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Centre, Periphery and Back: European Historiographical Itineraries

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# Centres and Peripheries in Gender History: A Historiographical Overview

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When some months ago I assigned an undergraduate student of my department to write an essay on the well-known international journal *Gender & History*, my didactic goal was twofold: firstly, to make clear that gender does not concern merely the so-called “private space”, family and sexuality, nor is it a synonym for women, but it is a sophisticated analytical category that can offer a deeper understanding of every aspect of human activity, particularly as far as power relations are concerned; secondly, to point out the level of academic diffusion that gender history has achieved today. To this aim, the assigned essay required the indexing of the journal’s issues since 2000 and the creation of a spreadsheet with data on authors, titles, dates of publication, thematic areas, and chronological and geographical focus.<sup>1</sup> The student’s conclusions from the data accumulated were rather unexpected, though: “It is worth noting that there are only a few articles that focus on the Balkans or Eastern Europe. Along with the United States and Western Europe, the main criterion for inclusion is colonialism. Regions that were not part of an imperial formation are mostly absent.”<sup>2</sup> Its accuracy aside, this remark reveals how research priorities shift according to the observer’s position and the diverse conceptualisations of centre and periphery. Western Europe and the United States hold here a prominent position, while the Balkans and Eastern Europe are strikingly absent. In the student’s view, the journal’s geographical openness is doubtful since it is mostly oriented towards former colonial or postcolonial settings, located somewhere “beyond here”. The student’s remark may open crucial questions about the dynamics, terms and limitations of academic globalisation and the resulting shaping of centres and peripheries in the writing of gender history.

To this aim, this article has two purposes. Firstly, it examines recent historiographical overviews that mostly discuss “peripheral” or “national”/“regional” historiographical traditions, to detect current aspirations, frustrations and challenges in respect of how academic centres, peripheries and hierarchies are constructed in gender history today. Secondly, it discusses the profile of four international journals dedicated to women’s and gender history to examine how historiographical centres and peripheries have been shaped through their pages in the last decade (2011–2020).

## *Academic centres and peripheries: Aspirations, frustrations, challenges*

By introducing new historical subjects and perspectives, women's and gender history has reoriented the priorities of historical writing, whereas feminist criticism and activism, particularly after the rise of "black" or "Third World" feminism, have sought to dislodge national, Eurocentric and patriarchal contexts and to encourage transnational exchange. The examination of how gender has worked in "other" societies, geographically and chronologically distant from the modern Western paradigm, such as precolonial America, premodern Europe or modern Asia and Africa, has contributed to a prolific critique and destabilising of dominant Western epistemologies on gender and sexuality.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, more sophisticated methodologies and approaches have strengthened intersectionality, that is, the examination of the complex intersections between gender and other social and cultural categories, such as class, "race", sexuality, religion and nationality, in the formation and consolidation of power regimes. The increasing academic internationalisation and the so-called "global turn" during the last decades has, at least theoretically, also contributed to this aim, by offering "global perspectives" of gender that have the potential to "confront the default Eurocentric understanding of gender".<sup>4</sup>

However, recent overviews on women's and gender history have often expressed disappointment about whether academic globalisation has made possible the equal participation of researchers from different academic and national environments. It has been noted that "national" or "regional" historiographies have been unable to follow the more internationalised Anglophone model of scholarship for various reasons: gender is not sufficiently recognised and incorporated in mainstream "national" or "regional" historiographical traditions, whereas university teaching, research funding, academic centres and journals focusing on gender are still largely absent in most countries.<sup>5</sup> In other words, as Giulia Calvi has aptly noted, there are significant "imbalances of power and unequal distribution of academic, linguistic and financial resources".<sup>6</sup>

The institutional strength of gender studies in the United States has been often experienced in terms of scholarly inferiority by researchers from Europe, especially the continent, and the "rest of the world". In this respect, a common criticism is that Anglophone colleagues do not take into serious consideration studies that are not written in English even when they fall into their areas of expertise. Some "national"/"regional" historiographies are certainly more internationalised than others by communicating research in English and in Anglophone journals. However, in an ironic way, what triggers this "coming out", particularly as far as "non-Western" scholarship is concerned, is often the need to disrupt the centre's dominant discourse about "periphery". Echoing a postcolonial critique, this talking back of the periphery has often encouraged sophisticated theoretical and methodological elaborations that transcend a simple binarism between centre and periphery.<sup>7</sup>

Even if the use of English as an academic lingua franca has definitely encouraged exchange, linguistic hierarchies have also shaped scholarly inclusions and exclusions, between “those who tell the history of gender” and “those who listen”, as Birgitte Sølund and Mary Jo Maynes have remarked.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, the dominance of English as an academic language is often seen as privileging “the Anglo-American style of argumentation and writing” at the expense of other historiographical approaches and traditions.<sup>9</sup> Besides, writing in English often becomes the main criterion for the academic impact and significance of an essay. Thus, even scholars who read other foreign languages usually prefer to quote literature written in English.<sup>10</sup> It has been noted that even when scholars consult and quote foreign scholarship, they mostly look for case studies, chiefly from the non-Western world, rather than aim at being involved in theoretical and historiographical debates that extend beyond “the controversies, insights, and framing devices drawn from Euro-American conversations about gender, sexuality and feminism”.<sup>11</sup> Often the relation between scholars from the “centre” and those from the “peripheries” is experienced by the latter in terms of hierarchy, as an exchange between those who offer conceptual and methodological elaborations, on the one hand, and those who have to incorporate this body of knowledge and provide “local” case studies so as to “enrich the comparative framework”, on the other.<sup>12</sup>

Academic globalisation has been sometimes experienced as an imperial endeavour of a one-way academic circulation of analytical tools and concepts from “centre” to “peripheries”. In this regard, Anglophone scholars have been criticised for not taking into consideration regional particularities. Interestingly, the periphery’s “exotic alterity” is not articulated only in terms of a “Western”/“non-Western” binarism. Several years ago Luisa Accati argued that what she termed “Anglo-American approaches” to women’s history have not been able to provide a proper understanding of gender relations in a Catholic country like Italy, where the mother-son relationship has been so important.<sup>13</sup> In any case, the “centre” usually keeps the position of the observer and the periphery that of the observed, echoing power relations embedded in the ethnographic gaze. The centre holds the hegemonic privilege of producing knowledge about the periphery and not vice versa. Even when “regional”/“national” historiographies challenge historiographical discourses about them, mostly emanating from Western academic environments, as distorting or intruding, they still remain self-referential.<sup>14</sup> This self-referentiality might be an act of empowerment and introversion, since it keeps alive historical memory but, in an ironic way, it reproduces marginality as well.

