



AUTUMN 2026

HGRG NEWSLETTER

RGS-IBG Historical Geography Research Group



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

PATRICIA SILVEIRA

Dear HGRG,

Welcome to the latest edition of the newsletter and to everyone who has just joined the Group and the Committee in the past few months. Readers will, I'm sure, enjoy this issue's features.

A number of highlights will be detailed throughout this newsletter, including our support of postgraduate scholars through our conference fund scheme, and the organisation of future events designed to connect the international community of historical geographers. The RGS-IBG Annual Conference took place in London and online from 1 to 4 September 2026 and the HGRG sponsored nine sessions. These included: Radical Archives Praxis, Map Room Conversations, Exhibiting Nations, Geographies of Reparatory Justice for Historical Enslavement, New and Emerging Research in Historical Geography and the *Journal of Historical Geography* Lecture. The HGRG also organised a friendly social event on 3 September. Thanks to all the participants who attended the sessions, shared their experiences of researching and writing historical geographies in different places and institutions. Our many thanks for those members who managed to attend the HGRG AGM that took place online on 27 August. Lovely to see old colleagues and to welcome new members to the HGRG Committee.

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<https://hgrg.org.uk/>



This AGM saw a number of changes in the Committee membership. Erin Manson will be HGRG's Postgraduate representative and Büşra Dede takes over the role as Research Series Editor. I'm pleased to express my gratitude here to those leaving the committee and to offer a warm welcome to those joining it.

We also have the pleasure to share that the 19th International Conference of Historical Geographers (ICHG) will take place in Rio de Janeiro, July 2028. This is the first time that the conference will be held in Latin America. The Conference topic is 'Unsettling the Archive: historical geographies of coloniality, memory and resistance'. A Call for Papers and Sessions will be issued in March 2027, please see <https://ichg2028.redebrasilis.net/>. To assist with attendance and participation at the conference, the HGRG will soon launch the HGRG-ICHG Bursary Scheme to support scholars' attendance at the ICHG 2028.

HGRG's activities were highlighted by the RGS Newsletter (Summer edition) – providing our members with an idea of the activities that they can get involved with and inspiration for other research groups. I would like to announce that during our AGM held in August, the Committee decided to focus HGRG's funds to the organisation of the next **Practising Historical Geography Conference** (PHG) that will be held online and in-person at Edinburgh University (thanks to Paul Wright for your dedication and to Rachel Hunt for the support). In this scenario, the HGRG will temporarily suspend the grants for Seminars Funding. The group's efforts will be concentrated in offering resources to PhD students and early careers researchers to attend the 32nd edition of the PHG. The conference series has always provided a safe and nurturing space to support the practice of historical geographical research, enquiry and writing. As HGRG supports a number of conference sessions in international conferences, such as the RGS-IBG Annual Conference and the International Conference of Historical Geographers, and the seminars

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organised by the London Group of Historical Geographers (see p.11), the HGRG will keep its commitment to support conferences dedicated to the advancement of historical geography. For more details about PHG's history, please see <https://hgrg.org.uk/practising-historical-geographies/>

I would like to stress that the **Postgraduate Support Scheme** will receive applications until **1 December 2026**. Application forms can be found on the [website](#). Finally, I would like to say a huge thanks to all committee members who have worked so hard across the year to keep the group active and to generate new exciting opportunities.

The HGRG Committee thanks the community (almost 400 worldwide members on the mailing list!) that kindly support our activities, publications and events.

With warm wishes for the season's festivities.
See you in 2027!

With best wishes,

Patrícia Silveira
Chair

HGRG Committee

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NEWS and events

HGRG DISSERTATION PRIZE WINNERS

We're very pleased to announce the winner of the HGRG's Undergraduate Dissertation Prize for 2026 is Louis Russell (University of Edinburgh) for the dissertation 'Geographies of Drainage and inundation: A Landscape History of Loch Spynie and the Laich o'Moray'.

