Blogging Histories of Knowledge in Washington, D.C.

by Mark R. Stoneman and Kerstin von der Krone

The authors reflect on their experiences as the founding editors of the *History of Knowledge* blog. Situating the project in its specific institutional, geographical, and historiographical contexts, they highlight its role in scholarly communication and research alongside journals and books in a research domain that is still young, especially when viewed from an international perspective. At the same time, the authors discuss the blog's role as a tool for classifying and structuring a corpus of work as it grows over time and as new themes and connections emerge from the contributions of its many authors.

Blogging as such is not new, nor is scholarly blogging by individuals or small collectives. Nonetheless, blogging in history has been undergoing a professionalization process, as Sadie Bergen observes of the English-speaking academy. The mainstreaming of collaborative scholarly blogs, which she characterizes as a "shift from blogging as a hobby to a line on [one's] CV," is by no means general, however.[1] One's relative position in the academy can shape one's attitude toward such undertakings, as can the research structures and cultures in which one has trained and advanced. The situation is similar in Germany,[2] whereby the growing acceptance of blogging there appears to be sustained in part by an increasing orientation toward open science and open access, not to mention the related issue of scholarly communication.[3] In any

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1 Sadie Bergen, From Personal to Professional. Collaborative History Blogs Go Mainstream, in: Perspectives on History, 1.4.2017, https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/april-2017/from-personal-to-professional-collaborative-history-blogs-go-mainstream.

2 Hannah Birkenkötter, Blogs in der Wissenschaft vom Öffentlichen Recht. Ein Beitrag zur Erschließung neuer Formate, in: Andreas Funke and Konrad Lachmayer (eds.), Formate der Rechtswissenschaft, Weilerswist-Metternich 2017, pp. 117–139; Mark R. Stoneman, Organizing and Communicating Historical Knowledge. Some Personal Observations, in: History of Knowledge [hereafter HoK], 3.2.2017, https://historyofknowledge.net/2017/02/03/organizing-and-communicating-historical-knowledge. See also Peter Haber and Eva Pflanzelter (eds.), Historyblogosphere. Bloggen in den Geschichtswissenschaften, Munich 2013; Mareike König's entries at the editors blog for the German section of the Hypotheses portal at https://redaktionsblog.hypotheses.org/author/dhiha.

3 See, e.g., the open access initiatives of the Federal Ministry for Education and Research at https://www.bildung-forschung.digital/de/open-access-initiativen-2680.html, as well as https://www.wissenschaftskommunikation.de, whose cooperation partners and funding evince growing recognition of the need to thematize scholarly communication and to develop its formats and the requisite competencies among researchers.

case, if professionally produced blogs are not new to historiography, they are new enough to merit consideration in this forum section. Moreover, the format is so flexible and people's experiences with it so diverse that a discussion of individual usage scenarios can be helpful regardless of readers' experiences with or attitudes toward blogs and blogging.

That is what we offer here: reflections on our particular blogging experiences in a specific historiographical and institutional context. To this end, we consciously adopt an artisanal outlook, the kind reflected in Marc Bloch's wartime treatise, "Apologie d'histoire, ou le metier d'historien," and the English translation of its title, "The Historian's Craft."[4] If historians often embrace scientific rhetoric and borrow from the social sciences and their methodologies, their activities are also grounded in an ethos of workmanship passed down from older generations of a craft that periodically inspires its practitioners to reflect on their practices. Such labor is about more than research alone. It comprises writing, editing, publishing, and other forms of scholarly communication – including public engagement and publicity. Significantly, this handiwork is influenced by historians' subjective experiences with raw source materials and historiography in more ways than most reveal in their long-form writing.[5] Finding our own agency particularly relevant in this context, we depart from a common rhetorical convention and adopt first-person pronouns, influenced perhaps by blogging itself.[6]

4   This in contrast to the German-language title, whose *"Beruf "* might mislead readers into recalling Max Weber's essay on science as a vocation or calling, at least until they see that the term appears next to *"Handwerker"* in the book's opening. Marc Bloch, Apologie pour l'histoire, ou metier d'historien, Paris 1949; Bloch, The Historian's Craft, New York 1953; Bloch, Apologie der Geschichtswissenschaft oder Der Beruf des Historikers, Stuttgart 2002.