In the 1990s and early 2000s, the tension between centre and periphery clearly emerged in the debates about gender versus women as a category of historical analysis. The concept of gender as a discourse that shapes and legitimises power relations, as elaborated in an influential essay by Joan Scott,<sup>15</sup> sometimes was considered in terms of “academic imperialism”. Although lively feminist debates about gender as a historiographical and political concept also took place in the United States,<sup>16</sup> the academic

communities of the “periphery” often rejected gender as an imported “postmodernist” and “apolitical” concept.<sup>17</sup> The rejection of such North American concepts was even conceived as a “patriotic” act of historiographical resistance. According to Gail Hershatter and Wang Zheng, the retention in Chinese historiography of “Chinese characteristics” stands as “a nationalistic desire to resist the onslaught of Western theories and paradigms, and/or a determination to engage in theoretical exploration of unique features of Chinese history that may revise and question Western theories”.<sup>18</sup> In many “regional”/“national” historiographies, women’s history remains dominant when compared to gender history including the history of masculinity, whereas emphasis on women’s agency and “visibility” remains a priority, in postcolonial settings in particular or wherever feminist politics encourage it.<sup>19</sup> In any case, women’s history remains the dominant perspective in many fields of Anglophone scholarship as well, while the weakening of historiographical dilemmas about “social” or “cultural”, empirical or analytical, has diminished the tension between women’s and gender history;<sup>20</sup> the boundaries between the two fields are now more porous.<sup>21</sup>

Notwithstanding, gender has also been incorporated in “national”/“regional” historiographies in selective and sophisticated ways, dynamically overcoming “paradigm lags” and contributing interesting insights to international feminist scholarship.<sup>22</sup> As Mrinalini Sinha has aptly remarked in an interesting overview of gender history in South Asia, “we must distinguish between merely exporting gender as an analytical category to different parts of the world and rethinking the category itself in the light of those different locations”. Such a historiographical and feminist praxis has the potential to “recast a Eurocentric historiography” and “democratize our concepts and analytical categories”.<sup>23</sup>

It is worth noting that divergence or even tension often arise between those scholars whose research and teaching activity takes place in universities and institutions of their place of origin and the so-called “academic diaspora”, particularly in the United States.<sup>24</sup> Besides, different academic orientations and research priorities may appear in national academic environments between those who specialise in regional or national history and those whose work lies outside it, especially in the fields of European or North American history.<sup>25</sup> In any case, the increasing academic internationalisation has probably diminished distinctions between “national” and “international”, particularly for the younger generation of scholars.

Interestingly academic hierarchies are experienced in unexpected ways by diverse communities of scholars. It would be quite simplistic to suggest that the division between centre and periphery is reduced in a binarism between “Western” and “non-Western” scholarly communities and historiographical traditions. Even for continental European or British researchers, the scholarly dominance of the United States in gender studies may be understood in terms of pre-eminence, or, as Sonya Rose has pointed out, it “can sometimes be read as both imperious and imperial”.<sup>26</sup>

*Localities, globalities, priorities in academic journals*

This section further discusses centres and peripheries in women’s and gender history by focusing on four international academic journals: *Gender & History* (1989–), *Journal of Women’s History* (1989–), *Clio: Femmes, Genre, Histoire* (1995–) and *Genesis: Rivista della Società Italiana delle Storiche* (2002–). By indexing the journals’ articles of the past decade (2011–2020), here I seek to detect historiographical, geographical and chronological priorities and silences.

All four journals accept articles written in major European languages. For *Gender & History* and *Journal of Women’s History*, the working language is English, for *Clio* French, while *Genesis* accepts articles in Italian, English, French and Spanish. These journals have largely contributed to the internationalisation and further development of women’s and gender history in multiple ways. On the one hand, they have brought gender to the heart of historiographical research and have variously highlighted its intersections with other areas and categories of historical analysis, such as class, “race”, citizenship, nation, empire, mobility, space, materiality, emotions, sexuality and the body. On the other hand, they have encouraged academic exchange and comparative perspectives by publishing studies on different parts of the world.

My purpose here is to examine these journals as “case studies” that can help us outline current international trends and discuss to what extent and in what terms the internationalisation of gender history has been achieved until today. Orientations and shifts in topics and themes over time fall beyond the scope of this article, which focuses solely on questions about the geographical and chronological priorities of the journals in question. At the same time, this article remains mostly impressionistic since it is based on a quantitative assessment of the issues of the last decade based solely on the articles’ titles. This assessment has not taken into consideration review articles or historiographical reviews.

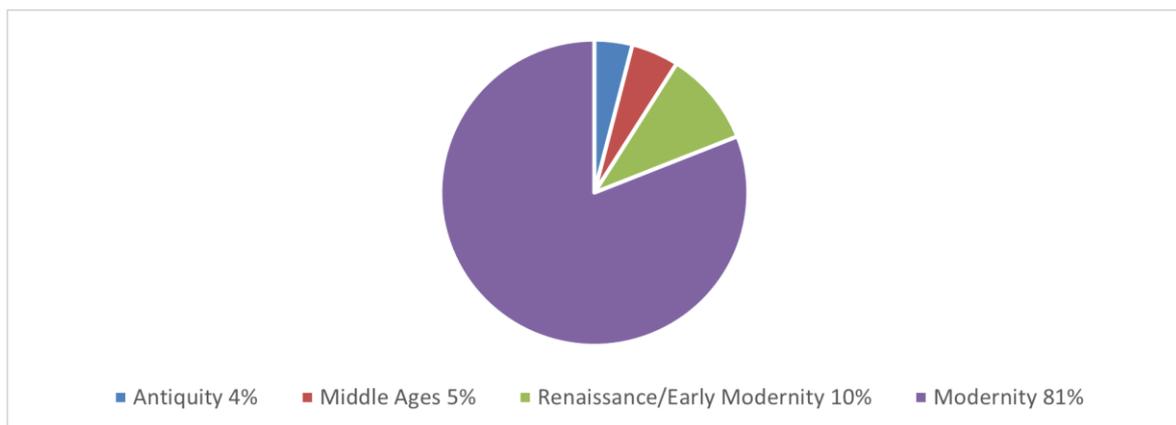


Figure 1. Distribution of articles by period (all journals)

To my disappointment, as an early modernist, all four journals have a clear orientation towards modernity. Actually the more distant a period the less possible to be

represented in the journals in question. In the last decade, 4 percent of the articles focus on antiquity, 5 percent on the Middle Ages and 10 percent on Renaissance/Early Modernity.<sup>27</sup> Very few articles transcend this conventional Western periodisation and on those occasions articles mostly focus on the “non-Western” world. More than 80 percent of the articles fall into the period since the late eighteenth century (fig. 1). Of these, approximately 68 percent focus on the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Although a comparison between the years 2000–2010 and 2011–2020 through the pages of *Gender & History* shows a slight increase from 19.5 to 23.5 percent in articles that focus on ancient, medieval and early modern period, the journal remains strongly oriented towards modernity. All four journals attest an overwhelming interest in the modern period: 76.5 percent in *Gender & History*, 92 percent in *Journal of Women’s History*, 71.5 percent in *Clio* and 84.5 percent in *Genesis* (figs. 2–5).

