

Island of Histories: Trans-national Cultural Transmission and Historical Knowledge Production in Early Twentieth-century Taiwan

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This paper aims to explore the multiple origins and complex formation of modern Taiwanese historiography in early twentieth century. Based on case studies of three pioneering figures in Taiwan studies, namely William Campbell (1861-1928), Inô Kanori (1867-1925) and Lian Heng (1878-1936), the author discusses different perceptions and competing representations of the island's people and landscape since late nineteenth century. By comparing the life history, travel experience, major works and intellectual network of these representative writers, the paper further outlines the coexistence, competition and convergence of Chinese, Western and Japanese knowledge formations on Taiwan in the context of trans-national cultural transmission and information consumption in modern East Asia. With special attention to the challenging question of colonial encounter and knowledge production, this study not only provides an alternative perspective on the unique trajectory of historical writings on Taiwan but offers an in-depth critique of conventional modernist and nationalist paradigms in East Asian historiography.