



# History at Cambridge



**Medieval Mementos**  
**Decolonising History**  
**Dance in Colonial Kenya**

# Welcome

**As Nandini Mitra's piece on 'decolonising the curriculum' shows, in the past year our students and academic staff have been deeply involved in debates on the purpose and future of historical studies in the U.K. and beyond.**

**A**t the award of Sir Christopher Clark's 'European Prize for Political Culture', on 4 August 2018, Wolfgang Schäuble, President of the Bundestag, testified to his work's contribution 'to an understanding of European history and to a European consciousness – something we need more urgently than ever'. This honour testifies to the breadth of Faculty's international and public commitments.

These have been fortified by major new appointments: by Richard Burke's research and teaching on European democratic thought and modern Irish history; Helen McCarthy on internationalism and women's history; by Bobby Lee's mapping of economics and ecology of U.S. westward expansion, and, featured here, Hank Gonzalez's combing of the secret waters of the Caribbean. Our new Vere Harmsworth Professor of Imperial and Naval History, Samita Sen, a pioneer in the labour and gender history of South Asia, will continue to move our world history programme in new directions.

Among the many important and prize-winning new books by our historians, it's fitting I think to draw attention to the final opus of a former holder of the Vere Harmsworth chair: Sir Christopher Bayly. His *Remaking the modern world, 1900-2015: global connections and comparisons* is published posthumously this autumn.



A work of such epic vision could not be more timely. Over the past academic year, the Faculty has faced directly the anxieties over the U.K.'s relationship with the wider world and the experience of industrial action on an unprecedented scale. This has presented challenges for students, academics and our deeply committed support staff, from the provision of teaching, to highlighting questions of future mobility, security of employment and fundamental issues of equality and diversity.

However, all this has galvanised our current planning to shape the History Faculty of the future, and our public promotion of the discipline of history. It has been a fitting year in which to launch our new degrees in History and Politics and History and Modern Languages.

Over the year, it has been an inspiration for me to read accounts of how your time here, and the individual subject choices you made, have shaped your lives, often in unexpected ways. I thank you for your support. The Faculty faces the future striving to provide innovative teaching and research of a wider compass than ever before. I hope you enjoy reading about it.

**Tim Harper**

*Chair of the Faculty*

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History at Cambridge is edited by Dr Lucy Delap.  
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## COME AND VISIT US!

The History Faculty will be hosting over 13 events for the 2018 Festival of Ideas (Oct 15-28), including debates on colonial violence, religious zealotry, marriage in the middle ages and fashion extremes.

**[www.festivalofideas.cam.ac.uk](http://www.festivalofideas.cam.ac.uk)**

# Medieval Mementos

Dr Julie Barrau (Emmanuel, 2006)



**M**y current research project contributes to a better understanding of the 'Twelfth Century Renaissance'. My project is deeply rooted in the study of Latin manuscripts; its end goal is a book on the social history of the ways knowledge circulated in England and Northern France in the long twelfth century. I am fascinated by the materiality and the constraints that framed and shaped the manuscript production of texts. Because each text and each assemblage of texts in a volume was a one-off effort, each was, in effect, unique. This means that no book is ever *exactly* the same as another one, even if their contents seem to be so. We are all deeply steeped in print culture, where the

potentially endless identical reproduction of textual material is the norm, and the creation of new texts a totally distinct process, that of authorship. The limit between textual creativity and textual copy was infinitely more blurred, and possibly partly irrelevant, in the medieval West.

The circulation of Latin texts is a crucial dimension of the intellectual developments of the twelfth century; it is particularly important to understand what was actually read, thought about, and used. Much work has been done by editors of specific texts, in their study of the manuscript tradition of their objects; *marginalia*, the notes left by readers in the margins, have also attracted serious attention.

However, I believe that much can still be done. Many medievalists share the assumption, often unconsciously, that educated people in the Middle Ages had such well-trained memories that they could store in their heads entire books. There certainly was a great interest in mnemonics in the period, as Mary Carruthers has masterfully shown. But there is also a great deal of evidence that medieval clerics relied on the written word to jog their memories, or to help them memorize. One extreme example is the inclusion of something as elementary as the Ten Commandments in the *Liber Floridus*, the huge sum of miscellaneous knowledge gathered by Lambert of Arras in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century.

One angle I am exploring is note-taking. A great deal of scholarly interest has been devoted to *florilegia*, or anthologies of extracts, over the last two or three decades. Those organized collections of extracts from authorities were intended for dissemination, and it is better understood now how crucial they were in intellectual practices in the High Middle Ages. Many references and quotes used by the best minds of the twelfth-century Renaissance, for instance John of Salisbury, were found not in the works of the authors who were quoted (explicitly or implicitly) but in *florilegia*. Excerpting and taking notes while reading was not just done in order to write those anthologies; it is a reasonable assumption to assume that medieval readers, just like more recent ones, tried to keep mementos from the books, often borrowed, that they opened. Little attention has been paid so far to such individual practices – and these are one of the main focuses of my book project.