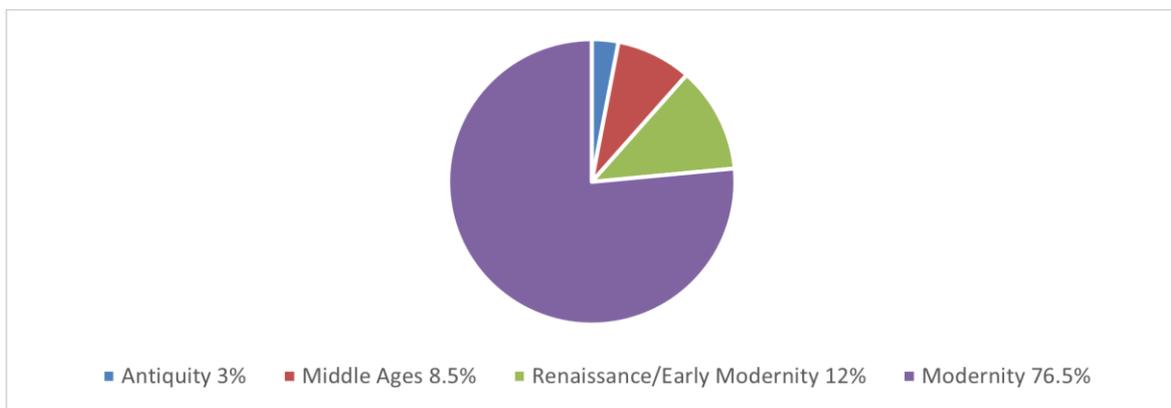


Figure 2. Distribution of articles by period (*Gender & History*)

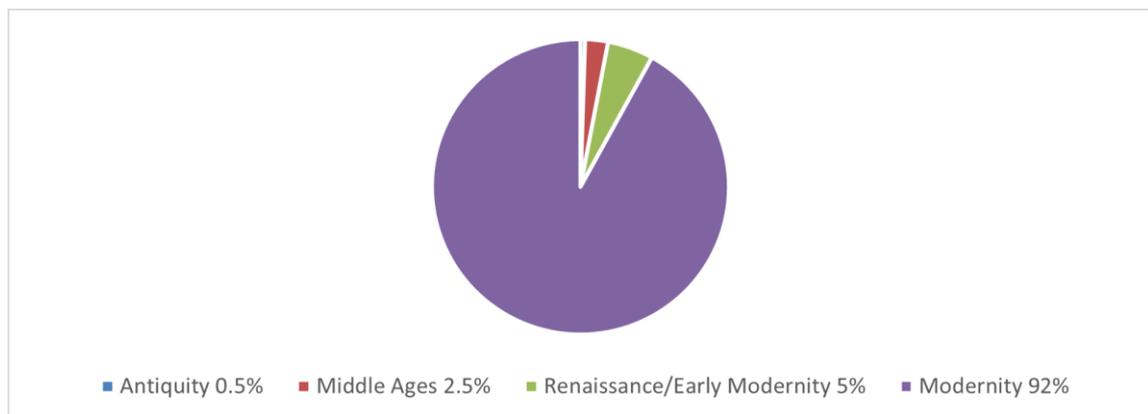


Figure 3. Distribution of articles by period (*Journal of Women’s History*)

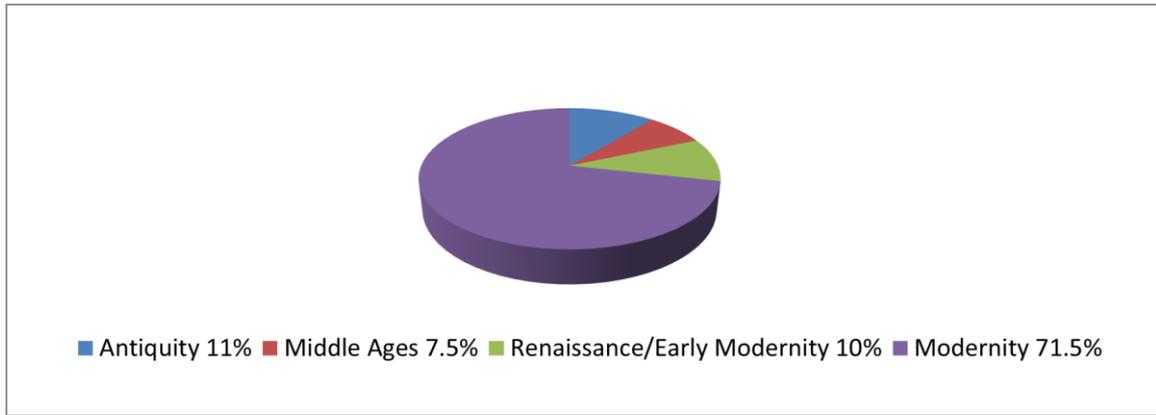


Figure 4. Distribution of articles by period (*Clio*)

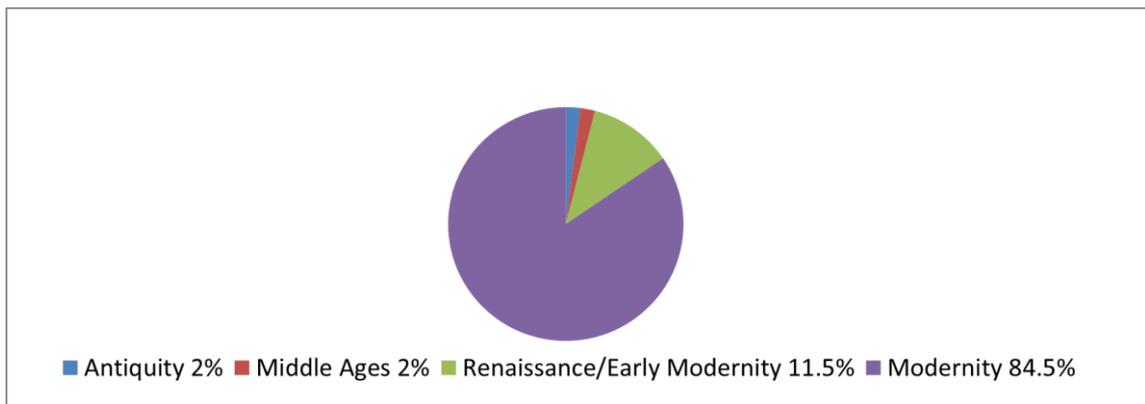


Figure 5. Distribution of articles by period (*Genesis*)

Does this underrepresentation of the premodern era suggest that it is less possible for medievalists or early modernists to deploy gender – or women – as a category of historical analysis in their studies? Or these researchers prefer to submit their essays in chronologically focused journals and be primarily involved in the historiographical debates dominating their specific fields (antiquity, Middle Ages, the Renaissance or Early Modernity)? In other words, do they construct their academic profile mostly as classicists, medievalists or early modernists rather than as gender historians and, if so, is this choice primarily determined by epistemological or academic criteria?<sup>28</sup> Such questions would require further research on the integration of gender in chronologically or geographically focused journals, monograph series, research funding, university teaching and national historiographical traditions.<sup>29</sup>

Let's now see the geographical distribution of the articles in the journals under examination. Although a quantitative assessment of centres and peripheries in geographical terms based solely on the articles' titles cannot but remain schematic, obscuring transnational or transcultural aspects not indicated in the title, it still can offer some interesting points for discussion. Leaving aside a few contributions that fall in the field of antiquity, primarily focusing on Athens and Rome, articles are geographically distributed as following: 56.5 percent focus on Europe (8.5 percent Eastern Europe, and the Balkans), 13 percent on the United States and 30.5 percent on the "rest of the world" or fall under the

rubric of the so-called “global history”. As shown in Figures 6–9, these percentages strongly vary from journal to journal though.

