



## The Yangtze and the Rhine: A historical conference

After a first meeting in Shanghai in October 2017, we found that we have similar academic interests, as both rivers have and had similar problems. Nonetheless, comparing aspects of the history of the two rivers and the ports at their estuaries is not as easy as thought. Therefore, in this second conference, we try to find a way to come to a better understanding of these aspects along both rivers by making sessions on a number of topics:

1. Economic/business aspects
2. Labour/Social History
3. Cultural/religious aspects
4. Political/juridical aspects
5. Environmental aspects

## Day 1 – Thursday May 23, Erasmus University Rotterdam

(Woudenstein Campus, Mandeville Building Room T 3-21)

**08:30** Coffee, tea and water + sides

**09:00** Official opening. Short openings word by Ms. Kristel Baele, Chair of the Board of Erasmus University and Dr. Meng Qingyu, Education Counsellor of the Chinese Embassy, The Hague

### **9:15-12:15 Morning session: Economic aspects of River societies:**

- a) Shipping, barging and adapting the channel to the needs of shipping
- b) Traders and their contacts along the river
- c) Competition with other modes of transport:

Presentations by:

- Prof. Wang Zhenzhong (Fudan University, Shanghai)  
王振忠: 明清徽商与长江流域的木材贸易 Huizhou Merchants and Timber Trade in the Yangtze River Valley in the Late Imperial Period
- Prof. Ralf Banken (Goethe University Frankfurt) Trade and traders along the Rhine

### **10:30-11:00 Coffee break**

- Prof. Chen Yao (Xiamen University, Amoy) 陈瑶: 河流脉动: 长江中游的木帆船与市场网络(1550-1850) River Stringing Markets: Junks and Markets Networking in the Middle Yangtze River, 1550-1850
- Prof. Hein Klemann (Erasmus University Rotterdam) Competition between Dutch skippers and German ship owners and the transition to steam
- Prof. Fan Jinmin (Nanjing University, Nanjin) 范金民: 明清运河运输市场的考察 A Study of the Transportation Market along the Grand Canal during the Ming-Qing Period

### **12:15-13:30 Lunch**

### **13:30-17:00 Afternoon session: Labour and Social History of River societies**

- a) Social and cultural integration along the river
- b) Child labour and labour of women in barging
- c) Living on the water

Presentations by:

- Xu Guanmian MA (Victor) 徐冠冕. (Leiden University) Colonial products on the Chinese market
- Dr. Tamira T.J. Combrink (University of Amsterdam) Colonial products and markets along the Rhine

### **15:00-15:30 Coffee break**

- Prof. Marlou Schrover (Leiden University) German migrants in Rotterdam and Rotterdam business
- Prof. Feng Xianliang (Fudan University, Shanghai)  
冯贤亮: 城乡之间: 晚明江南士人的移居、定居及其社会网 Between city and country: migration, settlement and social network of literati in the south of lower Yangtze river during the late Ming dynasty

**18:00-21:00** Boat trip on *De Nieuwe Maze* with a presentation by Frans van Keulen (Port Authority Rotterdam) on the port of Rotterdam

## Day 2 – Friday May 24, Leiden University

(Gravensteen, Pieterskerkhof 6)

- 09:00-12:00** Morning session: Political/juridical aspects of river societies
- Modern market relations and its institutions
  - Dike building, river regulation, water management or canalization

Presentations by:

- Dr. Nils Disco (Technical University Twente): Regulation of transnational rivers (Maas, Rhine and Scheldt).
- Prof. Wu Tao (Sun Yat-sen University, Zhuhai) 吴滔: 华洋杂处下的西津渡: 19 世纪京口江岸区域的社会秩序 Xijin Ferry under a mixed society of Chinese and Foreigners: the social order of riverbank area of Jingkou in the 19<sup>th</sup> century

**10:30-11:00** Coffee break

- Dr. Joep Schenk (Utrecht University) Political regulation of International Rivers.

**12:00-14:00** Lunch and tour through the Asian Library Leiden University

**14:00-15:00** **Keynote Lecture:**

- Prof. Petra van Dam (Free University of Amsterdam), Amphibious cultures along rivers: coping with flooding in the organic period.

15:00-15:30 Coffee, tea etcetera

- 15:30-17:30 Afternoon Session: Cultural and religious aspects of the river
- Religions or nationalistic river cults and their impact
  - Songs, poems and paintings about the river and its messages

Presentations by:

- Dr. Pia Nordblom (Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz) Rhine romanticism and tourism since the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century.
- Prof. Ben Wubs (Erasmus University Rotterdam) and Prof. Werner Plumpe (Goethe University Frankfurt) Weber, Protestant ethics and capitalism along the Rhine
- Prof. Leonard Blussé (Leiden University) The use of leeboards on Chinese and Dutch sailing vessels
- Prof. Wang Jian (Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, Shanghai) 王健: 棉业、海运与元末以来江南地区的黄道婆信仰 Cotton Industry, Maritime Transportation and Huang Daopo Belief in Lower Yangtze Region since Late Yuan Dynasty

18:30 Dinner in Kaag Sociëteit

## Day 3 – Saturday May 25, Maritime Museum Rotterdam

(Verolmezaal, Leuvenhaven 1, Rotterdam)

### **10:00-13:00 Morning session: Environmental aspects of human use of rivers**

- a) River regulation and its consequences:
- b) Global heating and the river

Presentations by:

- Prof. Christoph Bernhardt (Leibniz Institute for Research on Society and Space) The River as a resource and a threat. Environmental problems and water management along the Rhine in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- Prof. Xie Shi (Sun Yat-sen University, Guangzhou) 谢澍: 17 世纪江南基层水利的社会与政治语境 A study of local water conservancy in social and political context in seventeenth century lower Yangtze Delta

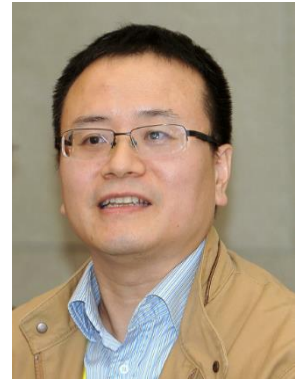
### **11:00-11:30 Coffee break**

- Dr. Nobert Kriedel (Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine), Low water levels on the Rhine in 2018 and their impact on the inland navigation industry and on industrial production in Germany
- Prof. Yu Xinzong (Nankai University, Tianjin) 余新忠: 清代长江流域城市水环境问题研究 A Study on Urban Water Environmental Problems of the Yangtze River Valley in the Qing Dynasty.