The Panel commented "In offering thoughtful analysis of the chosen fieldsite at various points time, the author demonstrated impressive skill in engaging with multiple areas of historical geographical scholarship. The writing style used throughout the dissertation was both engaging and highly innovative and there was excellent use of empirical material and maps to support the arguments. There was also a thoughtful and reflexive discussion on the author's personal relationship to the research as well as on the fieldsite's ongoing challenges and uncertain future."

This year's Highly Commended dissertation is 'Colonial control of Indian Women in Fiji 1879-1920' by Annabel Axelrod (University of Nottingham). Of which the Panel said: "The author has explored an interesting, important and highly original topic, with the combined focus on mental health and feminist approaches offering many novel and unique perspectives. The panel were particularly impressed with the substantial amount of work undertaken during the project and the critical engagement with relevant archival theory. The author also offered thoughtful and critical reflections on their own relationship to the research and its ongoing historical legacies.

HGRG Committee

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NEWS and events

continued...

As winner, Louis will receive £200 worth of Routledge books, courtesy of **The Routledge Research in Historical Geography** book series, which sponsors the prize, and will be invited to submit an article based on the dissertation for publication in the *Journal of Historical Geography*, subject to standard refereeing procedures.

Please note that judges do not assess work from their own institutions where there is a possibility that they may have helped in the development of a submitted dissertation.

Please do consider any ongoing dissertation research for the HGRG Dissertation Prize 2027.



OPEN DAY FOR RESEARCHERS

Discover the research taking place at The National Archives and explore opportunities for future collaboration at the inaugural Open Day for Researchers on **19 October**, a new annual event from The National Archives that showcases the breadth and impact of their research. Whether you are a student, researcher, or archive sector professional, this free event offers a unique opportunity to engage directly with researchers, projects, and collections.

Throughout the day, attendees will be able to choose from a range of activities, including talks, interactive workshops, behind-the-scenes tours, document displays featuring original material from the collections, and poster presentations from PhD researchers.

Book your place now at: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/open-day-for-researchers-2026-tickets-1996982454278?aff=oddttdtcreator&keep_tld=true



Calls for Papers

See a range of CfPs here:

<https://royalhistsoc.org/events/calls-for-papers/>

The RGS-IBG Postgraduate Conference will take place on 23 and 24 February. The Call for Papers closes on 15 January. Find out all the details at: <https://www.rgs.org/events/upcoming-events/postgraduate-conference>

14th Biennial European Society for Environmental History (ESEH) Conference. “Environmental History Beyond Disciplinary Boundaries”
Salzburg, Austria | 7-10 September 2027

The European Society for Environmental History (ESEH) is pleased to invite proposals for panel sessions, individual papers, book presentations, posters, roundtables, and more experimental presentation formats for its upcoming biennial conference. The conference theme, Environmental History Beyond Disciplinary Boundaries, aims to highlight and reinforce the interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary nature and culture of environmental history. The deadline for submissions is **15 October 2026, 23:59 CET**.

<https://eseh.org/cfp-14th-biennial-european-society-for-environmental-history-eseh-conference/>

Empire's Fruit: Colonial Ecologies, Food Systems, and Imperial Power
Saturday 20th March 2027 - University of Warwick, UK

A one-day interdisciplinary conference that will critically examine the central role of food, plants, and agricultural knowledge in the formation and maintenance of colonial and imperial systems from the early modern period to the present. By positioning food as both a material infrastructure and a cultural instrument of empire, the conference will bring together scholars from history, environmental humanities, food studies, anthropology, geography, postcolonial studies, and material culture to generate new interdisciplinary approaches to colonial power, ecological transformation, and global inequality.

Submissions are due **13 November 2026**.

More information here: <https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/hrc/confs/fruit/>

Remember to keep an eye out for emails and notifications from the HGRG re deadlines for sponsored sessions, and submission deadlines for next year's RGS-IBG conference early in 2027.



NEWS and events

Talking Records 2026: Spaces and Places of Care

Monday 7 December 2026, The National Archives

The 2026 symposium will explore histories of care and welfare and their intersections with histories of spaces and places. These histories leave complex traces in archival collections, entangled with histories of medicine, public health, poverty, government, social security and more.