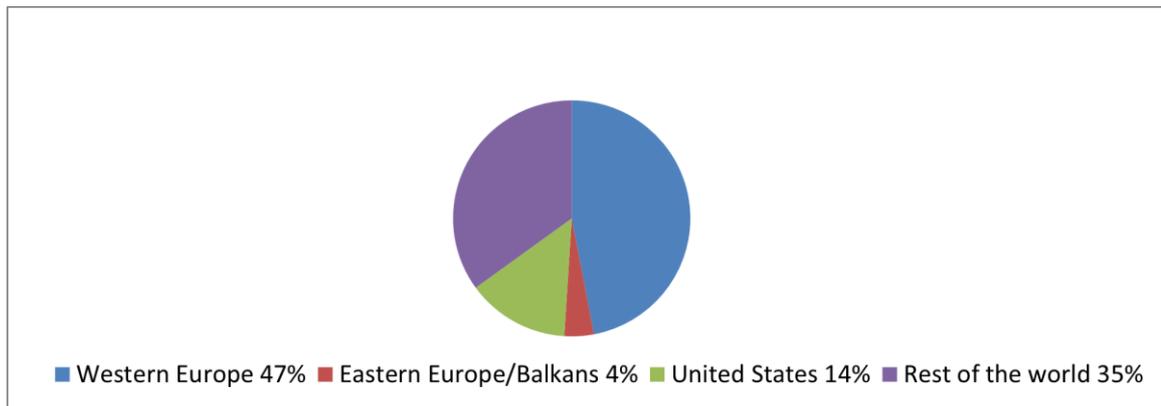


Figure 6. Distribution of articles by geography (*Gender & History*)

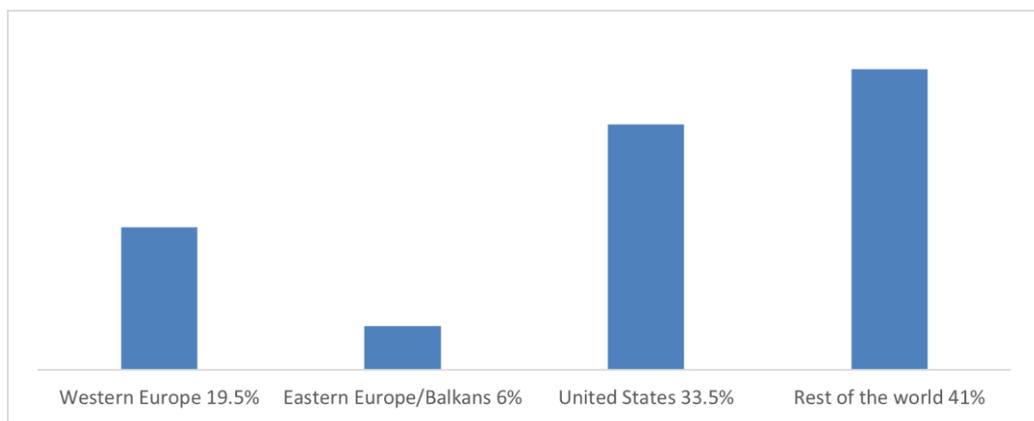


Figure 7. Distribution of articles by geography (*Journal of Women's History*)

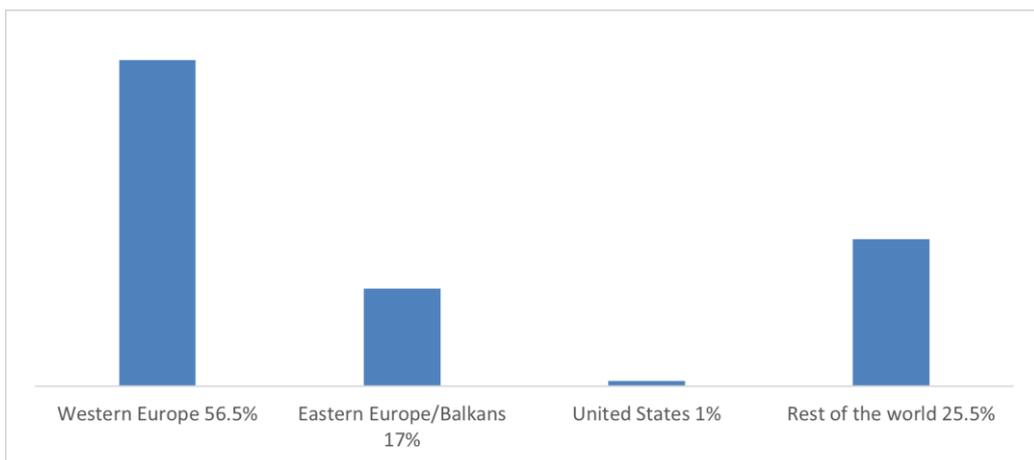


Figure 8. Distribution of articles by geography (*Clio*)

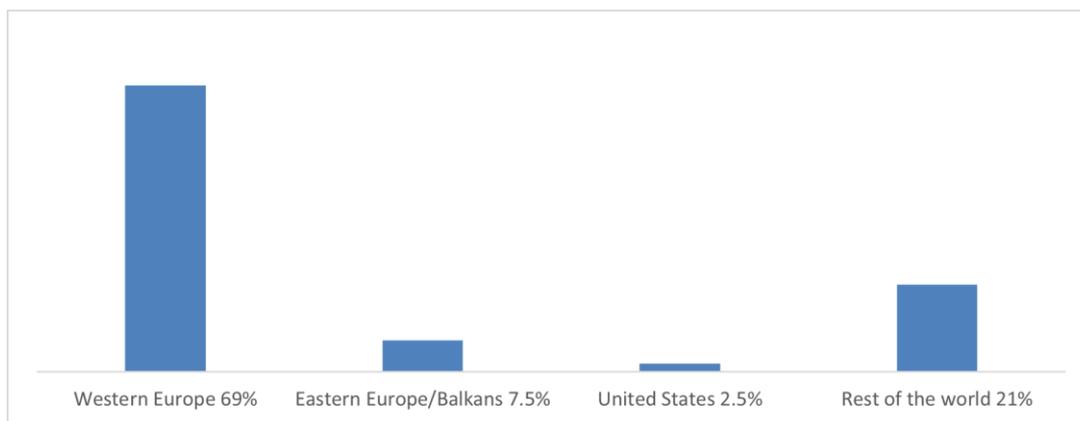


Figure 9. Distribution of articles by geography (*Genesis*)

The presence of Eastern Europe and the Balkans ranges from 4 percent in *Gender & History* to 17 percent in *Clio*. The latter has also hosted special issues on the post-Ottoman Balkans (2018) and real socialism (2015). Comparing the last two decades (2000–2010 and 2011–2020) in *Gender & History* one can observe that the number of articles on Eastern Europe and the Balkans has fallen from 6 to 4 percent, which probably reflects a decline in research interest in Eastern Europe in comparison to the 1990s, when new, fascinating questions had been raised about gender formulations in the former socialist regimes. This absence of Eastern Europe and the Balkans has been partly counterbalanced by the foundation of *Aspasia: The International Yearbook of Central, Eastern, and Southeastern European Women's and Gender History* (2007–), whose scope is to “advance work that explores transnational aspects of women’s and gender histories” and to expand “comparative research on women and gender to all parts of Europe, creating a European history of women and gender that encompasses more than the traditional Western European perspective”.<sup>30</sup>

