

Henning Trüper

Topography of a Method

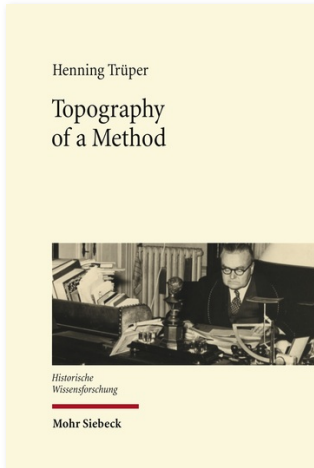
François Louis Ganshof and the Writing of History

[Topographie einer Methode. François Louis Ganshof und das Schreiben von Geschichte.]

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What does the practical work of writing contribute to historical writing? What does it mean for historical knowledge that it is, inescapably, written? Henning Trüper explores quotidian practices of writing as constituting the working life of a historian, the Belgian mediaevalist François Louis Ganshof (1895–1980). The argument draws on a large variety of texts and writing situations, so as to discuss, across the fault lines of twentieth-century historiography, shifting patterns of methodological discourse; procedures of historicisation; the making of scholarly sociability in writing practice; and finally the actual writing of historical text. Ganshof the historian, whether as author, reader, teacher, student, polemic, diplomat, witness, or mere voice on the radio, remained bound to paperwork, an ensemble of small-scale routines and makeshift solutions that ultimately lacked a central steering agency. The nexus between historical knowledge and paperwork was indissoluble.

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