## Prof. Wang Zhenzhong

Professor at Fudan University, Shanghai, P.R.China

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**Wang Zhenzhong** Ph.D, History, Fudan University. Now professor in the Institute of Chinese Historical Geography, Fudan University, and Chair Professor in the Center for Huizhou Study, Anhui University. I have been visiting professor at the Harvard-Yenching Institute. My research focuses on Chinese historical geography, history of the Ming-Qing, Extraterritorial Documents and Maritime History of East Asia. I have published some books in these fields such as:

*The Huizhou Merchants and Social Change of the Huaiyang Region in the Ming-Qing*, Beijing: SDX & Harvard-Yenching Academic Library, 1996; Revised 2014.

*Social History and Human Geography: A Personal Anthology of Wang Zhenzhong*, Shanghai: Zhongxi press, 2017.

*Sunset in the mountains: Wang Zhenzhong's Studies on the Social and Cultural History of the Ming-Qing*, Hong Kong: City university press of Hong Kong, 2007; Guilin: Guangxi normal university press, 2009.

### Huizhou Merchants and Timber Trade in the Yangtze River Basin during the Ming and Qing Dynasties

Timber trade had been an important commercial activity along the Yangtze River basin during Ming and Qing Dynasties (1368-1911) and has always been the focus to research. Due to the discovery and archiving of the famous Huizhou documents<sup>1</sup> and Qingshuijiang documents<sup>2</sup> in recent decades, in-depth research in this field has been possible. This paper makes a detailed discussion on Huizhou merchants and timber trade alongside Yangtze River basin by using some newly discovered local documents.

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<sup>1</sup> **Huizhou documents** are the local documents of six counties under the jurisdiction of the Huizhou Prefecture (now southern Anhui and northeastern Jiangxi province) in the Ming-Qing dynasty, with a number of up to one million copies, which are precious historical materials for the study of Chinese history from the 12th century to the 20th century.

<sup>2</sup> **Qingshuijiang documents** are the local documents reflecting the social life of Hmong and Dong nationalities in Qingshuijiang basin of Guizhou Province. Its main contents include folk contracts and transaction records in mountain forest management and timber trade. Up to now, hundreds of thousands of Qingshuijiang documents have been found, mostly of which are contracts from the 17th to the 20th centuries

# Prof. Ralf Banken

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## Present position

Assistant Professor, History Department, Economic and Social History, Goethe-University Frankfurt am Main, Germany

## New Books

*Hitlers Steuerstaat. Die Steuerpolitik im Dritten Reich.* Berlin 2018 (Tax Policy in the Third Reich).

*Building on air: The international industrial gases industry, 1886-2006* (together with Ray Stokes) Cambridge University Press 2015

*Edelmetallmangel und Großraubwirtschaft. Edelmetallmangel und Großraubwirtschaft. Die Entwicklung des deutschen Edelmetallsektors und die Degussa AG 1933-1945.* Berlin 2009. (About the Development of the German Precious Metal Market in the „Third Reich“ and the German Looting of Precious Metals in World War II)

*MAN. The History of a German Industrial Enterprise.* Munich 2009.

## Research in Progress

The Formation of the modern Enterprise 1750-1900

The History of the Rhine economy 1700-2000

The Capitalist Gateway: Trade between Western German Provinces and the Netherlands, 1740-1806

The Gold and Currency Policy of the Reichsbank in the Third Reich **Italian merchants in the Rhine trade.**

## **The importance of Amsterdam for Frankfurt's Brentanos, Guaitas and other Italian trading companies in the 18th century**

Although it is generally known how important the economic ties between the city of Frankfurt am Main and the Dutch commercial and financial centre of Amsterdam were for the development of the German city before 1800, they have so far hardly come into the focus of historical research. In fact, numerous Frankfurt merchants set up numerous branches in Amsterdam in the 18th century in order to eliminate the intermediary trade of the Dutch. In addition to traditional Frankfurt trading houses, several trading companies from Frankfurt, originally from Italy, founded branches in Amsterdam from 1700 onwards. In the present contribution, this development is traced using the case studies of the branches of the Guaitas and Brentanos in Amsterdam until 1815, thus illustrating the importance of the Dutch trading metropolis for the

connection of Frankfurt and the entire German hinterland to the Atlantic world economy of the 18th century. Using individual examples, it will also be shown how the German trading houses profited from the cheaper purchase of colonial goods and other international goods on the Dutch staple market.

## Prof. Chen Yao

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### **Education:**

Doctor of Philosophy in History, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2011

Master of History, Xiamen University, 2008

Bachelor of History, Xiamen University, 2005

### **Present Academic Position:**

Associate Professor, Department of History, College of Humanities, Xiamen University, China (2018-present)

Assistant Professor, Department of History, College of Humanities, Xiamen University, China (2011-2018)

### **Other Academic Title:**

May 2016 – Aug. 2016, visiting fellow in CUHK (CUHK-SYSU Centre for Historical Anthropology)

### **Recent publications:**

2017. 《余巢之局:清代湘潭的米谷贸易与地方社会》，厦门大学出版社，2017年。 [*The Trap of Rice Marketing: Rice Trade and Local Society of Xiangtan, Hunan Province in Qing Dynasty*, Xiamen University Press, 2017.]

2016. (trans.), 冯客著，陈瑶译:《简明中国现代史》，北京:九州出版社，2016年。 [Frank Dikötter, *The Age of Openness: China before Mao* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2008)]



## **Order over the River: Wooden Boats and Shipping Organizations in the Middle Reaches of the Yangtze River (1550 - 1850)**

Scholars have been debating on whether China's national market came into existence before the middle of 19<sup>th</sup> century. The author attempts to participate into the discussion through the investigation on the wooden boats and shipping organizations in the river transportation in the middle reaches of the Yangtze River.

### **Prof. Hein Klemann**

Erasmus University Rotterdam

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Hein A.M. Klemann (1957) studied history at the Free University Amsterdam (VU) and economics at the VU and the University of Amsterdam. He got a PhD on a thesis on Dutch trade in the 1930s. For this thesis he got the Dirk-Jacob Veegens Price of the Royal Holland Academy of Science for the best historical thesis of the year. Since then, he has been affiliated with Utrecht University and the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation (NIOD), where he wrote a study on the economic development of the Netherlands during the German occupation. Since 2005 he has been professor of Social and Economic History at the Erasmus University Rotterdam.

