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The volume deals with a critical review of national cultures of memory and history in the context of the centenary remembering the outbreak and the course of the First World War. Its starting point is the question in which way the broad activities in science, media and public focussed on Women's and Gender History. Which topics and aspects did historians analyse and explore? Did increasing debates around 2014 also result in a significant diversification of insights into the gendered history of the war or do we have to state on the contrary a return of "male-centred master narratives" or a persistent orientation towards national paradigms – as gender historians forewarned already at the beginning of the memory boom. Could gender historians fruitfully intercede in debates in academia or popular history? Could they take the chance to shift perspectives within traditional narrations, which tend to discuss the situation of "women in wartime" solely as "special chapter" of a seemingly "general", but in fact "male centred" history of the war? Can we observe differences in transnational comparison? In order to answer such questions, the current issue of "L'Homme" assembles case studies on Germany and Austria, France/Great Britain, Italy, Portugal and Hungary – thereby focusing also on some European countries or regions, which by tendency stayed marginalised so far in research. Dealing with a broad range of different methodological approaches, the authors examine various shapes of remembrance: scientific writing, national and international conferences or workshops, exhibitions and (virtual) collections or online portals.

Abstracts

Angelika Schaser, The First World War in Germany and Austria-Hungary from the Perspective of Women's and Gender History

The article reviews some of the latest research reports and books on the First World War in the German Empire and Austria-Hungary, asking which significance is assigned to women's and gender history. The topics of recent scholarship mirror the trends that can be observed and that are mentioned in the latest research reports: the growing interest in transnational and global perspectives and the continuous writing of national histories at the same time. Other studies deal with regional and local impacts of the war and increasingly use autobiographical texts as sources.

Alison Fell, Female War Icons: Visual Representations of Women's Contribution to the First World War in France and Britain in 1914–1918 and 2014–2018

This article compares and contrasts the representation of women's roles in the First World War in France and Britain during two key moments in which the war's cultural memory has been constructed: at the end of the war and during its centenary years. In order to do so, it first considers two visual sources dating from 1918: the film "La Femme française pendant la guerre" (The Frenchwoman in Wartime) made by the Section cinématographique de l'armée (Army cinema unit), and photographs of British women's war work commissioned by the Photographic Section of the Ministry of Information. It then analyses the representation of women and the First World War in two museum exhibitions that were both launched in anticipation of the public interest that would be generated by the centenary of the conflict: the First World War galleries in the Imperial War Museum in London, which opened in 2014, and the permanent exhibition in the Musée de la Grande Guerre (Museum of the Great War) in Meaux, which first opened its doors in 2011.

Fátima Mariano and Helena da Silva, From Memory to Reality: Remembering the Great War in Portugal and Gender Perspectives

Studies on the First World War have been met with increasing popularity in Portugal, a phenomenon also occurring in other countries. During the last few years, several commemorative activities took place, ranging from exhibitions to conferences to publications. Despite such unprecedented enthusiasm, these events have been mainly male-focused, apart from a few exceptions. This article aims to identify how current studies within and beyond the academic community take into consideration gender perspectives when remembering the Great War in Portugal. It offers a short overview of commemorative events in Portugal that have included gender narratives and their limitations. What academic books and articles have been published? What exhibitions highlighted women's participation in the First World War? Have the media been covering war and gender perspectives in particular? Despite a certain interest in the Great War's centenary, the role of Portuguese women continues to be reduced to second rate. The article will give possible reasons for this scenario and discuss potential future developments.

Judit Acsády, Zsolt Mészáros and Máté Zombory, Reflections on Gender Aspects of World War One: Commemoration Projects and Historiography in Hungary

The commemoration of the 100th year anniversary of the First World War in Hungary attracted significant attention. A large number of public events, conferences, exhibitions and publications were devoted to the centenary, several of them centrally launched and state-funded projects; universities and associations organised conferences and other events. The paper examines how these centenary projects represented gender and war. Most of them confined themselves to describing the gendered dichotomy of the front and the home front, details of men's and women's 'roles' and gendered practices in society. Some of them also focused on the discussion of how certain female roles have changed mostly on the home front.

The centenary projects were presented predominantly in the framework of traditional historical approaches. Only some of them challenged previously accepted discourses.

Stefania Bartoloni, The Long Anniversary of Women at War 1915–1918. The Italian Case

The paper deals with the centenary of the First World War in Italy, focusing on gendered memory politics before and after 2015. It is characteristic of the 'Italian case' that over the course of the twentieth century gender images of the Great War appear closely linked to rhetoric figures established in the context of events commemorating the unification of Italy in 1861. Besides, remembering the First World War played an important role in Italian Fascism. The Fascist regime declared the Great War as a crucial reference point of political ideology. Correspondingly, it propagated gender images of 'soldier-like manliness' and 'caring national motherhood'. In contrast, and in order to distance themselves from Fascism, Italian politics and public opinion after 1945 rather ignored the role of women in the First World War. Accordingly, the range of 'available' gender representations of the war remained rather limited in the second half of twentieth century. It was not until the commemoration events around 2015 that women's and gender history research set in motion again. Against the backdrop of a significant gender bias in current Italian historical sciences and persisting research desiderata concerning World War One, the conclusions of such historiographic developments nevertheless remain ambivalent.

Benjamin Ziemann, Ambivalent Masculinity. Gender Perceptions and Gendered Practices in the Imperial German Navy. The Example of Martin Niemöller

On 1 April 1910, Martin Niemöller, the son of a Protestant pastor, joined the Imperial German navy together with 206 other sea cadets. After twelve months of training, he was promoted to ensign, and to the rank of lieutenant-at-sea in April 1913. Based on a dense record of letters and diary entries, this article analyses how Niemöller engaged the practices of male camaraderie in the navy, and how his perception of his own masculinity evolved. A key factor in this context were the rules of marital consent, which required a navy officer to provide sufficient funds for a suitable livelihood before the navy command granted permission to marry. Faced with these constraints, Niemöller decided to terminate his relationship with a woman and sought refuge in the more intimate aspects of male camaraderie in encounters with few select friends. As the First World War began in August 1914, military masculinity appeared to be an empty shell for Niemöller as the German High Sea Fleet had to stay idle at the North Sea ports. Overall, the article argues that the discrepancy between normative role expectations and subjective experiences of masculinity among officers was much greater than suspected in historiography. Military masculinity in the Imperial German Navy remained highly ambivalent.