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Twenty Years of *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés*/*Crime, History & Societies*

Reflections on a Dynamic Field of Research

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Twenty Years of *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés*/ *Crime, History & Societies*

Reflections on a Dynamic Field of Research

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This year the journal *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés*/*Crime, History & Societies* celebrates its twentieth anniversary – twenty years, that’s already a respectable age and one which many journals do not reach – and we are celebrating this by publishing this special number devoted to the future of research in this field of the history of penal justice and criminality.

THE BIRTH OF CHS

The creation of a journal generally envisages filling a gap and creating an editorial voice on an emergent field of research. It is always a collective enterprise, involving a core of researchers who know each other well and who are often linked by collegial connections. In our case, the journal was firstly a spin-off from the *International Association for the History of Crime and Criminal Justice* (IAHCCJ) which was born in 1978 under the aegis of the Fondation de la Maison des Sciences de l’Homme (FMSH, Paris), and on the initiative of the sadly missed Herman Diederiks and of Pieter Spierenburg, in association with Michelle Perrot, Nicole and Yves Castan, Andre Zysberg, Jacques-Guy Petit, Clive Emsley, Jim Sharpe and others. This initial group rapidly became larger and met regularly, once or twice a year, for workshops organized by the FMSH, accompanied by the publication of an annual bulletin.

During the 1990s there developed within the core of this enlarged group the idea of creating a specialised journal, given that the annual bulletin was tending to become over-full with content. The project initially took proper shape 1994, although the first number did not appear until 1997. We had, in effect, been struck by the fact that despite the considerable development of this field of research since the end of the 1970s, there only existed one annually published journal (which in fact appeared a little irregularly), *Criminal Justice History*, its prime mover being Louis Knafla (University of Calgary), which has since ceased to appear. Our ambition was to produce not a journal which would be a standard-bearer for a particular school, even if we subscribed by inclination to a constructivist perspective on criminality and penal institutions, but a journal capable of welcoming, without exclusion, the work of a range of specialists in penal history. Today, *CHS* is still the only international social history journal in this area, alongside more regional journals or more specialised ones.

This enterprise would not have seen the light of day without the unwavering support of the FMSH, in particular of its director at that time, Maurice Aymard, and of Max Engammare, director of the Librairie Droz (Geneva) who from the outset took up the challenge of publishing a bilingual journal. The enterprise could not have

carried on without the material assistance of other institutions – The Centre National du Livre (France), the Herman Bianchi Foundation (The Netherlands) and, more lastingly, the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (France) – and without the input of all of those, too numerous to be named here, who, over the years, have participated in the journal's editorial committee or its panel of expert readers, and not forgetting the successive editorial secretaries, Bessie Leconte and Martine Aubry.

To commemorate these twenty years, the editors have chosen to ask a certain number of researchers either to provide a retrospective overview of the work produced in their specialist area, or to provide a forward-looking vision of research to come in their field. Our invitation to express a viewpoint did not elicit a response from all of the colleagues contacted. The thirty-one contributions received therefore do not represent the totality of research areas within our field, and they cannot claim to provide an exhaustive, fully-formed and fully-organised vision. For that reason, we have added at the end of this introduction a select bibliography for periods and fields which are not addressed in this issue.

This special number is aimed, in consequence, at being a necessarily incomplete exploration of the diversity of approaches, of fields and of methods. The texts constitute a polyphonic approach to the issues, retrospective and prospective, of the history of crime, growing from the outset from the firm roots which each author has in his or her field and supported by a select bibliography.

Four major approaches can be distinguished. The future of the history of crime will progress through an intersecting reflection on the processes of globalisation. It necessitates a questioning of the spatial and chronological divisions put to use by historians. Lastly, it will be engaged in a constant dialogue envisaging the opening up of disciplinary specialisms in the human and social sciences, profiting from a multipolar approach to criminal phenomena and to the responses of societies to crime. Consequently, the contributions to this special issue have been grouped into four large thematic sections, while frequently providing elements of a response to several of the problems raised in these various sections.

GLOBALIZATIONS

A dominant theme in history at the current beginning of the twenty-first century¹, globalisation is a primary concern of the history of crime. Most of the contributors to this volume evoke the concept. Without entering into semantic or epistemological debates², one can agree that the phenomenon of globalisation can operate in a geographical, chronological, disciplinary or thematic manner.