5   Thus, the all-knowing *"wir"* (we) in German historiography and similarly inspired attempts to avoid any use of "I" or "we" as personal pronouns in comparable English-language texts. On the rhetoric and truth claims of the discipline of history: Hayden White, The Content of the Form. Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation, Baltimore 1987. On scientific rhetoric and practices more generally: Pierre Bourdieu, Science of Science and Reflexivity, Chicago 2004, pp. 21 – 25, p. 41 and p. 116.

6   On personal pronouns in blogging: Jan Hecker-Stampehl, Bloggen in der Geschichtswissenschaft als Form des Wissenstransfers, in: Haber, Historyblogosphere, pp. 37 – 50, here pp. 39 f.; Julia Schreiner, Neue (Auf)Schreibsysteme. Verändern Weblogs die Konventionen des geschichtswissenschaftlichen Schreibens?, in: ibid., pp. 89 – 100, here pp. 89 – 92.

I.

It is only a coincidence that we started blogging about the history of knowledge in the US capital around the time that seeming certainties about our world were encountering startling epistemic challenges.[7] If subsequent rhetoric about "fake news" and "alternative facts" pointed to different ways of knowing in the world, the origins of our blog lay elsewhere. *History of Knowledge* grew out of a newly established research focus at our transatlantically engaged workplace, the German Historical Institute (GHI) in Washington, D.C.[8] The blog is primarily a historiographical and editorial project that happens to be on a digital platform, but we also view this platform as a digital tool that can be used to understand and organize research and thereby form new knowledge. This last idea animated the project from the start. The flexibility, nimbleness, and potential reach of this type of web publication also made it attractive. Scholarly knowledge forms in part through the ongoing dialog of researchers, which itself depends on the development of scholarly communities, however loosely knit.[9] Understanding scholarship as a social activity dependent on connection and discussion, we thought a blog could help foster such work.[10]

It is no accident that the professionally produced scholarly blog has been coming into its own.[11] It fills a vital research need that cannot be met by conferences, journals, and books alone. This need appears to be particularly palpable for emerging, redefined, or inadequately represented topics, approaches, and perspectives. The blog can serve as an experimental space, a laboratory, for scholars from a wide range of fields and statuses. In this way it can transcend hierarchical boundaries that might otherwise stifle potentially valuable innovative impulses. The scholarly blog can also help to expand and deepen international collaborations beyond already established platforms.[12] At the same time, it can transcend narrower disciplinary boundaries in order to facilitate wider ranging discussions that even reach various other segments of

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7 See, e.g., Brooke Gladstone, The Trouble with Reality. A Rumination on Moral Panic in Our Time, New York 2017.

8 History of Knowledge, https://historyofknowledge.net.

9 A helpful big-picture elaboration: Peter Burke, The Social History of Knowledge, vol. 2: From the Encyclopédie to Wikipedia, Malden, MA 2012.

10 When it comes to human undertakings, there is no escaping the social, no matter how sublime the activity. See, e.g., Pierre Bourdieu, Homo Academicus, Stanford, CA 1988; Bourdieu, The Field of Cultural Production. Essays on Art and Literature, New York 1993. Social cognitive neuroscience confirms that we think socially, see Matthew D. Lieberman, Social. Why Our Brains Are Wired to Connect, New York 2013.

11 See, e.g., three of the blogs highlighted in Bergen, From Personal to Professional: Nursing Clio, https://nursingclio.org; NOTCHES, https:// notchesblog.com; Black Perspectives, https://www.aaihs.org/black-perspectives/.

12 For additional perspectives on scholarly communication, see the LSE Impact Blog, https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/?category=academic-communication.

the educated public.[13] *History of Knowledge* can be understood in relation to most or all of these trends, beginning with its historiographical context.

II.

