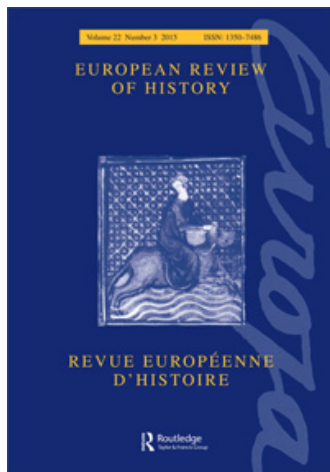


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Cent ans d'histoire des outre-mers: SFHOM, 1912-2012

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the part of the Czechoslovak government-in-exile – except in the case of the Hermanns' 1939–40 'transfer agreement' – is a sad but true evaluation: 'Solidarity with the Allies prevented them from action on their own initiative' (p. 99).

Regarding theory, I am conflicted about the question to what degree it is advisable to collapse Czechoslovak Jewish historiography into Polish Jewish historiographical debates (as seemingly done on p. 187), or rather remain independent. Given the special role that Prague and the Bohemian lands play for a general theory of nationalism as the biographical abode of three of its founders – Hans Kohn, Karl Wolfgang Deutsch, Ernest Gellner – and therefore as a key global case study, it seems peculiar to turn to Poland for theoretical debates. This turn likely reflects an echo of Jewish more than of Christian historical power structures. If interwar Poland as a country was just over twice as populous as Czechoslovakia, the Jewish community there was about 10 times more numerous. Meanwhile, I do share the view of a special role for Poland in Czechoslovak history, which probably reflects both Láníček's and my own family's roots in Silesia; I could also entertain certain thoughts on the (non-) history of Czech–Polish ties, imagining a Czechopolonia, rather than a Czechoslovakia. Still, it appears to me that our theoretical affiliation should be foremost with the traditions that grew out of the 'Bohemian' lands, or else – while keeping in mind all the silenced history this term, too, contains – the 'Czech' lands.

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Historiography—Historiographie

Cent ans d'histoire des outre-mers: SFHOM, 1912–2012, edited by Hugues Tertrais, Hubert Bonin and Josette Rivallain, *Outre-mers: revue d'histoire* 100, 2012, 655 pp., €20, ISBN 978 2 8597 0052 2

The year 2012 slipped by with little attention paid by historians to its anniversaries. It was, perhaps, overshadowed by the prospect of the Great War centenary in 2014, and in France, by the *année des outre-mer* of 2011. This special issue marking 100 years of the French-language journal *Outre-mers: Revue d'histoire* stands as a notable exception. Focusing on the decade of the 1910s but spanning a century, the scope of the edition is nothing if not broad. It surveys histories of colonisation and the human sciences during this period, with a further, reflexive purpose in that it attempts to chart a genealogy of the journal and its related society (known in its most recent incarnation as the *Société française de l'histoire des outre-mers*). This promise of deconstruction is not insignificant: it signals an attempt – perhaps echoing a broader trend amongst French historians – to move the journal's editorial stance towards a readier critique of the positivist 'science' of history and towards a fuller engagement with postcolonial scholarship from beyond France.

In the introductory essays, the volume's editors acknowledge the paradox of celebrating this journal – itself a product of 'colonial science' – whilst also being engaged

in colonial critique. The four sections which follow present tentatively critical readings of commemoration and of the production of history. Firstly, under the heading, 'Les empires coloniaux au moment de la création de l'association', 14 short chapters survey Japanese, Spanish and Portuguese as well as French colonial contexts in the early 1910s. This opening section functions as a window on colonial worlds on the eve of the Great War, allowing the reader to compare various royalist and republican missions. The next part, 'De la Société de l'histoire des colonies françaises à la SFHOM', emphasises the role of individuals such as Alfred Martineau in orienting the Society. Following this is a collection of historiographical analyses of the journal's content and its historical vision. These contextualise the semantic shifts by which history of the *colonies françaises* became that of the *outré-mer* ('overseas'). The latter formulation, as it dispenses with the 'colonial' label, seeks to face outwards beyond the 'Francophone' sphere. Yet the meanings of the '*ultramarin*' remain uncertain, when – technically speaking – from France one has to cross the sea to reach Britain but can travel overland to (for instance) Syria and Lebanon.

Commemoration is by nature selective, privileging the events and people in question over others and thus granting them legitimisation of one sort or another. A strength of this collection is its sensitivity to this, which characterises both the introduction and the final section, 'Commémorations et histoire'. A further strength lies in the fact that, by inviting contributions relating to the early 1910s, it draws attention to the years between the *fin-de-siècle* and the First World War. This period is sometimes overlooked by historians of Europe, who have frequently and understandably preferred to focus on the conflict and its aftermath, yet it was one in which French imperial projects gained a great deal of momentum.

The volume does, however, seem somewhat uncertain of its international scope. It deals quite comprehensively with areas of the French *outré-mer* from Morocco to Tahiti, but the additional perspectives on places not colonised by France seem comparatively limited. Furthermore, although the temporal and intellectual ambition of the work is certainly commendable, it does make for a heavy tome. An immediately accessible online version would not only save trees; it would also ensure that the significance of the volume is not lost, and that it reaches the many scholars whom it will interest.

The edition will have a particular appeal for those seeking to understand the processes by which, mid-century, '*sciences coloniales*' became '*sciences d'outré-mer*' and to ascertain individual agency in those processes. It also offers much food for thought to those engaging with the currently expanding field of commemoration studies.

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