

Alma Mater Studiorum Università di Bologna
Archivio istituzionale della ricerca

Geography and Geographers in Place and Time : A View from the International Geographical Union's
Commission on the History of Geography

This is the final peer-reviewed author's accepted manuscript (postprint) of the following publication:

Published Version:

Garcia-Alvarez, J., Schmidt di Friedberg, M., Baigent, E., Reyes Novaes, A., Ferretti, F., Ozouf Marignier, M., et al. (2023). Geography and Geographers in Place and Time : A View from the International Geographical Union's Commission on the History of Geography. Singapore : Springer [10.1007/978-981-99-6604-2_4].

Availability:

This version is available at: <https://hdl.handle.net/11585/950168> since: 2023-12-04

Published:

DOI: http://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-6604-2_4

Terms of use:

Some rights reserved. The terms and conditions for the reuse of this version of the manuscript are specified in the publishing policy. For all terms of use and more information see the publisher's website.

This item was downloaded from IRIS Università di Bologna (<https://cris.unibo.it/>).
When citing, please refer to the published version.

(Article begins on next page)

GEOGRAPHY AND GEOGRAPHERS IN PLACE AND TIME: A VIEW FROM THE INTERNATIONAL GEOGRAPHICAL UNION'S COMMISSION ON THE HISTORY OF GEOGRAPHY

Jacobo García-Álvarez, Marcella Schmidt-Muller di Friedberg, Elizabeth Baigent, Andre Reyes-Novaes, Federico Ferretti, Marie-Vic Ozouf-Marignier, Bruno Schelhaas¹

Abstract: This chapter considers the evolution and significance of the study of geography's history and philosophy from the perspective of the International Geographical Union's Commission on the History of Geography. Following a short introduction (section 1) the chapter presents a brief history of the Commission (section 2) focusing on its efforts to broaden and renew the study of the history and philosophy of geography from an international approach, which transcends national borders. Section 3 examines *Geographers Biobibliographical Studies*, the serial published under the auspices of the Commission since 1977, paying particular attention to its role in stimulating as well as recording research into geography's history using the biographical method. Section 4 identifies significant themes in and approaches to the history and philosophy of geography since the creation of the Commission in 1968, devoting special scrutiny to tensions between international and national approaches to geography's history, the links between geography and other historical disciplines, and the impact of the cultural, spatial and global turns. The final section summarises the chapter and flags issues and areas of research that may enrich the Commission on the History of Geography's research agenda in the near future.

Key words: History and philosophy of geography, International Geographical Union, biography, internationalism

1. Introduction

In the course of almost 55 years of existence, the International Geographical Union Commission on the History of Geography (CHG) has made a significant contribution to the historiography and philosophy of the discipline. At the research level, it has advanced our understanding of the past and present of geographical knowledge,

¹ Jacobo García-Álvarez, Carlos III University of Madrid, Getafe, Spain. E-mail: jacobo.garcia@uc3m.es
Marcella Schmidt Muller di Friedberg, University of Milano-Bicocca, Milan, Italy. E-mail: marcella.schmidt@unimib.it

Elizabeth Baigent, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK. E-mail: elizabeth.baigent@geog.ox.ac.uk

André Reyes-Novaes, Rio de Janeiro State University, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. E-mail: andreyesnovaes@gmail.com

Federico Ferretti, University of Bologna, Bologna, Italy. E-mail: federico.ferretti6@unibo.it

Marie-Vic Ozouf-Marignier, School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences, Paris, France. E-mail: marie-vic.ozouf-marignier@ehess.fr

Bruno Schelhaas, Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography, Leipzig, Germany. E-mail: B_Schelhaas@leibniz-ifl.de

academic and otherwise, and examined how this knowledge may be used to tackle important social and environmental challenges. As a forum for the exchange of ideas, it has been driven by a truly international and transversal perspective: being open to the plurality of cultures, languages, and national traditions; and, uniquely among the Commissions of the International Geographical Union (IGU), focusing on the discipline as a whole, rather than on its different branches and specialties. Finally, through its participation in the International Union of History and Philosophy of Science and Technology (IUHPST), the CHG acts as a channel for disseminating the achievements of the international geographical community among other disciplinary communities.

The main body of this chapter comprises four sections. The first of these, section 2, presents a brief history of the commission, focusing on its efforts to broaden and renew the study of the history and philosophy of geography from an international approach, which transcends national borders. Section 3 examines *Geographers: Biobibliographical Studies* (GBS), the serial published under the auspices of the CHG since 1977, paying particular attention to its role in stimulating as well as recording research into geography's history using the biographical method. Section 4 identifies significant themes in and approaches to the history and philosophy of geography, devoting special scrutiny to tensions between international and national approaches to geography's history, the links between geography and other historical disciplines, and the impact of the cultural, spatial and global turns. Section 5 summarises the main conclusions of the chapter and flags areas of research that can inform the CHG's future agenda.

2. A brief history of the Commission on the History of Geography

The CHG was founded in December 1968, within the framework of the 21st International Geographical Congress (IGC), held in New Delhi. Originally 'The Commission on the History of Geographical Thought', it was renamed at the 31st IGC, held in Tunis in August 2008. It is one of the longest-standing commissions in the IGU. During nearly 55 years of almost uninterrupted activity, it has been reconfirmed at 13 IGCs (although from 1980 to 1988 it operated as a Working Group) and has been served by an international cast of officers (Table 1).

Dates	Chair	Secretary
1968–1980	Philippe Pinchemel: France, University of Paris I	Thomas Walter Freeman: UK, University of Manchester
1980–1988	David Hooson: UK, University of California, Berkeley	Thomas Walter Freeman: UK, University of Manchester
1988–1996	Keichi Takeuchi: Japan, Hitotsubashi University	Anne Buttimer: Ireland, University College Dublin
1996–2004	Vincent Berdoulay: France, University of Pau	Mark Bassin: UK, University College London
2008–2016	Jacobo García-Álvarez: Spain, Carlos III University of Madrid	Jean-Yves Puyo: France, University of Pau
2016–	Marcella Schmidt Muller di Friedberg: Italy, University of Milano-Bicocca	Federico Ferretti: 2016–2021, Ireland, University College Dublin; 2021–, Italy, University of Bologna

Table 1: Officers of the Commission on the History of Geography

In addition to belonging to the IGU, the CHG has been a member of the IUHPST Division of History of Science since 1976, as one of its Inter-Union Commissions.

