Call for Papers
Linnaean Worlds: Global Scientific Practice during the Great Divergence, 1750-1850

First Annual Conference in the World History of Science
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Proceedings Conducted at the University Of Pittsburgh

Conference Theme
The thesis that a “great divergence” abruptly separated East from West after centuries of economic parity has been extensively debated by world historians over the past decade. Whereas proto-industrial England looked surprisingly similar to southern China in 1750, the argument goes, by 1850 England’s technological, economic, and military prowess had attained truly exceptional heights. Advantageous trade with the slave societies of the Americas, it turns out, was decisive in enabling Western Europe to become the center of the world economy.

Recent historians of science, meanwhile, have begun to reconstruct what one might call “a worldwide division of scientific labor” that mirrored and reinforced the economic division of labor between metropole and colony. This hierarchical arrangement, however, was riven with contradictions. Scholars of the past five or ten years have explored, 1), how non-western scientific practitioners creatively reinterpreted authoritative western texts; 2), how anonymous knowers of nature who were often Amerindian, Afro-American, female, and enslaved contributed to an allegedly European body of knowledge about the colonial world; and 3), how colonial naturalists in the New World developed their own theory of scientific practice which prioritized direct observation of natural phenomena.

These two groups of scholars (world historians and historians of science), unfortunately, have been working in separate silos. While colonial, global, and Atlantic historians of science often mention researchers scouring the globe for potentially profitable new plants, the connections between scientific endeavor and capital accumulation in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries remain vague. Conversely, to the extent that world historians have considered science as a factor in the shifting power relations among different parts of the globe, they have mostly argued over how far the West’s love of knowledge can go in explaining its hegemony. Much remains to be considered. A more sustained dialogue between world historians and global historians of science will be of great benefit to both groups of scholars. It is our hope that the meeting will provide the
initial grounding for a coherent, global narrative of scientific, economic, and technological change during the Great Divergence.

In this spirit, the first annual conference in the World History of Science invites proposals that explore the connections between the Great Divergence and changes in the worldwide division of scientific labor between approximately 1750 and 1850. The two-day meeting will provide a forum for established as well as junior scholars in both fields to discuss how the radical economic transformations that marked this period redefined “science” as well as membership in a global community of savants. Conversely, we will ask how new, globalist research in the history of science might fill out, affirm, or complicate world historians’ picture of the fateful century between 1750 and 1850. Many other issues will be up for debate, and panels or papers may be proposed for the following categories.

**Possible Panel or Paper Themes**

- The natural history expeditions organized by biologists like Linnaeus, Humboldt, and Darwin
- The rise of geology and notions of “deep time”
- Scientific agriculture
- Training/Education of scientists
- Transport engineering (railways, steamship technology)
- Hygienic movements; public health in the colonies
- Tropical medicine; indigenous, enslaved, or non-western healing practices
- Oceanography, meteorology, and climate sciences
- Rational, precise systems of quantification, eg the metric system, cost accounting
- Linguistics, Anthropology, and Race
- Geography, Cartography, Geodesy
- African and Asian sites for the emergence of new scientific knowledge (which have received less attention from scholars than Atlantic ones)
- Social science (political economy, labor management, etc.) in the eras of slavery and abolition
- Science and nationalism/republicanism/de-colonization in the Americas
- Electro-magnetism, telegraphy, and communications
- Any other themes related to the guiding questions of the conference

**Expected Results**

An edited volume published by the University of Pittsburgh Press in its new World History of Science series, to be co-edited by conference organizers Patrick Manning and Daniel Rood. The book will consist of a short preface explaining the motivations behind the conference, as well as an Introduction co-authored by Manning and Rood explaining the state of the field in World History of Science, and how the book chapters point out new directions for scholarship. The main body of the text will consist of 12–15 chapters (revised versions of the conference papers). While we will not be able to publish every conference paper, participants should expect to leave the conference with an article of
publishable quality or a chapter for a book of their own.

**Guidelines For Submission**

Individual proposals and panel proposals are both accepted. If applying individually, please submit an abstract of fewer than 300 words that clearly explains the topic, the sources used, and the argument made, as well as a synopsis of the scholarly debates in which the paper intervenes. Please include detailed contact information and a brief curriculum vita (2 pages maximum) with your abstract. If proposing a panel, please include with the individual proposals and curriculum vitae a 300–word synopsis of the panel theme. Materials should be sent, as attachments, to rood@Pitt.edu by **January 2, 2011**. Applicants will be notified whether or not their paper has been accepted to the conference within a couple of weeks, and can begin writing up a draft of their paper (which should be fewer than 9000 words, notes included), which will be due on April 1, one month before the conference. This will give participants ample time to read the drafts, which will be distributed via e-mail by the conveners.

At the conference itself, you will present a 20–minute version of the longer paper. Pre-circulation of the papers will enable each of the presenters to reframe his or her own scholarship in light of the other papers, promoting a general dialogue and even a convergence of major research questions. These emergent themes will be further fleshed out in discussions taking place over the course of the conference, and will help shape the book.

While the organizers plan on inviting commentators that fit each of the panel topics, we also welcome your suggestions as to suitable commentators.

Note: lodging, airfare, and meals will be taken care of by the sponsors of the conference.