It may seem impossible to have access to individual, and therefore fragile, practices. However, an abundance of sources, hitherto unnoticed, allow precisely that – a look into the day-to-day, elementary, and therefore very important, workings of minds of clerics and monks they were reading, excerpting and commenting. Often, in twelfth-century manuscripts,

one stumbles on short undistinguished texts usually labelled vaguely as ‘notes’ or ‘extracts’, and almost never properly catalogued. Those texts are uninviting, because they lack the usual hallmarks of organized anthologies – rubrics, thematic organisation, or any other form of easily identified logic. Those unappealing features are exactly what makes them precious to me. The messier, more disorganised and less welcoming those collections of extracts and glosses are, the more likely they are to be private notes, whose logic was idiosyncratic and penetrable only to the person who collected them. They are diamonds in the rough, which can allow us to see medieval minds at work.

Note-taking is just a small part of the project; I’m interested in the many ways in which textual cornerstones of the Middle Ages, such as the Bible, could be “tailored” for a specific individual and group, by excerpting it but also by adding, at the beginning and at the end of the text, elements that cast a very specific light on Scripture or some of its books. I have now gathered a database of dozens of relevant manuscripts, with material ranging from biblical, exegetical and theological items, to legal and classical fragments. My focus is mostly on the former, but canon law is also of great interest, especially when mixed with theological elements. At this early stage, I have studied in detail about thirty collections.

The project, which will eventually turn into a book, explores different angles of the general topic of circulation and acquisition of knowledge; the starting point is always the materiality of those manuscript texts, texts that have been overlooked until now. I hope to show their idiosyncrasies and variations, and how those texts were chosen, composed, sought after, modified, glossed and interpolated. The unifying theme here is the paradoxical creativity and malleability of a culture so often defined by the imitation and transmission of past authorities.



# History and Politics: The first year

## Dr Peter Sloman (Churchill, 2015)

Cambridge historians have long worked, in a variety of ways, at the interface between History and Politics. The Historical Tripos includes popular and well-established papers in British political history and the history of political thought, not to mention European and world history, and some of the most exciting research within the Faculty over the past thirty years has drawn on the cultural and linguistic turns to rethink the boundaries of the 'political'. Until last October, however, there was no formal way for Cambridge undergraduates to study History and Politics in combination. The new joint Tripos has been designed to change this. A working group including David Reynolds, John Robertson, David Runciman, Magnus Ryan, Mike Sewell, and Helen Thompson developed initial plans in 2014-15, and since then I have been working with colleagues to bring it to fruition; I'm especially grateful to Liz Partridge and Shruti Kapila from the History Faculty and Glen Rangwala in POLIS.

Other universities, including Oxford, have offered History and Politics degrees for several years. How could Cambridge set itself apart from the competition? Our established strengths in modern political history, the history of political thought, and international relations were clearly part of the answer, but the working group was also determined that the new Tripos should be more than the sum of its parts – providing a genuine integration between the two disciplines. The first-year programme is thus anchored by a bridge paper in 'Evidence and Argument', which introduces students to the wide range of sources, concepts, and approaches used by historians and political scientists in Cambridge

and encourages them to reflect on the implications of these methodological choices. Teaching the new paper in class groups of 12-15 students – led by Bronwen Everill, Tim Rogan, and myself – has also helped forge a shared identity among the joint Tripos students and provided an opportunity for graduate students to gain experience of class teaching.

Though the Tripos is still in its infancy, the early signs have been promising. The first admissions round attracted almost 200 applicants, and the first cohort consists of 39 students spread across 23 different colleges. Colleges have made 55 offers for 2018 entry, and there may be scope for further expansion. The programme is also making a significant contribution to the University's widening participation efforts: this year 84% of UK offers went to candidates from state schools and 14% to candidates from the quintile of neighbourhoods with the lowest HE participation rates. I am told these are the highest figures of any Tripos.

As I write, I have just finished marking the first batch of long essays from the 'Evidence and Argument' paper, which includes some remarkably ambitious work – on post-colonial nationalist texts as historical sources, the impact of the 'Cambridge School', and the lessons of the 2017 general election for theorists of voting behaviour. One student even showed how the use of symbols in 18<sup>th</sup> century cartoons, such as the depiction of the Earl of Bute as a jackboot, prefigured the 'memes' found in the darker reaches of the internet. There is still work to be done as the first cohort works its way through the Tripos, but those involved in setting the degree up can, I think, take satisfaction in what has been achieved so far.

# Hank Gonzalez

## New appointment

I have had the good fortune to recently join the Cambridge Faculty of History as a lecturer in Caribbean History. I am mainly a historian of Haiti and to a lesser extent the Dominican Republic. My first book, scheduled for publication in the spring of 2019, is a history of the early decades of Haitian independence. Curious about the Caribbean from a young age, my research on Haiti grew out of my own attempts to understand what I consider the most poorly understood country within a poorly understood region.