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/professional-guidance-and-services/our-research-and-academic-collaboration/research-events/talking-records/>

The Environmental Cultures Consortium (ECCo)

The ECCo is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council under the Collaborative Doctoral Landscape Awards Scheme. It will support 14 collaborative doctoral studentships over four years, with the first cohort beginning autumn 2027. The consortium will bring new research perspectives to historical natural sciences collections, which have traditionally been under used by arts and humanities researchers.

The full call for proposals for studentships starting autumn 2027 will launch shortly. Studentship proposals will be developed by supervisory teams made up of at least one university supervisor and at least one supervisor from either Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew or the Natural History Museum.

More information here: <https://www.nhm.ac.uk/our-science/study/postgraduate/the-environmental-cultures-consortium.html>

Archives Revealed - Unlocking the Colonial Archive: A Community Co-curated Exhibition

Reading Room, Herbarium & Library, Kew Green, TW9 3AE. Opens 29 September.

This exhibition is the result of community workshops held as part of an Archives Revealed cataloguing and engagement project (funded by The National Archives). The exhibition features community produced artwork and captions, alongside historic records from the archives and covers themes around plants, colonial histories and archival absences.



NEWS and events

HISTORY DAY

Bookings are now open for History Day 2026. Save the date for Wednesday 18 November and head to Senate House for this celebration of all things history!

History Day is organised by a small team at the Institute of Historical Research, School of Advanced Study and Senate House Library. History Day is an annual event that welcomes everyone to meet a range of exhibitors including libraries, archives, historical societies and museums, all in one space. The day is ideal for students, researchers and anyone interested in history to explore collections and be inspired. Organisations attending include British Film Institute, Mass Observation Archive, Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, Whitby Museum and Black Cultural Archives. The theme this year is Grassroots History, Grassroots Collections. A diverse range of participating organisations will interpret this theme broadly with their stands and online contributions. There will be something for everyone to engage with both in person on the day, and virtually, before and after the event.

Book now at: <https://www.history.ac.uk/news-events/events/history-day-2026>

RHS LECTURES IN NOVEMBER

Check out the upcoming programme of lectures at the Royal Historical Society at: <https://royalhistsoc.org/rhs-events-programme-2026/>

These include:

Tuesday 3 November 2026 at 6.00pm

This year's RHS Public History Lecture 'What History is NOT' will be given by writer and historian Sathnam Sanghera. In association with Gresham College, London. At: Barnard's Inn Hall, Holborn, also livestreamed online. Book your place: <https://www.gresham.ac.uk/whats-on/history-not>

Friday 27 November 2026 at 6.00pm

2026 RHS Anniversary Lecture: Professor Hanna Diamond (Cardiff University) 'From Cabaret Star to Gaullist Spy: Josephine Baker's Secret War' at Wolfson Suite, IHR, Senate House. Book your place via the events link above.



NEWS and events

LISA JARDINE GRANT, ROYAL SOCIETY

The Lisa Jardine Grant Scheme is open until **14 October** for applications for research from early career scholars. The Scheme is named in memory of the eminent British historian Professor Lisa Jardine CBE FRS. It encourages early career researchers to expand their interests in history of science and related interdisciplinary studies by travelling in order to use archival resources, to build relationships with the Royal Society and other institutions and to access training and networking opportunities for career development.

Find out much more and apply at: <https://royalsociety.org/grants/lisa-jardine/>

ROYAL MUSEUM GREENWICH EVENTS

Maritime Histories from the Margins: People, Places, and Practices, 1500-Present

11-12 November, tickets £60 or £30 for ECR/Student
National Maritime Museum.

Go to link for more information:

[Conference - Maritime Histories from the Margins: People, Places, and Practices, 1500–Present | Royal Museums Greenwich](#)

Beyond Black Data: Working with Descendant Communities

20th November, 10:30-16:00

National Maritime Museum

Free one-day symposium on descendant-led approaches to interpretation, care and ethical museum practice.

[Black Beyond Data: Working with Descendant Communities — Symposium Tickets, Friday, November 20 • 10:30 AM - 4 PM | Eventbrite](#)

Tickets are limited so booking required by the above.