The countries of Western Europe are also unevenly represented in the journals under examination. Of the contributions focusing on Western Europe, 27.5 percent are relevant to the Italian peninsula, 27 percent to France, 16.5 percent to Britain and 8 percent to Germany. However, openness and detachment from the national frame vary among journals, which is still more dominant in the less internationalised journals of continental Europe. Hence, Italy holds 69.5 percent in *Genesis*, France 62 percent in *Clio*, and Britain 41 percent in *Gender & History* (figs. 10–13). It is worth pointing out that, with the exception of *Genesis*, the majority of contributions on the Italian peninsula falls into early modernity. The Italian Renaissance has received significant attention internationally, in the United States in particular, since the postwar years. In the last decades gender has further enriched this scholarship, reshaping our views of the “Renaissance”, and raising new questions from the perspective of social and cultural history.<sup>31</sup> Interestingly, what makes Italy an attractive research field in gender history even today is still its “Renaissance past”, even without the symbolic and ideological significance that Jacob Burckhardt had attached to it.

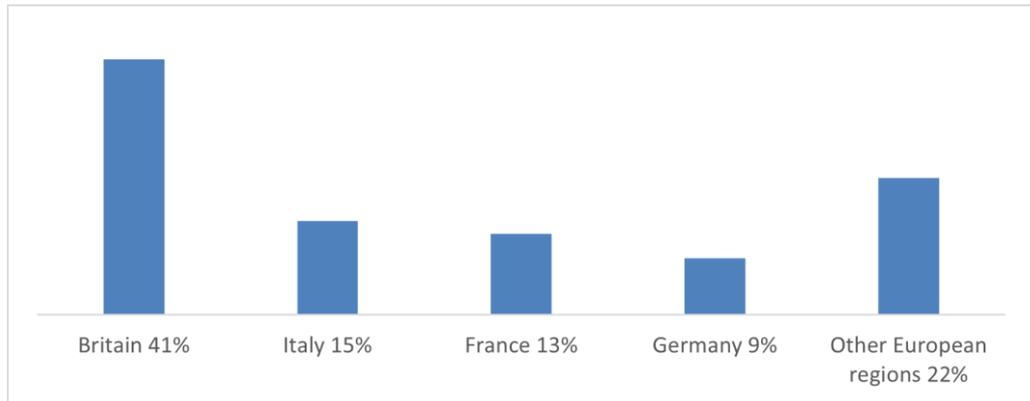


Figure 10. Distribution of articles by European country (*Gender & History*)

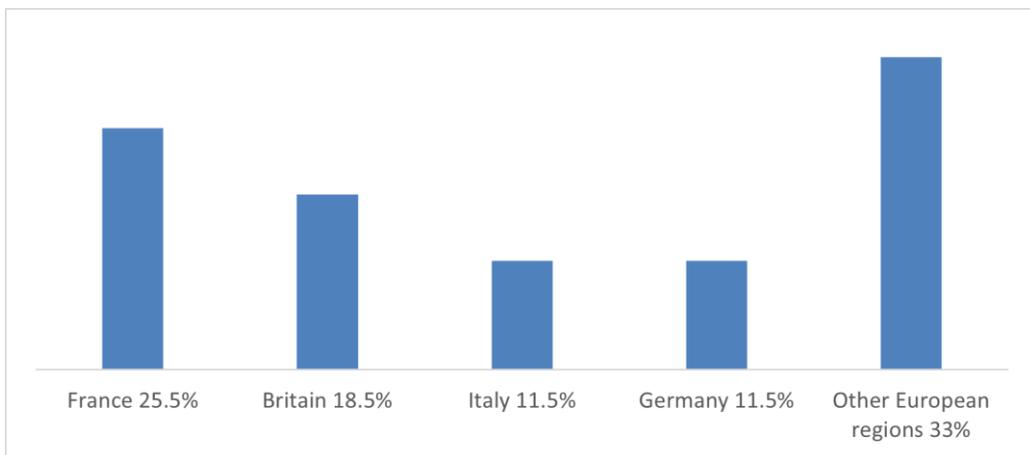


Figure 11. Distribution of articles by European country (*Journal of Women's History*)

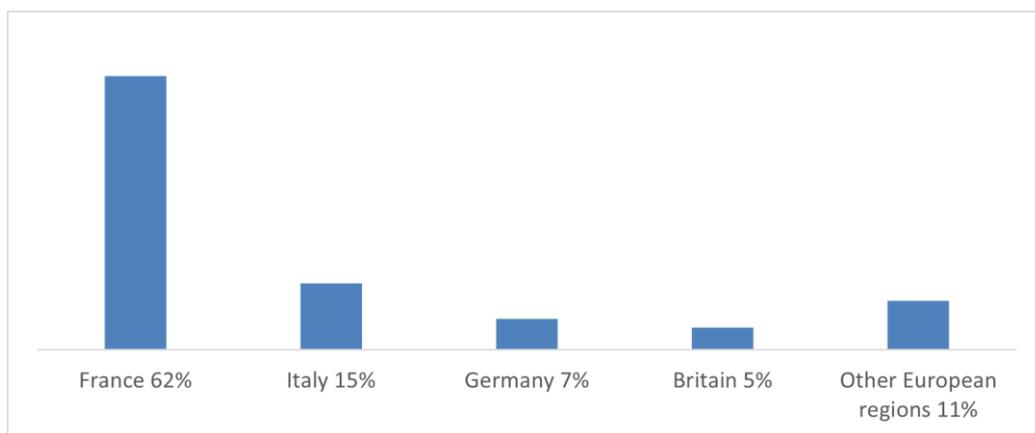


Figure 12. Distribution of articles by European country (*Clio*)

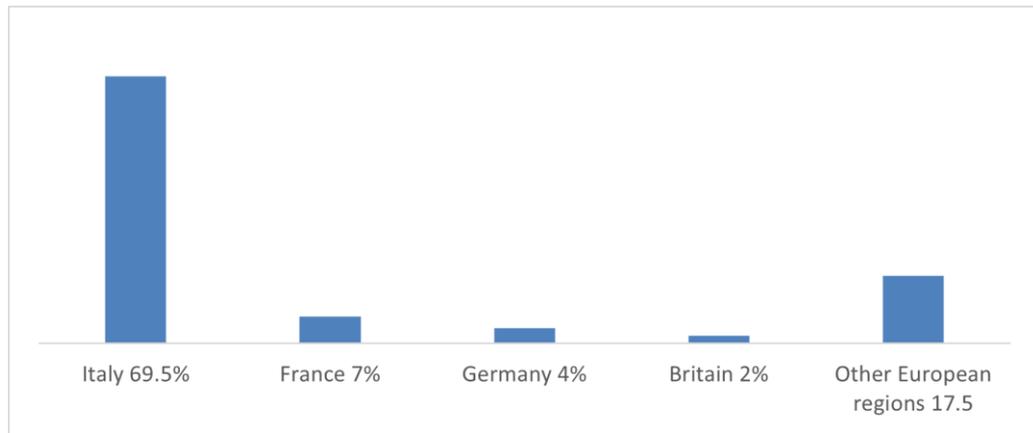


Figure 13. Distribution of articles by European country (*Genesis*)

Let’s now have a look at how the 30.5 percent of the “rest of the world” is regionally distributed. Asia has the lion’s share (41 percent), with special emphasis on India (14 percent), China (7 percent) and Japan (7 percent). Then follows Latin America and the Caribbean with 23 percent and Africa with 22.5 percent, with an emphasis on Egypt (3.5 percent). Oceania holds 9.5 percent (Australia 7.5 percent) and Canada 4 percent (see fig. 14). The incorporation of regions beyond Europe and the United States serves at least two important objectives of gender history: firstly, it aspires to decolonise history by disrupting “Western gender paradigms” and suggesting alternative gendered readings of the past; secondly, it encourages comparative perspectives and a better understanding of transcultural encounters.