I began studying Haitian history as an undergraduate and have never stopped. My research has taken me to archival collections in Paris, Florida, New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Rhode Island. But my work has perhaps been shaped most of all by the research that I have conducted in Haiti itself. Warned from many directions that the Haitian archives were in terrible shape, inaccessible, and likely preserved little or no old material – I rolled the dice and jumped through a variety of hoops in order to look for nineteenth century material in the country’s public archives. I was quite pleased to find significant government records dating back to 1811. These materials considerably enriched my analysis of crop production, trade, land tenure and social conflict in the turbulent decades following the country’s independence. One lesson that I took away from my experience is that historians should consider searching for sources precisely where they are told that they won’t find any. Intriguingly, this kind of advice can occasionally represent a contrary indicator: evidence that others may not have even considered looking.



The slow and challenging conditions of archival work in Port-au-Prince also allowed me to learn about Haiti through the kind of prolonged residence that is more often the privilege of anthropologists than historians. Lengthy stays in Haiti helped me to learn the country’s language, its society, its culture, and its lifeways. All of this has helped me try to create scholarship that speaks to the living world of modern Haiti rather than the colonial nightmare of Saint Domingue.

In the time since my book was accepted for publication, my research has turned towards questions of Caribbean cultural patrimony and material culture. My second book will be a history of foreign influence in the twentieth century Haitian art business. I have also begun work on two archaeological projects. While working in Florida I began planning a project to salvage some of the remains of improvised rafts formerly used by so-called ‘boat people’ in their risky, unauthorized sea voyages to the U.S. I have argued that the few examples of these ingenious creations still rusting away on remote beaches should be preserved as museum displays or public art installations. Back in Haiti, I have been exploring the site of an early nineteenth century shipwreck that I learned about in the course of my archival work. I am optimistic that local reports of underwater cannons lying at the site will hopefully come to fruition and can be matched to the wreck that I encountered in my documents. If so, the discovery might be of some interest to the Haitian studies community since the remains of an early Haitian military craft could shed new light on the country’s founding period. The earliest Haitian governments had very few naval vessels, and so far no wrecks of them have been identified or excavated.

# Volunteering at the Parker Library

Chloe Hadavas (Trinity, 2015)



**O**n my first day of volunteering at the Parker Library, I found myself standing, not sitting, in the vaulted upper library, surrounded by pale green walls lined with early printed books. I was working on the Bury Bible, a twelfth-century lectern bible so large that you have to get out of your chair to view it in its entirety. Illuminated by one of the first named artists in England, the bible was impressive—but any medieval manuscript might have been, had I encountered it on my own for the first time. Before then, I had worked with manuscripts in class, but had handled them briefly and tentatively. It was only after I started to spend time with the Parker's collection that I became more comfortable with the presence of written artefacts from almost a thousand years ago.

Since February, I have gone to the Parker twice a week, leafing through the Library's bibles to create tables of contents for the digitised manuscripts on 'Parker on the Web'. At times, the process is straightforward, especially with bibles produced before the thirteenth century. But often this is not the case: the bibles can contain irregular prologues (those not written or compiled by Jerome), the books of the Old and New Testaments can be arranged in different orders, and unexpected (and unlabelled)

texts can show up, such as biblical commentaries by Peter Lombard. With my time in the Parker, and frequent questioning of the ever-helpful librarians, Anne and Alex, I have become acquainted with more than the textual aspects of the manuscripts. I have seen the diverse artistic manifestations of Genesis and the common representations of biblical figures in historiated initials. I have felt how certain parts of individual folios are rendered rigid and glossy through the concentration of collagen. I have come to expect Matthew Parker's signature red crayon in the marginalia.

In my own research, which explores Latin literacy in female religious houses, I study handwriting in the eleventh to thirteenth centuries and have conducted palaeographical analyses of mortuary rolls. The Parker's manuscripts provide a space in which to witness the kinds of script I research and their development over time in other contexts. Yet engaging with manuscripts outside of the strictures of focused research provides a relief of sorts from many of the predispositions which accompany traditional academic work. Beyond reflecting my particular research interests, volunteering has been an opportunity to approach the Parker's manuscripts on their own terms as material, intellectual, and aesthetic objects.

# Tasting past strength

Lesley Steinitz (Darwin, 2011)

## How does a century old cup of cocoa taste?

“Sandow’s Health and Strength Cocoa” was a much-hyped health food launched in 1911. Its manufacturer, Eugen Sandow, was a celebrity strong-man and ‘Professor of Physical Culture’ to the King, and is now referred to as the father of body-building. His rock-solid muscles and incredible strong-man act showed that he knew quite a lot about health and strength, but his product’s name probably contradicts everything you think you know about cocoa! Cocoa contains quite a high proportion of protein, usually around 20%. This was an important consideration because proteins were thought to be lacking in many people’s diets. (The tiny quantity of protein in a cup of cocoa does not appear to have occurred to anyone!) Given that scientists seemed to be saying that only proteins could build and repair muscles, this lack was said to be a cause of bad health and therefore of impending national economic crisis. However, like its manufacturer, Sandow’s cocoa was positioned as the embodiment of muscles and fitness and the antidote to this existential threat of protein insufficiency.

