

Professional Development Grant Final Report

26th Annual World History Association Conference
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Restatement of Professional Enhancement Opportunity

I have been a member of the World History Association (WHA) since 2005 and have been attending their national and international conferences and delivering papers at these conferences on a regular basis for the past twelve years. This has led to a number of professional opportunities in the form of scholarly connections as well as to a number of publications including, most significantly, "Technology vs. Biology: European Expansion in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries" in *Popular Controversies in World History*, Vol. 3, ed. Steven L. Danvers (Santa Barbara, Ca.: ABC-CLIO, 2010), pp. 93-105. I have also written multiple entries on medieval exploration, travel literature, Mediterranean trade and transport, John Mandeville, etc for the *Encyclopedia of World History* (ABC-CLIO, 2010) and along these same lines am in the process of preparing a number of entries for a forthcoming ABC-CLIO volume, *The Daily Life of Women in World History*, edited by our department's own Micheal Tarver.

One of the conference themes this year was food history, and while food history as a discipline has emerged over the past twenty-five years, almost nothing has been written about food writing *per se*. My paper, which was an original piece of research called "Food Ink: Chewing Over the History of Food Writing," was a comparative analysis of elite food cultures and the end of empire in the late Ottoman empire, *ancien régime*/early modern France, Song China, the Abbasid caliphate, and late Republican Rome.

Brief Review

The feedback I received was useful, some scholars suggesting that the thesis of the history of food writing was large enough to turn it into a book instead of just an article. This is an interesting idea, but I have several other projects that I am working on right now, and I think an article for a peer-reviewed journal is the maximum that I want to explore for this subject at this time.

In addition to giving my lecture, I chaired a roundtable discussion entitled "Teaching World History Outside the U.S.," which was comprised of two other scholars with experience teaching history in the Middle East and one who directs a series of study-abroad programs for the University of California system. I also held several meetings with potential contributors to a new edited volume I'm working on for Bloomsbury Press tentatively entitled *Lived Histories*.

Summary of Findings, Outcomes, Experiences

Although I did receive positive feedback on my paper, and there has been some talk about turning the roundtable panel into an extended session for next year's conference, by far the most useful outcome

this year was work that I did to deepen the author pool and promote *Lived Histories*, which will focus on the experiences of historians and other scholars who have been eyewitnesses to recent political actions, revolutions, coups, and other world historical events. There seems to be a great deal of enthusiasm for this subject and I was able to meet several leading figures in the field who have offered their assistance in terms of editorial organization for my proposed volume. Arguably the most important meeting I had in this regard was with the current President of the American Historical Association (also a lifelong WHA member), Patrick Manning, Andrew W. Mellon Professor of World History, Emeritus, University of Pittsburgh. These are the sorts of connections and discussions that make attending the annual WHA conference particularly beneficial.

Conclusions and Recommendations

I am very appreciative of the opportunity that ATU's Professional Development Grant gave me to participate in this conference. It is a professional enhancement opportunity of inestimable value, which not only presented me individually with a positive scholarly experience but at the same time gave me the chance to enhance the reputation of Arkansas Tech University as an institution that is committed to serious scholarly research.