

French historian takes away inaugural 'Prize of History'



Female historians from around the world talk between meetings at the 22nd International Congress of Historical Sciences. PHOTOS BY JU CHUANJIANG / CHINA DAILY

By ZHAO RUIXUE in Jinan
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French historian Serge Gruzinski won the inaugural International Prize of History at the 22nd International Congress of Historical Sciences, which ends on Saturday, for his pioneering work on reflecting on questions of global and transnational history.

He was presented with a Jaeger-LeCoultre Reverso watch and an ICHS Medal at the congress venue in Jinan, the capital of East China's Shandong province, on Wednesday.

"Currently, global history and transnational history represent the main trends in the historical sciences," Margitta Hietala, president of the International Committee of Historical Sciences, said at the award ceremony. "Since we have to cross borders and learn about the cultures of others, Serge Gruzinski's publications tell us about the importance of understanding other cultures, religions and different types of behavior. The common specification for his books is interdisciplinarity."

Gruzinski, who was born in 1949, is a specialist on the history of Latin America in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. He is an invited professor at Princeton University and a senior pro-



French historian Serge Gruzinski displays his International Prize of History.

essor at the National Center of Scientific Research and School of Advanced Studies of Social Sciences.

"It is global history itself that restores the historic landscape to its thickness, complexity, diversity and ambiguity, which have too often been erased by Western history or national history for centuries. Can we still examine the European Renaissance without

the countries of Islam, without China, India or Japan? How should we think about the New World paying no attention to these major actors in the 16th century world?" Gruzinski said.

"A few years ago, I tried to reread the conquest of Mexico in the light of the Ming Dynasty of China in a book titled *The Eagle and the Dragon*. Hence, I realized that we could not write a line of history, even the history of the Americas, without having in mind the past of this great country and the scope — very often abysmal — of our ignorance."

Laurent Tissot, treasurer of the ICHS, said Gruzinski was one of the first to demonstrate how history is neither unilateral nor uniform.

"Serge Gruzinski doesn't want to simply de-Westernize history, neither does he want to remove the ways of thinking that make it so simplistic and so obvious to our Western eyes. He wants to globalize history."

"If the world is to be taken globally, the approach has to be global too. The question is to examine the way its parts get into mutual contact, how they are brought to meet, to face, to appreciate or to hate each other and to mix. The approach Serge Gruzinski develops is not easy," Tissot said.

The International Prize of History honors a historian or historians who

distinguished themselves in the field by their works, publications or teaching, and who significantly contributed to the development of historical knowledge, on a smaller scale but comparable in a way to the Nobel Prize or the Field prize in Mathematics, Hietala said.

"Only the collective members of the ICHS — its national committees or the international affiliated organizations — could propose candidates. No individual applications were accepted. The prize is nominally awarded and cannot be posthumously awarded. Exceptionally, the prize may be awarded jointly to two, or three people at most," she said.

"The Jinan congress is the first time we are awarding the prize. The jury — the board of the ICHS, which has 12 members from different countries — experienced many difficulties in choosing the best historian from among the many highly qualified candidates proposed," Hietala said.

"The prize will encourage historians to conduct intensive research, especially in the field of global history. Currently, most Chinese historians are more concerned with research on Chinese history," said Wan Ming, an expert on the history of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

Journal presents Chinese scholarship abroad

By ZHAO RUIXUE in Jinan
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Li Pingsheng worked as an editor for the *Journal of Literature, History and Philosophy* for 18 years since 1986 and said the publication not only broadened his working but also shaped his writing style.

Li, 53, now the director of the publicity department of Shandong University, clearly recalls his time at the journal.

"Every word, every annotation and each piece of sentence grammar had to be accurate. The editing helped me develop a habit of being strict in the details of my work," he said.

"In addition, articles from famous Chinese scholars enriched my knowledge, broadened my horizons on the world and enhanced my writing skills," Li said.

Li once edited a 90,000 word-article written by Ji Xianlin, a Chinese linguist and historian, cutting it to 30,000 words according to the requirements of the journal. The edited article was highly praised by Ji.

First published in 1951, the



Participants at the 22nd International Congress of Historical Sciences look at publications including the *Journal of Literature, History and Philosophy*. JU CHUANJIANG / CHINA DAILY

journal is a respected publication from Shandong University that has presented many influential discussions on Chinese culture and history, such as discussions on *A Dream of Red Mansions*, one of China's four great classic novels.