How did people respond to this new cocoa? One of the approaches that historians have increasingly been using to get a handle on such questions has been to use all the senses to investigate visual and material things from the past. Unfortunately for me, processed foods are ephemeral so I have, in my research into various health foods, referred to packaging, the imagery in adverts, and consumers’ reactions manifest in things like fancy dress costumes. These have been useful, but imagine my excitement when I opened an email from Sandow’s great-grandson, Chris Davies, who offered me the chance to examine and taste *Sandow’s Cocoa* from an unopened tin that was a century old!

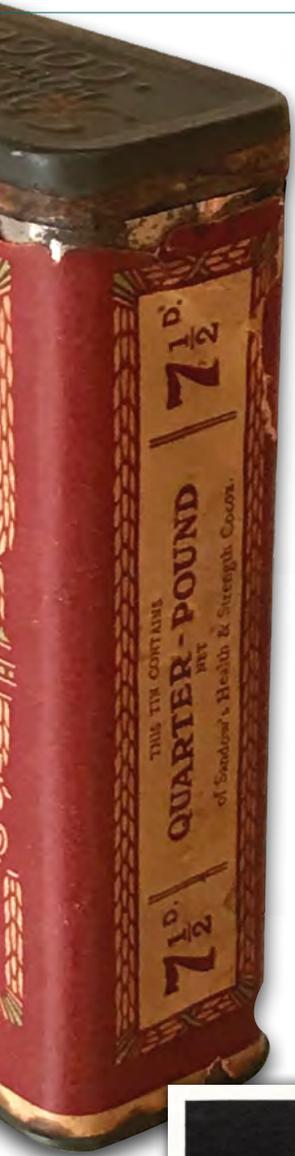
What might I learn from this rare find? Could it help me to understand how people might have experienced handling and tasting it? Would it have squared up with Sandow’s adverts? When I gently eased off the lid, wafts of fine aromatic clay-coloured powder went everywhere. The tin was full to the brim! I thought back to Sandow’s claims, that his ‘wind-sifted’ cocoa was four times as fine as other cocoas, and that you got more spoonfuls for your money. Handling it, I noticed how pale and free-flowing it was compared to the darker, more clumpy and coarser cocoas that I am (and they were) used to.

As to its strengthening effects, one tin wasn’t going to be enough for me to attempt to build up Sandow-like muscles. To assess the claims about its nutritive properties, I needed science. Fortunately, the Cambridge college system means that historians sit next to chemists and biologists at dinner, and I was able to recruit two of them to analyse the cocoa. We looked at it under the microscope, and they analysed its nutritional composition and checked for contaminants that might harm us – there appeared to be none. We compared what we found to Sandow’s claims and to modern cocoas. Yes, Sandow’s was lower in hard-to-digest fat and higher in all-important protein than most contemporary and modern cocoas, at 26%. Most cocoas were (and are) not simply an extract from the cocoa bean, though you wouldn’t know it from the ingredients list. They are “Dutched”. This is a nineteenth century technique whereby “alkalis” are added during processing. They



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“Fortunately the Cambridge college system means that historians sit next to chemists and biologists at dinner...”

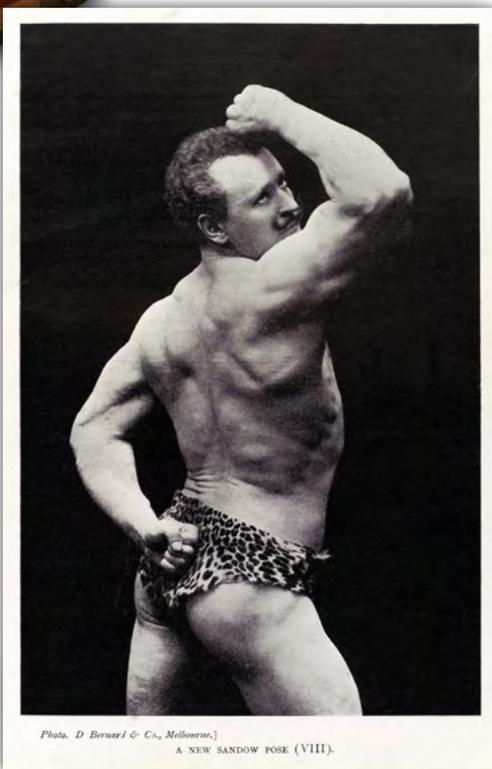


make the powder darker, apparently more soluble and reduce the mouth-feel and indigestibility of the extra fat left in the cocoa after processing the cocoa beans. Dutched cocoas tend to have higher fat and correspondingly less protein. Sandow's was pale, pure, and had no "alkali". In fact, it was most similar in colour, texture and chemical composition to a modern "raw" health-food cocoa. I realised that my preconception that darker cocoa would be tastier was an assumption shaped by cultural expectations ...

