

International Collaborations

Mirko Sardelić

'The Role of Emotions in Contacts Between Eurasian Cultures'



The ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions is committed to creating and enhancing international collaboration. Since 2015, CHE has been pleased to host visiting scholars while they undertake international research fellowships. Visiting fellows share their research and participate in CHE seminars and conferences, to deepen or develop their own approaches to the history of emotions. By engaging in discussions with members of the Centre, visiting scholars make a vital contribution to the intellectual life of CHE and create new opportunities for collaborative research.

Mirko Sardelić is a research associate with the Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences. From February 2015 he was hosted for 12 months at the Perth node of CHE as an honorary postdoctoral fellow, while undertaking research funded by a [NEWFELPRO](#) Croatia/Marie Curie Grant.

Mirko was awarded a PhD in Medieval History by the University of Zagreb in 2013, for his thesis on the European perception of the Mongols in the thirteenth century. His publications include the first Croatian translation of the *Carmen miserabile*, the account of the Mongol invasion written by Roger of Apulia (Matica hrvatska, 2010), and several essays on relations between Europe and Asia in the Middle Ages. His recent research has shifted towards the early modern period, focusing on relations between Europe and the Ottoman Empire until the late sixteenth century.

Mirko reflects on the benefits and highlights of his time with CHE, below.

My area of research interest has, for some time, been the relations between Christendom in central/south-east Europe and the Asian invaders of Europe. My doctoral thesis (2013) focused specifically on the Mongols and their image in thirteenth-century European sources, and in the last three years I have extended that research into the early modern period and the time of the Ottoman conquest. I am particularly interested in extant accounts of contact, conflict and cross-cultural exchanges that came about as a result of Asian incursions into continental Europe. In the course of this work I realised that the study of the Mongols in Europe – and cross-cultural contacts in general – is incomplete without considering the strong emotional component of historical experience and its repercussions for cross-cultural representations. With a background in Classics and History, I applied to the ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions (Europe, 1100–1800) in the hope of developing my understanding of contemporary theoretical and historical approaches to the study of emotions. I now feel that my postdoctoral attachment to the Centre was absolutely invaluable in developing and reshaping my thinking on key research questions.

I used my time at CHE, based primarily in Perth, in the first instance to read my way through key literature in the sociology of emotions and cross-cultural psychology. An early work-in-progress seminar (in late February 2015) allowed me to present an outline of the project and to establish discussion with other researchers at CHE about historical materials and approaches. Particularly helpful in this process were Andrew Lynch, Charles Zika, Giovanni Tarantino and Katrina O’Loughlin, along with others interested in cross-cultural contact and exchange. Through ongoing formal and informal discussions I developed my own platform through which I reorganised my research methodology. I suggest that the accurate analysis of particular segments of exchange is impossible without taking into account a complex triple helix consisting of culture, emotions and identities, and I am developing this approach as I write up my research over the next six to 12 months. During my visiting fellowship I presented a paper in Perth at a conference on ‘Blood, Tears, Sweat: Corporeality in Medieval and Early Modern Worlds’ in November 2015, and gave a public lecture at The University of Melbourne in October 2015. I also published a short review of what I considered to be the main problems of the history of emotions in relation to my area of research and outlined my own developing methodology in the leading Croatian historical scholarly journal, *Historijski Zbornik*. I am now preparing a more focused and refined version of this article in English, to be published in *Emotion Review*. Three other significant papers (all in international journals) are currently in preparation for publication in 2016–2017 as a direct result of this research, including a book chapter on the Renaissance ship in the Adriatic as a (cross-)cultural system, to be published in a Brill volume being edited by Alina Payne.

During the period of my fellowship at CHE I also participated in an international postdoctoral seminar, ‘Connecting Art Histories: Art on the Move 1400–1700’, run by Harvard University with the support of the Getty Foundation. Professor Alina Payne, now the director of the Villa I Tatti, Harvard Centre for Renaissance Studies, invited five professors and 15 postdoctoral fellows from 10 countries to participate in two fortnight-long gatherings: one at Harvard (February); and the other in Romania (June). These seminars provided the perfect setting to expand on and to exchange ideas and methodologies with people from various disciplinary backgrounds, who were all specialists of south-east Europe, and I found it a particularly valuable opportunity to develop my thesis about the importance of emotions in cross-cultural exchange. All of the participants showed great interest in the

work of CHE, and this has led to further opportunities for exchanges and collaboration with international scholars.

Perhaps the most important outcomes and culmination of my 12-month visiting fellowship are the creation of an intellectual network to support my research and the development of a proposal to formalise this network into a centre for emotions research in regions of cross-cultural exchange, to be based in Croatia. The initial suggestion is that contact zones amplify emotional responses and emotional exchanges between the protagonists of contact. I believe that the creation of a centre with a particular focus on historical and geographical contact zones would be of significant mutual benefit: for the Croatian centre to be connected to CHE ('standing on the shoulders of giants'); but also for CHE to have a regional partner in central Europe. The regional centre would contribute to CHE as a partner with a specific interest in emotions within cross-cultural exchange in south-east Europe, where the Carolingian and Byzantine Empires encountered each other in the early Middle Ages. This region was also significant as the site of the *triplex confinium* in the early modern period: the border-zone of the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires and the Venetian Republic. The centre would also partner with an established scholarly network of collaborators, including the professors and fellows from the Harvard 'Art on the Move' postdoctoral seminar and other prominent young scholars from the USA, Croatia, Hungary, Serbia, Bulgaria and Turkey. The proposed Centre for Emotions in Cross-Cultural Research develops many of my previous collaborations with international scholars. I had formulated the idea over several years, but CHE provided the impetus to carry it out, with help from CHE Postdoctoral Fellow Katrina O'Loughlin. Discussions with her were valuable for formulating and organising the concept, while Professor Andrew Lynch fully supported the idea and contributed to its formation.

During my fellowship I was able to meet with almost all of the collaborators of CHE, either at the Methods collaboratory in Sydney or during visits to the Centre's nodes in Melbourne and Adelaide. I was always warmly welcomed and I received excellent academic and institutional support. I also met with two international partners: Miri Rubin of Queen Mary, University of London, with whom I have planned follow-up meetings in Cambridge in 2016; and Jonas Liliequist of Umeå University, who was kind enough to invite me to give a lecture there later in 2016. I have also had the opportunity to introduce colleagues from CHE to fellow scholars from the Harvard seminar, as well as from universities in south-east Europe.

Of the numerous contacts and fruitful inspiration gained at CHE I intend to write more extensively in the introduction to the foundational volume of the Croatian Centre, hopefully in spring 2017. I found CHE to be a perfect environment for the interdisciplinary study of emotions: I have enjoyed more than a dozen seminars by fellows and visiting scholars, with their expertise ranging from history to literature to psychiatry. Having also benefitted from visiting attachments at Cambridge, Columbia, Harvard and the Sorbonne, I believe that CHE is a Centre of Excellence of which Australia should be proud. Without a doubt it puts Australia on the map of cutting-edge scholarly efforts in the incredibly complex world of emotions.

I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Andrew Lynch, for his kind guidance, the late Professor Philippa Maddern for her invitation and her work in supporting my application and colleagues at the Centre who warmly accepted me. My gratitude also goes to Pam Bond, Katrina Tap and Tanya Tuffrey for their support and persistence in helping me

with the difficulties of international documentation and making my life easier and brighter on many occasions.