

HISTORISCHE ANTHROPOLOGIE

Kultur • Gesellschaft • Alltag

Thema: Arbeit in der Erweiterung

24. Jahrgang 2016

Heft 2

Herausgegeben von

Brigitta Bernet, Juliane Schiel und Jakob Tanner

**ELEKTRONISCHER
SONDERDRUCK**



BÖHLAU VERLAG KÖLN WEIMAR WIEN

Inhalt

Editorial	157
-----------------	-----

Aufsätze

Themenschwerpunkt: Arbeit in der Erweiterung

<i>Ludolf Kuchenbuch</i> Mehr-Werk mittels Zwangsmobilität. Das Sollinventar der Abtei Prüm von 893 über ihre Domäne Rhein-Gönheim	165
<i>Martin Dusinberre</i> Circulations of Labor, Bodies of Work. A Japanese Migrant in Meiji Hawai'i	194
<i>Karin Harrasser und Gudrun Rath</i> Arbeit und die Grenzen des Lebens. Zur Kolonialität und Modernität von Plantage und jesuitischer Reduktion	218

Debatte

<i>Hans Medick</i> Turning Global? Microhistory in Extension	241
<i>Jakob Tanner</i> Das Kapital nach Marx. Piketty blickt ins 21. Jahrhundert	253

Forum

<i>Geneviève Fraisse</i> Service ou servitude – Dienst oder Dienstbarkeit. Ein Essay	265
<i>Brigitta Bernet</i> Insourcing und Outsourcing. Anthropologien der modernen Arbeit	272

Lektüren

Jörn Leonhard / Willibald Steinmetz (Hg.)

Semantiken von Arbeit: Diachrone und vergleichende Perspektiven

Isabelle Schürch (Konstanz) 294

Mirjam Milharčič Hladnik (Hg.)

From Slovenia to Egypt. Aleksandrinke's Trans-Mediterranean

Domestic Workers' Migration and National Imagination

Sara Bernasconi (Zürich) 296

David Kuchenbuch

Das Peckham-Experiment. Eine Mikro- und Wissensgeschichte

des Londoner „Pioneer Health Centre“ im 20. Jahrhundert

Pascal Germann (Zürich) 298

David Weil

The Fissured Workplace. Why Work Became So Bad

for So Many and What Can Be Done to Improve It

Andreas Fasel (Winterthur) 300

Abstracts 303

Debatte

Turning Global?

Microhistory in Extension¹

by Hans Medick

After its invention as a method and practice of historical research and writing in the 1970s, 80s and 90s the recent “Renaissance” of microhistory seems as a new and remarkable historiographical development.² It is true, there are continuities. New studies using the term “microhistorical” in their titles and subtitles continue certain older patterns. This is the case for instance with a microhistorical study that was recently published: Albion Urdank’s fine study “Birth, Death, and Religious Faith in an English Dissenting Community: A Microhistory of Nailsworth and Hinterland, 1695–1837”.³ It uses the method of nominative family reconstitution developed much earlier by the “Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure” for an investigation of the relationships between different kinds of religious faith and socio-demographic behaviour in an English local community and its hinterland. Quantitative microhistorical studies like these remain important, because their method brings to light patterns of human behaviour and their causes in crucial life events. In the case of Urdank’s study, it is the primacy of the event of religious conversion over the period and the incidence of marriage for the fertility histories of women and men; an interconnection that otherwise would remain in the dark and could not be investigated.

1 This text was first presented at the conference “The Space Between: Connecting Microhistory and Global History”, organised by Maxine Berg and John-Paul Ghobrial at Venice, 26–29 February 2016. A previous shorter version was given as a comment in the panel “Europe in the Perspective of a Global Microhistory”, organised by Dagmar Freist at the 11th Conference of the Working Group for Early Modern History in the Association of German Historians at the University of Heidelberg, 17–19 September 2015. My thanks go to the participants in both meetings for their comments. Special thanks go to Ian Gwinn for his perceptive reading of the English Ms. – The reference in the subtitle is to *Werner Conze, Sozialgeschichte in der Erweiterung*, in: *Neue politische Literatur* 19 (1974), 501–508. Here Conze, the Doyen of Social History in Germany after 1945, late in his scholarly life, suggested an extension of the then narrow field of social history into a wider dimension including family history and political history. – A Chinese translation of this text will be published in No. 4 (2016) of the journal *史学理论研究* (“Historiography Quarterly”), published by the Institute of World History at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing.