Historians of science have begun to use the term "knowledge" more frequently as the ostensible singularity of science as a form of knowledge production comes under fire.[14] Knowledge as an analytic category, however, need not be limited to the history of science. It figures in all areas where human agency matters. Indeed, it is already evident in existing historiography, if not explicitly in the idiom of knowledge. Robert Darnton's oeuvre on the history of the book in eighteenth-century France springs to mind.[15] English-language business and consumption history as well as the related topic of state bureaucracies also offer fruitful ground for research into knowledge practices.[16] And let us not forget libraries as spaces of knowledge production, preservation, and circulation,[17] not to mention library and information sciences, another key vector of knowledge studies.[18]

If American historiography outside the history of science rarely frames these topics as histories of knowledge, things look different in Europe, particularly the German-speaking parts. Called *Wissensgeschichte* in German, the topic has gradually gained traction in recent decades. Following a trend within the history of science to conceptualize knowledge as historically, culturally, and socially conditioned (an insight also evident in sociology, anthropology, and philosophy), scholars from other fields of history have likewise begun to engage with the subject. The scope of such research has broadened signifi-

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13 For German-speaking Europe, see, e.g., Geschichte der Gegenwart, https://geschicht edergegenwart.ch, and Verfassungsblog, https://verfassungsblog.de.

14 See, e.g., Robert E. Kohler and Kathryn M. Olesko, Introduction. Clio Meets Science, in: Osiris 27. 2012, pp. 1–16; Pamela H. Smith (ed.), Entangled Itineraries. Materials, Practices, and Knowledges across Eurasia, Pittsburg, PA 2019.

15 See Robert Darnton, An Early Information Society. News and the Media in Eighteenth-Century Paris, in: American Historical Association, 5.1.2000, https://www.historians. org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/presidential-addresses/ro bert-darnton; Erik Moshe, Old Lions Department. Cultural Historian Robert Darnton at 78, in: History News Network, 11.2.2018, https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/ 167951.

16 See, e.g., Josh Lauer, Making the Ledgers Talk. Customer Control and the Origins of Retail Data Mining, in: Hartmut Berghoff et al. (eds.), The Rise of Marketing and Market Research, New York 2012, pp. 153–169.

17 See, e.g., Roger Cartier, The Order of Books, Stanford 1994; Christoph Meinel (ed.), Fachschrifttum, Bibliothek und Naturwissenschaft im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert, Wiesbaden 1997.

18 See, e.g., Michael Buckland, Information and Society, Cambridge 2017; Buckland, What Kind of Science Can Information Science Be?, in: Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology 63. 2012, pp. 1–7.

cantly and has had an institutional impact as well. There are now chairs, research programs, and inter-institutional cooperations devoted to the history of knowledge. Notable representatives include the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin, the Center History of Knowledge in Zurich, and the recently opened Lund Center for the History of Knowledge.[19] The last, with the programmatic domain name newhistoryofknowledge.com, is at the center of a Nordic research network devoted to knowledge.

Analogous to earlier developments in the new cultural history,[20] this vigorous research activity has not produced a clearly defined conceptual framework, methodology, or topical focus that could potentially make the history of knowledge a subfield of history, at least not yet. "History of knowledge" remains a fluid concept, in our view a perspective or approach that seeks to apprehend knowledge's workings in specific political, scientific, economic, cultural, and social contexts.[21] Therein lies the "new." At the same time, this ongoing work requires continuous interrogation. How do scholars understand knowledge? In what ways are histories of knowledge different from or similar to both cultural history and intellectual history? What do we gain when we add history of knowledge approaches to our social, gender, and cultural history toolkits? What are the implications of Ludwik Fleck's insight that "cognition is the most socially-conditioned activity of man, and knowledge is the para-mount social creation *[Gebilde]*"?[22] Might we understand knowledge as practice in a way that could help loosen the "webs of significance" in which we have "suspended" ourselves with cultural history?[23] In other words, how might the category of knowledge be used to apprehend human agency?

The relative youth of the knowledge perspective in history is reflected in the initially limited number of publication outlets for such work. When we started the blog, there was mainly *Berichte zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte* in German-speaking Europe, which since 2019 also bears the title *History of Science and Humanities,* and *Isis,* the long-running journal of the American History of Science Society. From 2005 to 2020, the Zurich-based yearbook *Nach*

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19 The Zurich center was already established in 2005 and, following the unfortunate logic of so many big projects, is wrapping things up now. See Sandra Bärnreuther et al., Editorial. Feierabend? (Rück-)Blicke auf "Wissen," in: Nach Feierabend. Zürcher Jahrbuch für Wissensgeschichte 15. 2020, p. 7.