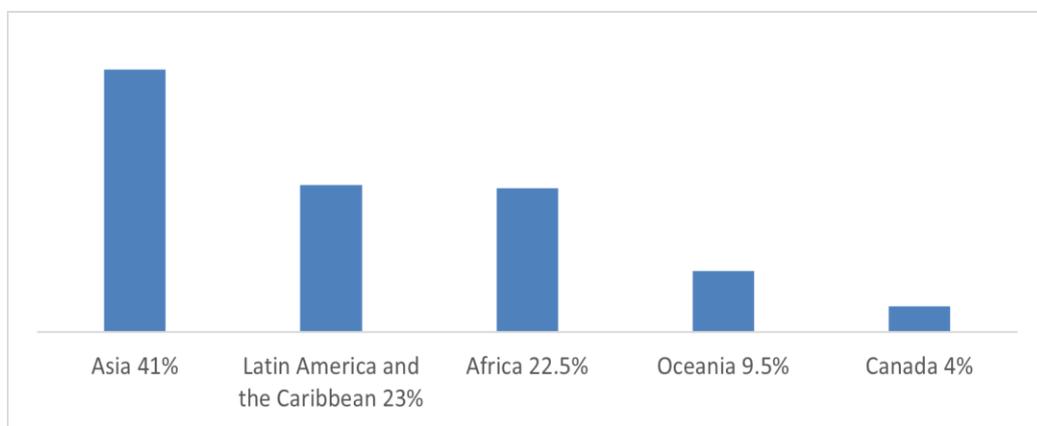


Figure 14. Distribution of articles by “rest of the world” (all journals)

The “non-Western” world holds a more prominent position in the largely internationalised *Journal of Women’s History* (41 percent) and *Gender & History* (35 percent), whereas *Genesis* and *Clio* still have a more “Eurocentric” orientation. Nevertheless, all four journals encourage internationalisation, transnationalism and transculturalism in their “aims and scope”: “spanning epochs and continents” (*Gender & History*), “from around the globe in all historical periods ... comparative and transnational

methods and approaches” (*Journal of Women’s History*), “toutes sociétés et toutes périodes” (*Clio*), “prospettiva transnazionale ... lavori che puntano a superare confini nazionali ed eurocentrismi” (*Genesis*). Besides, special issues have encouraged global, transnational or transcultural perspectives, as far as mobilities, exchange and travelling notions are concerned, with particular emphasis on the late nineteenth or twentieth centuries.

Strictly speaking though, very few titles (about 12 percent) clearly transcend national contexts, offer a comparative analysis or fall into the field of the so-called global history. This might suggest that there is a divergence between theoretical and methodological aspirations and scholarly practice as far as the intersection between gender history and global or transnational history is concerned. This divergence may lie on epistemological, methodological or academic grounds. Encounters between gender history and transnational history remain sporadic. Ulrike Strasser and Heidi Tinsman have aptly noted that diverging intellectual trajectories and trends dominant in each field may have separated world historians and historians of gender and sexuality (“it is a heavily *materialist* world history that faces off with a predominantly *culturalist* history of gender and sexuality”).<sup>32</sup> It might be suggested, though, that a social history of women, prioritising women’s agency, can offer more opportunities for transnational perspectives than a cultural history of gender focusing on discursively shaped gender formations.

Comparative, transcultural or transnational perspectives are more often adopted in articles that inquire into particular geographical areas, such as Latin America, South Asia or West Africa, discuss colonial or postcolonial settings, or examine mobility and migration to the United States or Europe, having as their main point of reference reception countries.<sup>33</sup> The “multicultural paradigm” of the United States in particular can offer an interesting site for the study of gender from the perspective of intersectionality, disrupting ethnocentric views of the past. Also, the study of European colonial empires offers a wide range of opportunities for discussing power relations, social and cultural hierarchies and tensions through the articulation of gender with other categories of analysis, such as class, “race”, sexuality, the body and nation-building.<sup>34</sup> However, as long as comparisons remain confined to former colonial formations, our transcultural gaze still runs the risk of being bound in a “colonial-like” binarism between “centre” and “periphery”, or even concentric circles from “centre” to “periphery”.

In any case, however, articles on “the rest of the world” remain a minority. Despite the increasing academic internationalisation and the development of global and transnational history, Western Europe and the United States remain the main areas of study in women’s and gender history. As shown in Figure 15, in *Gender & History* articles investigating the “rest of the world” only slightly increased from 34 percent in the 2000s to 35 percent in the 2010s. At the same time, it might be suggested that the modern Western

canon, even in its revisions, maintains the privilege of invisibility, as for instance in essays on the contemporary history of the United States where often the geographical or chronological focus is omitted in the title.

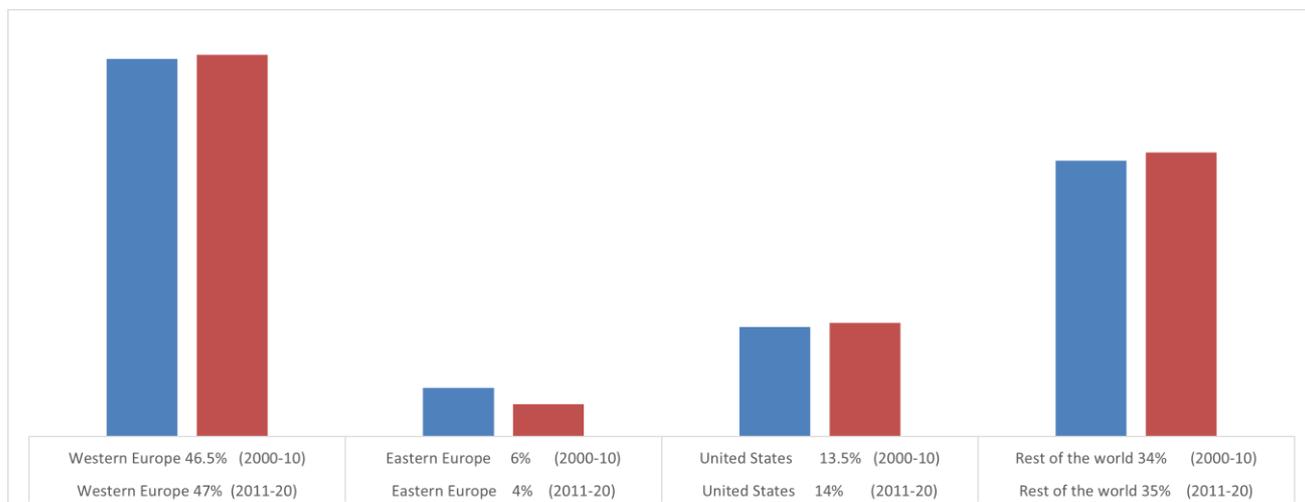


Figure 15. Distribution of articles by geographical region  
(*Gender & History*, 2000–2010 and 2011–2020)