2 On the recent state of the field of micro-historical research “landscapes” without however considering the perspective of a global microhistory, see the informative review of *Sigurður Gylfi Magnússon/István M. Szijjártó, What is Microhistory? Theory and Practice*, London 2013. Informative on the state of the debate at the end of the 1990s, see the contributions in *Jürgen Schlumbohm* (Hg.), *Mikrogeschichte – Makrogeschichte. Komplementär oder inkommensurabel?*, Göttingen 1998.

3 Lanham/MD – London 2016.

The most challenging development in the recent “Renaissance” of microhistory, however, points in another direction: towards a new positioning of microhistory in an encompassing perspective – as global microhistory.⁴ Already in a seminal essay of 2011 Francesca Trivellato asked “Is there a future for microhistory in the face of the global turn?”⁵ At present the outcome of this development is not yet clear. But it might be fruitful to sketch some trajectories of the approaches which are underway.

I would first like to mention a personal experience, which I recently gained from an intellectual encounter with another historiographic culture, namely that of China. It shows that microhistorical approaches are at present beginning to get discussed at places, where one would not have brought them into easy connection a few years ago.

In May 2015 I gave a lecture in Beijing. I had been invited by the “Institute of World History” at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences to speak about my own work as a micro-historian of proto-industrialisation in a German village. From several possible lecture titles, which I had suggested to my Chinese colleagues beforehand, amongst them a lecture on the micro- and macrohistorical dimensions of the Thirty Years War, which is at present my main field of research, the colleagues at the “Institute of World History” had opted to hear about the results of my microhistorical work on the German village of Laichingen.⁶ Laichingen was and is neither Stuttgart nor Heidelberg nor Berlin. During the early modern period and up to the early 20th century, it was a medium sized German village of weavers and peasants in the South German backwoods so to speak, in a mountainous region of Württemberg, often called “Swabian Siberia”, due to its disadvantageous climate and infertile soils on the high plane of the Swabian Alps. This village was undergoing a long and continuous process of rural industrialisation from the 17th to the 19th and 20th centuries. My lecture was entitled “Weaving, Surviving and Proto-Industry in a German Village, 1700 to 1900. Micro-history as Method and as Research Experience”.⁷ As the title of the lecture suggests I spoke first

4 The term was first introduced by *Tonio Andrade*, in his essay: A Chinese Farmer, Two African Boys, and a Warlord: Toward a Global Microhistory, in: *Journal of World History* 21 (2010) 4, 573–591.

5 *Francesca Trivellato*, Is there a Future for Italian Microhistory in the Age of Global History?, in: *California Italian Studies* 2 (2011) 1, published as e-paper [of 24 unnumbered pages] <http://scholarship.org/uc/item/Oz94n9hq> (16.03.2016).

6 This work has been published in a monograph, *Hans Medick*, *Weben und Überleben in Laichingen 1650–1900. Lokalgeschichte als Allgemeine Geschichte*, 2Göttingen 1997. My work was the result of a project on the regional and local role of rural industrialisation in Central Europe during the many-faced formation of world capitalism in the early modern era, which I carried out in close cooperation with Peter Kriedte and Jürgen Schlumbohm at the former Göttingen Max-Planck-Institute for History. Within this common project we produced a trilogy of individual research monographs. My colleagues’ works are: *Peter Kriedte*, *Taufgesinnte und großes Kapital. Die niederrheinisch-bergischen Mennoniten und der Aufstieg des Krefelder Seidengewerbes*, Göttingen 2007; *Jürgen Schlumbohm*, *Lebensläufe, Familien, Höfe. Die Bauern und Heuerleute des Osnabrückischen Kirchspiels Belm in proto-industrieller Zeit, 1650–1860*, Göttingen 1994. For the common conceptual framework see: *Peter Kriedte/Hans Medick/Jürgen Schlumbohm*, *Industrialization before Industrialization. Rural Industry in the Genesis of Capitalism*, Cambridge – Paris 1981.

7 It was based on the revision of a text that had been earlier given at the seminar of the Agrarian anthropologist James Scott at Yale University, published under the title “Weaving and Surviving in Laichingen, 1650–1900. Micro-History as History and as Research Experience”, in: James C. Scott/Nina Bhatt (eds.), *Agrarian Studies. Synthetic Work at the Cutting Edge*, New Haven – London 2001, 283–296.

of all on the results of my research, trying to explain the *longue durée* of a specific culture of work and of survival in the village of Laichingen, which indeed lasted from the 17th well into the 20th century. This persistence can be explained from the resilience of a distinct way of life significantly moulded by the practical form, which religious attitudes assumed in the everyday lives and deaths of a working population of men, women and children. The peculiarities of this way of life and work I found to be rooted in a religiously anchored protestant work ethic. It took industriousness and labour as a form of “Gottesdienst” (divine service) to be practiced by a constant bearing of inner-worldly asceticism (“Heiligungsaskese”)⁸ under the often precarious survival conditions of an agricultural economy of rural small holders, who always needed to meet the everyday exigencies of their survival by practicing a craft by-occupation.