### **Competition between Dutch skippers and German ship owners and the transition to steam**

To understand why and how Rhine skippers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century adapted to the new technology of steam, iron barges, a much larger scale and the resulting collapse of tariffs, the timespan in which this process took place should be cut in three. In the first period that started in the 1830s, the first steamers appeared and traditional skippers reorganized the horse stations to increase their speed and diminish the cost of transport. Between 1850 and 1860, towing horses were replaced by steam tugboats, but in the case of the small skippers only in upstream direction. Then, 25 years later, when the completion of Rhine canalization made it possible to increase the scale enormously, small, wooden sailing barges disappeared. In future, trains of large, iron or steel barges were tugged by steamers in both directions. These developments demanded huge investments for which the skippers had to find the money. Consequently, the small, self-employed and often Dutch skippers in the lower Rhine area had to economize to survive in the new, competitive transport markets. Therefore, somewhere between the 1870s and 1900, they gave up their houses on the shore and took their families on board. From somewhere in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, skipper's families, not only on the Rhine, lived on the river. This had enormous consequences for their economic, but also for their social position. Although Rhine skippers were compared to other skippers relatively well off, in the eyes of the people of the shore, as they called the rest of the population, they were wandering people and were qualified amongst vanity fair people, gypsies and tramps.



## Prof. Fan Jinmin



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### **Education:**

Ph.D. Chinese History, Nanjing University, China, 1997

M.A. Chinese History, Nanjing University, 1986

B.A. Chinese History, Nanjing University, 1982

### **Professional Experience :**

Professor, History Department, Nanjing University, 1998-.

Visiting Professor, Dongwu University, Taiwan. February-June 2007.

Visiting Professor, Korea University, Korea. September-December 2006.

Visiting Scholar, Academia Sinica, Taiwan. May-June 2006.

Visiting Researcher, Kyoto University, Japan. August 2004-February 2005.

Visiting Scholar, Harvard-Yenching Institute, Harvard University, U.S.A. August 1999-August 2000.

Visiting Scholar, Grinnell College, U.S.A January-July 1993.

### **A Study of the Transportation Market along the Grand Canal during the Ming-Qing Period**

The Grand Canal was renovated in its entirety in the 9th year of the Yongle Period (1411) during the Ming dynasty. Later, the Ming government moved the capital to Beijing (today's Beijing). National unification and social stability were achieved, and the economy continued to grow. The canal remained the most important artery for transporting goods in the country for nearly four centuries until the late 18th century when it silted up. During this period, the convenience of transportation between the north and the south of the country was unprecedented. Suzhou and Hangzhou were the two cities with the most developed economy and culture and the most outstanding social progress. They were also the most famous industrial, commercial and cultural cities in the country, and the two biggest cities, playing the most important roles along the canal. People of the time often spoke of Suzhou and Hangzhou in the same breath. The transportation function of the canal was reflected most clearly in the development of the two cities, and the characteristics and charm of the canal culture were fully demonstrated in the sustainable development of Jiangnan (the southern region of the Yangtze River).

## Victor Guanmian Xu 徐冠勉

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Victor Guanmian Xu 徐冠勉 works on the history of taste and commodities in early modern Asia. His Ph.D. project, “Exotic Goods and Chinese Taste: The Global Life of Things in Early Modern Asia, 1300-1800” (2017-2021), is generously sponsored by the Ph.D. fellowship of the Hulsewé-Wazniewski Foundation in Leiden. It aims to rethink the history of early modern globalisation from the perspective of how Asian consumption of exotic goods contributed to that process.

### **From Amsterdam to Suzhou: Taiwan’s “Sugar Revolution” and the Early Modern World, 1630s-1720s**

In the scholarship of early modern sugar history, there have been intensive debates about how Amsterdam’s invasion of Brazil was linked with the “sugar revolution” in English Barbados. These debates have greatly contributed to the emergence of the Atlantic World as an analytical framework for sugar history. However, beyond the Atlantic World, barely any research has been made on the global connectivity of these events. This paper aims to explore this ignored perspective by focusing on Taiwan sugar. Beginning as a sugar frontier of Amsterdam in the 1630s, Taiwan witnessed the emergence of a Chinese sugar colony under the Dutch mercantile system, and the appropriation of this system by the succeeding Zheng Regime and Qing Empire. These transitions jointly contributed to a “sugar resolution” in Taiwan. Thereafter, Taiwan emerged as one of the most productive sugar islands in the early modern world by the 1720s. Standing behind this sugar island was a new metropolis, which was no longer the lower-Rhine city, Amsterdam, but the commercial hub of the lower-Yangzi, Suzhou.

## Tamira T.J. Combrink MA

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*Tamira Combrink* is currently finishing a Ph.D project on Atlantic slave-based commodity chains in the Dutch Republic. She is based at International Institute of Social history and will defend the thesis at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam. The study shows the Dutch role in connecting the expanding production of sugar and coffee in the French West Indies with the expanding demand in the German hinterland in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This study is part of a collective NWO-funded project that investigates the economic impact of Atlantic slavery to the Dutch Republic. By tracing who earned from an eighteenth century cup of coffee or

sugar loaf, the study also looks into the distribution of value added along the global commodity chains based on slavery.

**Rhine trade in slave-based commodities. 1730-1830.**

Although the Rhine as a gateway to the German hinterland is usually associated with industrial activity in the Ruhr region, its origins lay further back in history with the 18<sup>th</sup> century trade in colonial commodities such as coffee, sugar and tobacco. Most of the re-exported commodities were based on Atlantic slave-labour. Within my research project that aims to assess the importance of slave-based commodity trade and processing for the 18<sup>th</sup> century Dutch economy, -one of the questions to be addressed is the destination of the exports. The German hinterland connected with the Netherlands by the Rhine became an increasingly important destination, a fact that has been noticed by various authors but still has hardly been researched so far.

## Prof. Marlou Schrover

Leiden University  
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Marlou Schrover is professor of migration history. She holds the chair of Economic and Social History at Leiden University. She has a large number of publications on migration. She is the editor in chief of the Journal of Migration History.



**German and other migrants in Rotterdam and Rotterdam business**

This paper discusses temporary and permanent migrants in Rotterdam within the same context. That is unusual. Most studies focus on one group or the other. The claim I am making in this paper is that Rotterdam society and business were as much affected by one group as it was by the other. The number of temporary migrants was much larger than that of the permanent migrants. In this paper I first describe briefly changes in the immigrant population of Rotterdam. This is followed by a longer section on trans-migrants, who were on their way from countries in Eastern Europe to the US. Although these trans-migrants were in the city briefly, the infrastructure that was put in place for them was a permanent feature of the town, as was true for many other port cities.