Since the development of this field of research in the 1960s, initially with work on the history of western preindustrial societies (sixteenth to eighteenth centuries), principally in North America and Western Europe, the history of crime has spread to numerous human societies worldwide³.

In their spatial and chronological work, researchers have debated with and integrated in an intersecting fashion the perspectives of numerous social, indeed natural,

¹ Bayly (2004), Osterhammel (2014).

² See on this subject the thematic issue of the *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine* (Coll. 2007).

³ See "Periodization" in this introduction.

sciences (biological anthropology, archaeological sciences, neuroscience) into the analysis of crime and of justice, as is emphasised by the contributions of J.S. Adler, M. Porret, P. Spierenburg, and J.C. Wood⁴.

Overall, globalisation has touched on methodologies which have been envisaged and themes which have been addressed. Besides the comparative approach to models, norms, practices and representations in various communities, societies or states, intersecting or interweaving history takes interest in exchanges between different societies (as is shown by the contribution of B. Godfrey).

Work on the police and on punishment provides good examples. The history of the police will be from henceforth written from a globalising perspective (see the contribution of A. Johansen), just like the use of capital punishment (contributions of N. Picard and S. Hynd), or corporal punishments or of incarceration (contribution of J. Claustre, E. Lusset, I. Heulland-Donat; see also Dikötter, Brown 2007). These perspectives derived from an interconnected history have strengthened the comparative approach to three areas. The study of societies at war or under military occupation (C. Emsley), the intersecting approach to authoritarian and dictatorial regimes (T. Marques, T. Ribeiro), and the history of colonial enterprises (S. Hynd, E. Blanchard, M. Finnane, D. Fyson). Thus research is devoted to colonial enterprises in the interior of colonial Empires (British, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Dutch), develops comparisons between colonial empires in Africa, America or Asia or otherwise favours a connected approach to “the criminal question” in metropolitan, colonial or post-colonial contexts (S. Hynd, E. Blanchard, A. Johansen).

In addition, having become connected and global, history allows a broadening of research into themes previously approached from a one-sided, often national, point of view. As far as individual phenomena are concerned, we would put emphasis on the socio-juridical construction of crimes such as *crimmigration* (M. De Koster, H. Reinke), and on international or transnational crimes (piracy, trafficking of human beings, cybercrime) (P. Knepper). With regard to social response to crime, work is increasing on international normative networks, the police, judges, and moreover on the globalisation of representations of crime and justice⁵. Indeed, one of the dominant themes of the twentieth century is the emergence of international justice, related to the dramatic consequences of worldwide conflicts (O. Rovetta).

This globalisation provokes numerous critical reflections on the ways in which these global phenomena have been constructed, as with their levels of scale, or their connections with local, regional, or national configurations. An epistemological interest in this globalising approach questions a blind spot in the historian’s discourse: “chronocentricity” or the tendency to believe that one’s own generation, or, for the historian, the period in which he or she is a specialist, is the pivotal moment in history (P. Knepper).

Nevertheless, this “globalisation” is the victim of its own success. The widespread usage of academic English as the language of global communication also increases the possibility of a comparative approach which comes at the cost of distorting local criminal and judicial cultures and obscuring the visibility of languages rendered inferior in scholarly discourse or of multilingual societies. When transmitting historical knowledge, numerous national communities do not deploy a synthesis on a national scale. Certain historical periods remain privileged, a function of their place in the construction of a

⁴ See “Transdisciplinary approaches” in this introduction.

⁵ Lewis 2014, Shelley 2014, Bruinsma 2015, Newman 2017.

national identity. Thus work on the domination of the West between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries continues to afford growing visibility to regions conquered by western empires (X. Rousseaux).

Likewise, globalisation modifies the practice of researchers. Developing in an increasingly international framework, these researchers are tempted to privilege the transnational or international objects, historical actors and documents which do most to promote their careers. This is to the detriment of micro-studies on a local level which draw on deep documentation, and which are complex and varied in their treatment of historical actors, practices and collective representations⁶.

TERRITORIES

Within this globalising perspective, the question of geographical areas retains a central importance in investigation and interpretation. One of the future tasks of the history of crime will be to construct an approach within a framework which is at once comparative across both time and place and which reflect the complexity of power relations. In this collection contributions bearing on geographical areas provide full evidence of the difficulty of dealing with individual territories over a wide chronological span. Numerous blank spaces remain on the criminal and judicial map of the world. Certain cultural or chronological areas are absent from our view.