But I did not only speak about the results of my work. I also explained my methodological approach as a micro-historian, who had developed the method of an extended linkage of biographical records, uniting biographical, quantitative and qualitative approaches to investigate the everyday life and work of all persons and families registered in the rich sources of the village for over two and a half centuries. I presented this method of using the “unintended evidence”⁹ of nominative sources through record linkage as the key to answering wider issues, especially with regard to the insights they offer into the interconnections between cultural-religious, economic and political moments in a local society. For instance, insights into everyday conditions of survival and death were opened up, in which the workload shouldered by mothers in the local agrarian-protoindustrial economy led to a long-term “regime of mortality”¹⁰, with extreme levels of infant and child mortality (and record fertility rates accompanying it under conditions in which birth control was not practiced) which – on a global comparative scale – approached figures at the limits of human behaviour. But there were also insights to be gained into the specifics of a conflictual political economy, in which the entanglements of the local inhabitants and of their products with the wider world, reaching out to Stuttgart and South-West Germany, but also to the Mediterranean, the Americas and the West-Indies, had to be fought out against the agencies of the state and against the violent pressures of a state-supported merchant capitalism trying to achieve monopolistic domination of the export trade.¹¹

My talk found a vivid response from my Chinese colleagues, particularly on matters of detail. But I was also asked to explain the potential relevance of my study for corresponding researches on rural industrialisation in China. There were few references

8 *Medick, Weben und Überleben*, ch. 6, 549–560.

9 The term goes back to a strategic methodical distinction between “intentional documents” and “unintentional documents”, which *Marc Bloch* first suggested in a fragment “Réflexions pour le lecteur curieux de méthode”, written down in September 1939 (German translation and edition of this fragment by *Peter Schöttler* (Hg.), *Marc Bloch. Historiker und Widerstandskämpfer*, Frankfurt a. M. 1999, 227–236). I owe the suggestion of the relevance of this category to a lecture by *Carlo Ginzburg*, “Unintentional Revelations. Reading History against the Grain” at Berlin on March 7, 2016.

10 So the subtitle of ch. 4 in: *Medick, Weben und Überleben*, 295–378.

11 *Medick, Weben und Überleben*, ch.1, 39–140, esp. 65ff., 121ff.

to the early modern period, but many to later ages and to present day China. Special attention was given to what I had outlined as the long enduring amphibian co-existence of craft and of agricultural production in proto-industrial family economies. One colleague even suggested that such de-centralised, non-metropolitan forms of proto-industry, parts of it based on the industrial production of family units and their engagement in part time intensive agricultural work, constituted an important part of the productive set up in the present day metropolitan zone of highly condensed industrial and commercial activity in the Yangtse delta between Nanjing and Shanghai.

However, what surprised me most about the reception of my talk at Beijing was a remark by the institute's director, Shunhong Zhang, in a letter written to me some days after my lecture. He wrote: "I have the view that world history exists in micro-histories and what happens in a village might be of a global meaning."¹²

I found this a remarkable sentence for the director of an "Institute of World History" that is at present intensely concerned with reformulating the concepts of an earlier Chinese historiographic paradigm of "World History"¹³, which had assigned – or still in part assigns – the reaches of World History mainly to regions and countries outside China, but less to China itself. This (older) concept of World History, centered implicitly on the "idea of the nation as a core container of the past", as Dominic Sachsenmaier has recently called it,¹⁴ is being discussed in China at present and seems about to be changed in favour of a new concept of World History as Global History. But the role of a micro-historical approach in this trajectory still seems to be undiscussed. It is here that Shunhong Zhang's remark seems illuminating. If micro-history is being brought into the orbit of this new Chinese conception of world history, it appears remarkable that it is the micro-history of the rural countryside and especially of villages which are envisaged as an important part of this Chinese turn to World History as Global History. The remark of Shunhong Zhang, thus, points in several directions: It clearly seems to be linked to a certain dissatisfaction with the still dominating Western paradigms of Global History and their being tied too much to Western concepts of globalisation, which consider this process primarily as the outcome of central modernising forces of industrial capitalism, of statebuilding and a worldwide march of urbanisation originating from Europe.

But the remark also seems to refer to the specifics of a long lasting Chinese discourse on the peasantry and the importance of rural village life and labour. This originated in the pre-19th century imperial Chinese past, but it continued in the transformations and revolutions of China during the 19th and 20th centuries.¹⁵ It made the public awareness

12 Shunhong Zhang, e-mail to Hans Medick on June 14, 2015.

13 The discussion going on at present in China is reflected in the new English language journal "World History Studies", edited by the Institute of World History since the year 2014. The first issue appeared in December 2014. The journal is published by the Social Sciences Academic Press (China), ISSN 2095-6770.