The history of the CHG has been told in several works (Pinchemel 1973a, Hooson and Takeuchi 1992, Buttimer 1998, Berdoulay 2003–4, 2010) and is also recorded in the materials from the IGU’s physical archives; the annual newsletters published by the CHG between 1980 and 2011; and the activity reports sent periodically by the CHG Steering Committee to the IGU Executive Committee, which since 2008 have been published online, both on the CHG’s website, along with most of the CHG Newsletters (<https://ugihg.hypotheses.org/>), and in the IGU’s valuable digital archive which is curated by Giuliano Bellezza (<https://www.homeofgeography.org/>). The reports, which are mandatory for all IGU Commissions, provide a detailed account of the CHG’s membership, meetings, networking activities, publications, and archival contributions and, in the years in which IGCs are held, of the CHG’s proposed work plans for the following four-year period. We outline here a selection of the main objectives, concerns, and achievements of the CHG over its long history.

The main purpose of the CHG is to be a forum for the fostering and exchange of ideas about history of the field and, more broadly, the history of geographical knowledge, experiences, and practices, and their impact and usefulness for the contemporary world. As such, it provides the IGU with a reflective outlook on the practices and meanings of geography. Some of its aims are common to all IGU commissions: promoting

international scientific exchange in its field, for example, or stimulating new research from a transnational and comparative perspective, disseminating innovative approaches, and contributing to the lines of work prioritised by the IGU.

In this respect, over its 54-year history, the CHG's fruitful output has included some seventy scientific meetings (organised within the framework of IGU Regional Conferences, IGCs, and ICHSTs, or as independent symposia), twenty-five Newsletters, forty volumes of the annual *GBS* series, and twenty books and special journal issues on the outcomes of its meetings. It has thus contributed significantly to knowledge of a wide range of geography topics, such as: the life and work of leading national and international figures in the field (see section 3 in this chapter); the formation of the leading "national schools" of geography (Katona 1974; Babicz 1980); the academic, professional, and folk/popular processes underpinning the institutionalisation of the discipline, as well as its public image and social construction (Stoddart 1981a; Berdoulay and Van Ginkel 1996; Buttimer, Brunn and Wardenga 1999); the relationships between geography, colonialism, and imperialism (Godlewska and Smith 1994; García-Álvarez and Garcia 2014), and those between geography and nation-building processes (Hooson 1994); the exchange and circulation of geographical ideas at different scales (Berdoulay and Gómez-Mendoza 1998; Lamego, Albuquerque and Ribeiro 2015); conceptualizations and representations of landscape and territory, and their connections with collective identities (Ortega-Cantero, García-Álvarez and Mollá 2010); and the contribution of geography to territorial policies, as well as to modern theories and practices of sustainable development (Berdoulay and Soubeyran 2000; Reyes-Novaes and Nunes 2015). The CHG played a leading role in the books which commemorated respectively 100, 125, and 150 years of the IGCs (coinciding respectively with 50, 75, 100 years of the IGU) (Union Géographique Internationale 1972; Robic, Briend and Rössler 1996; Kolosov et al., forthcoming), as well as a bibliographical monograph edited by Kish in 1979. These volumes are invaluable guides to understanding the institutional history of geography as an international science, and assessments of the challenges facing the global community of geographers (Kolosov et al., forthcoming).

Over the past two decades the CHG has made noteworthy contributions to a history of geography that fully acknowledges the work of geographers from beyond Europe and

Anglo-America. To this end, the CHG has deployed an intensive networking strategy, organizing a series of symposia in collaboration with local scholars in East Asia (Human Geographical Society of Japan's Geographical Thought Study Group, see Shimazu 2014), Western Africa (University of Cape Verde, Department of Geography, see García-Álvarez and Garcia 2014), and Latin America (National Autonomous University of Mexico, Geographic Institute: see Berdoulay and Mendoza 2003; Brazilian Network on the History of Geography and Historical Geography: see Lamego et al. 2015; Reyes-Novaes and Nunes 2015; Schelhaas et al. 2020). The CHG has traditionally used French and English in its activities and outputs, and openness to the plurality of cultures, languages, and national traditions has characterised it from its birth (Berdoulay 2010), which in turn owed much to close cooperation between several French and Anglo-American geographers (Pinchemel 1973a, 63). Some of the meetings organised over the past decade with Brazilian and other Latin-American geographers are almost unique among current international conferences in being multilingual, since most attenders were familiar with English plus one or more Latin languages, such as French, Spanish and Portuguese (Schelhaas et al. 2020, IX). While “this is not unproblematic and could not necessarily be replicated in all situations, it is an important demonstration that international scholarly cooperation can challenge all forms of monolingualism and monoculturalism (from dominant English to other languages representing regional imperialisms), which constitute a serious limitation to all the endeavours for effectively decolonising geographical knowledge and practices” (ibid.). This sort of approach fosters a move towards a truly world history of geography and away from hegemonic Western-centric approaches (Berdoulay and Mendoza 2003).