We should here address the comment of S. Hynd on the necessity of advancing the history of Africa from the heritage of colonial repression or the too often unconscious role of mirroring an archaic otherness of a stateless society. This comment invites researchers to re-emphasise balanced comparisons between geographical areas questioning whether or not they have been influenced by European domination. Thus one can discover an abundant scholarly literature on the history of crime in the ancient Middle East or Mediterranean, on China, on Japan and on south-east Asia, on the Arab world or the Ottoman Empire, in Africa and the Americas before western colonisation, and for more recent periods, in Latin American societies, in the socialist societies of Europe or Asia, or among native peoples.

Although societies deriving from (western) European expansion benefit from an important historiography, based on numerous works which have bearing on long timespans (X. Rousseaux), other geographical areas are present in this collection: the Russian Empire, with an overview of five centuries by N. Kollman, and China, between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, by T. Buoye.

In geographical terms, depending on national cultures or the state of the development of research, studies tend to privilege a local, regional/provincial, or statist framework. Thus works on Russia and China are founded on sources essentially produced by the imperial state and arising from its enterprise of concentrating its power, while Canadian studies operate mainly within a provincial framework (Quebec, Ontario) or an “ethnic” one: the English, French, or indigenous “nations” (D. Fyson). As for Europe, it poses at the same time the question of a recent identity (the political construction of the European Union) or of a thousand-year-old identity (X. Rousseaux).

The emergence of empires entails a reconfiguration of the notion of territory. The best

⁶ Guldi, Armitage (2015).

documented case is that of British expansion, in Africa, Asia, or North America (D.Fyson, S.Hynd, M.Finnane). The territorial question is, as M.Finnane has written, connected to “a momentous clash of imperial power and settler colonialism with indigenous cultures”. From this perspective, the gestation of indigenous areas, or the relations between the politics of colonial metropolises, of colonial powers and of ethnic minorities constitutes the crucible of a real global history. To escape the domination of the historiography of European empires, one wishes in due course for similar studies on other imperial systems (Russian/Soviet, Chinese, Arab, Indian, Ottoman, Japanese).

The contrast between rural regions and the great urban agglomerations constitutes another avenue of approach for the history of crime, something emphasised by colonial history. Particularly with regards to the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries, research is focussed on the metropolises: Calcutta, Sidney, Montreal and the large African towns, while the rural areas remain neglected. Certainly, these areas present specific issues, of which not the least is that central, metropolitan or colonial power has only a very feeble presence (E.Blanchard). Again, “colonial” studies illuminate state-formation in the colonializing metropolises over the long term. Over a period of a millennium, effecting secure control over their rural territories represented a challenge for the geographical and political centres of modern states in their struggle for hegemony.

Mobile and variable, the notion of territory interacts with that of the frontier. Let us call to mind the analysis of long-term developments offered by Charles Tilly which attributes the development of the modern state in Europe to a double movement⁷: the creation of pacified areas in the interior and the transfer of violence to the peripheral frontiers. The disciplining of the holders of power (the nobility) in the service of royal armies constituted the motor for this creation of pacified space. The creation of “national borders” takes on a new sense within the framework of colonial conquest as military occupation. Borders were not merely geographical entities, but racial or cultural ones (E.Blanchard). Within this framework created by conquest, the notion of an empire of differences⁸ or of centre and peripheries (N.Kollmann) allows for a relative perspective on the hegemonic model of the modern state, in observing how an imperial ideology could be constructed in a tolerance, enforced or desired, of a diversity of communal practices for dealing with crime (N.Kollmann).

Lastly, the authoritarian management of populations by isolationist regimes provides evidence of the consequences for concerns over the movement of populations. For example the consequences of the Cold War (notably the Iron Curtain) which weighed on the opposed representations of migrations between eastern and western Europeans (M.De Koster, H.Reinke).

PERIODIZATION

From the outset, research in the field of the history of criminality and of penal justice have experienced different chronological priorities in line with national historiographies. If in France and England, the two countries where this area has

⁷ Tilly (1992).