14 Dominic Sachsenmaier, The Evolution of World Histories, in: David Christian (ed.), Introducing World History, to 10,000 BCE (=The Cambridge World History, Vol. I), Cambridge 2015, 56-83, here 77.

15 See on this Xiaorong Han, Chinese Discourses on the Peasant, 1900-1949, New York 2005; Alexander F. Day, The Peasant in Postsocialist China. History, Politics, and Capitalism, Cambridge 2013.

of Chinese rulers, intellectuals, and revolutionaries and – last not least – of historians to the exigencies of the peasantry and of rural labour and life a mandatory obligation. As Susan Richter has recently shown in an important study of a specific discourse and imperial practice that originated in China – and the travels of this discourse and its concepts in an inflected form from China to Europe during the 17th and 18th centuries – this acknowledgement of the fundamental importance of agriculture and of the hardships and exigencies of peasant life led to a perception of the emperor in China as the first and foremost peasant in the state. This had repercussions for the emperor himself: It led to his regular ritual homage to peasant labour by personally taking a plow into his hands and tilling the soil in a grand ceremonial occasion.¹⁶ Considering the background of this discourse and its uses, which – as could be said – ranged from the Ming and Qing emperors to Mao Zedong and beyond, the remark of Shunhong Zhang could also be taken as a plea to live up to and deal in a historically innovative and circumspect way with a categorical Chinese tradition of political economy. In this tradition – in the words of Helen Siu – “for over a millenium, rural economy and village life were integral to the substance and ideology of imperial governance”.¹⁷ But quite apart from these categorical assumptions the remark of Shunhong Zhang probably also received part of its impetus from an awareness of a specific condition of contemporary Chinese society: the precarious situation of villages and of rural village society in the overall environment of a rural-urban divide, in which the metropolis and its economic (over)development have come to dominate the course of things.

Interestingly enough, the only historical work with a Chinese historical subject and with “micro-history” in its title that appeared in the Republic of China so far is a village study by the Sino-American historian Huaiyin Li “Village China Under Socialism and Reform: A Micro-History, 1948–2008” that appeared at the same time in Stanford and Beijing in 2009.¹⁸

Li used the exceptional archival documents existing for the village of Dontai in Jiangsu province for the period of agricultural collectivisation in the decades after the Chinese revolution. He also used his inside knowledge as a person born in this village, supplemented by additional fieldwork as an oral historian. With this methodological outfit, he produced an unconventional micro-history of “his” village. Against the assumption of an all-powerful socialist state during the revolutionary period he came to stress the agency of the villagers and their networks. He summarises his findings in

16 Susan Richter, *Pflug und Steuerruder. Zur Verflechtung von Herrschaft und Landwirtschaft in der Aufklärung*, Köln – Wien – Weimar 2015, here esp. ch. 2.2: Das Verhältnis von Herrschaft und Landwirtschaft in China, 81 ff.

17 Helen Siu, *Key Issues in Historical Anthropology. A View from “South China”*, in: *Cross Currents. East Asian History and Culture Review* 13 (December 2014), 176, <http://crosscurrents.berkeley.edu/e-journal/issue-13> (17.03.2016).

18 It is worth mentioning that *Huaiyin Li's* first book: *Village Governance in North China, 1875–1936*, Stanford/CA 2005, which is also dealing with the transformation of rural society and with village-state relations in Northern China in the pre-1949 period during the late Qing and the Republic years, is also characterised by its author as being written from a “micro-historical perspective”, see *Huaiyin Li, Village China*, xiv.

the sentence: “the villagers played a decisive role in shaping the state’s rural policies through their persistent and unrelenting resistance.”¹⁹

As a reader you may ask at this point: Is this all there is to be said about microhistorical studies in and on China? Where are studies pertaining to the early modern period and those putting themselves into the framework of global history? Indeed there are projects in the making or have been undertaken already. Jonathan Spence in several of his works, especially in his fascinating book “The Question of Hu”²⁰ can be considered as a forerunner of a transcultural microhistorical approach relating to early modern China. It is the story of a 40 year old Chinese gatekeeper and Catholic convert, who in 1722 migrated to Paris from Guangdong in the service of a Jesuit missionary and who in his new cultural setting – in the effort to communicate – suffered a personal breakdown of communication. This led to his confinement as insane in the hospital at Charenton before he later could return to China. Spence’s narrative literary approach linking a diversity of sources to the same person comes close to a study in microhistory if not explicitly evoking its concept and following its rigid methods of proof.

