

# Forum Transregionale Studien

Annual  
Conference

7-9 Dec 2017  
Maison de France,  
Berlin

## Call for Papers

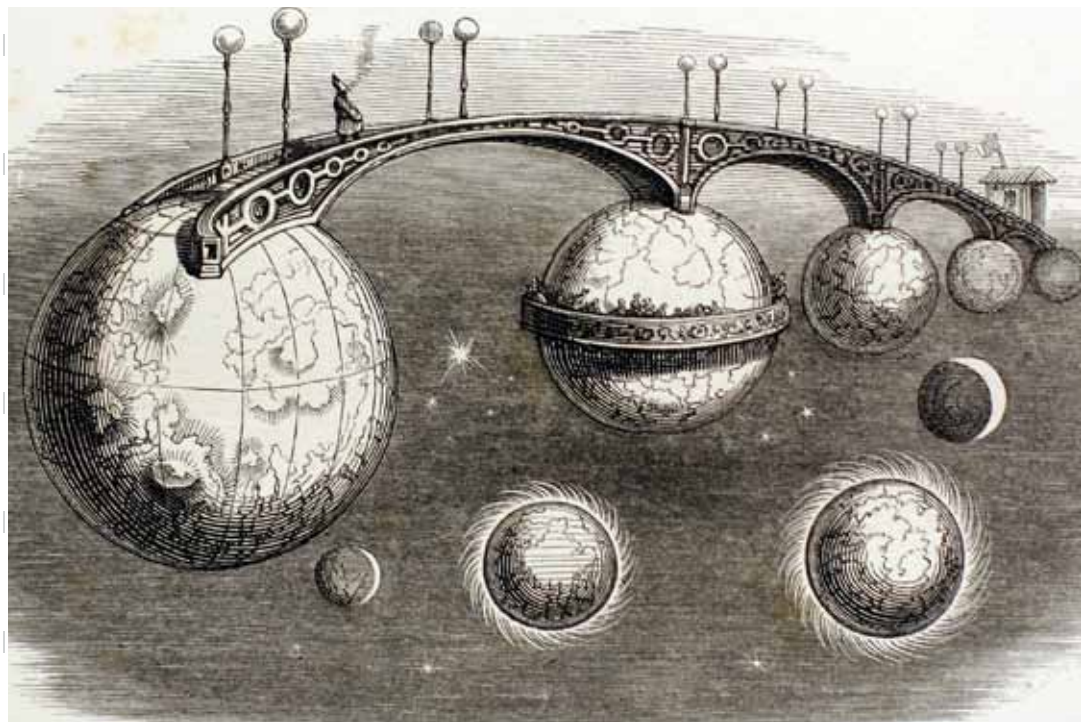


Illustration by J. J. Grandville from *Un Autre Monde*, Paris: H. Fournier, 1844.

## Chronologics: Periodisation in a Global Context

The Berlin-based Forum Transregionale Studien and the Max Weber Stiftung invite submissions for a three-day conference in Berlin on concepts of historical periodisation in transregional perspective. The conference is convened by Thomas Maissen (Deutsches Historisches Institut Paris, DHIP), Barbara Mittler (Heidelberger Centrum für Transkulturelle Studien, HCTS), and Pierre Monnet (Institut franco-allemand de sciences historiques et sociales, Frankfurt am Main). The conference will feature a keynote lecture on December 7th and several topical panel sessions on December 8th and 9th. It is arranged in cooperation with the Einstein Center Chronoi and the Graduate School Global Intellectual History at the Freie Universität Berlin and the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin.

**Submission Deadline: April 30, 2017**

GEFÖRDERT VOM



Forum  
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Max Weber  
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Kultur  
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ASIA AND EUROPE  
IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

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SCIENTES HISTORIQUES & SOCIALES  
RECHERCHES & SOCIALSCIENTIFEN

## Concept

Epochal divisions and terminologies such as “antiquity”, “baroque,” the “classical age,” the “renaissance,” or “postmodernity,” the “long 19th!” or “short 20th” centuries are more than mere tools used pragmatically to arrange school curricula or museum collections. In most disciplines based on historical methods the use of these terminologies carries particular imaginations and meanings for the discursive construction of nations and communities. Many contemporary categories and periodisations have their roots in European teleologies, religious or historical traditions and thus are closely linked to particular power relations. As part of the colonial encounter they have been translated into new “temporal authenticities” in Africa, Asia and the Americas, as well as in Europe.