20 See Lynn Hunt (ed.), The New Cultural History, Berkeley 1989.

21 See, e. g., Simone Lässig, The History of Knowledge and the Expansion of the Historical Research Agenda, in: GHI Bulletin 59. Fall 2016, pp. 29 – 58; Daniel Speich Chassé, The History of Knowledge. Limits and Potentials of a New Approach, in: HoK, 3. 4. 2017, https://historyofknowledge.net/2017/04/03/the-history-of-knowledge-limits-and-po tentials-of-a-new-approach; Johan Östling and David Larsson Heidenblad, From Cultural History to the History of Knowledge, in: HoK, 8. 6. 2017, https://histo ryofknowledge.net/2017/06/08/from-cultural-history-to-the-history-of-knowledge.

22 Ludwik Fleck, Genesis and Development of a Scientific Fact, Chicago 1979, p. 42 (Fleck, Entstehung und Entwicklung einer wissenschaftlichen Tatsache, Basel 1935).

23 Clifford Geertz, The Interpretation of Culture, New York 1973, p. 5.

Feierabend also devoted itself to historical and philosophical approaches to knowledge studies. Two recent additions, *KNOW* (since 2017), based at Chicago's Stevanovich Institute on the Formation of Knowledge, and the *Journal for the History of Knowledge* (since 2020), affiliated with Gewina, the Belgian-Dutch Society for History of Science and Universities, represent broader perspectives that extend beyond the history of science.[24] There are also new book series.[25]

Going back to late 2016, the situation on each side of the Atlantic (and elsewhere) offered opportunities for substantive engagement with a wide range of histories of knowledge. Given the particular moment, blogging seemed like an obvious way to go. With a blog, we could join existing discussions and help amplify them in a timely manner, in part by inviting new groups of scholars to the conversation. Our idea comported with core aspects of our institute's remit as well, namely to enhance the visibility of German historical research in the United States and to promote transatlantic dialog between German (as well as European) scholars and their North American counterparts.

III.

For us, blogging offered the possibility of relatively brief interventions. We could publish anything from provisional ideas, think pieces, initial forays into source analysis from a knowledge perspective, or reports about a relevant book. Blog posts could spotlight research in progress; reconsider completed work in a new light; or introduce such work on the open web, beyond the confines of paywalls and accessible to popular search engines. Our contributors have generally been writing 1,000 to 2,000 words. That is long enough to develop a meaningful idea or argument with some supporting evidence, but short enough to make experimenting viable, even attractive.

Our posts are not peer-reviewed in the traditional sense, but we work to ensure quality, while also welcoming a variety of approaches and topics. A key rule is that the editorial team, which could include a guest editor, agrees on a text. Every text is subject to meticulous editing, ensuring not only quality but also coherence with the blog's broader goals to bridge academic cultures and disciplines. Thus, *History of Knowledge* follows the common practices of any scholarly editorial project. Until now, we have managed with only two editors

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24 Shadi Bartsch et al., Editors' Introduction, in: KNOW 1. 2017, pp. 1 – 9; Christian Joas et al., Introduction. History of Science or History of Knowledge?, in: Berichte zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte 42. 2019, nos. 2 – 3, pp. 117 – 125; Sven Dupré and Geert Somsen, Forum. What Is the History of Knowledge?, in: Journal for the History of Knowledge 1. 2020, no. 1, pp. 1 f.; Bärnreuther, Editorial.

25 Knowledge Societies in History (Routledge), ed. by Sven Dupré and Wijnand Mijnhardt; Global Epistemics (Rowman and Littlefield), ed. by Inanna Hamati-Ataya; Studies in the History of Knowledge (Amsterdam University Press), ed. by Klaas van Berkel et al.

because of the GHI's institutional support. Meanwhile, though, Kerstin von der Krone has left the GHI, and her new responsibilities at the University Library Frankfurt am Main do not leave much time for the project. Thus, the blog is undergoing a transition, with a small circle of fellows at the GHI joining Mark Stoneman on a rotating basis.

Our preference has been for a small and simple structure because it keeps the blog flexible and nimble, but other solutions are possible too. There is, for example, the rotating editorship at *The Recipes Project* and the now more formal organization of the team behind *Nursing Clio*.[26] All such projects have to deal with shifting ideas about the value of various kinds of scholarly service, research, and publishing in the face of heavy workloads and difficult job markets, but that is also part of the professionally produced blog's attractiveness. It permits a wide variety of editorial structures, which can evolve. In our case, institutional support for editing the texts remains crucial because English is not the first language of about half of our contributors. Moreover, even texts from accomplished English-language authors require attention, if they are to reach across disciplinary boundaries and the narrower specializations therein.