In contrast to this perspective, the research of Anne Gerritsen departs from the focus on one person. It furnishes a different, more encompassing and conceptually reflected example in the trajectory of a global microhistory of Medieval and Early Modern China, pointing to two different configurations connecting the local and the global.²¹ In particular, her work on the porcelain manufacturing town of Jingdezhen in Southwest China and its networks of trade and exchange with the wider world outside China seems a perfect example for placing and tracing a local history in a globalising world by following up the interconnections and reciprocities established through the production and exchange of a scarce material good. But one could ask here: Does her close focus on the local and its interconnections with the global already amount to a microhistorical approach to global history? What are the methodical requirements for these and for other studies?

Other innovative work comes out of regional historiographic schools in China, like that of Guangzhou, centered at Sun Yat-sen University and its “Centre for Historical Anthropology”.²² The work emerging from this centre figures expressly as being conducted from an approach of historical anthropology devoted to local and regional history. It is mainly focussed on China and its neighbouring Asian Societies and has

19 Ibid., 3

20 Jonathan D. Spence, *The Question of Hu*, New York 1988 (dt.: *Der kleine Herr Hu. Ein Chinese in Paris*, München 1990).

21 Anne Gerritsen, *Scales of a Local. The Place of Locality in a Globalizing World*, in: Douglas Northrop (ed.), *A Companion to World History*, London 2012, 213–226.

22 Since its foundation in 2001 the Centre has carried out projects of regional and local research by historians and anthropologists. Since 2003 it produces – meanwhile in collaboration with the South China Research Center at The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology – a Chinese language “*Journal of History and Anthropology*” appearing twice per year, website: <http://schina.ust.hk/publications/Jour-E.html> (19.03.2016). Since 2010 the Centre’s activities are conducted in close collaboration of Sun Yat-sen University with The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

been initiated jointly by anthropologists and historians from China and the USA.²³ The methodical approach of this group has been characterised by one of its protagonists, Helen Siu, as coming close to a complex microhistorical perspective, dealing with the local, regional and translocal, but not entirely leaving out a multi-scale global horizon:

“We are indeed deeply interested in local history, but our explorations do not stop at the empirical details of a place or event. Instead we triangulate information from varied sources, be they official or popular, local or translocal to illustrate the narrative strategies and power play of actors occupying multiscale positions and to articulate the structuring dynamics between human actors and the larger environments in which they find themselves. We infuse in-depth understandings of microdynamics with an appreciation for resources embedded in broad political economies, such as regional ecologies, dynastic fortunes, nation-state formation, and global flows of capital.”²⁴

A series of publications edited by Helen Siu together with Eric Tagliacozzo and Peter Perdue under the title “Asia Inside Out” of which two volumes have appeared so far²⁵ tries to follow the common methodical path that Siu sketches out. The contributions, mainly by scholars working in the U.S., on the one hand, show the fruitfulness of this approach of analysing forms of “placemaking” and of “spatial connection that cut across continental divides”.²⁶ This is done from closely investigated local or regional cases, from exceptionally rich forms of documentation or from exemplary historical events or processes. But interesting as almost all of the individual case studies are, their “Asia Inside Out” perspective has its limits. As Anne Gerritsen has remarked in a review, their references to global historical connectivities remain limited to an Asia-centric perspective: “The focus is on inter-Asian connections and while it seeks to challenge the spatial boundaries of Asia as a whole, it remains rooted in a regional study of Asia.”²⁷

One of the most interesting projects in the field of connecting micro- and global history with reference to China and Asia at present is undertaken by the Italian-American historian Eugenio Menegon. In a first study Menegon has investigated the local appropriations and modifications of Catholic Christian religion originally brought by European missionaries into imperial China during the 17th century.²⁸ Menegon argues here against simplistic views of cultural-religious transfers in terms of import or export. He stresses the autonomy of local religious beliefs in developing new modes of Christianity in China during the early modern and modern periods until today. Following this study, he is at present pursuing a new research project on “Daily Life and Networks of Power in Qing Beijing: Europeans at the Imperial Court in the Seventeenth and

23 See the autobiographical remarks by the anthropologist Helen Siu of her own work and her collaboration with colleagues in *South China: Siu, Key Issues in Historical Anthropology*, 174 ff.

24 Cf., *ibid.*, 175.

25 *Eric Tagliacozzo/Helen F. Siu/Peter C. Perdue* (eds.), *Asia Inside Out: Connected Places*, Cambridge/MA 2015; *idem*, *Asia Inside Out. Changing Times*, Cambridge/MA 2015.

26 *Tagliacozzo/Siu/Perdue*, *Asia Inside Out. Connected Places*, Introduction, 6.