MAPS AND SOCIETY LECTURES

THE WARBURG INSTITUTE
University of London
Woburn Square, London WC1H 0AB

MAPS and SOCIETY

Lectures in the history of cartography are convened by Catherine Delano-Smith (Institute of Historical Research), Philip Jagerssar (King's College London) and Alessandro Scafi (Warburg Institute). Meetings are held on selected Thursdays at the Warburg Institute at 5.00 pm (admission is free) and are followed by refreshments. All meetings are now hybrid: in-person attendance is strongly encouraged, but those attending remotely are no less warmly welcomed. Enquiries: c.delano-smith@sas.ac.uk.

It is appreciated if all planning to attend a meeting, in-person or remotely, would inform the Warburg Institute at <https://warburg.sas.ac.uk/whats-on/maps-and-society-lecture-series>; those attending remotely will then be sent a link with guidelines. Meetings are generously supported by the Antiquarian Booksellers' Association's Educational Trust and the International Map Collectors' Society.

THIRTY-SIXTH SERIES: 2026–2027

November 26: David Fletcher (Independent Researcher). “A New Picture of the Tudor Realm: Christopher Saxton's Atlas of England and Wales”.

December 17: Giles Darkes (Historic Towns Trust). “Turning an OS into History: Creating Historical Maps for the Historic Towns Trust”.

2027

January 21: Kristen Lippincott (Director of The Saxl Project). “A Rediscovered Witness: The Art of Making Celestial Globes in 15th-Century Italy”.

February 25: Rachel Herrmann, Hakluyt Society Speaker (Cardiff University): “Maps of the Mar del Golpho de Mexico, or, what made Florida so weird”.

April 29: Marissa Griffioen (University of Amsterdam). “Map Encounters in the Dutch Republic (c.1600–1800): Analysing the Material Culture of Early Modern Maps”.

May 20: Anne-Sophie Pratte (Georgetown University in Qatar).: “Mapping the Steppe: Mongol Manuscript Maps of the 19th Century”



LONDON GROUP OF HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHERS

See the LGHG [Autumn Programme](#) here

The London Group of Historical Geographers (LGHG) organises regular seminars which are open to historical geographers worldwide. The Group was founded in the early 1980s by a group of historical geographers in the University of London (for further details, see the article on the [LGHG website](#), originally published in the HGRG Newsletter in 2011). Since 1989, we have convened a continuous series of fortnightly seminars on Tuesday afternoons across the three terms of the UK academic year (from October to June). The seminars take place in a space provided by the Institute of Historical Research (IHR), the UK's national centre for history based in Senate House, University of London, at the heart of Bloomsbury. Today all seminars are also livestreamed, enabling the participation of a much larger and more diverse group of historical geographers across the UK and the wider world. Some seminars are also available subsequently as podcasts See: <https://lghgseminar.wordpress.com/podcasts/>

Since 1989, each seminar series in the first two terms (October-December and January-March) have been convened around a particular theme across a range of geographical contexts and historical periods, with the third term (May-June) generally open. Recent seminar themes have included 'Imperial Spaces', 'Bad Habits', 'Law and Empire', 'Archives of Natural History' and 'Possession and Dispossession'. Some themed terms are organised in collaboration with geographers and other scholars beyond the convening team: recent examples include 'The Environmental Movement', 'Mountain Histories' and 'Archives and Activism'.

LGHG seminars attract an interdisciplinary and diverse audience of scholars and practitioners from across the arts, humanities, and social sciences. Early career scholars and researchers from beyond the academic sector, including museums, libraries and archives, are welcome. The LGHG series is co-convened by geographers and historians at Queen Mary, Royal Holloway, and UCL: today the convenors are Felix Driver, Margot Finn, Innes Keighren and Miles Ogborn. The seminar series is funded from small grants from a variety of sources including the Historical Geography Research Group, the Institute of Historical Research and a number of University Geography and History Departments in and around London.