At least two characteristics of the CHG distinguish it from other IGU commissions (García-Álvarez 2012, 23–26). First, as two former CHG chairs point out, among the IGU Commissions, only the CHG “deals with the whole subject of Geography, not just with some branches, but the entire historical record of its scientific research” (Hooson and Takeuchi 1992, 217). In addition, its membership of the IUHPST makes the CHG a vehicle for representation, relationship-building, and dissemination of the achievements of the geographical community within broader international science organisations, while also demonstrating “the value of a bridge discipline among the sciences” (ibid., 216.). To further this bridging work within and outside of the discipline, the CHG has, especially over the last decade, organised joint thematic

sessions with other IGU Commissions (such as those on Political Geography, the Cultural Approach in Geography, and Gender and Geography) at Regional Conferences and IGCs. Similarly, the history of geography helps combat professional and epistemological extremism or essentialism, by bringing to light the discipline's plural, complex, and contested past. The importance of this should not be underestimated, especially because the CHG was established at a time of epistemological turbulence and crisis in the discipline (Pinchemel 1973a, 60). Familiarity with geography's rich and complex history can stimulate geographers' theoretical and reflective skills, inspire innovative ideas and concepts, for which detailed knowledge of past ideas is a prerequisite, and foster a spirit of critical inquiry by situating past geographical thought and practice within its socio-spatial context.

A second distinctive contribution of the CHG has been the creation, conservation and dissemination of sources of interest for the history of geography, including the history of the IGU itself. From the outset, the work of the CHG drew heavily on a large and diverse range of sources to document the history of geography, including:

1. Written texts: published or unpublished; hand- or typewritten, with multiple hybrid forms; in different languages; mostly on paper, but increasingly digitised.
2. Audio and visual sources: images, films, and sound recordings, in various media supports (e.g., paper, glass, tape, film, digital storage), notably the projects "Geographers on Film" (Maynard Weston Dow, 1970) and "Invitation to Dialogue", (Anne Buttimer and Torsten Hägerstrand at Lund University, 1978), which recorded interviews with numerous geographers from all over the globe with close connections to the CHG (Ferretti 2019a).
3. Oral history: usually stored on textual, audio, or visual media supports, but also present within the community of geographers as a form of self-experience.

Considerable effort has also been made to enhance the archive by collecting and storing documents, and oral testimonies, making them available online, and analysing them. This task remains a priority for the CHG members from each country, and, in the study of the different national traditions, much archival material remains to be explored. Access to the aforementioned sources varies widely. Many key documents are held in national, regional, and university archives, but others are in the collections of geographical societies, academies, and other national or international organisations, or

family and private archives. Besides the well-known and important institutional archives, such as those of the Royal Geographical Society in London, the American Geographical Society in New York, the Association of American Geographers and the National Geographic Society (both in Washington), the Russian Geographic Society in Moscow, the Société de Géographie in Paris, or the Società Geografica Italiana in Rome, there are numerous and diverse collections in many other countries. The focus should be not only on “official” geography collections, but also on natural history, neighbouring sciences and cartographic collections.

The CHG’s idea of establishing a “World Directory of Geography Archives” was only partly successful (Martin 1989 and 1992a). However, source-based studies remain part of the CHG’s work, and have been presented and discussed at several meetings and in publications.

One key source for the recent history of geography is IGU’s own historical collection (Schelhaas and Pietsch 2020), which has an interesting story of its own. Previously held at the Royal Geographical Society in London and the Home of Geography in Rome, the IGU Archives are now part of the Archive for Geography at the Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography in Leipzig (Germany) and are open to the general public. Selected documents from the IGU Archives feature in recent and forthcoming publications (Roche 2019, Schelhaas et al. 2020, Kolosov et al., forthcoming).

3. *Geographers: Biobibliographical Studies*: mapping geographers’ lives and works

“*Geographers* has unearthed a distinctive and neglected population” declared David Stoddart in his review of the serial’s first three volumes (1981b, 304). *Geographers: Biobibliographical Studies (GBS)*, which has been published annually since 1977, records and critically examines the life and work of geographers through accounts of their personal and professional lives, and lists of their works – complete or selected (Table 2). With 40 volumes containing 489 memoirs published to date, we reflect here on the accuracy of Stoddart’s characterisation of geographers and *GBS*, and assess the serial’s past, present and future.

Volume number(s)	Dates	Editors	Institutions
1	1977	T Walter Freeman Marguerita Oughton Philippe Pinchemel	University of Manchester, UK Geographical Association, UK University of Paris 1, France
2–3	1978–1980	T Walter Freeman Philippe Pinchemel	University of Manchester, UK University of Paris 1, France
4–12	1981–1988	T Walter Freeman	University of Manchester, UK
13–16	1991–1995	Geoffrey J Martin	Southern Connecticut State University, USA
17–25	1996–2006	Geoffrey J Martin Patrick H Armstrong	Southern Connecticut State University, USA Edith Cowan University, Australia
26–35	2007–2016	Hayden Lorimer Charles W J Withers	University of Glasgow, UK University of Edinburgh, UK
36–	2017–	Elizabeth Baigent André Reyes-Novae	University of Oxford, UK Rio de Janeiro State University, Brazil

Table 2: Publishing and editorial history of *Geographers: Biobibliographical Studies*

Do geographers form a distinctive population, as Stoddart suggested, and does *GBS* accurately reflect that population? *GBS* was launched in part to free the history of the discipline from the history of discovery and exploration (Pinchemel 1977, vii). It reflected a sense that the discipline had come of age; that its practitioners had a shared understanding of what geography was; and that geographers thus constituted a distinctive population. Quite who were the geographers to be memorialised has, however, been a concern since the serial was first proposed during the IGU's 1972 meeting (Martin, 1992b). In a guide for contributors published the following year, Philippe Pinchemel (1973b, 688), founding chair of the CHG, called for memoirs of all scholars who had contributed to geographical thinking – not only “academics officially identifiable as geographers because having occupied geography chairs”, but the supporting cast, including “cartographers, geologists, hydrologists, economists, explorers, urban planners, philosophers, historians”. This liberal view was echoed in his introduction to the first volume: “geography has never been the exclusive concern of geographers” (1977, viii).