27 *Anne Gerritsen*, Review of *Tagliacozzo/Siu/Perdue* (eds.), *Asia Inside Out: Connected Places*, to appear in: *Journal of World History* 27 (2016).

28 *Eugenio Menegon*, *Ancestors, Virgins, and Friars. Christianity as a Local Religion in Late Imperial China*, Cambridge/MA 2009.

Eighteenth Centuries”.²⁹ Menegon here investigates the role of a small group of Europeans, most of them Catholic clerics, who worked as much sought after technical or scientific specialists at the margins of the imperial court in Beijing. But they were at the same time also acting as undercover missionaries, unofficially supporting the networks of Catholic communities in China. With this new project Menegon seems to aim at decentering the history of the imperial court at Beijing and, at the same time, to show how the emerging global infrastructures of scientific and technical knowledge, of commodity trade mainly in the luxury sector, and of ongoing missionary activities of the Catholic Church impinged on the daily life of persons and of social groups inside and outside Chinese court society. No longer are the emperor and his closed court at the center of attention, but they form part of a wider web of relationships, agencies and dependencies. With this research, Menegon is moving on the frontier of issues that surely deserve to be further pursued and in due course are being pursued by him: For June 11, 2015 I found him listed in the web with the interesting title of a lecture, which he then gave at the University of Cambridge (England): “A Micro-historical Approach to Global China: The Daily Life of Europeans in Beijing in the Long 18th Century”.³⁰

With this project and also with the subject of his first book Menegon puts Chinese-European interactions during the early modern period into focus, from a non-European observation point, but he does this from an explicitly “multi-scopic perspective”. He sees himself as participant in what he calls – in a conciliatory irenic idiom – “the resumed conversation in recent years between microhistorians and global history”.³¹

Menegon is in consonance here with other current efforts to rewrite the global history of the early modern period, some with an outspoken reference to micro-historical approaches, others pointing towards corresponding research practices, if not explicitly claiming to following a micro-historical orientation.

One of the most interesting steps in this direction has recently been undertaken by the American historian Lynn Hunt. In 2014, Hunt published a small and readable book entitled “Writing History in the Global Era”.³² She argues here for taking up a historically (and historiographically) reflected “paradigm” of globalisation that avoids the shortcomings and pitfalls of what she calls a “top down approach” to global history. She sees the shortcomings of this approach mainly in the priority given to worldwide economic processes with a focus on those “large scale processes that connect the world’s many distinct and discrete societies”, as for instance by “international patterns of exchange of goods and people”.³³ She suggests instead a “bottom up perspective” which she sees as “particularly fruitful for studying globalization in the early modern period”,³⁴ thus allowing a revision of the globalisation paradigm “in fundamental ways”. Hunt here suggests a transcultural and translocal rather than a transnational perspective, a perspective which is “deliberately looking across national bounda-

29 <http://blogs.bu.edu/emenegon/work-in-progress/> (18.03.2016).

30 The lecture is available as a website video: <http://sms.cam.ac.uk/media/2008626> (17.03.2016).

31 Menegon, video of the Cambridge lecture of 2015: http://sms.cam.ac.uk/media/2008626_0 (17.03.2016).

32 Lynn Hunt, *Writing History in the Global Era*, New York – London 2014.

33 *Ibid.*, 60

34 *Ibid.*, 66.

ries“ towards “interstitial spaces”³⁵ such as borderlands, deserts, rivers and oceans³⁶ as spaces, where histories of different varieties are transacted, happen, come together and intersect. The cutting edge of Hunt’s “bottom up perspective” lies, however, in her analytical model, which gives priority to “cross-cultural transactions”, “local cultural patterns”, such as “changing tastes and sensibilities” and their mediations through the agency of persons, but also of things and their social connections. She points to these cultural and social factors as prime movers, indeed as historically effective “causes” before and over the assumed primacy of global economic factors and transactions. Without explicitly discussing it, Hunt seems to come near a micro-historical perspective when she considers the “self-society intersections”³⁷ in these historical configurations and the sources documenting these configurations – amongst them especially letters – as a necessary point of departure for writing new forms of global history, especially during the early modern period.