For 2026-27, continuing the Group's strong commitment to innovative interdisciplinary research, our themes are 'Skills, Knowledge and Practice' (term 1) and 'Modern London' (term 2), the latter series marking the opening of the new London Museum in Smithfield, with speakers from the London Museum, English Heritage, Queen Mary, the University of Birmingham, and the Courtauld Institute. For advance details of the programme see the [LGHG website](#); for full details and booking, go to the [IHR website](#) from late September 2026. Seminars, which are free and open to all, are scheduled on Tuesdays at 5:30pm and include a substantial period for discussion after the reading of the paper. Details of each term's seminar programme – including abstracts for all papers are publicised in advance on the LGHG page on the website of the [Institute of Historical Research](#) where you can book your free place. To receive regular updates on future seminars subscribe to the Group's mailing list here: <https://lghgseminar.wordpress.com/subscribe/>



Senate House, where the London Group of Historical Geographers will convene seminars every alternate Tuesday throughout the UK academic year. All seminars are also livestreamed online.

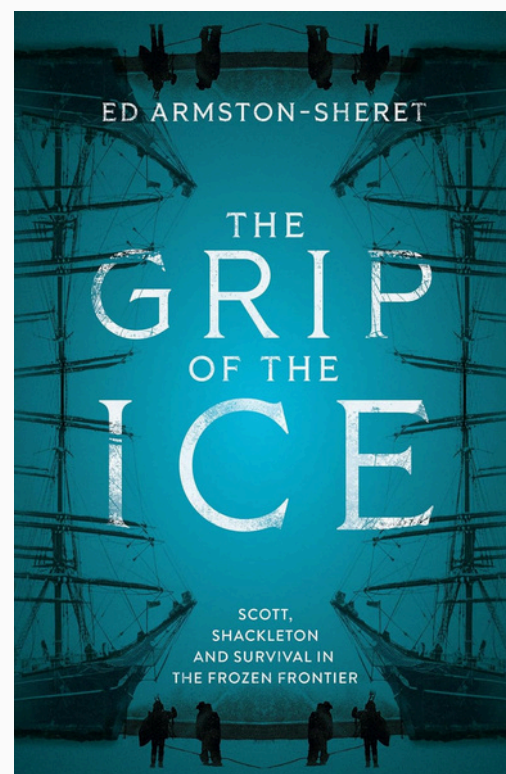


New Books

THE GRIP OF THE ICE

Ed Armston-Sheret, former HGRG newsletter editor and postgraduate representative, has recently published a new book with Mudlark, *The Grip of the Ice: Scott, Shackleton, and Survival on the Frozen Frontier*. (RRP £22 in hardback). Ed says: “It is now available from all good bookshops, and even some bad ones!”

“*The Grip of the Ice* tells the story of the *Discovery* Expedition through the lives of twelve men involved in it. While it is primarily a trade history book, the project builds on my previous work by examining the collective nature of exploration, the links between exploration and empire, and cultures of heroism and celebrity.” The book, which was timed to be published for the 125th anniversary of the voyage, has already received great reviews. If any readers are interested in publishing trade history books, Ed would be very happy to talk with them. You can contact him at:
edward.armstonsheret@sas.ac.uk



RGS POLAR HISTORY COLLECTIONS

The RGS holds remarkable items in its Collections from the 1901–1904 *Discovery* expedition, which offer valuable insights into early polar exploration, scientific research and our understanding of how our world has evolved. The RGS is currently digitising collections to help ensure that the expedition artefacts are preserved, shared and continue inspiring students, researchers and the wider public.

It is asking for support: “With around 7,000 fragile photographs, maps, letters and reports from the expedition at risk of deterioration, your timely support will keep these irreplaceable materials protected and forever accessible - bringing history to life and shaping new understandings.” See the [donation page here](#).



