



Centre for Transnational History

In collaboration with GRAINES

Call for Papers and Workshops

Mapping and Visualising Transnational (Hi)Stories. Connecting History, Space and Digital Tools

Venue: 8-10 June 2014, School of History, St Andrews

Convenors: Bernhard Struck, Konrad Lawson

Submission date for papers and workshop proposals: **10 January 2014**

IDEA AND RATIONALE

- 1 MARRYING SPATIAL AND TRANSNATIONAL HISTORY
- 2 LEARNING TRANSNATIONAL TOOLS AND DIGITAL SKILLS

Transnational history has been broadly defined as being interested in connections across borders as well as in flows of goods, people, ideas across, through and above nations. As a *perspective* or *way of seeing* transnational history has been characterised as being primarily concerned with people as actors that create webs of connections as well as circulations, honeycombs and nodes of interaction across borders.

Such definitions raise questions of space and scale that this workshop seeks to address. What is more it raises the, admittedly but deliberately, broad questions:

- Where is transnational history?
- How to map and visualise transnational (hi)stories, the social and cultural spaces in which transnational actors and objects act and which are created by transnational actors and connections?
- Which maps would be needed in order to write transnational (hi)stories that will enhance our understanding of cross-border movements and flows?
- Could transnational and global history as well as spatial history on the one hand, technology and digital humanities on the other speak more fruitfully to one another?

The emphasis on mapping and visualisation points towards a more technical aspect that we seek to address during the workshop. It stems, however, from two observations. First, more programmatic texts on transnational, but also on global history, have emphasised (explicitly or implicitly) the search for spatial alternatives

with but *beyond* the nation-state. The reference to space here and for the workshop is a deliberately open one. Within the context of transnational and global history, however, the distinction between ‘spatial practice’, ‘representations of space’ and ‘representational space’ made by Henri Lefebvre seems particularly relevant to us. Second, despite a growing number of excellent case studies and impressive monographs or synthesis in the vein of transnational and global perspectives, maps and visualisations of these (hi)stories and the spaces in which transnational history takes places or that are created by transnational flows and connections are strikingly abstract.

The workshop seeks to address the questions above on how to spatialise and, consequently, how to map and visualise transnational histories and the flows and connections it is interested in. With these challenges and problems on space and scale in mind, the workshop seeks to combine transnational and global history with the simultaneous (re)emergence of space and spatial issues since the early 1990s. We invite papers and workshop proposals in the, again, deliberately broad and open perspective of transnational history.

(UN)ORGANIZATION AND CONNECTION – FORMS AND FORMAT(S)

The workshop will be explicitly experimental. What we are looking for is the willingness to explore and share thoughts, tools and techniques in order to develop the links between transnational and spatial history further. While the individual papers presented are historical we seek to explore ways of visualising and mapping flows and connections by collaborating across disciplines.

The event will be organised as a workshop combining presentations and feedback sessions on submitted papers with a workshop-like event, which introduces a specific skill or approach to mapping and the study of spatial history. Applicants may either submit a paper or may apply to coordinate one of the informal training workshops with a focus on technology, software and skills .

Following the CFP and selection of topics and participants, the preparation of the meeting will start through a virtual platform, establishing a collective reading group and a shared community space in the form of a pre-meeting reading repository and a collaboratively authored blog in order to build up a workflow and facilitate the exchange of ideas. Prior to the actual meeting in St Andrews papers, or workshop preparatory materials will be circulated (two weeks before meeting).

During the meeting the focus will be on brief presentations, cross-comments in large plenum with intervals of breaking up into small-groups as well as writing groups with the clear view of developing the papers further with a clear view of different forms of dissemination and publication. The writing groups will work closely and directly from pre-circulated texts that are the basis of the brief presentations, and offer an opportunity to move from general feedback to more direct contributions to the writing revision process in a small and more comfortable group setting.

As an interdisciplinary workshop, different participants bring different skill sets. We will set aside one morning of the workshop to offer an opportunity for volunteer participants to share a specific approach, skill, or technique that can be useful in writing spatial history, which might include technical skills such as providing an introduction to or specific applications of GIS, social network analysis or share the experience of historians who have devised other particular ways to tackle the specific challenges of space and scale that they faced in research and writing in this area.

While independent academic essays are the major research outcome, it is also hoped that the writing groups will offer an opportunity to experiment with more direct collaborative writing amongst group members building either upon initial ideas shared on the collaborative blog for the workshop or from another pre-shared list of ideas amongst participants with shared interests. These might take the form of getting the initial outline and key arguments for a full article, or the creation of shorter pieces focusing on providing a collective essay with recommendations on how to meet the specific challenges of transnational history that addresses flows and connections at various scales.

We invite the submission for both papers and workshops by **10 January 2014**. Please send your proposal (max 250 words) and a brief biographical note (max 100 words) to Bernhard Struck at bs50@st-andrews.ac.uk

Note: Proposals for workshops should include 1) a list of learning outcomes 2) indicate whether they are appropriate for 60, 90, or 120 minutes, and 3) If they are interactive, what software and prerequisite skill requirements there are for participation.

There is no fee for the workshop. The Centre for Transnational History will cover accommodation expenses for the duration of the event. Travel expenses need to be covered by the home institution.

For further information see grainesnetwork.com
standrewstransnational.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk