

# **Collecting, Classifying, (Re)Presenting: Archives, Museums, Textbooks and the Politics of the Past**

**ICAS-Workshop TM1:  
at the German Historical Institute in Rome**

**Wednesday, 9.10.2019 – Friday, 11.10.2019**

The archive, the museum and the textbook are three different institutions dedicated, among other functions and objectives, to the preservation, creation and diffusion of evidence, of narratives and images of the past. They are sites of memory and knowledge comprising a manifold set of socio-cultural techniques and practices by which societies, states, religious communities, and other entities deal with issues of the broad field of history, which are related directly to questions of power and identity. During the last two centuries, their evolution has been closely linked with the rise and the fate of the modern nation state and bourgeois society. This is because they were used as instruments for conveying ideas of progress and civilization, of a past in terms of national and imperial peculiarity and superiority as well as for self-affirmation and legitimization.

Currently, each of the three institutions has become a productive field of research informed particularly by cultural history and the history of knowledge. One of the main desiderata, however, remains a comparative perspective which embeds the analysis of their objects in a transcultural approach, especially referring to the “West” and the “East” resp. the “Global South” as well as the relations and interactions between the three sites of memory and knowledge. This is what this workshop aims at by bringing together scholars who study colonial and post-colonial India with those, mostly situated in Europe and North America, who specialize in the history of archives, museums, and textbooks in the Western context. The discussions during the workshop will focus on practices and techniques linked with the three institutions that are related to different – kinds of – “politics of the past”. First, the workshop will engage with the role of these institutions in different cultural contexts: it will examine mutual influences and appropriations in different political situations and circumstances, and analyse their position as contested sites of memory and knowledge, including – among others - problems of center and periphery, of access, control and empowerment, as well as of cultural and religious diversity. Second, the workshop is concerned with concrete modes of collecting and classifying traces, texts and other objects and of using them in different ways to (re-)present the past. And finally, it will explore the interrelationship and interdependence of the three institutions as devices in constructing, displaying and circulating narratives and images of the past.

The workshop will be introduced by an opening keynote by Markus Friedrich, University Hamburg and Neeladri Bhattacharya, recently retired from JNU New Delhi followed by two days of paper presentations and discussions. An excursion to the Vatican Archives and the Capitoline Museums is planned for the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the workshop.

We invite papers that engage with the role of archives, museums and textbooks in collecting, classifying and presenting the past in the light of their entanglement with the political in a comparative perspective.

**Proposals and submission:**

For paper sessions, we invite proposals for 15 to 20 minutes presentations (proposals should be no longer than 300 words).

**Please send your proposals by 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2019 to the organizers of the workshop to Monika Kruse:**  
[kruse@dhi-roma.it](mailto:kruse@dhi-roma.it)