The inclusion of Eratosthenes (c.275–c. 195 BC) in the second volume of *GBS* knocked on the head the idea that the serial existed to memorialise only recent, academic geographers (though perhaps it left the editors open to the charge that they sought to add the lustre of antique origins, and hence respectability, to their discipline). Geographers

occupying academic positions are the group most strongly represented in the serial, but in addition, among the disciplines which Pinchemel suggested should be included, we can point to geographers who were also cartographers (August Petermann, in volume 12 and Georg Joachim Rheticus in volume 4); geologists (Charles Andrew Cotton in volume 2 and Shen Kuo in volume 11); hydrologists (Francis Beaufort in volume 19 and James Edward Church in volume 22); economists (Thomas Malthus in volume 20 and Henry Charles Carey in volume 10); explorers (Hugh Clapperton in volume 28, Ferdinand Magellan in volume 18, and Zheng He in volume 20); urban planners (Sir Peter Hall in volume 36), philosophers (Pierre Teilhard de Chardin in volume 7 and Immanuel Kant in volume 4); and historians (Anita McConnell in volume 36; Jaime Vicens Vives in volume 17 and Jaime Cortesão in volume 40), as well as meteorologists (Hugh Robert Mill in volume 1 and Felipe Poey and Andrés Poey in volume 24); sociologists (Patrick Geddes in volume 2 and Sebald Rudolf Steinmetz in volume 24), social reformers (Hull House Geographers in volume 33), and many others.

Being catholic, *GBS* allows us to explore canonicity: the “texts, habits and practices that identify geography” (Powell 2015) or its canonical concepts (Johnston and Sidaway 2015). *GBS* provides rich evidence for such texts, habits, practices, and concepts, but is itself descriptive rather than prescriptive. Indeed, in its catholicity it anticipates Ferretti (2019b)’s call for the ethical necessity of “Rediscovering other geographical traditions”, outside the canon; and does not adopt a canonical view that shuns “the excluded, the evil, and the anarchic” (Keighren 2018). *GBS* requires constant editorial vigilance in its attempts to include the excluded, but it has featured anarchists Pyotr Kropotkin (vol. 7) and Elise Reclus (vol. 3) and problematic figures such as Karl Haushofer (vol. 12) or Halford Mackinder (vol. 9); however, the serial’s print format does not allow updating or revisiting of biographies of controversial figures as is routine in digital publications which are thus better able to reflect changing views on difficult or distasteful figures.

More generally, the biographical format allows us to identify petty failings, which are far more common than the actual evil that Keighren mentions. While the slothful are unlikely to reach the eminence memorialisation demands, the geographers presented in the *GBS* are certainly prey to other deadly sins. While obituaries in professional journals focus almost exclusively on the professional lives of dead geographers and are generally relatively hagiographic, *GBS* gives considerable weight to subjects’ personal lives, and thus to the unattractive as well as the commendable. Lives written in the round reveal us

all to be a mix of admirable and shabby, generous and petty, imaginative and pusillanimous. They help us understand reasons for failings or only modest achievements: ill health, difficult family circumstances, war, or poverty, for example. *GBS* by its very format, then, enables us to paint a humane, as well as human, view of our discipline. Obliging contributors to record the less attractive aspects of their subjects is a duty of editors. Many contributors are reluctant to even to record their subjects' deaths, let alone their shortcomings, and many struggle with superabundant or absent source material (McGeachan et al. 2012) but with vigilance we can make *GBS* a vehicle for a rounded presentation of the discipline.

The point ultimately is not whether we can *connaître la géographie par les géographes* (know/understand geography through geographers) as Françoise Grivot pondered in her review of the serial's first volume (1978). Rather it is that a biographical method shows us the lifepaths of many geographers who, while sharing some characteristics and viewpoints, remain disparate, multiple, diverse, and irreducible to a single canonical trajectory (Baigent 2004). *GBS* can thus help us identify canonical traits but simultaneously challenge that canon.

To Stoddart's second point: do geographers form a neglected population and does *Geographers* effectively redress such neglect? Certainly, geographers regularly suffer from a sense of inferiority that springs from the youth of their discipline and the breadth of their endeavour: Johnston (2005), for example, felt that academic geographers had been neglected in the British national biographical dictionary. In providing a dedicated vehicle for memorialising practitioners, *GBS* effectively removes the need for geographers to compete with, say, hard scientists for a place in dictionaries of scientific biography, or with politicians, actors, or business people for a place in dictionaries of national biography. If geographers have been neglected by outsiders, the serial has gone some way to redressing that neglect, albeit unequally. While Pinchemel interpreted the term "geographer" liberally in terms of fields of activity and disciplinary training, his view was constrained by gender expectations. He hoped for memoirs on "great men...university men...men who founded and worked for geographical societies", for minor figures as well as "founder fathers", but apparently no women, despite having a female co-editor working alongside him (1977). Along with women, those from the global South, the young, non-white, and Indigenous, and those who lived before the nineteenth century have been overlooked in the serial (Baigent and Reyes-Novaes

2018). Nonetheless, *GBS* at least provides a vehicle for redressing such neglects, for example, via its recent volumes dedicated exclusively to women (vol. 38) and figures from the global South (vol. 40), as well as for leading geographers as a whole to a wider view. While reviewing volume 37, historian of science Sarah Pickman anticipated that the book would be “almost comically niche”, but, having read it, she concluded that in fact “the book’s essays demonstrate the many forms a scholarly life can take and different ways of making meaningful contributions to the profession” and that “One need not be an Alexander von Humboldt to deserve a biography” (2021, 631).

Stoddart concluded his review of the first three volumes of the serial by proclaiming: “*Geographers* is a great achievement” (1981b, 304). For all its shortcomings, we believe that he is right. In ensuring that the discipline’s past is recorded, *GBS*’s editors, contributors, publishers, and supervisory commission, as well as archivists and subjects’ friends and families, have done the discipline a significant service.

4. Key themes and approaches in the history and philosophy of geography

The CHG was founded during a period of tension within and outside the geographical discipline. 1968 was a critical year for social movements and youth protest, which famously led to the rise of Radical Geography and the founding of the journal *Antipode* in the United States in 1969 (Barnes and Sheppard 2019). Such radicalism was not limited to North America (Berg et al. 2021): even in France, where most geographers were politically and/or epistemologically conservative, despite Paris’s having been the epicentre of the May 1968 protests, there were young geographers who were receptive to the new current (Orain 2020; Robic et al. 2020). Further tension arose within the discipline where, in the 1960s and 1970s, controversy raged between the proponents of quantitative, radical, and humanistic approaches to geographical scholarship.