⁸ Barkey (2006).

developed most widely, research covers a long period going from the Middle Ages to the modern epoch, the nineteenth century, however, remains the preferred period for numerous works. Conversely, in Germany, but also in certain eastern European historiographies (for example Czech), the early modern period is largely predominant, so that studies concerning the nineteenth and twentieth centuries remain rare (with the exception of the history of criminology and those policing techniques with which the contemporary period is naturally much more involved). On the other hand, the medieval period pre-1300, antiquity (above all other than Roman) and, *a fortiori*, the prehistoric period remain, for all areas, largely shadowy historiographical zones. The contribution of H. Ménard furnishes some explanations for these lacunae – lack of sources, the low level of explanatory frameworks (most of the great theoretical approaches showed little or no interest in these periods) – but indicates also some hitherto neglected avenues of research, notably “everyday criminality”, which remains frequently easier to grasp in other periods. Unfortunately, the editorial board has not succeeded in convincing any medievalist colleague active in this field to draw up a report of recent research in this area – a failure which could be read as a sign of the feeble presence, in comparison with other periods, of the Middle Ages in the body of works bearing on penal justice. This is even more true for the study of forms of deviance and of social regulation in those societies without writing, where the contribution of ethnology remains indispensable (even if the closeness between historians and ethnographers, woven together at one time through historic anthropology, has become somewhat unravelled in the last few years).

The viewpoint of a medievalist, however, permits us to give more weight to a neglected aspect of one of the most studied areas: that of the death penalty. Often addressed among general approaches – like the concept of the “Civilizing Process” created by Elias – the implementation of capital punishment manifested equally, perhaps primarily, religious meanings in societies profoundly marked by the influence of religion and the church. As shown by P. Schuster in his contribution, the scaffold became, at the end of the middle ages, the location of a veritable implementation of the sacred. This influence of religion on penal practices was confirmed at the Reformation, when, on the one hand, the number of offences punished by this sanction increased considerably while, on the other hand, the sword became more and more the rule in executions – at least in the German lands where the impact of theological controversies was more important than in others (for example in France where decapitation remained, up to the end of the Ancien Régime, the privilege of the nobility). These findings might equally be read as a sign of the opening up of an entire field towards questions firstly animated by cultural history, with all the diversity which that term adopts in different national historiographies. This is reflected also in the contributions of K. Härter and M. Porret which constitute an initial research report on areas which have been particularly dynamic in recent years: the connections between criminality and cultural diversity (which includes an interest in the impact of minorities and aspects of migration on the penal sphere) as well as popular representations of crime and penal justice which are formed in the public sphere, giving a growing place to the *topos* of security which serves in its turn to develop a juridico-medical apparatus destined to define and punish the guilty.

If the cultural orientation of much recent research is common across works devoted to different periods, without doing much to propose real transperiodic perspectives, one area in particular distinguishes itself by overtaking the chronological ring-fencing

of it as a specialism: work on the history of imprisonment. For a long time focussed, in the wake of Foucauldian studies, on the nineteenth-century prison, this area is now determinedly open to the medieval and early modern periods, adopting in addition a comparative perspective turning on “closed institutions”, for example monasteries, asylums or hospitals, putting back into fashion the idea already developed by the sociology of the 1960s (notably in the work of E. Goffman). As J. Claustre, I. Heulland-Donat and E. Lusset indicate, this approach – which takes interest in incarceration practices over a long chronological span – tends to open up an area whose roots are much older than the relevant historiography has for a long time wished to believe.

TRANSDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

The history of criminality and penal justice has always regarded itself as forming part of a wider disciplinary field, including notably the history of law and sociology, but also of criminology. Its themes, approaches and theoretical orientations imply in consequence a resolutely interdisciplinary perspective which expresses itself equally in positions taken in our journal. This traditional interdisciplinarity is currently giving place to a wider variety of disciplinary openings. This is witnessed, for example, by the interest in space in penal justice studies, outlined in the contribution of F. Bretschneider, and which feeds off a rather old cooperation between historians and geographers (notably in France), but now more in thematic reorientations in a much broader spectrum of social and human sciences including philosophy and anthropology. The spatial perspective allows not only the posing of new questions (for example that of the role of penal justice in the spatial aspects of political power) but also to bring new results to established areas, for example the study of juvenile violence in urban contexts – as is shown by the contribution of K. Weinbauer, which underlines the embedding of this violence in processes of communication, themselves linked into spatial practices and feeding into the individual and collective imagination. In relation to these new spatial approaches to the history of crime and justice, the interest for a visual and material history of crime – such as that presented by X. Rousseaux – takes its inspiration more from archaeological studies or from historians of art, but also from the increasing weight afforded to digital humanities in this area. As T. Hitchcock shows in his contribution, these new technologies do not just allow the researcher to obtain an easier access to certain types of source (even if that is often on the strength of what is on offer commercially); they also offer a challenge to a certain “methodological conservatism” which is currently dominant in our field. Learning to make a reasonable and reasoned use of the new possibilities engendered by the massive digitalisation of certain materials is a task which remains largely to be accomplished in the coming years.