German historians in particular, in C.H. Williams’ ironic description, “have an industry they call ‘Periodisierung’ and they take it very seriously. (...) Periodisation, this splitting up of time into neatly balanced divisions is, after all, a very arbitrary proceeding and should not be looked upon as permanent.” In producing and reproducing periodisations, historians structure possible narratives of temporality, they somehow “take up ownership of the past,” (Janet L. Nelson) imposing particular “regimes of historicity” (François Hartog). Accordingly, periodisations are never inert or innocent, indeed, they have been interpreted as a “theft of History” (Jack Goody).

The aim of this conference is to uncover some of the dynamics behind particular cultural and historical uses of periodisation schemes, as concepts for ordering the past, and thus to reconsider these terminologies “devised to think the world” (Sebastian Conrad). Periodisations are culturally determined. They beg for systematic comparison in order to identify the contextual specificity and contingency of particular understandings of particular historical epochs. An interdisciplinary and transregional perspective allows for a reconsideration of the (non-)transferability of historical periodisations and the possibility to work out categories of historical analysis that go beyond nation-bound interpretative patterns.

The conference aims to show where and how periodisation reveals clear cultural, social, and national leanings and predispositions. We will discuss the making of these chronologies, the variable systems and morphologies it takes, e.g. religious, spatial and other models (e.g. linear, spiral, circular). We will focus on different agents and modes involved in the making of periodisation schemes (institutions ranging from the university to the school or the museum but also genres such as the documentary, the historical novel or local communities). We will discuss how European attempts at structuring the History, and along with them, particular chronotypes have been translated worldwide into universal and/or national, and communitarian models. At the same time, we will also focus on alternative, complementary and or silenced models of periodisation and epoch-making. By bringing together scholars with an expertise in different regions of the world, we hope to better understand the importance of temporality in the making of global history.

## Application Procedure

This call is open to emerging as well as established scholars on all levels. Abstracts should address themselves to some of the following issues and questions:

1. The Making of Periodisation Schemes
2. Morphologies and Models of Periodisation
3. Axial Times and Epochal Breaks
4. Time and Power: Periodisation in a Global Context
5. Popular and Pedagogical Dimensions of Periodisation

As the institutions involved have French, German and English as working languages, papers can be held in all of these three languages while the working language at the conference will be English. Abstracts should not exceed 300 words for paper presentations of 20-25 minutes. Please submit, along with a brief biographical statement, to [initiatives@trafo-berlin.de](mailto:initiatives@trafo-berlin.de) by **April 30, 2017**.

Selection of papers will take place in May, applicants will be informed by the end of May. The Forum Transregionale Studien will cover participants' travel and accommodation expenses.

Participants invited for presentation will have a version of their paper published online at "TRAFO - Blog for Transregional Research" and may have the option to publish their papers in an edited print/open access format as well.

For questions regarding the organisation, please contact Alix Winter:  
[initiatives@trafo-berlin.de](mailto:initiatives@trafo-berlin.de); T: +49 (0)30 89 001-424; F: +49 (0)30 89 001-440.

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The conference is part of the strategic cooperation between the Forum Transregionale Studien and the Max Weber Stiftung - Deutsche Geisteswissenschaftliche Institute im Ausland. It is supported by the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, BMBF).

The Berlin-based Forum Transregionale Studien is a research organization that promotes the internationalization of research in the humanities and social sciences. It is dedicated to a research agenda that systematically links disciplinary approaches and the expertise of area studies, by focusing on entanglements and interactions across national, cultural or regional borders. The Forum is supported by the Land of Berlin.

The Max Weber Stiftung promotes global research, concentrated around the areas of social sciences, cultural studies, and the humanities. Research is conducted at ten institutes in various countries worldwide with distinctive and independent focal points. Through its globally operating institutes, the Foundation is able to contribute to the communication and networking between Germany and the host countries or regions of its establishments.

**For more information please see:**

[www.forum-transregionale-studien.de](http://www.forum-transregionale-studien.de)

[www.maxweberstiftung.de](http://www.maxweberstiftung.de)

[www.asia-europe.uni-heidelberg.de/en](http://www.asia-europe.uni-heidelberg.de/en)

[www.dhi-paris.fr/home.html](http://www.dhi-paris.fr/home.html)

[www.ifra-frankfurt.de](http://www.ifra-frankfurt.de)

**Collaboration partners:**

[www.einsteinfoundation.de/en/people-projects/einstein-centres/einstein-zentrum-chronoi](http://www.einsteinfoundation.de/en/people-projects/einstein-centres/einstein-zentrum-chronoi)

[www.global-history.de/gih/index.html](http://www.global-history.de/gih/index.html)