Ironically, some of the key radical figures, such as David Harvey and especially William Bunge, had previously been leading exponents of quantitative geography (Barnes 2009 and 2016). Similarly humanistic geography was in part a reaction against quantification and geography as ‘spatial science’—something which Anne Buttimer wryly defined as: ‘The dance macabre of materialistically motivated robots’ (Buttimer 1993, 47). Most scholars working in the history and philosophy of geography preferred qualitative to quantitative approaches, as did the CHG itself—unsurprisingly

given the key role that individuals such as Buttimer played in framing the its epistemological approaches and material instruments, including *GBS*. Yet, historians of geography were quick to historicize these controversies, including the development of quantitative geographies, as a part of the plural histories of geography (Barnes 2009; Lamego 2014; Cuyala 2014; Gintrac 2015).

The history and epistemology of geography initially represented a new approach that needed to earn a legitimacy of its own. Its first task was to examine the history of geography's emergence as a science and as a discipline, from the point of view of contents and contexts. In the case of France, for example, before the pioneering works of Claval, Broc, Pinchemel, Berdoulay, and Meynier, little was known about the beginnings of the French school of geography. Thus the foundations of the mainstream national tradition were mapped out first, with more recent studies beginning to focus on marginal or non-academic figures (Clerc and Robic 2015; Ginsburger 2016), troubled periods (wars, political movements), and sensitive memories (colonization, occupation) (Ginsburger, Robic and Tissier 2021).

From the 1980s onwards, with the rise of poststructuralism and the so-called 'cultural turn', the history of geography became increasingly concerned with self-reflexion and situating developments in the discipline within broader trends in the history of science. The latter focus prompted context-sensitive readings of geographical histories aimed at making sense of the growth and transformation of ideas in their historical, cultural and geographical contexts, and challenging purely internalist and disembodied readings of the history of ideas. The work that classically symbolised this shift, *The Geographical Tradition* (1993), was authored by David N. Livingstone, another of the CHG's contributors, and has recently been the object of collective re-readings and reworkings within the community of historians of geography (Boyle, Hall and Sidaway 2019; Péaud 2016). While the (auto)biographical turn to which *GBS* decisively contributed may be seen as part of this contextual framework, a key complement to contextualistic approaches came from the so-called 'spatial turn' in social sciences.

While amazingly the ideas of the spatial turn seemed to be assimilated more enthusiastically by historians of science than by geographers (Secord 2004), it was again Livingstone who published one of the key contributions in this field (Livingstone 2003). The key assumption of the spatial turn is that localisation matters to the

formation of ideas, which vary between places. Given the intrinsic mobility of knowledge, the focus of the spatial turn is not confined to localization, but also includes studies on the transfer and movement of ideas across places, languages, and cultures, thus extending the scope of contextual approaches. More recently, new theoretical instruments for this line of inquiry have been provided by the ‘material turn’, inspired by notions such as Bruno Latour’s Actor–Network Theory (ANT), which also focuses on the importance of material factors, including non-human agency, in the shaping of scientific networks (Latour 1987).

More broadly, the history and philosophy of geography are intrinsically interdisciplinary, and therefore by definition concern themselves with broader developments in the historical disciplines, in terms of what have been termed fertilisations and cross-pollination between geography and history (Ozouf-Marignier and Verdier 2013). While the incorporation of geographical approaches into geo-historical traditions is nothing new, some of the more recent trends in history appear especially promising for current and future scholarship in the history of geography. One such tendency is the ‘Global Turn’ in history, which implies transcending previous notions of ‘crossed’ or ‘comparative’ histories that remained closely bound up with national frameworks. As an alternative framework, global history is generally based on transnational approaches that help to make sense of knowledge transfers, not only across, but also independently of, boundaries.

This paradigm bears crucial implications for geography, because it questions the pertinence of readings based on the existence of ‘national’ schools. A significant body of empirical research now suggests that numerous eminent scholars cannot be exclusively identified with a given national school, and recent studies point up the transnational and multilingual trajectories of many geographers, such as those involved in attempts to build up social networks of geographers on both sides of the Atlantic (Ginsburger 2010; Alves de Lira 2021; Louis 2019), or across the Global North and the Global South in the second half of the twentieth century (Davies 2019; Ferretti 2019b; Ferretti and Pedrosa 2018). This is clearly consistent with the aims of the CHG, many of whose members have fostered transnational and multilingual readings of histories of geography in recent years.

More generally, the history of geography increasingly includes research that brings geography into dialogue with other sciences. For example, it questions the place of geography within the human sciences or the humanities (Orain 2021), often bringing interdisciplinary approaches to bear on this endeavour (for example, in France, see *Revue d'histoire des sciences humaines* and the Société Française pour l'Histoire des Sciences de l'Homme). On another frontier, the increased prominence of environmental issues and inquiry into the relationship between nature and culture (Descola 2015) has led historians and philosophers of geography to engage in close dialogue with philosophers, anthropologists, and specialists in the sciences of the Earth and the universe.

Last but not least, while scholars associated with the CHG contributed to geographers' self-criticism with respect to their discipline's colonialist and imperialist pasts (and presents), they are now exploring current debates on decoloniality and the rediscovery of different epistemes. Although not limited to a single geographical area, these strands of inquiry are especially prominent in Latin America thanks to the work of the Modernity–Coloniality–Decoloniality collective (Radcliffe 2017), recent theorising on post-development and the pluriverse (De la Cadena and Blaser 2018), and the rediscovery of alternative geographical traditions, including from non-European cultures, as, for example, approaches that help to supersede dichotomies such as humankind and nature (Ferretti 2020). Growing interest in histories of geography from the South, and the increasing engagement of Southern (especially Latin American) scholars with the work of the CHG are key indicators of these developments.