IV.

History of Knowledge is meant to serve as an open forum, and we invite readers to join the conversation at any time with their own contributions or with links to thoughts they have published elsewhere. At the same time, we have not enabled the comments feature on the blog because moderating them would exceed our resources.[27] We use social media instead, especially Twitter (@histknowledge), where we try to interact with a growing multidisciplinary community, not merely broadcast to it.[28]

Discussion occurs when the virtual meets the analog as well. This has been most notable for us in two pre-conference blogging events, starting with "Learning by the Book: Manuals and Handbooks in the History of Knowledge."[29] The conference itself entailed more than thirty presentations on handbook knowledge (loosely defined) across time and space, from antiquity

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26 The Recipes Project, https:// recipes.hypotheses.org; Nursing Clio, https://www.nur singclio.org.

27 See, e.g., Bob Garfield and Ta-Nehisi Coates, How to Create an Engaging Comments Section, in: WNYC Studios, On the Media, 30.12.2011, https://www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/otm/segments/178194-how-create-engaging-comments-section; Alan Taylor, For 10 Years, I Read the Comments, in: The Atlantic, 7.3.2018, https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2018/03/10-years-of-comment-moderation/553136.

28 For the Twitter account, see https://twitter.com/histknowledge?.

29 Held at Princeton University from 6 to 10 June 2018, see https://learningbythebook.princeton.edu.

to the present and from crafts and sciences to conjuring, education, architecture, economics, and religion. The scope and scale of the undertaking together with the existence and remit of our blog gave rise to the idea of using *History of Knowledge* to engage conference participants and other interested readers ahead of time. Speakers would introduce their papers with posts of no more than 2,000 words. The resulting edited blog series served a similar purpose to that of pre-circulated papers, but it also challenged the conventions of pre-conference writing.[30] Blog posts were not only shorter but also had to engage an unusually diverse group of conference participants, not to mention a broader scholarly public.

Drawing on this positive experience, we put together a second pre-conference series a year later that addressed knowledge in the political.[31] Similar to "Learning by the Book," the series was integral to the conference, with blog posts and presentations fostering lively discussions on a broad range of topics related to the experiment of viewing political aspects of history through the lens of knowledge. More recently, Anna-Carolin Augustin assumed the mantle of a guest editor by bringing together a few colleagues in conjunction with an art provenance conference to explore how perspectives from the history of knowledge might be used in provenance research.[32]

While providing a basis for discussion and performing a documentary function, the conference series also leave open opportunities for more detailed and focused publications. In this way, the series mirror how other articles on the blog contribute to scholarly discourse. They do not replace the peer-reviewed mainstays of journal articles and monographs but instead supplement, call attention to, or form preliminary studies for such publications.[33] They form a middle ground also occupied by public lectures, for instance. In their aggregate, however, they do much more, furthering the circulation of knowledge and fostering the development of new research communities.

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30 For the blogged output, see https://historyofknowledge.net/lbtb. For the experience from Mark Stoneman's point of view, see Blogging before Conferencing, 13. 6. 2018, https://markstoneman.com/2018/06/13/blogging-before-conferencing.

31 Exploring Knowledge in Political History, a Preconference Blog Series, 13 May to 2 June 2019, https://historyofknowledge.net/poliknow. The conference, Political Culture and the History of Knowledge: Actors, Institutions, Practices, was held at the GHI Washington, D. C., from 6 to 8 June 2019.

32 See Provenance Research and the History of Knowledge, HoK, https://histo ryofknowledge.net/series/provenance-research.

33 Two recent publications had early incarnations on the blog: Elaine Leong et al. (eds.), Learning by the Book. Manuals and Handbooks in the History of Science, special issue, The British Journal for the History of Science Themes 4. 2020; Kijan Espahangizi and Monika Wulz (eds.), The Political and the Epistemic in the Twentieth Century. Historical Perspectives, special issue, KNOW 4. 2020, no. 2.

V.

