“Philosophy of History and Ancient Chinese Historiography”
(PHACH) Project
Call for Abstracts (and, eventually, Contributions)

The Project is sponsored by the Guangqi International Center for Scholars, Shanghai Normal University. The organizers are:

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Abstracts are invited for contributions to the “Philosophy of History and Ancient Chinese Historiography” (PHACH) Project.

We hope that contributors will be able to use perspectives developed in the last sixty years in the field of philosophy of history (theory of history), whether in “West” or “East,” for the better understanding of ancient Chinese historical classics, historians, historical concepts, and historical thought, and for establishing, as much as possible, a common discourse for exchange and dialogue.

The editor of Journal of the Philosophy of History, which is perhaps the leading philosophy of history journal in the world, has expressed strong interest in publishing a special issue on ancient Chinese historiography discussed in ways that will be interesting to philosophers of history. Here is the journal Web link:


In addition, because the special issue is limited in size, the Organizers will also be approaching a major Western academic publisher with a proposal for a book on the same theme. Especially for the book project, we welcome proposals that take their grounding in literary/narrative theory as well as from philosophy of history strictly defined. (However, literary/narrative theory and theory of history indeed overlap.)

Submission of Abstracts (Paper Proposals):

Submission to: historiography.cn@gmail.com

Deadline for Submission of Abstracts: August 31, 2021
Abstracts (= paper proposals) should be submitted in Chinese (800 characters) or English (500 words) (excluding references). We strongly urge Chinese scholars who work in China, and who did their graduate work mostly in China, to write their Abstract, and then their paper, in Chinese. On the other hand, Chinese scholars with extensive experience writing in academic English (e.g., scholars who have obtained a PhD from an Anglophone university) should feel free to submit their Abstract in English, if they wish.

Although English is an easy language to learn, as a written academic medium it can be quite difficult. Further, we do not want to exclude experts in ancient Chinese language and literature simply because they are not expert writers of academic English. Eventually, papers accepted (after peer review) for publication will be translated into English.

**Submission Deadline**

Abstracts should be no longer than 500 words, or 800 characters (excluding references), and submitted by **August 31, 2021**.

However, we urge potentially interested scholars to approach us as soon as they are ready (**after May 15, 2021**) with questions, proposals, or even draft Abstracts, if they wish to have early feedback.

Once contributors have been notified of acceptance of their proposals, they will be able to participate in an online feedback and topic selection seminar to be held in late December 2021. There will be further deadlines and events as the project proceeds.

**Expert Advisory Committee**

Prof. Paul A. Roth (Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, University of California, Santa Cruz)
Prof. Chongyue Jiang (Professor of Chinese History, Beijing Normal University)
Prof. Zhifeng Deng (Professor of Chinese History, Fudan University)
Giuseppina D’Oro (Reader in Philosophy, Keele University)
Prof. Achim Mittag (Professor of Chinese History, University of Tübingen)
Prof. Masayuki Sato (Professor Emeritus of Social Studies, University of Yamanashi)
Dr. Chiel Martien van den Akker (Lecturer in Historical Theory, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)

**Motivation, Background, Further Ideas**

As is well known, in the past 60 years, research in the field of philosophy of history (theory of historiography) has made great progress. In many ways, Collingwood was the founder of the theory of historiography as it developed in the West, but to Collingwood many other names potentially relevant to the understanding of historiography must now be added. These include Louis Mink, Arthur Danto, Hayden White, David Carr, Frank Ankersmit, Hans Kellner, and Chris Lorenz, although we could also add many other names prominent prior to ca. 2000.

In addition, the field of theory of history (philosophy of history) has especially flourished in the last twenty years, and now includes newer, lesser-known names who have done interesting work.
Those who are not familiar with the field will be glad to know that three journals, between them, provide access to it. These are (most important) *History and Theory* (now in its 59th year), *Rethinking History* (now in its 25th year), and *Journal of the Philosophy of History* (now in its 15th year).

Furthermore, in the subfield concerned with the history of ancient Greek and Roman historiography, theory has begun to enter into the thinking of researchers – for example, in the form of narrative theory, theory of historical time and space, notions of historical identity, morality, aesthetics, representation and performance, and relations of power, rights, politics, and so on. Scholars who have written in such a mode include, to varying degrees, Jonas Grethlein, Alexandra Lianeri, Felix K. Maier, Alexander Meeus, and Kurt Raaflaub, among others.

Finally, we also hope to deepen our human understanding of ancient historiographies in different cultures in the diverse environments of global historical research and cooperation. This is the larger context within which our project aims to promote the bringing into contact of philosophy of history and the study of ancient Chinese historiography.

We do not want potential contributors to “drown” either in the available theoretical material, or in the nearly bottomless pit of Greek and Roman historiography, or in the possibly abyssal pit of global history. We are looking for papers that deal with the *empirical material of ancient Chinese historiography*, as illuminated by an awareness of issues that reach out beyond ancient Chinese historiography.

We hope that contributors will be able to use perspectives developed in the last sixty years in the field of philosophy of history (theory of history), whether in “West” or “East,” for the better understanding of ancient Chinese historical classics, historians, historical concepts, and historical thought, and for establishing, as much as possible, a common discourse for exchange and dialogue.

Although some papers on Chinese theory of history and historical research have appeared in such journals such as *History and Theory*, we believe that systematic exploration of historical thinking in Chinese ancient historiography, viewed and analyzed from the perspective of philosophy of history (theory of historical research and representation), is sorely lacking. We believe that in past 60 years, some topics such as historical consciousness, historical narrative/representation, historical experience, historical memory, historical time, historical identity, historical evidence, historical periodization, historical reason, contingency and necessity in history, historical trauma and historical crisis, and so on, may bring some new perspectives for understanding and interpreting ancient Chinese historiography.

**Here are some suggested topic areas:**

1. Basic Concepts or Ideas in Ancient Chinese Historiography
2. Ways of Ancient Chinese Historical Thinking
3. Modes of Criticism in the Texts of Ancient Chinese Historiography
4. Historians and Historical Writing Paradigms in Ancient China

5. The Identity of Ancient Chinese Historians

6. Ancient Chinese Historians' Cognition of Subjectivity, Objectivity, and Narrative Principles

7. Genre of Ancient Chinese Historiography

8. Historical Consciousness in Ancient Chinese Society and Its Production and Dissemination Methods


10. Nostalgia and Imagination in Ancient Chinese Historiography

11. The Moral Elements in Ancient Chinese Historiography

12. The Aesthetic Intention in Ancient Chinese Historiography

13. Historical Consciousness in Ancient Chinese Poetry and Political Essays

**Here are some suggested questions to think about:**

These are *comparative* questions, and for this reason, they are probably too difficult to deal with in the format of an article or chapter. However, they may offer food for thought:

1. Did ancient Chinese historians view the relations between history and politics in ways similar to the historians of other ancient civilizations?

2. In what ways do ancient Chinese historical genres resemble or differ from those of other civilizations?

3. In what ways did the motivations and methods of ancient Chinese historians resemble or differ from those of historians in other ancient civilizations?

4. How did the modes of preservation and circulation of ancient Chinese historical works resemble or differ from those that prevailed in other ancient civilizations?

5. How did historical consciousness and concepts of time prevailing among ancient Chinese historians resemble and differ from those prevailing in other ancient civilizations?