## Prof. Feng Xianliang

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Prof. Feng Xianliang is professor of History at Fudan University, PHD supervisor Professor. Feng's research interests includes the history of the Ming and Qing dynasties, the regional history of Jiangnan and the socio-cultural history of China. He has received a number of awards, such as Excellent Young Scholars of Universities in Shanghai (2005), Talents of New Century verified by Chinese Ministry of Education (2011), the Chinese Government Award for Printing (2010) and so on.

**Selected Publications:**

A Study on the District Magistrates and Local Society of Jiangnan during the Ming and Qing Dynasties (2015)  
History of the Qing Dynasty (2015)  
Environment, Water Conservancy and Society in Zhexi Area from the Ming Dynasty (2010) Shapes of Environment and Transformations of City and Country in the Tai Lake Plain: From 1368 to 1912 (2008)  
Environmental Changes and Social Control in Jiangnan during the Ming and Qing Dynasties (2002)

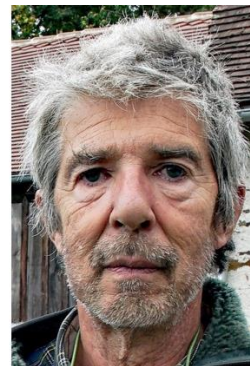
**Between city and country: the water transport environment and social life in the south of lower Yangtze river during Ming and Qing dynasties**

In the lower Yangtze region, the basic networks of life and production are established along waterways. Taking full advantage of the rivers, the inter-urban, inter-rural and the urban-rural transportation networks have all been expanded. Also, people have been enabled to broaden their social relationships within a larger area through the convenient water transportation. During the Ming-Qing period, all of the cities in Jiangnan were located at the nodes of water transportation networks. The urban life space and the literati's garden mansions were both constructed close to the river. Furthermore, the connections between the urban and rural life, the literati's migrations and settlements were led by waterways as well. Consequently, the local society and the social networks can be clearly revealed in such space of waterways.

**Dr. Nils Disco**

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Cornelis Disco has a B.A. in sociology from Yale University and a PhD. from the University of Amsterdam. He most recently taught at the University of Twente, retiring in 2009. He was an editor in the Dutch TIN-20 project and has participated in the Tensions of Europe project from its inception. He is co-editor (with Eda Kranakis) of *Cosmopolitan Commons. Sharing Resources and Risks across Borders*. (MIT Press, 2013).

**Regulation of transnational rivers (Maas, Rhine and Scheldt)**

Since the Second World War, efforts have been undertaken to “emancipate” European rivers from centuries of industrial abuse and to restore them to a semblance of their original selves. This has required complex negotiations among actors with fundamentally different interests, basically derived from their location along the river but also numerous other factors.

Given Europe’s small political scale, rivers inevitably crossed borders and such negotiations necessarily became international. The negotiations and the associated international bodies were deeply embedded in the overall political landscape and depended on the establishment of trust and the articulation of common interests.

Several years ago Alex van Heezik and I were asked by the Dutch Rijkswaterstaat to study and report on the history of international negotiations aimed at what we called the “emancipation” of the four international rivers in which the Netherlands was stakeholder: the Rhine, the Meuse, the Scheldt and the Ems.<sup>3</sup> We saw that “emancipation” entailed more or less sequential phases, namely: first, fighting water pollution; second, restoring riverine ecologies; third, managing flood risks by reconstructing shoreline morphologies; and, finally, “climate proofing” rivers, i.e. combating (effects of) very high and low river stages.

We were surprised to discover striking differences in the timetables for the start of these various phases on the different rivers. The Rhine, in particular, appeared to progress through the phases earlier than any of the other rivers.

## Prof. Wu Tao

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Wu Tao is a professor at the Department of History (Zhuhai), Sun Yat-Sen University and director of the Department of History (Zhuhai), president of the Center for Historical Geography Studies of Sun Yat-Sen University, and a fellow of the Humanities and Social Sciences Subcommittee of the Academic Committee of Sun Yat-sen University. Besides, he is a fellow both of the Historical Geography Committee of the Chinese Geographical Society, and of the Chinese Agricultural History Society. His main research areas are historical geography and the history of the Ming and Qing Dynasties. His publications include books like *Space Perspectives on the Relationship between Towns and Rural Areas in Jiangnan in the Qing Dynasty: A case study of Suzhou Area* and over 60 articles published in top journals.

### **Xijin Ferry under a mixed society of Chinese and Foreigners: the social order of riverbank area of Jingkou in 19<sup>th</sup> century**

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<sup>3</sup> These are the four rivers in which the Dutch are partners with other countries under the terms of the EU Water Framework Directive of 2000. The study was published as Nil Disco and Alex van Heezik, *Different Strokes for Different Folks, 50 Years of Agreements and Disagreements in the Rhine, Meuse, Scheldt and Ems River Basins*, (Rijkswaterstaat, 2014).

*Zhenjiang* is located at the turn of the Yangtze and the Grand Canal. Therefore, the development of its riverbank area is deeply affected by the trade pattern of the Yangtze River and the Grand Canal. In the traditional period, the riverbank area gradually formed a spatial distribution pattern of “East Port and West Ferry”.

In 1858, with the Tianjin Treaty, the Yangtze River Basin directly participated in the trade between China and the West, and the functions and spatial patterns of the *Zhenjiang* riverbank changed qualitatively. The establishment of the British Concession and the entry of foreign business drastically increased the market value and commercial proportion of the land on the riverbank. The emergence of the hulks and the construction of the warehouses changed its spatial form. In the meantime, the traditions of local merchants also continued. The process of order reconstruction and regional space development in the riverbank region showed the characteristics of interweaving of old and new. The commercial community of Chinese and foreign coexistence replaced the traditional spatial pattern of “East Port and West Ferry”, and the riverbank began to develop into the new spatial structure form under the treaty system.

In the limited riverbank space, the increase in population and the modern economic activities have caused conflicts between Chinese and foreign officials and people. Various reasons lead to disputes and contention, forced the East and the West to reform and respond to the shipping and management of riverbank areas. In this process, the British Ministry of Industry and the Chinese Taotai not only perform their respective duties, but also cooperate with each other, sometimes compete with each other, jointly manage and maintain the social order of the riverbank area.

## Dr. Joep Schenk

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**Joep Schenk** is a postdoctoral researcher within the ERC-project 'Securing Europe, fighting its enemies 1815-1914'. The central theme in his research is the study of the tensions between transnational agency and national political structures. His monograph *The Rhine and European Security in the Long Nineteenth Century: Making Lifelines from Frontlines* is forthcoming with Routledge in 2019.

### **Constructing expertise and prominence. The CCNR in the 1840s**

In this paper I will show, mainly on the basis of new primary sources found in the CCNR archives in Strasburg, how in the 1830s the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR) struggled with its new role as guarantor of the principle of freedom of navigation on the Rhine, as it lacked executorial teeth and expertise. By means of two initiatives, that is measuring the Rhine in the 1830s and surveying the Rhine's navigable course by external experts in 1849, I show the CCNR managed to coordinate information flows and institutionalize a complying mechanism nonetheless. The complying mechanism worked on the basis of external-expert input, internal intermediation and majority denouncement, thereby securing the principle of freedom of navigation at the expense of full national sovereignty.



## Prof. Petra van Dam

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Petra J.E.M. van Dam is an expert in the field of ecological (or environmental) history of Europe. At the VU she holds the Chair for Water- and Environmental History in the Faculty of Humanities, Department of History, co-funded by the Schilthuisfonds. She is co-founder of the Environmental Humanities Center at this Faculty. As vice-chair of the European Society for Environmental History she contributed to establishing the ESEH Summerschools, she was the organizer of the ESEH Amsterdam 2007 Conference, 'Global Perspectives.' She co-founded the book series 'The Environment in History: International Perspective' (Berghahn Publishers, Oxford-New York) together with Russia specialist Prof. dr. David Moon (York University, GB), Prof. dr. Christof Mauch and Prof. dr. Helmut Trischler (directors of the Rachel Carson Center for Environmental Studies, München). Also, she is editorial committee member of the scholarly Journal *Environment and History* (Cambridge).

She is convinced that currently, after decades of growing awareness among ever larger groups, generally consensus exists about the urgency of environmental and sustainability issues. One feels this most strongly among university students. Their questions are directed towards investigating 'historical imaginaries', finding solutions and models of behaviour and political decisions in the past, that will lead to more sustainable ways of living in the future. Her research interests are assessing the balance between the natural and human agency in environmental change and studying the resilience and vulnerability of societies to natural disasters. Petra van Dam and her students wrote some 10 books and 80 scholarly and general articles. Her latest book is *Van Amsterdams peil naar Europees referentiepeil. De geschiedenis van het NAP tot 2018* (2018) [The history of the Amsterdam Vertical Reference Level]. Her upcoming book is *Swimming Rabbits. An Amphibious Society dealing with Environmental Change*.

### **Key-Note: The Amphibious Culture along rivers: coping with flooding in the organic period**

Before 1900, in the so-called organic period, flooding was a regular event in the low-lying areas of the Netherlands. In this paper I argue that in the past those low-lying areas shared an amphibious culture. The essence of the culture is a series of cultural adaptations to a wetland landscape. This began to disintegrate in the nineteenth century.

I want to highlight three features: 1. the landscape structure in compartments; 2 the elevation of settlements; 3 water-based transport, including evacuation of humans and cattle. The adaptations imply very swiftly and easily moving in and between wet and dry parts of the landscape in normal times. During disastrous floods when borders between water and land became fussy, one sees how this amphibious culture operated in extremis.

This amphibious culture is a model, an ideal type or a metaphor. I wonder if we can apply this to other wetland regions, in particular if the disappearance of this way of living is a global phenomenon. On the one hand, the frequency of floods increases. This is mainly due to human induced environmental changes, including: sinking of soils, sea-level rise, increased precipitation, changes in catchments areas and river delta's, and sealing of surface. On the other hand, cultural loss of adaptation to flooding may occur worldwide. A transition from water based to land-based transport ('auto-motorisation') seems to take place globally and also changes in house styles are away from temporary (wooden) structures to (concrete)



houses. Developing a model of an amphibious culture connects to one of the questions the organizers might have posed when preparing today conference: Can knowledge of how human societies dealt with environmental change in the past, offer any lessons for the present or the future? The wider global developments sketched here need more research. In this essay I present the case-study of the early-modern Netherlands (1500-1800) in order to develop some basic concepts.

I take material from several floods, in particular of the years 1675, 1825, 1916 and 1953. for which relevant recent case-studies exist. Two introductory remarks about the physical aspects of the flood disasters in the Netherlands. The typical storm pattern for these floods was that it started with some days of strong south-westerly or westerly winds, pushing water from the ocean into the North Sea Basin. Such weather often includes a lot of rain, so the dikes, which are basically earthen walls, become soaked. Then the winds develop into a strong north-westerly storm that pushes the water from the North Sea into the sea arms such as the Zuiderzee or the river mouths for several days. The water spills over the dikes and erodes the dikes from within, from the landside, which is the less protected side. Then the dikes collapse at one or more places. River floods usually are the result of melting snow and heavy rain in the upper part of the river basins, and these effects reinforced by floods from sea. In the eighteenth century the frequency of floods increased in the river area due to a number of reasons, including weather changes and inadequate human-induced changes of the river.

The second remark is about the landscape. On average, until 1800 or so the difference between sea level and average soil level was small, typically in the range of 1- 3 meters. Soils in the low Netherlands are often filled-in sea or river beds, no mountains or stone layers come to the surface, only the occasional sand or river dune. So once the dikes were broken the flood water would spread out and not reach great heights. In some places the waves might reach relative high heights, due to the wind pressure, but this is counted in meters, not in dozens of meters. A storm surge in the Netherlands was not a tsunami, not a wall of land rolling over the land destroying everything it met. The exception to this was the so-called 'droogmakerijen,' reclaimed lakes with soil levels at 4 meters below sea level, a type of reclamation that started in the sixteenth century. They would turn into bath tubes in times of flood. Due to the general subsidence of the peaty soil, typical example of human-induced environmental change, this effect became more common over time. In the case of river floods, this is different again, river water is more destructive because it keeps flowing. Essentially, one can perceive of river dikes breaking as a river changing its course.