But who contributes to *History of Knowledge,* and what do we know about its readership? From the end of 2016 to October 2020, 108 authors from 18 countries wrote for the blog. About a third of them have studied and worked in more than one country and thus are the product of an increasingly international academic culture. Most (99) are either based in Europe or have had significant experience there. Germany (49) is best represented, followed by the United States (42).[34] These backgrounds reflect the GHI's core constituencies and networks. By contrast, only a limited number of our authors have connections to Asia or Oceania, while none come from South America or Africa. If the scarcity of authors with a so-called non-Western background can serve as encouragement to increase our outreach, these numbers show that *History of Knowledge* has achieved a key institutional goal – to foster transatlantic dialog between German and European scholars, on the one hand, and US and Canadian scholars, on the other.[35]

Not surprisingly, about three-fourths (79) of our authors hold a doctoral degree, while one-fourth (27) was working toward one when they published with us. One-fifth of our authors belong to the higher ranks of academia as professors, associate professors, or senior lecturers, whereas more than half fall in the mid–career category, holding postdoctoral positions, assistant professorships, or other often nontenured research and faculty posts.[36] A small portion of our authors (6) are otherwise engaged in archives, libraries, and museums, or in academic management and communication. Overwhelmingly, our authors are historians, but not all identify as historians of knowledge. Whereas most of their contributions focus on topics from the late eighteenth century onward, we have also published work from early modernists, medievalists, and scholars working on ancient cultures. The statistically most significant of the subdisciplines represented on the blog is the history of science. If we lump its representatives together with those from the histories of technology and medicine, the resulting group comprises about one-third of our authors. Other notable disciplines and research fields represented are European and German history, intellectual history, art history, American studies (literature or history), East Asian studies, and Jewish studies.

If our authors are already a wide-ranging group, *History of Knowledge* reaches a broader audience, at least in terms of geography and page views. The site has

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34 Here we are including people with formal academic training and significant work experience of at least two years, to the extent that this data was publicly available. All figures refer to affiliation with academic institutions, not to nationality, language, or culture. The same individual can be included in more than one figure.

35 In addition, 29 (27 %) authors have a connection to the GHI, whether as current or former staff (9), visiting fellows (17), or interns (3).

36 Of these, 27 are doctoral students and candidates, 57 are authors at the mid–career level, and 22 are at the senior level.

had page views in some 180 countries from January 2017 through October 2020. There were 17,000 page views in 2017, 24,000 in 2018, and more than 30,000 in 2019. For 2020, we are heading toward a number like for 2019. The total, thus far, is some 100,000 page views. While our readers come from all continents, except Antarctica, most access the blog from North America (47 %) and Europe (40 %), especially the United States (43 %) and Germany (15 %). These numbers, as limited as they are, evince a readership that overlaps with the GHI's transatlantic constituencies, while going beyond these to include other groups, especially in Europe. The locations of our visitors also seem to reflect the predominance of North America and Europe in this kind of scholarship.

VI.

Making sense of the diverse material we have published – well over 200,000 words by more than 100 authors – would be extremely challenging, but for the flexible taxonomic features of the blogging software. The built-in taxonomies are time, tags, and categories. Time structures the archives and tells a story about what we published when. Tags, analogous to entries in a book's index, are less important for us because of the blog's search functionality and the possibility of doing targeted searches with a third-party search engine. Tags also seem to be less important to search engines nowadays, but we still use them, if somewhat unevenly. The most important taxonomy for us is the category, which helps us to make sense of the scholarship we publish. This feature was a key factor in our wanting to publish a blog in the first place.

Loosely analogous to a book's table of contents, categories (called "Themes" in the sidebar menu of *History of Knowledge's* front page) are meant to reflect overarching themes shared by several or more contributions. Blog categories can potentially mirror standard organizational themes such as regions, time periods, scholarly disciplines, and historical subdisciplines. In our case, however, they tend to reflect themes more specific to the study of knowledge such as "artisanal knowledge," "museums," and "colonial and postcolonial contexts."[37]

To understand the power of categories, it can be helpful to return to the table-of-contents analogy. When one embarks on a book-length project, one might map out a general outline of the shape one imagines the project taking. This outline never survives the completion of one's research and writing intact because of the inevitable need to adjust terminology and taxonomies to the themes that emerge in the course of further source analysis and deeper engagement with the relevant scholarship. Our blog categories work in roughly the same way. They amount to a kind of virtual outline of core topics, each