The history and philosophy of geography, which gradually evolved into a distinct area of knowledge over the post-war era, first sought to establish its institutions and its foundations at the national level, while participating in major developments in the history of science and knowledge. Recent changes reflect the rise of more open perspectives. The investigations of scholars in this field continue to be situated in space and time, but with a stronger focus on the transdisciplinary and transnational circulation of objects, concepts, problematics, and methods, and renewed openness to the challenges of our era.

5. Conclusions and Prospects

From the decisive year of 1968 to date, the CHG has remained firmly committed to investigating the historiographical and philosophical significance of geography from an international and transversal perspective, and to offering, as we have seen, helpful insights into some of the leading dynamics, problems, and challenges of the contemporary world. In parallel, it has contributed, at different scales, to the circulation and dissemination of themes, ideas, theories, and turning points in historical geography, within the broader framework of global history.

Given the continuing globalization of knowledge, the CHG now stands before new prospects for theory and practice within the discipline, towards the dual aims of encouraging innovative research themes and approaches, while critically revisiting some of the hegemonic interpretations of the past. A first emergent focus is the internationalization of geography and the current role of national and local institutions. Language policies and practices are key concerns here, in terms of the loss of linguistic diversity and the prospect that English will occupy an increasingly hegemonic position in the accumulation of knowledge. Scrutiny of geography's 'imperial legacy' – and of the legitimacy of who produces scientific knowledge, where, and according to what dominant paradigms – has informed the decolonial perspective, prompting new lines of inquiry and raising questions about our understanding of the contemporary aftermath of geography's colonial past. The new framework, to draw on Anne Buttimer's remarks about the humanistic turn in geography: "could [not only] help broaden our horizons to new areas of intellectual enquiry, but [...] could also help us transcend the artificial barriers which our Western intellectual heritage has placed between mind and being, between the intellectual and moral, the true and the good in our life worlds" (Buttimer 1976, 292).

Over the decades, the history of geography has expanded to address new research themes, stimulating contact with scholars from countries and regions of the world that had previously remained peripheral to, or absent from, academic channels of exchange. We must now commit to continuing this process of inclusion by receiving the views of under-represented groups, such as ethnic minorities, children, and LGBT people, and exploring non-human agency in our research. Likewise, even greater effort must be invested in incorporating a gender perspective into the historiography of geography, and

in attending to scholarly developments in, and contributions from, the Global South. As we have seen, the *GBS* has already made a key contribution in this regard.

Another major challenge for the future, which is shared by cartography, concerns the sphere of communication, representation, and engagement with technology. The Internet and open access journals have already greatly boosted the internationalization of geography. At the national and local scales, new technologies also enable access to archival sources, unwritten documents and oral testimonies. In this regard, the public dimension and perceptions of geography outside academic circles constitute another important sphere of action for the CHG. The history of geography is a cross-cutting and integrative field that links different areas of research and different aspects of current global emergencies. One point of contact is environmental crises and climate change, where great scope remains for historical inquiry and deploying indigenous knowledge. Investigation of dynamic change in the relationship between human beings and the environment can advance our understanding of past and future changes in land use and how these may serve the interests of sustainability.

Finally, the CHG's cross-sectional perspective can help us to understand and address current momentous changes, as well as offering theoretical insights into the global nature of these changes. First, the COVID-19 pandemic, which has redefined our relationship with space, including from a virtual communications point of view, with repercussions that extend far beyond the realm of epidemiology, generating an unprecedented economic, political, and social crisis. And now, war and the urgent need to revisit the geography of peace—a geography that was theorised early on by Kropotkin and Reclus, and later put into practice by Zonia Baber and William Bunge, among others. In this regard, though written almost 140 years ago, the words of Kropotkin continue to be of the utmost salience today: “In our time of wars, of national self-conceit, of national jealousies and hatreds ably nourished by people who pursue their own egotistic, personal or class interests, geography must be [...] a means of dissipating these prejudices and of creating other feelings more worthy of humanity!” (Kropotkin 1885, 945).

References

- Alves de Lira L (2021) Pierre Monbeig e a Formação de Geografia no Brasil (1925–1956). Uma geo-historia des saberes. Alameda, São Paulo.
- Babicz J, ed. (1980), *Les Écoles de Géographie*, *Organon* 14: 135–228.
- Baigent E (2004) The geography of biography, the biography of geography: Rewriting the Dictionary of National Biography. *Journal of Historical Geography* 30, 531–551.
- Baigent E and Reyes-Novaes A (2018) Retrospect and prospect of our discipline's biographical record. In E Baigent E and Reyes-Novaes A *Geographers: Biobibliographical Studies* 36. Bloomsbury, London and New York, v. 36, 1–10.
- Barnes TJ (2009) Not only ... but also': Quantitative and critical geography. *The Professional Geographer* 61(3): 292–300.
- Barnes TJ (2016) The odd couple: Richard Hartshorne and William Bunge. *The Canadian Geographer/Le Géographe canadien* 60(4): 458–465.
- Barnes TJ and Sheppard E, eds (2019) *Spatial histories of radical geography*. Wiley, Oxford.
- Berdoulay V (2003–2004) L'Histoire de la Pensée Géographique. *Enjeux cosmopolitiques*. *Inforgéo* 18–19: 21–36.
- Berdoulay V (2010) Quelques réflexions sur l'histoire de la géographie au défi de la prospective et du patrimoine. In Ortega-Cantero N, García-Álvarez J and Mollá Ruiz-Gómez M, eds. *Lenguajes y visiones del paisaje y del territorio / Languages et visions du paysage et du territoire / Languages and visions of landscape and territory*. Universidades Autónoma y Carlos III de Madrid / Grupo de Trabajo de Historia del Pensamiento Geográfico de la Asociación de Geógrafos Españoles, Madrid, 13–22.
- Berdoulay V, Gómez-Mendoza J, eds. (1998) Around the World; the circulation of ideas in the history of geographical thought. *Finisterra* XXXIII, 65:13–228.
- Berdoulay V, Mendoza H, eds. (2003) *Unidad y diversidad del pensamiento geográfico en el mundo: retos y perspectivas*. Union Géographique Internationale – Commission sur l'Histoire de la pensée géographique / Instituto de Geografia,