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**Rhine romanticism and tourism since the end of 18th century.**

## Prof. Ben Wubs

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Ben Wubs (1961) is professor International Business History at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam and an appointed Project professor at the Graduate School of Economics Kyoto University. He is engaged in various research projects related to multinationals, business systems, transnational economic regions, and the transnational fashion industry. Wubs is council member of the European Business History Association. He is Programme Director of an Erasmus Mundus master GLOCAL (Global Markets and Local Creativities), set-up by the Universities of Glasgow, Göttingen, Barcelona, and Erasmus University Rotterdam.



## Prof. Werner Plumpe

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Werner Plumpe, born 1954 in Bielefeld, is Professor of Economic and Social History at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main. Until 2012 he was chairman of the German Association of Historians. In 2010 he appeared in *Wirtschaftskrisen. Geschichte und Gegenwart*. Werner Plumpe received the Ludwig Erhard Prize for Business Journalism.

### **Weber, Protestant ethics and capitalism along the Rhine**

Religious and resulting institutional innovations played an important role in the development of a Rhine economy, but often in paradoxical fashion and never as linear as Max Weber had intended when he published his major thesis. Protestant ethics and, derived from it, the "bourgeois virtues" therefore mark at best a moment of economic upheaval since the 17th century and beginning of modern capitalism, but are consequently no causal explanation for the transformation of the economic structures along the Rhine that began at that time, whose earlier upswing cannot be explained by these theories. For the rise of the Rhine delta to become an economic and trade centre of European importance was not a consequence of the Reformation; at best it temporarily shifted the regional structures in favour of the Northern provinces and the cities in the Low Countries. It was a multitude of historical contingent factors that turned the favourable geographical structure and the excellent traffic situation of the Rhine's adjoining areas into such a laboratory of economic modernisation, which ultimately radiated throughout Europe and even the world. Individual factors are important, but by no means as mono-causal explanations. Rather the interplay of the factors led to the historical momentum that finally had an impact on the rise of Rhine economy.

## Prof. Leonard Blussé

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Leonard Blussé, emeritus chair History of Asian-European relations, Leiden University and extraordinary professor at the Research Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Xiamen University. Some publications:

(with Nie Dening) *The Chinese Annals of Batavia, The Kai Ba Lidai Shiji* (开吧 历代史记) and other stories (1610-1795), Leiden: Brill Publishers 2018.

*Een Zwitsers Leven in de Tropen, De lotgevallen van Elie Ripon in dienst van de VOC (1616-1626)*. Amsterdam: Bert Bakker 2016.

*Visible Cities, Batavia, Canton and Nagasaki and the Coming of the Americans*, Harvard UP, 2008.

*Bitter Bonds, A Colonial Divorce Drama of the Seventeenth Century*. Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers. 2002.

*Strange Company*, Leiden: KITLV Press 1986.

### **The Use of the Leeboard on Riverine and Coastal Craft in the Yangzi and Rhine Estuaries, a foot note to comparative nautical history <sup>4</sup>**

Geography may influence human life but it does not determine it. Human life is determined by the ways in which humans avail themselves of the physiographical conditions to improve their standard of life. This common observation is proved by the ways in which the navigators of the shallow estuaries of the Yangzi and Rhine rivers handled their aquatic natural environment. They did so by designing and building all kinds of vessels that were suited to an environment where water transport was more economical and convenient than transport over land. This paper will focus on a unique contrivance that dramatically improved the navigational capabilities of the flat bottomed sailing vessels that navigated the delta regions of the Jiangnan region and the Low Countries: the movable leeboard, *zijwaard* (side sword) in Dutch and *pishuiban* 披水板 (splitting the water board) or *yaoduo* 腰舵 (hip rudder) in Chinese.

## Prof. Wang Jian

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**Prof. Wang studied** as a Postdoc at Shanghai Normal University, Department of History and before at the East China Normal University, Shanghai, Department of History. He wrote a PhD Thesis called: “*On folk religion in Suzhou(苏州) and Songjiang(松江) areas during Ming and Qing Dynasties.*” Prof. Wang is at the moment Associate Professor and Researcher, Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, Institute of History and before worked as a visiting scholar Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Oxford, UK, at the Institute for Research in Humanities, Kyoto University, Japan and at the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), Leiden, the Netherlands.

**Cotton Industry, Sea Transportation and Huangdaopo Belief in Jiangnan Area Since Yuan Dynasty**  
Constant waves for thousands of years have formed a sand bank from the northwest to the southeast called “Gangshen” (冈身), or Chenier plain, in the southern part of the Yangtze River Delta. The eastern part of Gangshen is close to the coastal region which developed later. The high land makes it hard to irrigate and the salty soil is suitable for cotton planting but not for rice growing. In the Yuan Dynasty, cotton was introduced into Jiangnan (江南) and first planted in Wunijing (乌泥泾) of Shanghai (上海). Since the Ming Dynasty, the planting area gradually expanded. At the beginning of the Qing Dynasty, Ye Mengzhu (叶梦珠), a Shanghainese, said that “the local planting area of cotton is as large as that of Japonica rice.” By the middle of the Qing Dynasty, the cotton coverage reached more than 70% in Shanghai, Songjiang (松江), Jiading (嘉定), Taicang (太仓), Chongming (崇明) and other places. At the same time, the yield of cotton per mu in Jiangnan also increased greatly in the middle of the Qing Dynasty, by about 100 jin per mu. Additionally, the

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<sup>4</sup> The presentation of this contribution will be accompanied by illustrations.

cotton textile technology was also improved. Given this background, Jiangnan became the center of China's cotton industry, with Shanghai being the center of Jiangnan's cotton industry.

According to relevant records and legends, Huang Daopo (黄道婆) was the first person to bring cotton seeds and textile technology from Hainan (海南) to Wunijing. After her death, the local people in Wunijing "cried to express gratitude", buried her, and consecrated her in the local Buddhist temple in commemoration. Since then, with the increasing importance of the cotton industry in the economic development of Jiangnan, Huang Daopo Belief gradually received attention from officials and scholars. However, generally speaking, in the hundreds of years after the end of the Yuan Dynasty and the early Ming Dynasty, her influence was not significant, and some people even confused her with the Weaver Girl.

In the 6<sup>th</sup> year of Daoguang reign, when the canal was blocked, Tao Shu (陶澍), then governor of Jiangsu province, achieved great success in organizing the sea transportation of grain. Thereafter, gentry and businessmen in Shanghai jointly requested that Huang Daopo be included in national sacrifice ceremonies, marking a turning point when Huang Daopo Belief attracted real attention in Shanghai and even in Jiangnan. However, the details of these events in the 6<sup>th</sup> year of Daoguang reign are not clear due to the lack of historical materials. Based on a collection in the Bodleian Libraries, the author believes that the work of including Huang Daopo in national sacrifice ceremonies was hindered and even stopped by Xin Congyi (辛从益), Commissioner of Education in Jiangsu. It was not until the 6<sup>th</sup> year of Daoguang's reign that Huang Daopo managed to become part of the national sacrifice ceremonies. The fact that local officials, like Xin Congyi, tried to hinder the work actually shows their indifference to obstacles in economic development and maritime transportation.

