



CALL FOR PAPERS

SPECIAL ISSUE: “MOBILE CULTURES AND THE ANTHROPOCENE: TERRITORIES, SOCIETIES, TEMPORALITIES”

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Abstract deadline: 15 July 2025

Research on mobility has shown considerable interest in promoting an interdisciplinary approach to history in order to renew knowledge of transport. Among the issues brought to light by these perspectives, the question of the environment is central. Because transport affects the territories we inhabit, because it reflects the way societies are nurtured by technology, the mobilisation of history and its long-term perspectives shed light on the footprints our mobility patterns have left on the Earth. Their material impact, which is reflected in the interweaving of the technical, social and entrepreneurial infrastructures they have constituted over the long term; the change in representations - of movement, space and ways of life - that they have initiated.

This special issue of *The Journal of Transport History* examines the relationship between mobile cultures and the Anthropocene from an interdisciplinary perspective. Describing the impact of humans on the Earth and the alteration of the biosphere by their actions, the term *Anthropocene* was reintroduced in 2002 by Paul Crutzen, Nobel Prize winner in chemistry and specialist in Earth system sciences, when he published a highly influential article “Geology of Mankind: the Anthropocene” in the journal *Nature*. While the Anthropocene refers to a new geological epoch or event resulting from human activities with dramatic consequences for the climate and the atmosphere, the term and its meanings remain debated and contested, in the chronostratigraphic community

(International Union of Geological Sciences, 2024), but also in the earth-system science and the social sciences, whether in terms of its temporalities or its anthropocentric perspective (Steffen et al., 2011; Steffen et al., 2015; Bonneuil and Fressoz, 2016; Chakrabarty, 2021). Similarly, proposals for a change of ecological course are contrasting and hotly debated, ranging from energy de-growth to frugal sobriety or confidence in technological renewal, the responses to which sometimes consist of solutions similar to those that created the problems in the first place.

We could add a new term to this spectrum: kinocene (Roseau, 2024) in order to understand the way mobile cultures became anchored in our societies and the imprints they left on the Earth. *Mobile cultures* encompass the social meanings generated through a diversity of mediations and powers, that set of uses and representations that gradually shaped the relationship between travel techniques and environments. From prototype to industry, from elite practice to mass transportation, from infrastructure to superstructure, inventions related to the transportation of people, materials and information have emerged as essential technological systems, with considerable global economic heft and an equally considerable environmental impact.

History is considered here as “problematic” to use the words of Lucien Febvre, that is to say that it “poses problems to the past according to the present needs of humanity”, and thus allows us to better understand current events in which we are both actors and spectators (Febvre, 1946). By focusing on a dialogue between the objects and questions raised by mobile cultures and the panorama of issues related to the Anthropocene, the retrospective perspective we propose aims to reopen historiography and reformulate research perspectives in order to understand the interdependencies of scales and boundaries that affect our environments over the long term. Conversely, adopting a perspective that places mobile cultures in the Anthropocene time on which we are focusing commits us to renewing our understanding of the disciplinary and historiographical fields through which we analyse mobile cultures, to exploring their margins, to identifying their hidden faces and to reopening their potentialities. By showing what our pasts have accomplished, it ultimately provides a reflection on our relationship to the future.

This special issue follows on from a panel¹ held at the virtual T2M conference in 2021 (Lisbon) and the publication of Nathalie Roseau's article in *The Journal of Transport History* entitled “Mobile cultures and the Anthropocene” (Roseau, 2022), which explored these issues from the perspective of aerial culture. Following on from this exploratory discussion, this call for papers therefore aims to open up an entangled approach to history by encouraging dialogue between different disciplinary fields and historiographical segments; by promoting situated research, at the junction of theoretical discussion and empirical fieldworks; by encouraging a shift in attention to the margins and a repositioning of the centrality of key issues. As such, the formulation of the subjects should make it possible to renew and enlarge the objects of inquiry in history: territories as palimpsests, aerospace, sea lands, consumption and energy, speed and acceleration, etc. The approach could not only be permeable to other disciplines (anthropology, geography, political science, science and technology studies, sociology, urbanism, visual

¹ Including the papers of Carlos Lopez Galviz, Arnaud Passalacqua, Guillaume de Syon, and Nathalie Roseau

culture, etc.) and their contemporary concerns, but also bring together approaches that are often fragmented but essential to the understanding of the history of transport.

This special issue will be guest edited by Dr. Nathalie Roseau (Nathalie.roseau@enpc.fr), professor of urbanism at the École nationale des ponts et chaussées, and tenured researcher at the Laboratoire Techniques, Territoires et Sociétés, who will select (with *The Journal of Transport History* editorship) the papers according to their thematic relevance, their originality and their scholarly rigor.

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Abstract components: Your abstract should include the following elements:

1. Name, affiliation and e-mail address
2. Short biography (150 words)
3. Extended abstract of 1000 words including the title of the article, a statement of the relevant topic/research questions/case studies/arguments.

Please send the above items in a **single PDF document** assembled to Nathalie Roseau (Nathalie.roseau@enpc.fr)

The authors of the selected papers will be notified approximately six weeks after the deadline. **The deadline for submission of full articles will be 28 February 2026**

Papers will be subject to a double-anonymised review process. About JTH, its indexing and submissions guidelines, please refer to <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/jth>.

Queries before the abstract submission date can be directed to the guest editor.

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