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37 We also use a custom taxonomy to distinguish between articles, notices, and miscellany.

hyperlinked to the pieces thus categorized. The articles, which appear in reverse chronological order, can now be filtered by theme. Unlike with a book, however, the same article can appear under more than one heading.[38]

As the blog grows, it is necessary to review and revise the categories, lest they proliferate to the point of uselessness. Therein lies an opportunity: The blog is a specific kind of hypertext with which we can interact to discern thematic links and display these relationships by means of hyperlinked categories. This taxonomic work fulfills both editorial and research functions, which together form a kind of positive feedback loop in which better understanding can lead to clearer presentation and vice versa, like in other historiographical activities.

"What is the history of knowledge?" is a category we have used right from the start. Another tried and trusted one is "translation and dissemination," which we initially used to situate a piece about the "Spartacus International Gay Guide."[39] The same category has proven appropriate for many other pieces as well, including one about Polish exiles explaining Poland to Britons in the Vormärz period, US folklorists' encounters with migrant culture during the Great Depression, and efforts by scientists to systematize and distribute knowledge about cloning and human genetics.[40] We have kept this category but added to it one that relies on a different metaphor: "circulation of knowledge."[41] This rubric has proven useful for many articles, not least a provocative piece about the Habsburg empire.[42] Another category we have been using is "disparate knowledges," beginning with Andrew Taylor's piece on encounters between indigenous knowledge and Canadian jurisprudence in the courtroom.[43] If we decide to reframe this category as "ways of knowing," it would

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38 Depending on one's WordPress configuration, it can also be possible to reorder categories, establish hierarchical relationships among them, or display them in nonlinear ways.

39 Christopher Ewing, Translating Sex. "Spartacus" and the Gay Traveler in the 1970s, in: HoK, 10. 4. 2017, https://historyofknowledge.net/2017/04/10/translating-sex-spartacus-and-the-gay-traveler-in-the-1970s.

40 See Translation and Dissemination, HoK, https://historyofknowledge.net/category/translation-and-dissemination.

41 See Johan Östling et al. (eds.), Circulation of Knowledge. Explorations in the History of Knowledge, Lund 2018.

42 Franz L. Fillafer and Johannes Feichtinger, How to Rethink the Global History of Knowledge Making from a Central European Perspective, in: HoK, 9. 10. 2019, https://historyofknowledge.net/2019/10/09/global-history-of-knowledge-making-from-central-european-perspective.

43 Andrew Taylor, Placing Indigenous and European Knowledge on Equal Footing in the Delgamuukw Land Claim, in: HoK, 14. 9. 2017, https://historyofknowledge.net/2017/09/14/placing-indigenous-and-european-knowledge-on-equal-footing.

also work for a piece about different academic disciplines discussing the Anthropocene.[44]

Arising from the research and dialog of the many, such taxonomic work might be understood in terms of the practices that Fleck associated with "handbook science" and the "modern scientific thought collective."[45] In any case, we would like to take the work a step further with short think pieces about observable trends in the articles so far, quoting from and linking back to the articles in question. The result would not be a classic German handbook, but it would add the element of a research notebook to the blog. At present, though, our blogging energies are devoted to commissioning, reviewing, editing, categorizing, and publishing new posts. In this way, we continue to contribute to the growth, internationalization, and visibility of work in the history of knowledge, a perspective central to historicizing our so-called knowledge societies. Increasing interest in such work can be seen in the new journals and book series mentioned above. This trend will likely continue for some time, given additional urgency by societally relevant epistemic uncertainties such as those laid bare by the COVID-19 pandemic.[46]

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44 Fabienne Will, Negotiating and Communicating Evidence. Lessons from the Anthropocene Debate, in: HoK, 26. 1. 2018, https://historyofknowledge.net/2018/01/26/negotiating-and-communicating-evidence-anthropocene-debate.
45 See Mathias Grote, Who Has Been to Ames, Iowa? Or: Handbooks as an Unappreciated Dimension of Science, in: HoK, 25. 5. 2018, https://historyofknowledge.net/2018/05/25/handbooks-unappreciated-dimension-of-science.
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