The final test, obviously, was flavour. To prepare for this, I prepared and got used to modern raw cocoa made with just water and a little sugar, as per the instructions that came with the Sandow's tin. The taste test was live, in front of an audience at the Polar Museum as part of Cambridge's Science Festival. So, was Sandow's cocoa 'luscious'? Perhaps not, but despite its age, it had a good flavour though one of my scientists, more familiar with milky cocoas, described its as "cardboard." Did my experiences influence my trust in Sandow's ability to make me healthier and stronger? I've bought modern health foods based on equally unlikely claims!

As a historical exercise, this has certainly informed my analysis of health food positioning and culture. But most importantly, if you'd like to invite me for a cocoa, I now drink it like my coffee, black.

Lesley Steinitz is writing up her doctoral dissertation, *Industrial health foods and culture during Britain's Decadent Era (1880-1920)*.



# Decolonising History

Nandini Mitra (King's, 2013)



I applied to Cambridge in 2013 for deferred entry to King's College – an oddity to add to the list of 'unusuals' that marked my university application: being the child of first-generation immigrants; having studied at a comprehensive school; being from an area in North London where not many people go to university; and being the first in my family to go to university. I knew Cambridge would be very different to what I was used to, so I tried to approach it with an open mind. Having just graduated, I look back on that mindset of having no expectations as particularly helpful in navigating the University. I now know that Cambridge, and particularly the History faculty, go beyond any expectations, especially for an applicant with no clue of what they're about to go into.

Most importantly, I think the most unexpected, and enjoyable, gain I've made is the learning that continued outside of lecture halls and exams – learning can, and did, take place in grassroots organising groups across campus, stretching from Cambridge Defend Education to the Decolonise Cambridge working groups. I gained as much in these spaces as I did during Tripos. It was in these groups where I met warm, generous people who were not only interested in study, but in sharing what they knew and imagining new possibilities for learning by seeking to truly democratise and expand what 'education' means. This process of learning was continuous throughout Tripos, and eventually

led me to be the undergraduate representative on a Decolonising History panel that was held in Michaelmas 2017. Participants collectively discussed and began to build new ways of constructing Tripos so that it reflects not only a broader geographical range of study, but also adopts the methodologies and ethics required to decolonise modes of knowledge production and acquisition. Taking part in this was a hugely rewarding experience. It was encouraging to see that there was support for critical thinking about what History is, not only as a field of study but as a means of social production – how history, in extending beyond the academy, informs our worldviews, and responds to and aids the formation of public policy and debate.

Part I of the History Tripos is about breadth. My papers ranged from the Roman Empire in late antiquity, modern British history, and world history since 1914. My Themes and Sources option also allowed me to closely examine the impact of colonialism and Catholicism on women and non-binary people in c.15-c17 Philippines – an area and time period I hadn't looked at before. However, the biggest surprise came with my choice to study Political Thought c.1700 – 1890. In first year, I had doggedly tried to widen the scope of the papers I was studying in first year (which were all British and European history) towards gendered and decolonised histories. I think I opted for Political Thought partly to prove to myself that I could maybe do such a 'quintessential' Cambridge paper, even though it seemed so different to what I value in pedagogy. Although the Political Thought reading lists remain (sadly) almost entirely populated by white male thinkers (and where women thinkers are discussed, it is mostly about gender – as if women didn't think about politics aside from gender!), I found that I really enjoyed the paper. Getting to grips with what thinkers like Marx, Wollstonecraft, and Smith were saying, examining their influences and debates, and thinking about the value systems implied by what 'politics' means to these thinkers was the most intellectually fulfilling experience of Part I. Additionally, it also taught me that you can support gendered and decolonised histories by subverting the canon, and by using gender as an analytical tool, as opposed to a field of study. Despite finding the paper challenging,

# Dance in Colonial Kenya

Dr Cécile Feza Bushidi (Newnham, 2016)

I opted to study modern Political Thought and Philosophy at Part II, as I felt I had more to gain from this field of study.

Opting to study new things also led me to choose International Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War for my Part II Special Subject. Although I knew I found the Cold War interesting, I was unsure how the perspective of diplomacy could hold given the cultural turn and my own interest in a 'fuller' politics. I found I was surprised by what can be gained from this perspective; it made me revise my view of 'great man' history (with caveats). I also really enjoyed the range of primary source material we looked at, which gave greater insight to how international relations were conducted and operated in the great offices of power during this turbulent period.

Whilst studying World History, I wrote an essay on the Partition of India that led me to go on to write my undergraduate dissertation on the 1946 Calcutta Killings – a genocidal riot that began a spate of outbursts that have often been referred to as being the prelude to Partition. My central thesis was to debunk the teleology provided in this general narrative, and instead restore the significance of the Killings as a nationalistic war in itself. Drawing primarily on original-language police reports and oral history, I was able to use this independent research to support the architecture of a thesis I could call my own. I found this to be an incredibly intellectually fulfilling exercise, as was the opportunity to pursue interests that I'd built up and identified over Tripos, such as nationalism, political violence, community identity, and memory.