New Books and Resources

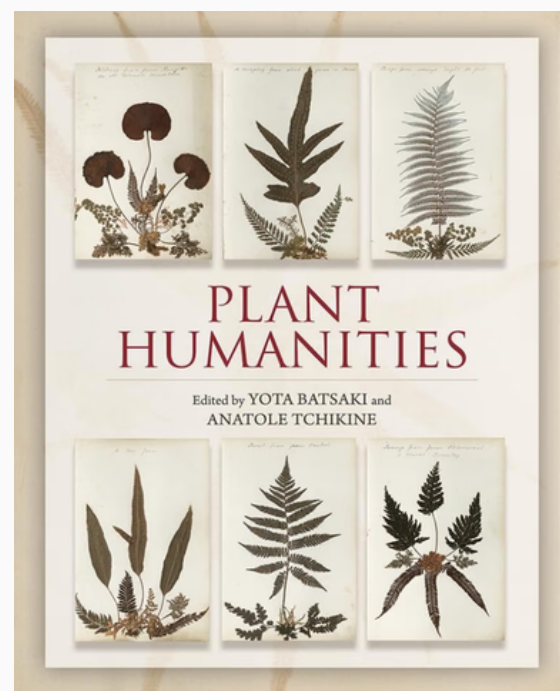
PLANT HUMANITIES

A new book entitled *Plant Humanities* from Yota Batsaki, the executive director of Dumbarton Oaks at Harvard University and Anatole Tchikine, curator of rare books in their research library, has just been published (25 September 2026).

Plant Humanities moves plants to the centre of critical inquiry, positioning them as biocultural entities with distinct environmental and social histories that have profoundly shaped human cultures. Its thirteen chapters cover a broad geographical range, including the Americas, Europe, the Pacific, the Indian subcontinent, East Asia, and Africa, to explore the dual character of plants as place makers and world travelers. As ecosystem builders and cultural agents constitutive of national, sacred, and domestic ecologies, plants

help us trace legacies of colonialism, capitalism, racism, and the related challenges of anthropogenic climate change and biodiversity loss. Plant-focused epistemologies are also central to this volume; several essays explore the interplay between vernacular and scientific paradigms and distinct taxonomic systems to reveal instances of rupture, continuity, and resilience. *Plant Humanities* concludes with the discussion of the poetics of plants—their foundational role in communal imaginaries—and the ways they shape our understanding of the sacred, probing how notions of value are predicated on human commodification, elevation, or abjection of the vegetal world.

Available now: RRP £62.95, hardcover. [Harvard University Press](#). Also available on Kindle via [Amazon](#).



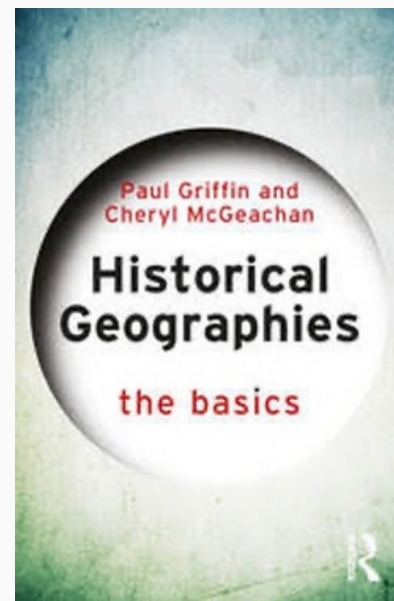


New Books and Resources

EVENT: HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHIES: THE BASICS – REFLECTIONS ON TEACHING HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHIES

The HGRG will host a panel dedicated to explore collective projects of writing and teaching historical geographies. This online seminar (on **28th October**) provides insights into the collaborative making of the book *Historical Geographies: The Basics* (2026), published by Paul Griffin (Northumbria University) and Cheryl McGeachan (University of Glasgow). More information about registration will be available soon at HGRG's website.

Find out more about the book at: <https://www.routledge.com/Historical-Geographies-The-Basics/Griffin-McGeachan/p/book/9781032757414>



GEOGRAPHERS BIOBIBLIOGRAPHICAL STUDIES (GBS) BY ELIZABETH BAIGENT AND ANDRÉ REYES NOVAES (EDS)

The newly published GEOGRAPHERS BIOBIBLIOGRAPHICAL STUDIES (GBS) – volume 42 explores how individual geographers have interacted with and shaped institutions throughout their careers. Rather than focusing solely on institutions themselves, this volume examines how geographers have used institutional frameworks to advance their practices and how they have intertwined their knowledge production with both academic and non-academic settings.

