

British Academy Review

UNDERSTANDING PEOPLES, CULTURES, SOCIETIES - PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

ACADEMIC BOOKS: A SPECIAL ISSUE

Richard J. Evans on Europe's century of power ¶ **Steve Smith** and **Catherine Merridale** on writing the Russian Revolution ¶ **David Hand** on how his new book measures up ¶ Twelve months of influential and prize-winning books ¶ So what does the future hold for the academic book?



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The British Academy





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Editorial

Mary Morgan says ‘The Book is dead – long live the Book!’



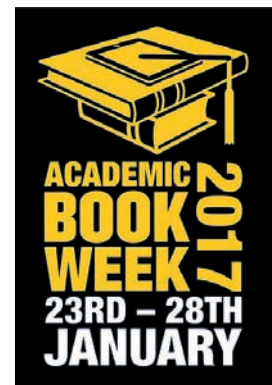
Professor Mary Morgan FBA is the British Academy’s Vice-President (Publications), and she has been a member of the Strategy Board for the Academic Book of the Future project.

Reports of the death of the monograph will, surely, always be premature. It is not just that books have the potential for an enviably long life: they come reading-ready straight from the shelf or computer screen, and reappear in brand new covers when stock runs out and they are republished or reissued. It is not just that book publishers show little sign of disappearing – they are reputed to be amongst the oldest and most long-lived companies we have in Britain (along with breweries). Rather, it is that despite predictions that changes in publishing and reading technologies will kill the book, more monographs are published, new forms of the monograph are being developed, and new academic publishers are opening up lists. The book is far from dead, but we still need to care for it, and its environment, to maintain its evolution.

One of the keys to this continued life of the book is that technological change did not cause the academic book to die, as some thought it would. Perhaps this mis-prediction came from misunderstandings about the nature of books. The powerful growth of ‘information technology’ suggested that perhaps books merely held information, when in fact they were repositories of knowledge, and even sources of wisdom (to paraphrase T.S. Eliot). The possibilities of being able to download at will (or at least via a licence for an ebook) suggested that perhaps books were square screens of words, that could be searched for useful bits of learning as if they were all reference books. But most books don’t exist just to be consulted as sources of information – rather they are for reading – for insight, enlightenment, provocation, understanding, and even enjoyment.

This issue of the *British Academy Review* is the British Academy’s contribution to Academic Book Week 2017 (beginning 23 January 2017). This week is the second celebration of its kind, an event founded out of the Academic Book of the Future project (funded by the AHRC and the British Library). For the first Academic Book Week, the *British Academy Review* interviewed six British Academy-supported early career academics about their love of, and need for, the monograph: they proved committed to printed monographs as both writers and readers. This issue of the *British Academy Review* in turn reveals how young scholars find a variety and depth of resources for their own work from their book reading (and re-reading), whether those books be monographs or volumes of essays.

Indeed the varied articles in this issue are evidence of how important academic books are – not in academic terms – but for their ability to get to grips with the world, and to enlighten readers regardless of their allegiances and reasons for reading.



Reflections on the 'Academic Book of the Future' project

Marilyn Deegan reveals the progress and achievements of this timely exploration



Marilyn Deegan, Professor of Digital Humanities at King's College London, was a Co-Investigator on the Academic Book of the Future project.

The fact that in January 2017 we are, for the second time, engaging in major country-wide celebrations of the academic book is testament to the success of the first Academic Book Week in November 2015. It is testament too to the project that initiated Academic Book Week – the Academic Book of the Future – which came to an end in September 2016, and which will be making available its final report in early 2017.

The Academic Book of the Future project was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the British Library in response to widespread concerns about books, publishing, libraries and the academic world. Declining monograph sales, rising serials prices, funding problems, rapidly changing new technologies, shifting policy landscapes, all contributed to a sense of unease about the health of the academic book in the arts and humanities, and indeed in the health of the disciplines themselves. Run by a team from University College London, King's College London and the Research Information Network,¹ what has been special about the project is the way we chose to carry it out, engaging communities of practice across the whole complex ecology of academic writing and publishing, and interrogating a wide range of cross-cutting themes and issues. It was a challenging set of tasks we set ourselves, but we believe the results have shown that the approach worked.

First of all, we tried to define what it is that we (and indeed the funders) mean by an academic book. Monographs are a fundamental means of sharing the fruits of research in the humanities; they are deeply woven into the way that we as academics think about ourselves as scholars. Other book-length outputs, such as critical editions, are also significant, and non-print formats like performances, film, musical compositions are key research outputs in certain disciplines, but the monograph remains central for many reasons. Recent moves towards open access, initially intended to enable scientists to make research results available more widely for the advancement of knowledge, have called into question many of the ways we understand the writing, publication and reading process, and the diverse and complex routes that a book can take on its journey from writer to reader. The rapid advance of digital technologies has changed the publication process and loosened the bonds between text and print, making it possible to think of the 'book' as a different entity, something that could exist in a variety of forms: on a shelf, on a computer, in a smartphone. In turn, this has opened up all sorts of other possibilities for communication, sharing and enhancement around the central concept of the book. However, there is a concern that pressures on academics to do more teaching, more research and more administration – and to respond to ever more assessment regimes – might have eroded their capacity for sustained writing. In this environment, is the monograph still viable? We are pleased to report that the answer is a resounding 'yes', with more titles being published than ever before (though worryingly sales of

1. Dr Samantha Rayner (UCL) was Principal Investigator. Mr Nick Canty (UCL), Professor Marilyn Deegan (KCL), and Professor Simon Tanner (KCL) were the Co-Investigators. Dr Michael Jubb was the project's consultant at the Research Information Network.

each title are declining), and a continuing belief in the monograph as central to the humanities. Interestingly, print is still preferred by readers for sustained reading, though ebooks are valued for accessibility. Most monographs are now made available as ebooks, and there have been exciting experiments in the development of enhanced monographs, marrying text with data and multimedia content. But while such enhancements suggest some useful possibilities for one of the futures for the book, they are as yet a minor development in comparison to the overwhelming proportion of long-form publications still in monograph form, though often now delivered as ebooks or via print-on-demand.

The electronic format has many benefits, among them the ability for publishers to make available back-list titles long out of print and to create cohesive sets of scholarly works across disciplines. For instance, Oxford Scholarship Online integrates over 13,000 titles published over the last 50 years, while Cambridge Core provides access to over 30,000 ebooks and 360 journals, going back as far as the beginning of the 20th century. Kathryn Sutherland, too, in this issue, points out that ‘humanities scholars already benefit from the huge cultural investment in digitising our older print heritage’. With primary and secondary sources from across many centuries becoming increasingly available, the academic book of the past now has a more assured future too.

The communities we engaged with during the project were academics across the arts and humanities, publishers, both university and trade, libraries, booksellers and policy-makers. Though we were a UK-based project, reporting on issues of key concern to academics here, we took account of many projects outside the UK offering useful models and perspectives to consider. In the US, where concerns about the position of the monograph in the academy are equally pressing, a whole range of pertinent reports have appeared in the last few years. US university presses, facing severe financial challenges with declining sales, are making new alliances between the press, the library and the wider university and exploring other reshaping initiatives. The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has recently funded a number of projects to develop new capacity for the production of enhanced monographs; some \$10 million has been disbursed to 21 projects, most of which have library and faculty involvement in the publishing process. In Europe, too, there is concern about the place of the monograph in the ecology of scholarship, with a particular emphasis

on open access. The OAPEN project (Open Access Publishing in European Networks), hosted from the National Library in The Hague, is dedicated to open access, peer-reviewed books, and has published a number of useful reports and surveys. OAPEN-UK, a collaborative research project gathering evidence to help stakeholders make informed decisions on the future of open access scholarly monograph publishing in the humanities and social sciences, carried out an

extensive survey of UK academics in 2014, and released its final report in 2016.² The OAPEN-UK survey has greatly informed our work on open access during this project, as has the HEFCE report, *Monographs and Open Access*, produced by Geoffrey Crossick.³

The Academic Book of the Future project has had some notable successes, among which was Academic Book Week 2015, with over 70 events and activities – seminars, workshops, debates, symposia, exhibitions (both physical and virtual), writing sprints, competitions, promotions – taking place throughout the UK and internationally. During that Academic Book Week, the project team produced a collection of essays in the Palgrave Pivot format containing short contributions from across our communities.⁴

One somewhat unorthodox, though hugely popular, activity of Academic Book Week 2015 was the 20 Academic Books that Changed the World competition. The shortlist of books was chosen from a long list of 200 titles submitted by publishers and contained some unusual choices that one would not normally include in the category of academic book: the works of Shakespeare and Orwell’s *1984* for instance. What the competition did was engender a discussion about academic books and their importance across the general public. There were articles in major national newspapers. There was huge international interest, with reports on the vote from as far away as Mozambique, South Africa and Venezuela, as well as across the anglophone world. Lively debates ensued around the definition of the terms ‘academic’ and ‘book’. The vote was a public one, and a member of the public who contributed a blog to the Academic Book project website suggested that it would be an unusual person who had read all 20: that is probably as true of the academy as the wider public. Andrew Prescott, Theme Leader Fellow for the AHRC’s ‘Digital Transformations’, commented on the winning title that ‘*Origin of Species* is the supreme demonstration of why academic books matter’; and Tom Mole, from the University of



The first Academic Book Week, in November 2015, featured a list of ‘20 academic books that changed the world’ – as displayed here in Blackwell’s University Bookshop in Liverpool.

2. Ellen Collins and Caren Milloy, *OAPEN-UK Final Report: A five-year study into open access monograph publishing in the humanities and social sciences* (January 2016).

3. Geoffrey Crossick, *Monographs and Open Access: A Report to HEFCE* (January 2015).

Edinburgh, added ‘The fact that this book was written by a man who never held a university position, and that it was not published by a university press, should remind us of the importance of sustaining academic books in all their forms.’ The competition also stimulated publishers themselves to think about the influence their academic books were having, and a number of blogs were written by publishers with suggestions as to why their publications had changed the world. Oxford University Press was bold enough to suggest five of their own books that might shape the future.

So what do we leave as a legacy for the project? First of all, a major report to be released in early 2017. This looks in detail at the diverse and changing roles of all those in the intricate supply chains concerned with the production and use of academic books: academics, publishers, librarians, and the myriad intermediaries (distributors, library suppliers, booksellers, etc.) along the way. It considers the key issues of open access, the relationship between print and electronic, preservation, publishing processes, peer review, legal issues, and demand, discoverability and access. It offers a number of recommendations to funders and policy-makers to ensure that the academic book and its central role in the humanities are acknowledged and nurtured. But this is far from our only deliverable. The project website will live on for some considerable time, hosting a plethora of content: major reports such as Tanner’s analysis of the 2014 REF,⁵ and Watkinson’s survey of the academic book in the US,⁶ over 50 blog posts covering many of the themes of the project; reports of meetings, conferences, workshops, book sprints sponsored by the project; think pieces about the academic book and its continuing relevance (or not). There is too a major innovative publication in production: BOOC (Book as Open Online Content),⁷ which will appear from the newly revived UCL open access press. This presents peer-reviewed content in a range of formats (articles, reports, blogs, videos) on a dynamic, evolving open platform. It is intended that BOOC will continue the conversations around the academic book and its futures. UCL Press will provide a stable home for this to grow and thrive.

Many of our participants have commented that the connections and links between and across communities have been the project’s most significant contribution; there are plans in place to foster these. In March 2016, Liverpool University Press hosted the first ever university press conference in the UK, and what surprised the organisers was not just the strength of the response from UK presses, but the engagement from presses and

academics from outside the UK. A number of new UK university presses have been established recently, often as partnerships between the library and the wider institution, and generally as open access. These were well-represented at the conference, along with more established organisations, giving a real breadth to the discussions. Selected papers from the conference were published in a special (open access) issue of *Learned Publishing*.⁸ This conference was so successful that the next two have already been planned, in partnership with the Association of Learned and Scholarly Publishing (ALPSP). The next will be organised by UCL Press in 2018, the following by Cambridge University Press in 2020. As Anthony Cond, Director of Liverpool University Press, told us, ‘without question the conference only exists because of the project’.

Another major activity that we initiated will also, we intend, have a life beyond the end of the project: investigating the position of the academic book in the Global South. This was an important strand of the project, in partnership with Dr Caroline Davis from Oxford Brookes University. With generous sponsorship from the British Library, a conference in March 2016 brought together participants from Africa, India and the Middle East, as well as the UK. In accordance with our philosophy of connectedness, these came from academe, publishing, libraries and archives, and the discussions were around the challenges that our colleagues in the South face, some of which accord with our own concerns. One colleague remarked how enlightening it had been ‘to realise we have so many different perspectives and, yet, we all share the same goal: promoting knowledge in the South and about the South’. Many also commented that they had never been to an event that drew in people from across the South, rather than from specific regions. An important outcome here has been the firm intention to establish a network to strengthen the connections and promote further work and collaborations across and within national and professional boundaries. Funding is already being sought for this.

At the conclusion of the project, we envisage a variety of futures for the many different kinds of academic ‘books’, most likely to derive from dialogue between the aspirations of the scholarly community and its funders on the one hand, and the wide range of publishers, libraries and intermediaries with expertise in the transmission of knowledge, and meeting those aspirations, on the other. Bringing so many of these together to start those dialogues is what this project has been about. ■

■

The connections across communities have been the project’s most significant.

4. Rebecca E. Lyons and Samantha J. Rayner (eds), *The Academic Book of the Future* (Palgrave, 2016).

5. Simon Tanner, *An analysis of the Arts and Humanities submitted research outputs to the REF2014 with a focus on academic books* (Academic Book of the Future report, November 2016).

6. Anthony Watkinson, *The Academic Book in North America: Report on attitudes and initiatives among publishers, libraries, and scholars* (Academic Book of the Future report, September 2016).

7. <https://ucldigitalpress.co.uk/booc-v1.1/BOOC/>

8. *Learned Publishing*, ‘Special Issue: The University Press Redux’, 29:S1 (October 2016), 313–371.

How should we read a monograph?

Kathryn Sutherland offers some personal reflections on the academic book of the future



Kathryn Sutherland is Professor of Bibliography and Textual Criticism at the University of Oxford; she has been Chair of the Advisory Board of the AHRC/British Library-funded Academic Book of the Future project.

Changes over recent decades in the production and status of the academic book or scholarly monograph bring into focus a range of issues affecting humanities disciplines and their associated institutions of libraries, academic publishers, and booksellers. Productivity is increasingly engineered and funded by research councils, with academic careers and promotion structures dependent on research awards and the books that emerge from them. Government Research Exercises – RAE and REF – incentivise book production; they also downgrade it: in the latest REF a book weighed in as equivalent to two articles. More books from each academic career often means more narrowly focused topics, an effect mirrored in the

output of major monograph publishers like Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, Routledge/Taylor & Francis, Palgrave, for whom more titles translate into individually reduced print runs. A recent development is the move by some publishers to commission short-form monographs (for example, Palgrave Pivots). At the same time, proliferating titles are meeting library

budgets heading in the opposite direction. So far, there has been no significant digital transformation of the academic book (aside from some cautious investment in digital scholarly editions). Most academic books continue to be produced as hard copy, but because libraries with their dwindling budgets represent the biggest fixed costs within Higher Education a new model is attractive.

There is a tacit understanding among funders and research councils that the solution to the present situation is open access and that open access means digital monographs. Humanities scholars already benefit from the huge cultural investment in digitising our older print heritage. Online catalogues and online journals are now the norm; so too are vast text repositories: Early English Books Online, Eighteenth-Century Collections Online, and above all Google Books. With astonishing speed (in little more than a decade) we have shifted the library from a physical space to a virtual environment, and from local institutional support, provided by human experts, to the Internet and a search engine. Humanities scholars have become sophisticated users of digital resources. Digitisation has brought back to life much dead print: historic newspapers, for example. The great swathes of Victorian newsprint unread for over a century

and now available online are reordering the priorities of many graduate students and early career academics and, in turn, altering the contours of humanities scholarship. There are compelling professional reasons why it now makes sense to write a doctoral thesis or first book on occasional political poems by shoemakers published in the Chartist press between 1835 and 1842 rather than a study of Tennyson's poetical form or George Eliot's contribution to the realist novel.

There have been noticeable shifts in my own discipline of English Studies towards the obscure and the superficial; on the one hand, a kind of neo-antiquarianism, characterised by anecdote and snippets of fascinating and esoteric information, chosen as often for its singularity as for its capacity to engage wider debate or communal assent; on the other, sociologies of literature that reject sustained interpretation in favour of description, documentation, and 'flat' reading practices, recently summed up as 'close but not deep criticism'.¹ Both approaches, the esoteric and the sociological, distinguish themselves from older humanistic models of close reading; both find sustenance in digital techniques of data mining and attest in different ways to the decentring of the human within the humanities – the rise of anti- and post-humanist literary studies – as consequences of widened digital access.

Digitisation has the potential to alter profoundly the ways we interact with and carry forward our textual heritage. This has less to do with a print/electronic divide and more to do with a text/data divide. It is an odd thing to say that, with such vast reserves of our textual heritage revived in the electronic environment, the humanities model of research may be at risk, but I suspect it is. It is unfashionable to suggest that the future of the humanities is bound up with the culture of the book, but I think it is. It may seem perverse to argue that if our textual heritage or backlist is digital there are good reasons for keeping some at least of our present contributions as print, but I think we should.

One hundred years ago, writing in the *Times Literary Supplement* on 30 November 1916, Virginia Woolf distinguished between 'learning' and 'reading'. 'Learning', she argued, drives out 'reading':

Let us begin by clearing up the old confusion between the man who loves learning and the man who loves reading, and point out that there is no connexion whatever between the two. A learned man is a sedentary, concentrated, solitary enthusiast, who searches through books to discover some particular grain of truth upon which he has set his heart. If the passion for reading conquers him, his gains dwindle and vanish between his fingers. A reader, on the other hand, must check the desire for learning at the outset; if knowledge sticks to him well and good, but to go in pursuit of it, to read on

a system, to become a specialist or an authority, is very apt to kill what it suits us to consider the more humane passion for pure and disinterested reading.

We are regularly told that 'information wants to be free', an appealing ideology of apparent individual empowerment (in fact, a form of data grabbing by big companies) that has all kinds of legal, political, economic, moral, and cultural implications. The atomisation of our heritage texts into information records within relational databases interrogated by powerful search engines seems to offer one particular freedom – from print – and in so doing to disentangle through technology the perennial struggle between learning and reading. As Woolf implied, this goal is not worth the gaining. In mining data and in the increasingly instrumentalist agendas

imposed by policy-makers on our disciplines, we jeopardise the human and humane perspectives at the heart of the humanities. It is a matter of scale, of closeness of encounter, of difficulty and obstacles too easily overcome, of reflection.

It is unfashionable to suggest that the future of the humanities is bound up with the culture of the book, but I think it is.

The context of the Academic Book of the Future project is one of rapid change (and anxiety about change): change in the educational landscape in the UK and elsewhere, change in academic career and promotion structures, change in the funding models for education, change in technology. In all this world of change, there is a temptation to think that one model should fit all; that the prompt to complementary thinking provided by the 'both'/'and' resources of our present hybrid knowledge ecosystem of material books, ebooks, digitised databases, and collaboration tools is a transient state that should and must fall away. I am not convinced. Much current open access evangelism makes the false assumption that we can extrapolate a model that will work for the book from the model that works well for the journal article.