I have been able to tailor Tripos towards my interests, which largely skew towards grassroots political action, intelligence, and the relationship between the state and the nation; I am now working at a grassroots organisation that provides legal aid for immigrants settled in the UK. My dissertation and Special Subject particularly allowed me to crystallise these interests, which I hope to explore further by pursuing a Masters in the near future.

**W**hy and how does dance expand what we know about settler colonialism in Africa? In what ways does dance in colonial central Kenya converse with stories of domination and cross-cultural contacts in African pasts? Why does dance in this region involve all actors operating in colonial settings? How does a narrative of dance offer new ways to rethink colonial-era dance in/ from Africa? The book I'm currently writing, *In the Name of Dance: Settler Colonialism, Performance, Culture and Politics in Being in Central Kenya, 1880-1963*, considers these questions from the perspective of the history of dance among the Gikuyu peoples — Kenya's largest ethnic group who have historically lived in central Kenya. In what is the first historical study of dance in Kenya, I examine Gikuyu dance repertoire as a set of practices and concerns over eight years of colonial encounters in a space that has been the economic heartland of colonial Kenya. The unfolding history of dance-related corporeal, visual and aural

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expressions is explored through a diverse range of themes. From the transformations borne out of the East Africa Protectorate's political economy to interventions into so-deemed unruly bodies, from the reinventions of indigenous political cultures to the problem of regulating workers' leisure in space and time, the history of dance in this region offers a vibrant contribution to the extensive text-based historiography of Kenya.

A concern of colonial-era anthropological inquiries, dance in Africa was first given historical treatment in 1975 by Terence Ranger, whose insights into how *beni ngoma* might serve as analytical tools to understand coastal East Africa's experience of colonialism has not been extended to other colonial spaces in Africa. *In the Name of Dance* develops Ranger's arguments that dance sustained pre-colonial patterns of socialization, assisted in African politicization and generated deep-felt anxiety amongst colonial officials, African middlemen and missionary circles. I examine the logics of the emergence of syncretic dance genres borne out of cultural cross-pollinations between Africans and Europeans. I present dance as a reflection of complex dynamics involving both the enactors and recipients of colonial power. The book transcends a simplistic vision of dance as a vehicle of change for the oppressed, rather presenting it as an ensemble of practices that affected a wide range of individuals who all had something to say about the dances they practiced, observed, heard and felt about. Drawing on Tony Ballentyne and Antoinette Burton's edited volume *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History* (2005), the book recasts the concrete and symbolic arenas of contacts between Europe and Africa and creates new possibilities to evaluate local somatic histories of connection and transformation in a space of enforced mutual occupation. This approach decentres the sinister epistemological universe and negative ontologies of dances from and within Africa as symbols of 'theories of otherness' during

colonialism and which, in essence, offer a very limited range of intellectual and artistic tools to write stories about dance in Africa during this era.

There are significant methodological challenges of reconstructing the colonial past of a dynamic corporeal language. Although written archival material constitutes the most substantial part of the data collection that informs this book, the availability of colonial-era ethnographies, sound archives, photographs, oral interviews along with my own practice of dance are greatly useful for uncovering past dance narratives. Mining previously untapped sources, the book examines the relationship between dance, the making of masculine and moral self-mastery, and the dance ground as site for inter-Gikuyu male struggles over power. I examine the interwar evolution of ancient male youth dances and emergence of Euro-American bodily idioms in light of settlers' excessive exigencies, colonial concerns for African labour, anxieties about the moralities of dance, Gikuyu nationalism and intergenerational conflicts. While dance enabled many youth to forge communities based on shared political aspirations and class-based senses of belonging, the book also introduces new cultural intermediaries in the origins of historical thought about ethnicity beyond the circle of literate culture brokers. *In the Name of Dance* inserts performance into the various levels of political debate and action, thus pointing to vivid conversations between the paradigms of high politics and low politics. By delving into the prevailing colonial ideas and attitudes towards dance at different times, it emerges that from the mid-1920s, and more dramatically after 1940, the colonial government inadvertently created the material, social and ideological conditions for Africans to spread old and new dances.

#### **About the Author**

Cécile is currently a Junior Research Fellow at Newnham College. In a previous life, she was a dancer and has performed with Lakoma|Pal Frenak, Random Dance|Wayne McGregor, Freddie Opoku-Addiae, and Douglas Thorpe.

# Imogen Schon

(Murray Edwards, 2011)



**W**hen I graduated, I had an offer of a legal training contract in the City. My work experience and interests had more of a social justice bent - but the idea of 'having it sorted' was pretty appealing. I'd accepted the offer in second year, reasoning I could always use the qualification and go into human rights law later. Throughout third year, though, this niggled, and eventually I gave it up, entering graduated life without a defined plan.

After a summer volunteering with Cambridge Development Initiatives in Tanzania, I started Year Here, a post-graduate course in social innovation (applied social policy, mixed with entrepreneurship). The course is brilliant - 4 months volunteering; 2 months on a consulting project for a branch of local government or business, and then several months devising a social venture.