People from all walks of life in Shanghai who participated in these events were inextricably linked to sea transportation of grain: some were local gentry who had profound thoughts on and were deeply engaged in the development of local economy and society; some were rising gentry from merchant families; some were sea merchants or sand boat merchants who were directly engaged in cotton trade and had close mutual ties.

Further investigation shows that these locals played a significant role in hydraulic engineering, philanthropy and urban management in Shanghai before the Opium War. To some extent, the development of Shanghai's urban society before the opening of the port was dominated by the local gentry and sand boat merchants. The trend of collaboration between gentry and merchants was fairly obvious, and it was Huang Daopo Belief that bound them together. This highlighted the changes in the overall social ethos in the context of economic development based on cotton trade.

## Prof. Christoph Bernhardt

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Prof. Dr. Christoph Bernhardt is head of the Department for Historical Research / Scientific Collections and deputy director at the Leibniz Institute for Research on Society and Space (IRS) at Erkner/Berlin. He is also an Associate Professor for Modern and Contemporary History at Humboldt University Berlin. His main field of research is European Urban and Environmental History. In 2016 he

published a book on the environmental history of the Upper Rhine (Christoph Bernhardt: *Im Spiegel des Wassers*, Cologne 2016).

### **The River as a resource and a threat. Environmental problems and water management along the Rhine in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>5</sup>**

Narratives on the environmental history of rivers are usually developed along certain uses of rivers and riverscapes in history, like shipping or hydropower, and along some major environmental concerns, like flooding, water pollution, or biodiversity. There is a large body of literature on the history of political struggles between France and Germany and on questions of economic development and cultural life along the Rhine. In contrast studies on environmental history of the river were for a long time only written by water engineers who focussed on problems of drainage, flood control, and pollution. It was only recently that leading US American historians, like Marc Cioc and David Blackbourn, have started to study the environmental history of the Rhine according to historiographical standards.<sup>6</sup>

The paper will start by highlighting some of the most important uses and environmental concerns since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and show the rise and fall of the different uses over time. At the same time the major historical turning points will be addressed in which these uses, and concerns were institutionally regulated. This was for example the case in 1815 when the Central Commission for the shipping on the Rhine was launched or in 1918 when diplomatic treaties set the start for the construction of modern hydropower plants along the Upper Rhine.

The first major intervention in the river course that the paper will analyse was the so called “correction of Upper Rhine” that French and the German water authorities started in 1817. It was motivated by interests of flood control and land reclamation. The project which was completed in 1876 shortened the river by around 80 km by cutting meanders and other measures of large-scale water management. As a result, the Upper Rhine wasn’t any more a broad aqua-terrestrial zone of 2-3 km width but a canal which was paved with stones. Around 1910 another major regulation project in favour of large-scale shipping completed the transformation of the Upper Rhine from a riverscape to a canal. Finally, the construction of hydropower plants from 1918 onwards and large scale urbanisation and industrialisation after World War II completed the transformation of the river to an industrial waterway and riverscape.

With regard to environmental problems it is important to note that although modern industrialisation and urbanisation were the most powerful driving forces of environmental degradation also the pre-industrial periods knew strong environmental problems. This can be seen by the massive long-term unintended consequences that the correction project of 1817 provoked which had in fact followed a pre-industrial early modern concept of drainage and land reclamation. In the long run problems of erosion, flooding and desertification accumulated. The analysis of changes in the uses of the river and of the emerging environmental problems in history has to include the strong social and political conflicts in this field. As early as around 1800 we find violent local water cultures and local “water wars” between upstream and downstream riparian communities.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century national polarisation around water issues was massively growing along the Rhine until from 1945 onwards transnational treaties and organisations for environmental protection were established. In the first years after World War II pollution more and more endangered or destroyed some of the most important services of the river, like for drinking water and for fishing and industrial purposes. Since the 1970s the pollution of the Rhine was gradually reduced. In order to improve the chemical and ecological status of the river large monitoring programs were established, political and scientific control was extended and strong legal standards were introduced. In the long run these successful environmental policies against pollution along the

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<sup>5</sup> This paper is based on my book on the environmental history of the Rhine from a transnational long-term perspective: Christoph Bernhardt, *Im Spiegel des Wassers. Eine transnationale Umweltgeschichte des Oberrheins (1800-2000)*, Köln 2016

<sup>6</sup> Mark Cioc: *The Rhine. An eco-biography 1815-2000*. Seattle/London 2002; David Blackbourn: *The Conquest of Nature. Water, Landscape and the Making of Modern Germany*. New York/London 2006

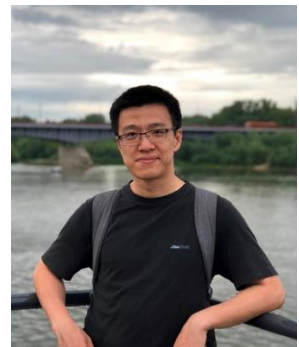
Rhine were a result of growing transnational European cooperation. At the same time the turning point 1970 towards environmental protection marks a new state of control of man over nature.

An analysis of recent politics of flood control confirms this observation. Here the massive reduction of wetlands since around 1800 seriously increased the danger of flooding, as experts realized since the 1950s and as the great floods of 1955, 1976, 1993 and 1995 did confirm. Since 1982 international treaties and programs try to win back flood plains, which is difficult as property rights are concerned. In this context, historical landscapes are intensively discussed and used as visions for landscapes of the future.

In a conclusion the paper will discuss the major long term trends of transformation of the river and reflect the role of transnational cooperation for environmental policies. It will be argued that the profile of environmental degradation has constantly changed since the early 19th century and that transnational cooperation wasn't a value in itself but could also trigger environmental degradation.

