

## Synopsis of *'The Rise and Propagation of Historical Professionalism'*

The Rise and Propagation of Historical Professionalism approaches what it means to be a professional historian in a quite new way. The starting point is sociological. A community of historians is a precondition for professionalism and it has to fulfill certain conditions. In the book an international community of historians sharing a set of values and norms on what is correct on the one hand and fruitful on the other is seen as crucial for professionalism. As these values and norms have changed from Ranke's state-centrism to methods and further to a historiography borne by social theories, historical professionalism has got new shapes. The propagation of these different ideals and of new educational forms (seminars) is examined from late 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present.

A second starting point is epistemological. Historical professionalism is seen not simply as a way of writing history but a normative system for history-writing in order to create historical knowledge. The professional norms are of two kinds. The first kind consists of those norms that decide what must be demanded from a text written by a professional historian. Such norms I call minimum demands, and they include logic as well as historical source criticism or historical method generally. The second kind of norms, which I call optimum norms, are those that prescribe which themes are most interesting to make research about in terms of what is fruitful for the creation of new knowledge. Evidently all historians do not share the same optimum norms. The development of professionalism has not been a constant refinement of the rule system of historians but, rather, a change in three repetitions between what was given the priority. Within the Rankean professionalism (1830s-1880s) the priority was on optimum norms, but it was followed by a period of a priority of minimum demands (1880s-1950s) and this in turn was followed by a period of priority of optimum norms. Both kinds of norms existed all the time but one had the lead. This interpretation of the development of professionalism forms a contrast to what is often called the professionalization of historiography, which seems to indicate a gradual increase of refinement of the characteristics that each author has thought essential to professionalism.

Making historical professionalism global was a tardy affair, and a difference is made between the globalization of professionalism and the spread of global history as such. The role of CISH (the international committee behind the world congresses of history) for the global propagation of historical professionalism is analyzed in a way that brings new insights. It is made clear that the early idea behind the international congresses was to gather all sorts of researchers on human activity in the past to meet and exchange views, either they represented the discipline of history or any other discipline in the European universities (Europe and North America were totally dominant in these congresses). However, after the Second World War congresses were concentrated to those who represented the historical discipline, but at the same time the differences of optimum norms among historians grew and they also led to dissensions within CISH. Commissions or international organisations for specific types of history grew in importance and they advocated room for their specialities, while the national committees, growing in number at the close of the 20th century, favoured no specific sort of history.

It is fair that the book ends up in a discussion of what constitutes new results – and scientific revolutions – in historical research. It is contended that there is a fundamental similarity in the widely different sorts of historical research (6 types are specified) in their use of inferences to the best explanation of archival or other written or oral material or also objects for their construction of history. One main thesis is that professional history (as other disciplines) does not produce 'truths' but valid statements in relation to the norms of historical professionalism.