A second area of deepening interdisciplinary cooperation involves the cognitive sciences, extremely lively disciplines, which allows the putting old questions to new proofs. That is the case of the problem of levels of homicide and of their historical evolution, the focus of regularly reopened controversies, and which would profit from a large disciplinary opening – up, as is shown in the contribution of J.S. Adler. That of J.C. Wood argues in favour of a greater integration of the findings of evolutionary psychology and the history of violence, while stressing that such an approach might be of assistance in finding the “meaning” of violence. If these propositions may not meet with unanimous approbation among historians in the field, they at least show

the potential for a “productive annoyance” typical of all attempts to range beyond disciplinary frontiers. Lastly, three contributions – those of R. Wetzell, D. Churchill and R. Roth – let us see the fecund connections between history and criminology. These are especially perceptible in the area of the history of criminology, which opens up some other historical fields (notably the history of the welfare state) and evolves towards a transnational history of the two disciplines. They are to be found also in the exchanges between history and criminology which build fruitful common questionings and methodological and theoretical orientations. They express themselves above all in a strengthened cooperation between the two disciplines, a dialogue which while anchoring itself currently in an established tradition will continue to give a historic depth to questions which are often limited to the present alone.

We would indicate moreover that other transdisciplinary reorientations and cooperations could not be raised in this special edition of our journal, the fault, most often, of our not having been able to find an author ready to give us a brief account of these areas. This is the case for the history of emotions, a theme of central importance, notably for the historical evolution of violence or of crimes of passion, but also for the representation of the criminal in the public sphere and for the attitude of authority. To take another example, there is the study of the influence of technological developments on the history of crime and penal justice: what changes were engendered by the arrival of photography for criminological study, the appearance of the motor car for police action, the birth of the computer for forms of criminality and the pursuit of these forms, *etc.*? Likewise, we would have liked to have had a contribution deepening the connections between our field and that of the history of law (which has in recent years made considerable progress, notably in the study of the functioning of courts and other tribunals). It would have been equally wise to arrange for a more detailed viewpoint on the revival of sociological studies on the prison, which are motivated by an inflammatory current state of affairs where social and racial discriminations come together, failures by the public authorities and extremely violent forms of contestation, such as terrorism. Moreover, the overview we offer to the reader generally provides little on the media and their impact on individual and collective representations of crime: novels and television (where crime fictions are currently flourishing), cinema and series (often devoted to historical subjects which touch on the area of penal justice, as in *the Borgias*, *the Tudors* or *Babylon Berlin*) but also new media (such as video games, they too often having an historic character).

HISTORIOGRAPHICAL COMMENT

As for periods and geographical areas not covered by our contributors, the reader can uncover the existence of an abundant scholarly literature on the history of crime, much of it recent. Casting an eye briefly over the bibliography reveals research on the history of crime under the classic headings – law, crime, punishment – or works framed around themes which have recently merged from the history of crime – banditry, organised crime, sexual offences, gender, social control, repression, policing, “True Crime”: all of them applied to different human civilizations.

Thus complementing H. Ménard's contribution on Rome there are the *antique civilizations* of the Middle East and of the Mediterranean⁹. The same goes for the *Arab world* or the *Ottoman Empire*¹⁰, for the *Indian sub-Continent*¹¹, for *China*¹², *Japan*¹³ and *South East Asia*¹⁴. Research on *Africa* and the *Americas* before Western colonization¹⁵ complements the contributions in the volume of E. Blanchard and S. Hynd. For more recent periods, we must note work on *Latin American societies*¹⁶ or Russian and Chinese society, whether it is a matter of the *Tsarist Empire*¹⁷, of the *Soviet Union*¹⁸, of the *Republic of China*¹⁹ or of the *People's Republic of China*²⁰. Finally, there are researchers focussing on crime and justice in indigenous societies²¹.