‘Approaching institutional history through memoirs of individuals can be corrective, at the same time showing how geography’s institutions can be gatekeepers and obstacles as well as enablers and supporters of geographical practice and practitioners’ (Baigent and Novaes, 2026, p. 23).

To find out more: <https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/geographers-9781350613201/>



New Books and Resources

NEW WORK IN THE RGS-IBG JOURNALS

by Anna Lawrence, Managing Editor at RGS-IBG Journals

We have seen a flurry of historical geography come through the RGS-IBG Journals in the last year and would draw your attention to some recent publications of note. Firstly, Jo Norcup and David Lambert write in *Area* on 'Caribbean Historical Geographies and British Geography', drawing from discussions at the 2024 RGS-IBG Annual Conference. Also in *Area*, we have a paper which reflects on participatory archiving and the process of archival co-curation with the Indian Workers' Association in Britain by Sarah Peck with Harsev Bains of the IWA(GB).

In *The Geographical Journal*, Agostinho Pinnock's paper on hair, race, and identity in (post)-colonial Jamaica contributes to a forthcoming Special Section on 'Global Black Geographies'. Finally, Jake Hodder and Philip Jagessar's recent paper focuses on the League of Nations' Geographical Department, highlighting the role of mapping as a foundational technology in the production of liberal internationalism. These papers are all open access.

Continue to send your work our way and get in touch at journals@rgs.org with any questions on the journals!



Archives in Focus

Mapping a transnational and institutional conversation: Arquivos Históricos do Itamaraty and Archives de l'École nationale des Ponts et Chaussées

Thomaz Menezes Leite (PhD in
Geography, Federal University of Rio
de Janeiro - UFRJ)

During my doctoral research on the creation of a "geodoxa" regarding a place from the past, I spent a year as a visiting scholar at the École des hautes études en sciences sociales (EHESS) under the supervision of Professor Cláudia Damasceno Fonseca, funded by a CAPES-COFECUB scholarship. Taking advantage of this opportunity—and despite the obstacles posed by the COVID-19 pandemic—I visited the archives of the École nationale des Ponts et Chaussées (ENPC) to try to answer a question that frequently arises in studies on the urban reforms in Rio de Janeiro during the early 20th century: what did Mayor Francisco Pereira Passos do while in Paris during the Haussmann reforms?

The period of the Brazilian's stay was known (1857–1860), as was his institutional affiliation as the second attaché to the Brazilian diplomatic legation in France. However, what the newly graduated mathematician actually did in Paris remains a subject of controversy. Despite the lack of supporting documentation, this period abroad has become a key argument used by contemporary researchers to assert that Passos was a Francophile, possessed

outstanding technical skills and deontological ethics, aspired to transform Rio de Janeiro into a replica of Paris, and learned Haussmann-style urban planning through firsthand experience during the reforms. Some of these claims rely on the fact that older, laudatory biographies of the mayor attest that he attended courses at what was then the École Impériale des Ponts et Chaussées.

Upon researching the institution's archives (Champs-sur-Marne, France), I found no mention of Pereira Passos's alleged period of study there. To determine whether the absence of references to foreigners was systematic or specific to him, I delved into the ENPC's context at the time and the institutional ties between the institution and Brazil. I discovered that the opposite was true: there was a significant flow of foreign students graduating and visiting professionals attending just one or two courses, as well as strong demand for the technical and graphic materials produced by the ENPC.

To bridge this gap, upon returning to Brazil, I investigated the Arquivos Históricos do Itamaraty (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil). There, I discovered valuable documents regarding Pereira Passos's time in France—including a previously unseen handwritten letter—suggesting that his primary interest during that period lay in observing, firsthand, railway and port projects overseen by the Corps des Ponts et Chaussées in the French provinces, rather than attending ENPC courses or studying Haussmann's urban works in Paris. Based on these findings, I realized that the claim regarding the Brazilian mathematician's attendance at the ENPC had evolved from a mere inference into a