### *In conclusion: Towards decentring gender history?*

This article sought to map the multiple ways in which centres and peripheries, both in institutional and historiographical terms, are shaped in gender history today. To this end the first part of the article outlined scholarly pursuits, academic aspirations, criticisms and challenges, as expressed in recent overviews of gender history. The second part of the article detected how geographical and chronological centres and peripheries have been formulated in gender history in the last decade. To this aim, the article discussed as case studies four international journals dedicated to women’s and gender history that have their bases in Europe and the United States: *Gender & History*, *Journal of Women’s History*, *Clio: Femmes, Genre, Histoire* and *Genesis: Rivista della Società Italiana delle Storiche*. Although quantitative, partial and impressionistic, this account sought to raise some questions about to what extent polarities, such as centre/periphery or Western/non-Western, have been disrupted in gender history today. However, to a certain degree this article has also been trapped in the binarisms it seeks to discuss, as far as the bibliographical sources used and geographical and chronological taxonomies employed are concerned.

In recent decades, women’s and gender history has been largely internationalised, with the incorporation of regions beyond Europe and the United States and the perspective of intersectionality. This is particularly true as far as scholarship on mobility, migration and colonialism/postcolonialism is concerned. This internationalisation has largely “decolonised” gender history by “familiarising” “non-Western” experience and “defamiliarising” or

“deconstructing” Western paradigms. In tandem with feminist criticism, gender history has significantly disrupted ethnocentric historical narratives. This can be a fruitful site for the building of transnational academic communities and entangled historiographies. Nevertheless, Western Europe and the United States remain the main points of reference, which even implicitly sustains polarities such as centre/periphery and Western/non-Western. British and North American scholarship remains at the forefront of research in gender history. However, hopefully there is a growing international interest in gender issues that can raise new questions in diverse academic and historiographical contexts. Gender remains a dynamic hermeneutical tool for decentring mainstream history in methodological, thematic and geographical terms.

From a different point of view, centres and peripheries emerge not only in geographical but also in chronological terms. All four journals in question indicate that modernity is the stronghold of gender history. The more distant a period, the less likely it is to be represented in the debates taking place in journals dedicated to women’s and gender history. Medievalists and early modernists have offered a lot to gender history through denaturalising the present, as is demonstrated in monographs, edited volumes and contributions to chronologically focused journals. However, it seems that although interdisciplinarity, intersectionality and transnationalism have been among the main objectives of gender history, crossing different time periods has been sporadic. In an ironic way, past remains the most distant foreign land.

Scholarship on women’s and gender history is rapidly growing today. However, this vast academic scholarship, although impressive, has not been followed by equivalent efforts towards critical epistemological or academic self-reflection. Overviews of women’s and gender history remain sporadic and fragmentary, most often are thematically oriented, briefly dealt with in the first few pages of collected volumes or confined to journals dedicated to women’s and gender history.<sup>35</sup> Besides, the uneven development of gender history and gender studies internationally, even among European scholarly environments, certainly creates academic hierarchies and tensions, epistemological and methodological gaps and ambiguities. At the same time, this means that academic centres hold the hegemonic privilege to speak for the “periphery”, while “regional”/“national” historiographies remain largely self-referential, even when they radically talk back to the Western interpretative canons. This cannot but echo power relations embedded in the ethnographic binarism between observer and observed. As several overviews have remarked, academic and historiographical hierarchies are often shaped between those who contribute with methodological and theoretical elaborations and those who offer just local case studies. Studying “centre” as an “alterity” from the perspective of the periphery might help disrupt such polarities. In this regard, the main question raised by the conference that lies behind this special issue, that is, “how periphery interprets centre”, is potentially a radical one.

- <sup>1</sup> The spreadsheet can be found at: <http://www.ha.uth.gr/index.php?page=hist-library-databases>.
- <sup>2</sup> It is worth noting that Wiesner-Hanks and Willoughby have also made a similar remark in their work on how to teach world history: "World history courses that focus on the modern period (whether beginning in 1500 or 1750) tend toward a narrative of European colonialism and imperialism, with the rest of the world as marginal territories that enter the narrative as they become colonial spaces." Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks and Urmi Engineer Willoughby, *A Primer for Teaching Women, Gender and Sexuality in World History: Ten Design Principles* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), 73.
- <sup>3</sup> For a more detailed discussion, see Jeanne Boydston, "Gender as a Question of Historical Analysis," *Gender & History* 20, no. 3 (2008): 558–84. For an interesting example on how the study of precolonial America can remap our notions about sexuality, see Pete Sigal, "Latin America and the Challenge of Globalizing the History of Sexuality," *American Historical Review* 114, no. 5 (2009): 1340–53. On how the study of early modernity can disrupt dominant modern paradigms of sexuality, see Carla Freccero, *Queer/Early/Modern* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 1–9.
- <sup>4</sup> See the insightful and critical discussion by Mrinalini Sinha, "A Global Perspective on Gender: What's South Asia Got to Do with It?," in *South Asian Feminisms*, ed. Ania Loomba and Ritty A. Lukose (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 356–73.
- <sup>5</sup> Most overviews cited in this article share this point. For instance, on Eastern Europe see, Andrea Pető and Judith Szapor, "The State of Women's and Gender History in Eastern Europe: The Case of Hungary," *Journal of Women's History* 19, no. 1 (2007): 160–66; see also the forum "Clio on the Margins: Women's and Gender History in Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe," organised by Krassimira Daskalova, in *Aspasia: The International Yearbook of Central, Eastern, and Southeastern European Women's and Gender History* 7, no. 1 (2013): 132–213.
- <sup>6</sup> Giulia Calvi, "Global Trends: Gender Studies in Europe and the US," *European History Quarterly* 40, no. 4 (2010): 641.
- <sup>7</sup> See, for example, the "African paradigm" in Nwando Achebe, "Twenty-Five Years of African Women Writing African Women's and Gendered Worlds," *Journal of Women's History* 25, no. 4 (2013): 275–87.
- <sup>8</sup> Birgitte Søland and Mary Jo Maynes, eds., "The Past and Present of European Women's and Gender History: A Transatlantic Conversation," *Journal of Women's History* 25, no. 4 (2013): 307.
- <sup>9</sup> Karen Hagemann, "From the Margins to the Mainstream? Women's and Gender History in Germany," *Journal of Women's History* 19, no. 1 (2007): 197–98.
- <sup>10</sup> Françoise Thébaud, "Writing Women's and Gender History in France: A National Narrative?," *Journal of Women's History* 19, no. 1 (2007): 170; Hagemann, "From the Margins to the Mainstream?," 197–98; María Teresa Fernández-Aceves, "Imagined Communities: Women's History and the History of Gender in Mexico," *Journal of Women's History* 19, no.1 (2007): 203.
- <sup>11</sup> Gail Hershatter and Wang Zheng, "Chinese History: A Useful Category of Gender Analysis," *American Historical Review* 113, no. 5 (2008): 1412.
- <sup>12</sup> Arzu Öztürkmen, "Turkish Women in Academia: Problems of Legitimacy in Trans/National Perspective," *Journal of Women's History* 19, no. 1 (2007): 176–77.
- <sup>13</sup> Cited in Perry Wilson, "From Margin to Centre: Recent Trends in Modern Italian Women's and Gender History," *Modern Italy* 11, no. 3 (2006): 333.
- <sup>14</sup> Achebe, "Twenty-Five Years of African Women," 276.
- <sup>15</sup> The linguistic turn in gender history has as a crucial point of reference Joan Wallach Scott's "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (1986): 1053–75.

