

Africa: pasts within pasts

Call for contributions to a thematic issue for 2019

Afriques. Débats, méthodes et terrains d'histoire Journal

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This issue is edited by François-Xavier Fauvelle (TRACES, CNRS) and Clémentine Gutron (TRACES, CNRS). It will consist of 5 to 10 articles, written in French or in English.

Call for papers

Africa is undoubtedly an ideal setting in which to consider the active relationship which the past has with the present, and which the present has with the past. Evidence of this can be found in the numerous and often rich Africanist studies on the invention of tradition, issues relating to memory, reappropriations of history, as well as the bestowal of heritage status on sites inherited from the past, and contemporary policies relating to the creation of memory and to research. However, by making this connection between present and past active, our reflection contributes to the establishment of a bimodal system of historicity in which the layered nature of history gets lost. It is as if the archaeological stratification of the past, the discontinuities of memory, the separation of discourses on the past into different stages, are smoothed over into a uniform “past” without any dynamic relationships other than with the present.

In this issue, we wish to ask ourselves how ancient societies represented their own past, or at least the past states of societies which came before them. In other words: what perception, collections, inventories, archaeology, denials, or even destructions, did they perform on their *previous pasts*? Which continuities or breaks did they believe they had perceived? What did they believe their own elders or ancestors had passed on to them? We are seeking papers which specifically explore the relationships between a past which is doubly past, a present which no longer exists, and our own present. Such contributions may enable cases to emerge which have not yet been explored extensively, or lead to the creation of new relations between history and other humanities disciplines.

While all approaches are welcome, all forms of documentation valid (textual, archaeological, epigraphic, numismatic, artistic etc.), and all regions of the continent and islands of Africa suitable, where relevant in comparison with other non-African regions, neighbouring or further afield, it is imperative that, to give this research question the best possible chance to flourish, the contributions focus on an “ancient” past (in any event, earlier than the 19th century), which cannot be reduced to a continuous present. This approach via the sedimentation of the past, this inquiry into entangled genealogies, may encourage authors to explore the ancient filters which simultaneously sorted and relayed the evidence to us, thus initiating a more general reflection on the nature of the remains and the composition of collections.

Deadline

Proposals for articles, in French or English, in the form of an abstract of approximately 500 words, in French or English, should be sent to both francoisxavier.fauvelle[[@](mailto:francoisxavier.fauvelle@gmail.com)]gmail.com and to clementine.gutron[[@](mailto:clementine.gutron@univ-tsle2.fr)]univ-tsle2.fr by **28th February 2018**. After their proposal has been accepted, authors will be required to submit their articles by **30th September 2018**. Reviewing will take place from September to November 2018. Revised and formatted articles are to be sent to the journal by 15th January 2019 at the latest.