Conceptually Lynn Hunt’s position exhibits some similarity with the focus on the “microhistory of global social sites”, a concept which Dagmar Freist has elaborated in a creative adaptation of Theodore Schatzki’s practice theory and suggested as a methodological touchstone and analytical point of departure for global microhistory.³⁸ The relevance and uses of this concept are shown in Freist’s own emerging work and that of her co-researchers and graduate students.³⁹ This approach promises to be of central importance in her project on the so-called “Prize Papers” of the British High Court of Admiralty from the 17th to the beginning of the 19th century, a gigantic collection of early modern documents, objects and materials in the British National Archives, leftovers of the prize arrests, undertaken by British privateers or ships of war against ships considered to come from enemy powers. These arrests were made in considerable numbers in the numerous maritime wars that Britain fought as an imperial power globally throughout the early modern period. The Prize Papers are the archival residues, both the product and testament of these global maritime entanglements of British sea power. These papers have begun to be used for research internationally during recent years.⁴⁰ Freist and her team of researchers attempt to go

35 Ibid., 69.

36 Ibid., 64.

37 Ibid., 133.

38 On the concept of microhistory: *Dagmar Freist*, *Historische Praxeologie als Mikro-Historie*, in: Arndt Brendecke (ed.), *Praktiken der Frühen Neuzeit. Akteure – Handlungen – Artefakte*, Köln – Weimar – Wien 2015, 62–77; on the extension of the concept to Global History as a case study from the Prize Papers, see *Dagmar Freist*, „Ich schicke Dir etwas Fremdes und nicht Vertrautes.“ Briefpraktiken als Vergewisserungsstrategie zwischen Raum und Zeit im Kolonialgefüge der Frühen Neuzeit, in: idem (ed.), *Diskurse – Körper – Artefakte. Historische Praxeologie in der Frühneuzeitforschung*, Bielefeld 2015, 374–404, esp. 388 ff.

39 Ibid.

40 An exemplary project is that of Dutch historical linguists and historians “Brieven als Buit/ Letters as Loot. Towards a Non-standard View on the History of Dutch”, directed by Marijke van der Wal, who selected and edited about 1000 out of about 40 000 (estimated) confiscated Dutch letters from the Prize Papers and published them in a diplomatically transcribed and digitalised corpus with advanced research facilities, concerning the texts and their research oriented “metadata”, <http://www.brievenalsbuit.nl/> (25.03.2016); *Gijsbert Rutten/Marijke J. van der Wal*, *Letters as Loot. A Sociolinguistic Approach to Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-century Dutch*, Amsterdam – Philadel-

further. They are preparing to make available the entire, exceptional corpus of texts, artefacts and material objects of the Prize Papers in a work-intensive operation of archival disentanglement as a public research resource: with a complete und systematic digital registration cum facsimile reproduction of the documents, combined with a research oriented base of metadata, of first content analyses and ensuing interpretations.⁴¹ The challenge ahead for this project of assembling an exceptional amount of qualitative historical testimony with a global outreach for the early modern period is twofold: how to select from the documents of this extraordinary collection and future edition of “big data” suitable evidence to generate contextualising microhistorical studies and how to frame in this departure new questions and find new answers for a developing global microhistory.⁴²

The methodological ground of explicitly pursuing, reflecting and practicing approaches of a global microhistory is no longer a tabula rasa at present. Historians of a new generation of microhistorians accompanied by some from an older generation have taken us into new fields of research accompanied by new perspectives. Amongst them Sebouh Aslanian⁴³, Linda Colley⁴⁴, Natalie Zemon Davis⁴⁵, Angelika Epple⁴⁶, John-Paul Ghobrial⁴⁷, Emma Rothschild⁴⁸, Francesca Trivellato⁴⁹ and others impress with the distinctiveness of their works and their methodical approaches. In closing this review I would like to single out amongst them Francesca Trivellato for the complementarity that exists in her work between the material results of her research and her methodical and conceptual reflections. Trivellato develops her arguments as a microhistorian of a younger generation, who has undertaken pathbreaking research on a Sephardic-Jewish trading network, which operated as a business partnership of two families out of Livorno and Aleppo cross-culturally with a global outreach during the first half of the 18th century. Her research connects to other works on “stateless” trading diasporas. But from its microhistorical stance it comes to question the categories of earlier research as well as its findings. It is not the close kinship and religious ties of the two Sephardic Jewish families alone that she finds to be the integrating and

phia 2014, electronic version: <http://www.jbe-platform.com/content/books/9789027269577>; independent microhistorical projects, based on the evidence for entire ships from the Prize Papers, are undertaken by Sebouh Aslanian (UCLA) and by Margaret Hunt (University of Uppsala).

41 See the information on this project: <http://www.prizepapers.de/> (24.03.2016).

42 This process is on its way with first specific case studies, see the contributions in *Freist* (ed.), *Diskurse – Körper – Artefakte*.

43 *Sebouh David Aslanian*, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa*, Berkeley/CA 2011.

44 *Linda Colley*, *The Ordeal of Elizabeth March: A Woman in World History*, New York 2007.

45 *Natalie Zemon Davis*, *Trickster Travels: A Sixteenth Century Muslim between Worlds*, New York 2006.