- UNAM/Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática, Ciudad de México.
- Berdoulay V, Soubeyran O, eds. (2000) *Milieu, colonisation et développement durable. Perspectives géographiques sur l'aménagement*. L'Harmattan, Paris.
- Berdoulay V, Van Ginkel HA, eds. (1996), *Geography and Professional Practice*. Nederlandse Geographical Studies, Utrecht.
- Berg L, Best U, Gilmartin M and Larsen HG, eds. (2021) *Placing critical geographies: Historical geographies of critical geography*. Routledge, London.
- Boyle M, Hall T, Sidaway JD (2019) Reappraising David Livingstone's The Geographical Tradition: A quarter of a century on. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 44 (3): 438–443
- Buttimer A, Grasping the Dynamism of Lifeworld. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 66, No. 2 (Jun., 1976), pp. 277–292
- Buttimer A (1998) Geography's contested histories: changing states-of-the-art". *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie*, 89 (1): 90–99.
- Buttimer A (1993) *Geography and the Human Spirit*. Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London.
- Buttimer A, Brunn S and Wardenga U, eds. (1999) *Text and Image Social Construction of Regional Knowledges*, Institut für Länderkunde, Leipzig.
- Clerc P et Robic M-C (eds.) (2015) *Des géographes hors-les-murs? Itinéraires dans un Monde en mouvement (1900–1940)*. L'Harmattan, Paris.
- Cuyala S (2014) *Analyse spatio-temporelle d'un mouvement scientifique: l'exemple de la géographie théorique et quantitative européenne francophone*. PhD thesis. Université Paris 1 Panthéon–Sorbonne.
- Davies A (2019) *Josué de Castro's Geografia Combatente and the Political Ecology of Hunger*. PhD thesis. King's College London.
- De la Cadena M and Blaser M (eds.) (2018) *A world of many worlds*. Duke University Press, Durham and London.
- Descola P (2015) *Par-delà nature et culture*. Gallimard, Paris.

- Ferretti F (2019a) Between radical geography and humanism: Anne Buttimer and the International Dialogue Project. *Antipode* 51 (4): 1123–1145.
- Ferretti F (2019b) Rediscovering other geographical traditions. *Geography Compass* 13 (3): 2019–03.
- Ferretti F (2020) From the drought to the mud: Rediscovering geopoetics and cultural hybridity from the Global South', *cultural geographies*, 27(4): 697–613.
doi:10.1177/1474474020911181
- Ferretti F and Pedrosa BV (2018) Inventing critical development: a Brazilian geographer and his Northern networks. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 43(4): 703–717. doi:10.1111/tran.12241
- García-Álvarez J (2012) The IGU Commission on the History of Geography. Report of the activities carried out in 2008–2012 and Work Plan for 2012–2016, 1–26.
https://web.univ-pau.fr/RECHERCHE/UGIHG/06_Documents/2014/IGU_Commission_History_of_Geography_Report_2008-2012_Plans_2012-2016.pdf
- García-Álvarez J, Garcia JC, eds. (2014) *Historia da Geografia e colonialismo / Histoire de la Géographie et Colonialisme / History of Geography and Colonialism*. Centro de Estudos Geográficos da Universidade de Lisboa – International Geographical Union, Lisboa.
- Ginsburger N (2010) *La guerre, la plus terrible des érosions* ». Cultures de guerre et géographes universitaires. France, Allemagne, Etats-Unis (1914–1921). Thèse d'histoire contemporaine, Université de Paris Ouest Nanterre, Nanterre.
<http://bdr.u-paris10.fr/theses/internet/2010PA100195.pdf>
- Ginsburger N (2016) “Le quart féminin des géographes: dynamiques et limites de la féminisation dans la géographie universitaire française et internationale (1928–1938)”, *Revue d'histoire des sciences humaines*, 29, 213–248.
- Ginsburger N, Robic M-C et Tissier J-L. (2021) *Géographes français en Seconde Guerre mondiale*. Editions de la Sorbonne, Paris.
- Gintrac C (2015) *Au seuil critique de la ville : trois groupes de géographie engagée*, thèse de doctorat en géographie. Université de Paris Nanterre, Nanterre.

- Godlewska A, Smith N, eds. (2004) *Geography and Empire*. Blackwell, Oxford.
- Grivot F (1978) Connaître la géographie par les géographes: *Geographers. Biobibliographical Studies*, Volume 1. Edited by T.W. Freeman, M. Oughton and P. Pinchemel, *Annales de géographie*, 87 566–568
- Hooson D, Takeuchi K (1992): The International Geographical Union Commission on the History of Geographical Thought. *GeoJournal* 26 (2): 216–217.
- Hooson D, ed. (1994) *Geography and National Identity*. Blackwell, Oxford.
- Johnston R (2005) Learning our history from our pioneers: UK academic geographers in the Oxford dictionary of national biography. *Progress in Human Geography* 29, 651–667.
- Johnston R and Sidaway JD (2015) Have the human geographical can(n)ons fallen silent; or were they never primed? *Journal of historical geography* 49, 49–60
- Katona S, ed (1974) *La naissance de la géographie humaine: Friedrich Ratzel – Paul Vidal de la Blache*. Budapest, Academie des Sciences de Hongrie, Budapest.
- Keighren IM (2018) History and philosophy of geography II: The excluded, the evil, and the anarchic. *Progress in Human Geography*, 42, 770–778.
- Kish G, ed. (1979) *Bibliography of International Geographical Congresses 1871–1976*. G.K. Hall Company, Boston.
- Kolosov V, García-Álvarez J, Heffernan M, Schelhaas B, eds. (forthcoming) *A Geographical Century. Essays for the Centenary of the International Geographical Union*. Springer, Cham.
- Kropotkin PA (1885) What Geography Ought to Be. *The Nineteenth Century*, 18, 940–956, <http://www.praxis-epress.org/CGR/2-Kropotkin.pdf>.
- Lamego M (2014) O IBGE e a geografia quantitativa brasileira. *Terra Brasilis* 3 <http://journals.openedition.org/terrabrasilis/1015>
- Lamego M, Ribeiro G, Albuquerque PR, dirs. (2015) Circulação das ideias e história dos saberes geográficos 1. Trajetórias, intercâmbios e aplicações das idéias geográficas. *Terra Brasilis (Nova Serie)* [online journal], 5.