## Prof. Xie Shi

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XIE Shi received his B.A. in history from the Department of History, Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, and got his Ph.D. in historical geography from Center for Historical Geographic Studies, Fudan University in 2009. Elected by the committee of the Hundred Talents Program of Sun Yat-sen University, he is currently appointed Professor, Ph.D. supervisor, the Head of Department of History and the Dean of Boya (Liberal Art) College, and has been selected to the National Program for Special Support of Eminent Professionals of China. He specializes in the research on social economic history, historical geography and historical anthropology in China. His thesis was nominated for the Best 100 Ph.D. Dissertations by the Chinese Ministry of Education in 2011.

His book *High Land and Low Land: Research on the Regional Historical Geography of the Lower Yangtze Delta (11th -16th Century)* was published by SDX Joint Publishing Company (Beijing, 2015), which won the first prize of Outstanding Achievement Award of Philosophy and Social Science, Guangdong Province. He has published articles at leading academic journals such as *Historical Research (China)*, *Bulletin of The Institute of History and Philology*, *Academia Sinica (Taiwan)*. He has also conducted some national research projects in this field.

### **Social and Political Context of Local Water Conservancy in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century Lower Yangtze Delta**

In 2017 at the “Historical and Cultural Comparisons between the Yangtze River and the Rhine River” Seminar, under the title of “*Windmill and Spinning Wheel*” a comparative analysis of the technology options and the human-land interaction based on the development of the Rhine–Meuse Delta and the Yangtze River Delta during the 15–17<sup>th</sup> centuries was conducted. It was noticed that since the 14<sup>th</sup> century a large number of peat lakes gradually expanded to the Rhine–Meuse Delta with geomorphic characteristics similar to the Yangtze River Delta. Both deltas are drainage basins. From the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, both deltas underwent complex drainage reconstruction. As drainage activities broke the balance of water environment, new hydraulic engineering problems often led to new changes in development activity of these deltas. The problems should not be simply regarded as



intensive land utilization, as it could not present the complex links among water dredging, land reclamation, finance and tax system as well as social structures. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the economic mechanisms of the two deltas interacted with their water environment. Commercial capital changed crop-planting structures and farmland forms, stimulated the development of the market-town settlements, shaped the landscape of river networks, showed the multiplicity of human-land relationship, and reflected the trend of utilizing natural resources and financing hydraulic engineering.

## Dr. Nobert Kriedel

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Nobert Kriedel studied economics at the University of Augsburg (Dipl. Oec. 1999) and has a PhD in economics (Faculty of Economics of the University of the Federal Armed Forces in Munich, 2005). In his dissertation, he analysed the existence and the shape of long-term economic growth cycles, related to large infrastructure projects such as railways. His results, which were based on statistical low pass filters, showed wave-like fluctuations in the overall economic activity, which confirmed the overall findings of earlier research (Kondratjew, Schumpeter, and others).

Kriedel worked also as a senior economist at the Hamburg Institute of International Economics (2005-2008), mainly in the field of regional economics, regional business cycles, and energy economics. He joined the CCNR Secretariat in 2008, working for the European market observation project. Within this project, different economic aspects of inland navigation are analysed empirically, in particular the evolution of transport demand according to goods segments, the fleet evolution, evolution of freight rates, companies, employment, and other aspects such as medium-term-forecasts for certain goods segments. He also contributes to the CCNR's work on greening of IWT and to general aspects of impact assessments regarding technical requirements for inland navigation vessels.

### **Low water levels on the Rhine in 2018 and their impact on the inland navigation industry and on industrial production in Germany**

Rhine navigation is crucially dependent on the water level conditions on its free-flowing parts. The extreme low water period that occurred in the second half of 2018 proved this in a clear way, in the form of a strong limitation of vessels' loading degrees and a strong reduction of goods transport in 2018 on the Rhine. At the same time, freight rates (transport prices) went up very strongly. Low water periods therefore have multiple effects: Due to rising freight rates, a positive effect on the earning situation of barge owners cannot be denied, but the following negative effects from a more macroeconomic and societal point of view should not be underestimated: decrease in total transport volume, loss of market shares for an ecologically rather friendly mode of transport, reduction of industrial production in river-related industries and countries. As inland navigation is an ecologically relatively friendly mode of transport, a reduction of its transport level, its market share and its transport service activities for whole industries and countries is certainly not desirable, from a societal point of view. Therefore, the inland navigation sector should face climate change and related

low water periods by adapting its immobile infrastructure (fairway depth) and mobile infrastructure (vessel types and design, vessel size) in order to become less vulnerable towards future low water periods.

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YU Xinzhong is Professor and vice-dean of College of History, Nankai University. He received his Ph.D. in history from Nankai University in 2000, and studied as postdoctoral fellow at Kyoto University from 2003 to 2005. He is author of many award-winning books, including *The Epidemics and Society in Jiangnan during the Qing Dynasty: A Study on the Social History of Medicine* (in Chinese, 2003), *A History of Chinese Family in the Ming and Qing Dynasties* (in Chinese, 2007), and *Mechanism of Hygiene and Epidemic Prevention and its Modern Evolution in Qing Dynasty* (in Chinese, 2016). He is also the editor of *Disease, Medical Treatment and Hygiene Since the Qing Dynasty from the Perspective of Social and Cultural History* (in Chinese, 2009.)

### **A Study on Urban Water Environmental Problem of the Yangtze River Valley in the Qing Dynasty**

Water environment concerning broad areas is an important component of the ecological environment. This article mainly focuses on the water quality of cities and their surroundings. When it comes to this issue, most works, like contemporary gazetteers, professional records and other related works, may just cite a few ancient records on water pollution then directly skip to the modern period, regarding the real water contamination did not show up until the Republic of China or after 1950s. However, we can find out quite a few records on urban water pollution in documents before the 20<sup>th</sup> century. At least since the Song Dynasty, there have already existed many related records, and the number of these records increased in the Qing Dynasty, especially after the times of Emperor Jiaqing and Emperor Daoguang. Moreover, modern newspapers and periodicals such as *Shenbao* in Late Qing, had intensive discussions on the urban water pollution. Meanwhile, various books (e.g. travel notes) written by foreigners in China also frequently mentioned the poor water quality of cities in the Qing Dynasty (especially the Late Qing). Hence, the urban water pollution had long drawn people's attention. If we merely consider water pollution as an issue does matter only after the middle of 20<sup>th</sup> century, how can we explain numerous records found in historical documents? If we totally believe these narrations, considering water contamination has already existed for a long time, how badly is the city water is polluted in the mid and late Qing Dynasty, regarded as a period of both late ancient times and early modern times? A handful of existing related works present partial "truth" of the history from different angles, but the keys to the above questions still need our comprehensive analysis of the data, on the basis of understanding the

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