THE MISSION OF *CRIME, HISTOIRE & SOCIÉTÉS/CRIME, HISTORY & SOCIETIES*

As a bi-lingual journal publishing articles and book reviews in French and English, *Crime, histoire & sociétés/Crime, History & Societies* has acted as bridge builder, promoting dialog between researchers working within different linguistic networks. The mission of the journal to include research from any region on the world is an ambitious one, which presents the publication with opportunities, but also with some practical obstacles. Although all abstracts are published in both English and French, there is a certain reluctance among some scholars and institutions to engage with a journal where much material is in a language unfamiliar to many readers. On the other hand, researcher with reading abilities in both languages benefit greatly from

⁹ Alston et Hopwood (1999); Bauschatz (2013); Bertrand-Dagenbach *et al.* (1999, 2005); Cantarella (2000); Cassayre (2010); Coll. (1977); Coll. (1984); Démare-Lafont (1999); Harries (2007); Hunter (1994); Joannès (2000); Kelly (2011); MacDowell (1963); Ménard (2004); Müller-Wollermann (2004); Pavon Torrejon (2003); Rivière (2004); Rollinger *et al.* (2012); Tetlow (2004, 2005).

¹⁰ Barkey (1996); Boğaç (2003); Faroghi (1995); Gingeras (2014); Lange et Fierro (2009); Lévy-Aksu (2013); Martel-Thoumian (2012); Peirce (2003); Peters (2006); Petry (2012); Schull (2014); Semerdjian (2008); White (2011); Zarinebaf (2010).

¹¹ Banerjee (2006); Fischer-Tine et Tambe (2008); Singha (1998).

¹² Antony (2003); Dikötter (2002); Hegel (2011).

¹³ Botsman (2007); Itaru (2012); Kwan-Wai (1975); Murray (1987).

¹⁴ Rafael (1999).

¹⁵ Bohannon (1967); Dalgleich (2005); Eleechi (2006); Novak (2014).

¹⁶ Barreneche (2006); Bretas (1997a et b); Johnson *et al.* (2013); Salvatore *et al.* (2001).

¹⁷ Ackeret (2007); Adams (2006); Hasegawa (2017); Kaczynska (1994); McReynolds (2013); Nethercott (2012).

¹⁸ Barenberg (2014); Clark (1993); Connor (1972); Dobson (2011); Dowling (2017); Feofanov et Barry (1996); Hardy (2016); Healey (2009); Huskey (1986); Ivanova (2000); Khlevniuk (2004); Kowalski (2009); Shelley (1996); Solomon (1996).

¹⁹ Dikötter (2002); Ng (2014).

²⁰ Bakken (2005); Liang Lu (2015); Lu Miethe (2010); Mühlhahn (2009); Seymour Anderson (1999); Trevaskes (2007, 2012).

²¹ French (2003); Knafla et Swainger (2006); Nielsen et Silverman (1996, 2009); Thalia (2013).

the intellectual and geographical breath.

Due to the nature of the bi-linguism, the journal spans across French, British and North American academic traditions. The editorial approach is therefore characterised by considerable flexibility in terms of conventions for style and presentation. This approach provides a particularly welcoming environment for scholars whose main language is neither English nor French, and whose research may be primarily accessible to small or to non-western audiences. In the 21st century academic environment researchers are increasingly encouraged to internationalise, which often means publishing in languages other than their main language. *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés/Crime, History & Societies* therefore has an important mission in prioritising the insights that researchers with smaller or non-European languages can contribute to the field.

Crime, Histoire & Sociétés/Crime, History & Societies also has an important mission in facilitating the entry of young scholars into the historical field of crime and criminal justice by providing a welcoming forum where post-doctoral and early-career researchers can cut their teeth in an international environment alongside researchers with decades of experience in the field. The Herman Diederiks Prize is the centrepiece of this endeavour to nurture talented young scholars who bring new approaches and perspectives to the fore. It is our hope that the journal can serve as the lever to strengthen the careers of younger scholars by publishing research that show great potential, even if the presentation is a bit raw and not quite in line with traditional British or French academic norms.

For twenty years, *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés/Crime, History & Societies* has sought to bring together contributions to the history of crime and criminal justice across the ages and from around the world. Since 1997, it has contributed significantly to transforming the field from being a marginal topic among historians towards the mainstream, so that in the future it will not be possible to write general historical interpretations without including sections crime and criminal justice. We hope that this special issue will contribute to this development.

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