- Latour B (1987) *Science in action: how to follow scientists and engineers through society*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press, Chicago.
- Livingstone DN (1993) *The geographical tradition: episodes in the history of a contested enterprise*. Blackwell, Cambridge.
- Livingstone DN (2003) *Putting science in its place*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Louis F (2019) *La science de l'ennemi : la réception de la Geopolitik en France, au Royaume-Uni et aux Etats-Unis (années 1920 – années 1950)*. Thèse de doctorat en histoire. EHESS, Paris.
- Martin G (1989) Toward “A World Directory of Geographical Archives”. *IGU Bulletin* 39 (2): 120–124.
- Martin G (1992a) History of Geography Archives – A World Directory. *GeoJournal* 26.2: 221–222
- Martin G (1992b) The geography of geographers. *GeoJournal* 26: 219–220.
- McGeachan C, Forsyth I, and Hasty W (2012) Certain subjects? Knowledge with biography and life-writing in historical geography. *Historical Geography* 40, 169–185.
- Orain O (2020) Mai–juin 68: l’Espace géographique et la mémoire d’une communauté. *L’Espace géographique* 49(1): 1–4.
- Orain O (2021) Pour une histoire des « sciences sociales » françaises. La géographie française en situation (1944–1986), in *Une histoire de la géographie au prisme des sciences humaines*. Habilitation à diriger des recherches en géographie. Université Panthéon Sorbonne, Paris.
- Ortega-Cantero N, García-Álvarez J, Mollá Ruiz-Gómez M, eds (2010). *Lenguajes y visiones del paisaje y del territorio / Langages et visions du paysage et du territoire / Languages and visions of landscape and territory*. Universidades Autónoma y Carlos III de Madrid / Grupo de Trabajo de Historia del Pensamiento Geográfico de la Asociación de Geógrafos Españoles, Madrid.

- Ozouf-Marignier MV and Verdier N (2013) Le territoire : représentations géographiques et pratiques politiques. *Annuaire de l'EHESS* : 191–193
- Péaud L (2016) La géographie, émergence d'un champ scientifique. France, Prusse et Grande-Bretagne. ENS Editions, Lyon.
- Pickman, SM (2021) Elizabeth Baigent; André Reyes Novaes (Eds). *Geographers: Biobibliographical Studies* 37 (2019). *Isis* 112, 630–631.
- Pinchemel P (1973a) La commission d'histoire de la pensée géographique de l'Union Géographique Internationale. In: Babicz J ed. *Studia z dziejów geografii i kartografii / pod redakcją Józefa Babicza = Études d'histoire de la géographie et de la cartographie*. Polska Akademia Nauk, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk, 59–66.
- Pinchemel P (1973b) Les géographes. Note méthodologique pour la rédaction internationale des notices biobibliographiques. *Bulletin de l'Association de géographes français*, no. 411–412, 687–692.
- Pinchemel P (1977) Introduction to Freeman T W, Oughton M and Pinchemel P (1977) *Geographers: Biobibliographical Studies* 1 vii–viii.
- Powell RC (2015) Notes on a geographical canon? Measures, models and scholarly enterprise. *Journal of Historical Geography*, 49, 2–8.
doi:10.1016/j.jhg.2015.04.011.
- Radcliffe S (2017) Decolonising geographical knowledges. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 42(3): 329–333. doi:10.1111/tran.12195
- Reyes-Novaes A, Nunes S, dirs. (2015) Circulação das ideias e história dos saberes geográficos 2. Representações e práticas no conhecimento do território. *Terra Brasilis (Nueva Serie)* [online journal], 6.
- Robic MC et al. (2020) Mai–juin 68, l'Espace géographique et la mémoire d'une communauté. *Débat*, 16 juin 2008. *L'Espace Géographique* 49(1): 5–45.
- Robic MC, Briend AM, Rössler M, eds (1996) *Géographes face au monde. L'Union Géographique Internationale et les Congrès Internationaux de Géographie / Geographers and the World: The International Geographical Union and the International Geographical Congresses*. L'Harmattan, Paris.

- Roche M (2019) New Zealand Geography and the International Geographical Union
Part II. Audience to stage, 1956–1974. *New Zealand Geographer* 75 (1): 52–62.
- Schelhaas B, Ferretti F, Reyes-Novaes A, Schmidt di Friedberg M, eds (2020)
Decolonising and Internationalising Geography: Essays in the History of
Contested Science. Springer, Cham.
- Schelhaas B, Pietsch S (2020) (Re-)Writing the history of IGU? A report from the
archives. In: Schelhaas B et al. (eds.) *Decolonising and Internationalising
Geography. Essays in the history of contested science*. Springer, Cham, pp. 127–
140.
- Secord J (2004) Knowledge in transit. *Isis*, 95: 654–672
- Shimazu T, ed. (2014) *Languages, materiality, and the construction of geographical
modernities*. Wakayama University, Wakayama.
- Stoddart D, ed. (1981a): *Geography, Ideology and Social Concern*. Blackwell, Oxford.
- Stoddart D (1981b) *Geographers: Biobibliographical Studies* 1 eds. T.W. Freeman, M.
Oughton and P. Pinchemel (1977); 2 and 3, eds T.W. Freeman and P. Pinchemel
(1978, 1979). *Progress in Physical Geography: Earth and Environment* 5, 303–7.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/030913338100500211>
- Union Géographique Internationale, Commission d'Histoire de la Pensée Géographique /
International Geographical Union. Commission on the History of Geographical
Thought (1972) *La géographie à travers un siècle de Congrès
internationaux/Geography through a Century of International Congresses*.
UNESCO, Caen.