



EXPLANATORY WORKSHOP

Convened by Stéphane Van Damme and Blake Smith with the support of the Department of History and Civilization and the Max Weber Programme

EXPLORING FRENCH ASIA: SCIENCES AND KNOWLEDGE IN THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY

Tuesday 19 June 2018, European University Institute

Sala dei Levrieri – Villa Salviati, Via Bolognese 156, 50139 Firenze



ABSTRACT

Over the last fifteen years the history of the science of the modern era – and particularly of the 18th century – has taken a global turn, expanding the discipline's horizon of interests. Major globalisation projects became subject to close examination, from the catholicisation of the world to the emergence of the paradigm of trade and global pillage, from environmental tropicalism to political economy and slavery. Having long been focused on the Atlantic settlements or imperial circuits, the history of science of the Early French sciences downplayed the role played by African and Asiatic imperial experiences. Especially since the loss of territorial possession after 1763 forced the French to re-invent a imperial project in the region. Drawing on hybrid and connected history and diaspora studies, recent studies seek to better understand instances of scientific interaction, circulation and travel, as well as processes of translation and integration. The idea is not only to enlarge the picture, to zoom out, but to better include intermediaries or local knowledge. This workshop would like to examine through case studies this regional mobilization of science in South India, Mauritius, Manilla, China or the Pacific Islands and the multiple ways of re-ordering the French Global. It asks what extent did the asiatic experimentations transform the nature of French science itself?



PROGRAMME

- 09:30-13:00** **Chair: Lissa Roberts** (University of Twente)
- Blake Smith** (Max Weber Fellow, EUI), 'Reactionary Indo-philes? Anquetil Duperron and Burke on Revolution and the East India Companies'.
- Antoine Lilti** (EHESS, Paris), 'A "fruitless curiosity" ? A Tahitian in Paris (1769)'
- Sarah Easterby-Smith** (Saint-Andrews), ' French natural history collecting in the 18th-century Indian Ocean World '
- 13:00-14:00** **Lunch Break**
- 14:00-18:00** **Chair: Neil Safier** (John Carter Brown Library)
- Dorit Brixius** (German Historical Institute, Paris), '*Pala* who? The curious case of the nutmeg between knowledge non-circulation, misinterpretation, and ignorance'
- Alexander Statman** (Graduate School Global Intellectual History, Berlin), 'How the Past Became a Foreign Country: France, China, and the Invention of Progress'
- Stéphane Van Damme** (EUI), 'Things that Talk badly. Collecting Scandalous Antiquities in the Late Eighteenth-Century French Asia'
- 18:00-18:30** **Conclusion: Simon Schaffer** (University of Cambridge)