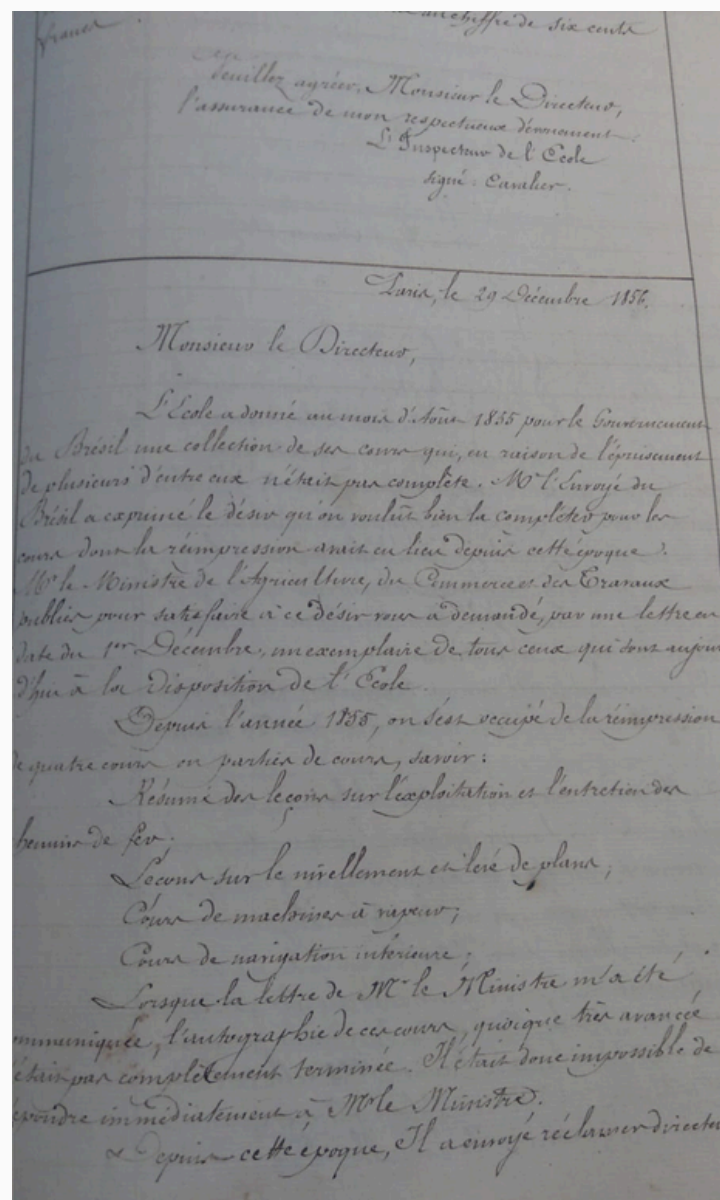
Archives in Focus

self-evident truth—serving as yet another element in the construction of the Carioca Geodexa surrounding the Passos Reform.

Archives in different languages, from different places, organized according to different logics, produced by different institutions, and subject to different legal regimes. Yet, it was only through the conversation between the two that—beyond merely uncovering new details about Passos’s stay—a genuine network of circulation was revealed. A case in point is the discovery, within the ENPC’s own archives, of records documenting the Inspector’s submission of lithographed course materials to the Brazilian government—a fact corroborated by a memorandum sent from the Brazilian Legation in Paris to the Brazilian Empire’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, found in the Itamaraty Historical Archives.

Discussions regarding diplomacy between two 19th-century empires, the diffusion and exchange of knowledge and techniques—facilitated by the movement of intellectual elites, training abroad, the travel of professionals, and even the literal exchange of requested books, courses, and records. One gains insight into each side of the dialogue, including their grievances, imposed limitations, cultural differences, and personal ambitions intertwined with national or institutional interests. A whole new picture emerges when attempting to assemble this heterogeneous puzzle, the pieces of which originate from diverse archives. In this context, the researcher’s own mobility—enabling access to widely

separated locations—becomes highly valuable. Archival alterity, while demanding greater effort in contextual interpretation, offers a unique richness that can help answer questions—or raise new ones—that might otherwise remain obscure.



Source: Archives de l'École nationale des Ponts et Chaussées (Rapports de l'inspecteur 1842-1893 Cota: 9582 / 77.551)