"The *Journal of Literature, History and Philosophy* has been one of the pillars of academic discussions in China since its first issue. Its broad range of humanities topics and dedication to creative

research value have kept it at the vanguard of intellectual trends for more than half a century," said Wang Xuedian, editor-in-chief of the journal.

Wang said the journal has always been a platform for academic discussions and debates and it rejects low-level copies of other scholars' opinions.

"The quality and the tenet of our journal has been maintained since its beginning.

"In each journal, we publish

an article written by a junior scholar, which is one of the journal's traditional features," Wang said.

Eight of the journal's 10 editors hold doctorate degrees to ensure the publication's high quality.

The Chinese journal not only has subscribers in China but has been available elsewhere in the world since the 1950s. By the end of 2008, it had 545 overseas subscribers in more than 30 countries and regions, according to China National Publications Import and Export. Most are libraries of universities and academic institutes.

The journal has around 6,000 subscribers in China, Wang said.

The publication is one of four Chinese academic journals recognized by Harvard University. The other three are *Study of History, Archaeology and Cultural Relics*.

The *Journal of Literature, History and Philosophy* published its first English version in June 2014.

"Drawing upon the resources and high standards of the

Chinese version, we would like to carry forward this tradition to the world outside China," Wang said.

Wang said the English version selects and translates for Western readers articles from top Chinese scholars in their fields. Each issue has a specific theme pertaining to literature, history, or philosophy and also includes a limited number of contributions from Western authors to ensure multiple viewpoints and inspiring discussions.

There are challenges in compiling the English version, Wang said. "We have difficulties in translating Chinese history and culture accurately into other languages."

To ensure the quality of the English version, the editorial board has 17 foreign experts, including Yu Ying-shih, an emeritus professor of East Asian Studies and History at Princeton University, and Professor Roger T. Ames, an expert in Chinese philosophy at the University of Hawaii.

What they say

Editor's note: The weeklong 22nd International Congress of Historical Sciences will close on Saturday in Jinan, the capital of Shandong province. The conference had four main themes — Digitalization trends in historical studies, Historicizing emotions, China from global perspectives and Revolutions in world history: Comparisons and connections. About 2,600 scholars took part in the conference to share perspectives on the latest global developments in historiography.

"In order to understand what's going to be in the



global world in the future, we have to understand historical rules. If we understand why Chinese goods were popular among Europeans in medieval times, we can understand the present day's trade. Here at the congress, I can meet more sources in China. If we can do everything together, we can move things forward."

Alexander Petrov, Russian Academy of Sciences, Russia

"My field is 19th century history, when there



were a lot of contacts between the West and the East and construction of new traditions. It's interesting to do something comparative on an occasion with a strong Chinese presence to think about issues like construction, ideas of nations, or collective feelings."

Laura Malosetti Costa, National University of San Martin, Argentina

"It is a very new topic and new perspective (on

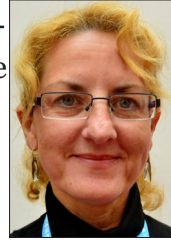


choosing "Historicizing Emotions" as a major theme of the congress). European historians proposed it, but it is fruitful this time to get recognized by the ICHS Congress in China. Studying different emotions in different circumstances and cultures, and human

feelings is also important."

Martyn Lyons, University of New South Wales, Australia

"It (a major theme of the congress — "Digital Turn



in History") is a really great session. Digital history is becoming a key. As a national museum, we cannot do our job without digital tools. Our entire collection has open data and 3-D printing to preserve our physical collection will be the next big thing."

Anna Adamek, Canada Science and Technology Museums, Canada

"The congress wants to end Eurocentrism (in



historical sciences) and coming here to China is the first step. And, this is just a beginning. We've seen so many European and American studies on China, we now expect a stronger presence of China in the international discussion. For example, what is the Chinese opinion on 17th-century Jesuits in China? We have so many European views. It will be interesting to have another perspective, and that will be the future of historical studies."

Marco Jorio, Swiss Academy of Sciences

"Chinese historians should not only



focus on our own history but it's better to consider it as part of global history, and improve our capacity for international communication. It's a good start to set the Chinese History in Global Perspectives section this time, and we need to broaden our horizons to promote interdisciplinary studies and avoid restricting ourselves to small circles."

Wan Ming, Institute of History, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, China