I didn't feel a tug to continue working full time on my venture, feeling I still had more to learn and having always been curious about government and how precisely it wrings an effect on individuals' lives. So, I joined the Civil Service Fast Stream, where I did postings in the prison service - fascinating and challenging in equal measure - and then relocated to Middlesbrough to manage a team in a job centre there. This was hard: the Redcar steelworks had just closed and the area had the highest proportion of refugees in the country, alongside incredibly high unemployment level. I would probably not have chosen these roles, but in them I learned so much about recent, and not-so-recent British history, and its indelible impacts on communities today, as well as valuable lessons about work.

In September 2016, I returned to London to work on EU exit issues in central government, where I still work. Working within government and seeing how it works - especially in the historic and unique context of Brexit - could not be more interesting. I often wonder whether, one day, emails and documents I and my colleagues write might be pored over by historians and history students, and what assessment they will make.

I'm still not sure what my 2014 self would have made of my career and life since then, and am no closer to having a plan for my life and career in 4 (or 40!) years' time. But I think she'd be pleased to know that I've achieved many of the things I wanted, but also that many of my most life-direction-influencing-experiences (prisons, Year Here, the job centre) were not part of 'the plan', and, I suppose, that I couldn't have expected to be working on Brexit in 2014, even if I'd had a 'plan' firmly mapped out.

# Sarah Dunant

(Newnham, 1969)



**I**n the dark ages of the early 1970's, Newnham was one of only three Cambridge colleges that admitted women. The first thing I did after graduation was to get the hell out of learning for a while, taking advantage of a father who worked for an airline to get a cheap ticket to Japan, where I taught English and worked in a night club for six months. (Not as racy as it sounds.)

Once back home, I applied for dozens of jobs. But the one I really wanted didn't exist. As a teenager, I had adored speech radio: documentaries, plays, criticism. So I wrote a "how can you not employ me?" letter to the Head of Talks at BBC Radio 3/4. Nothing ventured...

Possibly the 2:1 from Cambridge got me through the front door. As luck would have it the department was creating a new assistant producer post, yet to be advertised. I got a 6th month contract on a live arts programme. A sink or swim experience, I took in a lot of water but survived. The learning curve was amazing: interviewing, editing, producing. When I left two years later (the travel bug not yet out of my soul)

I had a profession. I also had the urge to write and a journey through central America supplied a notebook of ideas.

For the next few years I earned my living as a freelance journalist, presenting programmes for commercial radio and the BBC World Service while writing and publishing novels; a financial juggling act that makes me nervous even to think of it now, though at the time it felt invigorating.

From radio, I went to television, presenting a BBC late-night arts programme. While the subject was culture, there was always history behind it. The modern, even the post-modern, was born out of what came before and understanding that made for a richer appreciation, while the skills of research, synthesis and structure were always there to fall back on.

But the best is yet to come. The programme got axed, I got tired of writing thrillers and suffered a life crisis (no one gets away without a couple of those). But through it I found my way back to history.

Since then, I have been writing novels set in the Italian renaissance, drawing on the work of new scholarship to illuminate the lives of women. In short, I have become a history student again, burrowing in libraries and archives, visiting convents, churches and palaces, treading in the footsteps of people who died five hundred years ago.

Now in my sixties, (like many of my generation I had hoped I would die before I got old!) I realise that my training as a historian has been at the root of everything I have achieved, with a hefty dollop of luck – or as Machiavelli would have it: fortuna – thrown in on the way.

# Faculty news 2017–18

## Faculty Appointments

We are delighted to welcome **Prof Richard Bourke**, appointed to the Chair in the History of Political Thought. Prof Bourke is currently Professor in the History of Political Thought at Queen Mary University of London, where he is co-director of the Centre for the Study of the History of Political Thought. He studied at University College Dublin, the University of Cambridge and Birkbeck College. He has written widely on enlightenment political thought, ideas of democracy, nationalism and popular sovereignty, and modern Irish history. Among his numerous awards and accolades, in 2016 he was joint winner of the István Hont Memorial Book Prize in Intellectual History, for his *Empire and Revolution: The Political Life of Edmund Burke* (Oxford, 2015). He takes up his position in Cambridge in January 2019.

We will also welcome **Prof Samita Sen** as the Vere Harmsworth Professor of Imperial and Naval History in October 2018. Prof Sen is currently Dean of the Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies, Law and Management in Jadavpur University, Kolkata. She works on labour, gender and migration in South Asia, and is the author of many books and articles including *Women and Labour in Late Colonial India*, *Domestic Days* and *Passage to Bondage*.

Other appointments include **Dr Hank Gonzalez**, historian of the Caribbean, whose research is

featured on p. 6, joins us from the University of South Florida.

**Dr Bobby Lee**, previously of Harvard and UC Berkeley, will be our new lecturer in American History. He works on the expansion of the United States through treaties with Native Americans, and adopts innovative geospatial analysis alongside his archival work. **Dr Helen McCarthy** joins us from Queen Mary University of London as a lecturer in Modern British History. Dr McCarthy works on women's and gender history, spanning internationalism, women diplomats and working mothers in twentieth century Britain.

