CFA: Histories of Citizen Science in Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe

(CFA for thematic section in Studia Historiae Scientiarum 2019)

Citizen science is becoming the most important trend in science of the 21st century. Increasingly used as a method of collecting and classifying data, amateur networks help scientists to enlarge the scope of their inquiries, transgress geographical or cultural boundaries, and process big data. Clearly, this is not a new development: amateurs have long been involved in helping to gather seismological or meteorological data, collect specimens, dig out archeological artifacts and write histories. Scholars readily engaged in such collaborations, sometimes developed as a part of state service, but often also actively sought amateur participation in, for instance, natural or language collections. Training observers and collectors thus became a part of the building of collective identities, whether that entity be the state, an empire or a nation.

For sure, engaging amateurs in discussions is not an easy task, often involving a long process of trust gaining and the mutual learning of languages (Epstein 1998). Sometimes it takes the form of “cultivating” and “calibrating” both networks and their individual members (Coen 2013). It may involve the rethinking of their own methodology or values, leading to a change in classifications or a movement of the inquiry into completely new areas of research. Amateurs have never been just mute actors in such networks, but had their own
agendas and interests, including changing their own position in this professional-lay network. These recalibrations and reconsiderations of lay network participation is also visible in countries with “people’s science” (Aronova 2017) and “vernacular science” (Fan 2012), where official ideologies oscillated between acknowledgment of professionalization and the cult of the lay masses.

Our special section inquires into modes of civic participation in the history of scientific knowledge in Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe, from the onset of scholarly professionalization up to nowadays. We encourage especially submissions discussing the peculiarities of professional-lay relations in the region as well as comparative studies. Papers are not limited to, but should seek to answer, such questions as:

- What forms of lay participation and civil science appeared in the region? Which specificities did they develop, and in which political projects and discourses were they involved (empire-building, nation-building, state-building etc.)? Who were the actors mobilizing civil networks: – imperial or nationalist scholars, politicians intending to change science and scholarship, social activists?
- How did forms of civil science react to changes of state boundaries and political regimes? Did boundary change mean the end of lay networks, or did they follow their own trajectories independent of political changes?
- What was civil science under state socialism and communism? Which forms of lay participation were encouraged and which repressed and prohibited?
- To what extent did lay participation transgress linguistic, cultural and state boundaries? Did transnational networks develop, either during the era of empires and Soviet Bloc politics or the era of national states?
- How were the norms for lay participation developed and managed? Who were the actors influencing norm-building and norm-changing? Did such negotiations affect only individual networks, or can we find spillover-effects beyond people directly involved?

Literature:


We invite the submission of abstracts on the questions and topics raised above. Please send an abstract of no more than 500 words and a short biographical sketch to jan.surman@gmail.com.

The editors will ask the authors of selected papers to submit their final articles no later than July 1st 2018. The articles will be published after a peer-review process.

*Studia Historiae Scientiarum* is a peer-reviewed, diamond open access journal devoted to the history of science. For more information visit: [http://www.ejournals.eu/Studia-Historiae-Scientiarum/](http://www.ejournals.eu/Studia-Historiae-Scientiarum/).

The deadline for the submission of abstracts: January 20th 2018.

**Kontakt**

Jan Surman

**E-Mail:** jan.surman@gmail.com

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