- <sup>16</sup> See, for example, the exchange among Corfield, Purvis and Weatherill: Penelope Corfield, "History and the Challenge of Gender History," *Rethinking History* 1, no. 3 (1997): 241–58; June Purvis and Amanda Weatherill, "Playing the Gender History Game: A Reply to Penelope Corfield," *Rethinking History* 3, no. 3 (1999): 333–38.
- <sup>17</sup> See, for instance, Franca Iacovetta, "Gendering Trans/National Historiographies: Feminists Rewriting Canadian History," *Journal of Women's History* 19, no. 1 (2007): 210; Thébaud, "Writing Women's and Gender History in France," 168; Wilson, "From Margin to Centre," 330.
- <sup>18</sup> Hershatter and Zheng, "Chinese History," 1420.
- <sup>19</sup> See, for instance, Thomas' critical perspective on "agency" as the main "argument" among historians of women in Africa: Lynn M. Thomas, "Historicizing Agency," *Gender & History* 28, no. 2 (2016): 324–39. See, also, Achebe, "Twenty-Five Years of African Women."
- <sup>20</sup> For instance, the perspective of women's history has dominated scholarship on early modern Italy in studies written either in Italian or in English: Androniki Dialeti, "Patriarchy as a Category of Historical Analysis and the Dynamics of Power: The Example of Early Modern Italy," *Gender & History* 30, no. 2 (2018): 331–42.
- <sup>21</sup> For the gradual integration of gender in the historiography of Eastern Europe, see Maria Bucur, "An Archipelago of Stories: Gender History in Eastern Europe," *American Historical Review* 113, no. 5 (2008): 1375–89. Gender has also been more dynamically incorporated in Greek historiography recently, as research has turned to fields such as the body, sexuality, masculinity and space: Glafki Gotsi, Androniki Dialeti and Eleni Fournaraki, "Εισαγωγή" [Introduction], in *Το φύλο στην ιστορία: Αποτιμήσεις και παραδείγματα* [Gender in history: Historiographical accounts and case studies], ed. Glafki Gotsi, Androniki Dialeti and Eleni Fournaraki (Athens: Asini, 2015), 7–52.
- <sup>22</sup> See, for instance, Heidi Tinsman, "A Paradigm of Our Own: Joan Scott in Latin American History," *American Historical Review* 113, no. 5 (2008): 1357–74.
- <sup>23</sup> Sinha, "A Global Perspective on Gender," 357, 370.
- <sup>24</sup> Hershatter and Zheng, "Chinese History," 1417–19; Bucur, "An Archipelago of Stories," 1382–83.
- <sup>25</sup> Yuko Takahashi, "Recent Collaborative Endeavors by Historians of Women and Gender in Japan," *Journal of Women's History* 25, no. 4 (2013): 246–47.
- <sup>26</sup> Cited in Susan R. Grayzel, "Same Language, Different Academic Cultures: Working Across the Trans-Atlantic Divide," *Journal of Women's History* 19, no. 1 (2007): 191; Also, see the remarks by Antoinette Burton, in Søland and Maynes, "The Past and Present of European Women's and Gender History," 297.
- <sup>27</sup> The underrepresentation of essays on medieval and early modern period in journals devoted to women's and gender history, such as *Gender & History*, *Journal of Women's History* and *Women's History Review* was first noted by Bennett several years ago: Judith M. Bennett, *History Matters: Patriarchy and the Challenge of Feminism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 32. See also Bennett, "Forgetting the Past," *Gender & History* 20, no. 3 (2008): 669–77.
- <sup>28</sup> It is worth noting the foundation of *Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal* in 2006. Unfortunately, considerations of space do not permit a detailed presentation of this journal here. For a more detailed discussion on the encounters between early modern history and feminist historiography, see also Androniki Dialeti, "From Women's Oppression to Male Anxiety: The Concept of 'Patriarchy' in the Historiography of Early Modern Europe," in *Gender in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Marianna Muravyeva and Raisa Maria Toivo (London: Routledge, 2012), 25–26.
- <sup>29</sup> In Greek historiography, for instance, gender has been mainly deployed for the study of the nineteenth and twentieth century, whereas in the Italian or Lithuanian academia there is a long tradition in the history of women in the early modern period: Eleni Fournaraki and Yannis Yannitsiotis, "Three Decades of Women's and Gender History in Greece: An Account," and Dalia Leinarte, "Women's and Gender History in Lithuania:

An Overview from Time and Distance,” both in Daskalova, “Clio on the Margins,” 162–73, 183–92; Elena Brambilla and Anne Jacobson Schutte, eds., *La storia di genere in Italia in età moderna: Un confronto tra storiche nordamericane e italiane* (Rome: Viella, 2014).

<sup>30</sup> On the uneven representation of European regions in gender history, see also Jitka Malečková, “Gender, History and ‘Small Europe,’” *European History Quarterly* 40, no. 4 (2010): 685–700.

<sup>31</sup> For a more detailed discussion on women’s and gender history in early modern Italy, see also Dialetti, “Patriarchy as a Category.”

<sup>32</sup> Ulrike Strasser and Heidi Tinsman, “It’s a Man’s World? World History Meets the History of Masculinity, in Latin American Studies, for Instance,” *Journal of World History* 21, no. 1 (2010): 77–79. See also Merry Wiesner-Hanks, “Crossing Borders in Transnational Gender History,” *Journal of Global History* 6, no. 3 (2011): 363–64.

<sup>33</sup> It should be noted that the transnational perspective is still primarily adopted in the research areas that Wiesner Hanks had pointed out some years ago: feminist movements, colonialism and imperialism, national identity and citizenship, and migration: Wiesner-Hanks, “Crossing Borders,” 364.

<sup>34</sup> As, for instance, Anna Clark has noted, “because European countries initiated and dominated colonialism, the study of European empires is a particularly good way of looking at clashes of gender regimes and sexual cultures”: Søland and Maynes, “The Past and Present of European Women’s and Gender History,” 305.

<sup>35</sup> Most overviews examined in this essay have been published in *Journal of Women’s History* and *Aspasia: The International Yearbook of Central, Eastern, and Southeastern European Women’s and Gender History*. It is disappointing, though, that journals dedicated to theory and methodology of history, such as *History and Theory*, *Rethinking History*, and *Storia della Storiografia*, have not prioritised gender in their debates.