We also welcome **Dr Yulia Hilevych** as a postdoctoral British Academy Fellow, working on the social history of infertility in Britain, and **Dr Marie de Rugy** as a Newton Fellow, working on Asian cartographies. **Dr Justin Rivest** joins us as a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow examining the State and the charitable distribution of drugs in Old Regime France, 1670-1789, and **Dr Saumya Saxena** has taken up a British Academy Postdoctoral fellowship looking at democracy, family, and religious-customary law in South Asia.

## Promotions

From October 1<sup>st</sup> 2018, **Tessa Webber** and **Nora Berend** will take up personal Chairs, and **Carl Watkins** will take up a Readership. Many congratulations to all these colleagues.

## Departures

Congratulations to **Dr Stephan Hanß**, appointed as Senior Lecturer in Early Modern History at the University of Manchester; and to **Dr Emily Jones**, appointed as Lecturer in History.

## Retirements

**John Robertson**, who retires this summer as Professor of the History of Political Thought, has been a leading scholar of the Scottish and European Enlightenments for three decades. His early work, completed under the supervision of Hugh Trevor-Roper at Oxford, addressed the important question of the citizens' militia in eighteenth-century Scotland, and he has since broadened his research to the Enlightenment as a single pan-European phenomenon, especially in *The Case for the Enlightenment: Scotland and Naples 1680-1760* (2005). In his most recent work - for example, in his 2016 Carlyle Lectures - John has explored the relationship between arguments about human sociability and conceptions of sacred history in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Faculty will miss him greatly.

## Student news

Our doctoral students have won a series of prizes: **David Cowan** won the 2017 Duncan Tanner Essay Prize, **Stephanie Mawson**, has won the 2016 Robert F. Heizer Article Award, **Stephen Tong** the 2017 Neale Prize, **Jake Richards** the 2017 DC Watt Prize, and **Pedro Feitoza** the 2017 World Christianities Prize.

Our undergraduates have also won prestigious awards: **Cherish Watton** won the Royal Historical Society Public History Prize Undergraduate Award. For their 2017 Part II dissertations, **Jilna Shah** won the History of Parliament award, and **Fiona Garrahan** the Gladstone Memorial Prize. At Part I, **Harry Gibbins** won the Cambridge Historical Society best Themes and Sources Long Essay, and **Josh Kimblin** won the Faculty Prize for best overall performance in Part I. At Part II, **Robin Franklin** and **James Burn** shared the Faculty prize for best overall performance at Part II, and James also won the Alan Coulson Prize. The Istvan Hont Prize was awarded to **Christopher Holliday**, and the Cambridge Historical Society Prize was shared by **Tom Sampson** and **Ella Sbaraini**. **Sam Collings-Wells** won the Junior Sara Norton Prize, while **Tom Sampson** also won the Winifred Georgina Holgart Pollard Memorial Prize.

## Grants, Awards and Honours

In 2018, **Prof John Morrill** was awarded an honorary doctorate at Durham, and **Prof Nora Berend** an honorary doctorate at the University of Stockholm. Professors **Gary Gerstle**, **Tessa Webber** and **Ulinka Rublack** were elected members of the British Academy in 2017. **Prof Sir Christopher Clark** was awarded the 2018 European Prize for Political Culture.

**Dr Rachel Leow** won the 2018 Harry J. Benda Prize in Southeast Asian Studies for her monograph *Taming Babel: Language in the Making of Malaysia* (Cambridge University Press, 2016).

**Dr Renaud Morieux** has won the American Historical Association's Leo Gershey Award. **Dr Emily Jones** (Pembroke) and **Dr Tom Lambert** (Sidney Sussex) were shortlisted for the Longmans/History Today 2018 Book Prize. **Dr John Slight** won the Trevor Reece Memorial Prize

**Prof Joya Chatterji** and graduate historian **Sundeep Lidher** were part of the team who won the Royal Historical Society Public History Prize for Best Online Resource.

**Dr Lucy Delap** was a member of the team who won the Public History Prize for Public Debate and Policy.

**Prof Eugenio Biagini** has won a Leverhulme Major Research Fellowship to investigate religious minorities and the construction of democracy in twentieth-century Ireland.

**Dr Andrew Arsan** has won a Philip Leverhulme Prize.

**Prof Liesbeth van Houts** was awarded a major AHRC grant jointly with the University of Bristol on the literary heritage of Anglo-Dutch relations, c. 1050 -c.1550. **Dr Leigh Shaw-Taylor** gained an ESRC Impact Acceleration grant on 'Interactive online resources for economic and social history and historical geography in schools'.

Cambridge historians received **Cambridge Humanities Research Grants**, to investigate

- Digitizing and analysing the account book of a grand tour artists in 18th century Naples (**Dr Melissa Calaresu**)
- Collaborative workshops with the Sorbonne (**Prof John Arnold**)
- Empire as counter-revolution in the oceans of the Global South (**Dr Sujit Sivasundaram**)