46 *Angelika Epple*, *Das Unternehmen Stollwerck. Eine Mikrogeschichte der Globalisierung*, Frankfurt a. M. 2010.

47 *John-Paul Ghobrial*, *The Secret Life of Elias Babylon and the Uses of Global Microhistory*, in: *Past and Present* 222 (2014), 51–93.

48 *Emma Rothschild*, *The Inner Life of Empires: An Eighteenth-century History*, Princeton/NJ 2011.

49 *Francesca Trivellato*, *The Familiarity of Strangers: The Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period*, New Haven/CT 2009.

propelling moment of their wide-ranging economic connections and transactions, but what she terms their “communitarian cosmopolitanism”⁵⁰ of skillfully handling a multiplicity of connections and “multiple, mobile and overlapping contexts” in a complex world of unequal power relations and heterogeneous trading networks.

From the vantage point of a “global history on a small scale”, Trivellato presents in several of her methodological and conceptual contributions a subtle and critical review of the achievements and shortcomings of microhistory since its inception in the late 1970s.⁵¹ What I find most remarkable in Trivellato’s assessments of the state of the art, from her insider’s and practitioner’s point of view, is her balanced assessment, both positive and critical, of the achievements of the biographical approaches towards a global microhistory, which have mushroomed over the last decade. In sketching out the future horizons of a “global microhistory” she warns against the multiplication of “biographies of early modern globetrotters” which put individuals and individual agency too much into the center of the world historical stage. She encourages instead an approach, which “steers away from idealizing their hybridity and resilience”.⁵²

As a microhistorical practitioner of the first generation who comes from social history and historical anthropology, I can only agree with the hope of Trivellato that a future global microhistory should equip itself with a dose of “contrarian spirit” and will use person-, group- and practice-oriented methodological approaches. In taking the biographical approach and a focus on ego-documents as an important dimension, it should however “continue to experiment beyond the biographical genre”.⁵³

The primary task ahead of global microhistorians should perhaps be not so much to focus in a centrist manner on “global social sites” (Dagmar Freist following Theodore Schatzki) but – as the title of the recent conference has put it – on the “space(s) between”⁵⁴ and on assumed what happened in and with these in-between spaces in historical transformations and changes. We should thus concentrate not so much on the centers of power or on entire locations but rather, from a decentering transcultural perspective as suggested by Natalie Zemon Davis⁵⁵, on margins and “interstitial spaces”. Boundaries and boundary crossings, trade routes, the roots of communications and of knowledge transfers, translations and exchanges are meant here, but also mobile spaces, such as ships, networks of correspondence and trade, and, last but not least, the real or imagined spaces traversed by persons and their social worlds in the

50 *Trivellato*, *Familiarity of Strangers*, 18.

51 *Trivellato*, *Is there a Future for Italian Microhistory in the Age of Global History?*; idem, *Microstoria/Microhistoire/Microhistory*, in: *French Politics, Culture and Society* 33 (2015) 1, 122–134; idem, *Global Microhistories. Promises, Perils, Paradoxes* (2015), Ms. of contribution to panel “Europe in the Perspective of a Global Microhistory” (see fn.1).

52 *Ibid.*, 9.

53 *Ibid.*, 10.

54 See fn.1.

55 *Natalie Zemon Davis*, *Decentering History: Local Stories and Cultural Crossings in a Global World*, in: *History and Theory* 50 (2011) 2, 188–202, here 190: “Decentering involves the stance and the subject matter of the historian. The decentering historian does not tell the story of the past only from the vantage point of a single part of the world or of powerful elites, but rather widens his or her scope, socially and geographically, and introduces plural voices into the account.”

course of their lives. In this context it seems important to study the “multiple cultural, social or economic affiliations”⁵⁶ of persons, groups, institutions and goods, but also the multiple affiliations, travels and translations of categories and concepts in a world that was historically involved in many processes of globalising before it became globalised.

56 This concept has been developed by me in the context of exchanges within the late research group “Ego-Documents in Transcultural Perspective” to which I belonged for several years. On this concept and on the work of this group and its results see the concluding volume: *Claudia Ulbrich/Hans Medick/Angelika Schaser* (ed.), *Selbstzeugnis und Person. Transkulturelle Perspektiven*, Köln – Weimar – Wien 2012, introduction 1–19, here 17–19. This introduction has recently been published in a revised form in French: *Claudia Ulbrich/Hans Medick/Angelika Schaser*, *Ecrits autobiographiques et personne. Perspectives transculturelles*, in: *Etudes de lettres* 300 (2016) 1–2, special issue: Appel à témoins. Ecrits personnels et pratiques socioculturelles (XVI^e–XX^e siècles) (ed. Danièle Tosato-Rigo), 217–242.