In his 2015 report on *Monographs and Open Access*, carried out for HEFCE, Professor Geoffrey Crossick argued that while open access may solve issues of accessibility and enhanced interaction, the technology, the licences, and the business models are not yet in place to make it work for books. Who will take the lead – technology companies, publishers, academic libraries – in developing platforms? Should we care? And he offered a robust defence of the distinctions between research forms or outputs: what works for an article as opposed to a monograph. The difference is more than vehicular; there is (or should be) something incarnationally different

1. Heather Love, 'Close but not deep: Literary ethics and the descriptive turn', *New Literary History*, 41 (2010), 371–91.
2. Geoffrey Crossick, *Monographs and Open Access: A Report to HEFCE* (January 2015), p. 13.

between long- and short-form publications. In assessing the function of the monograph, 'it is therefore important to avoid the danger of seeing it as an awkward outlier in relation to a mainstream framework of research communication defined by the journals and refereed conference proceedings that dominate the sciences'.² Rather, the monograph's emphasis is on sustained argument, on voice (the identity of the writer), and it represents a contribution to research that is durable (long-term as well as long-form knowledge) and that shapes further thought. Crossick's words sound as much a caution to the academic profession as to the policy-makers, when he writes that 'books must be understood best as a vehicle for long-term knowledge communication, preservation and curation, rather than solely as an asset for short-term exploitation and with an associated short shelf-life'.³ Policy-makers, funders, career pressures, publishers are already blurring the distinction between articles and books. Digital publishing and its associated consequences could well accelerate this. Smaller packets of information or argument ☒ chapters or sections of chapters, amenable to access on student mobile devices? The distributed book downloadable perhaps as digital mini ebooks? That might be one model, and it would alter radically the nature of the academic book and of academic enquiry.

There is much to commend open access, especially if it means that the reach of serious scholarship is wider than that of the immediate and narrow academic sub-field, if it offers a way to situate serious scholarship at the centre of society's cultural life. But will it? How open will it be? Who will fund it? Who will preserve it? I'd like to make a plea for material books and what they best represent, features that a host of pressures from digital technology, policy-makers, and career assessment panels risk downgrading. It is really quite simple: technological changes tend to combine with intellectual changes. Katherine Hayles put it like this in her 2005 book *My Mother Was a Computer: Digital Subjects and Literary Texts*: "what we make" and "what (we think) we are" coevolve together'.⁴ The time-stamped digital perspective is one route to making and understanding; the space-invasive print perspective is another. Print is fixed and good at shaping collective opinion. By contrast, a prime characteristic of electronic texts is to deny their common status as public objects; they are more easily customised, rendered individual, available for reuse as distinct from common/shared reading and debate. Digital technology makes many forms of research easier; things that become easier often too become more disposable. Targeted reading (maybe not even reading at all) becomes easier in the

digital environment, offering the efficient release of scholarship from reading in the round, to Virginia Woolf the more humane discipline and a vital link between the academic world and the public sphere.

A term that emerged during Crossick's consultations was 'thinking through the book',⁵ a powerful idea that suggests that the act of constructing and writing a book involves far more than the harvesting and communication of research findings. In *My Mother Was a Computer*, Hayles worked hard a particular word, 'intermediation', to denote the mediating interfaces that connect humans with the intelligent machines that are 'our collaborators' in making, storing, and disseminating information.⁶ Another powerful word, thanks to business models like that of Amazon, is 'disintermediation', meaning to cut out the middleman. This might be the high-street bookseller or, within a progressive digital ecology, it might be the reflective academic herself. As retrieval gets smarter and as quantification sets almost every academic agenda, the invitation to replace books as voices and arguments to be engaged within a critical community with individualised technical searching will seem more and more seductive. It may also, in the not so long run, undermine our best efforts to ensure the survival of the humanities.

Is there anything more at stake here than how we present and access scholarly information? Are there any constant values that the humanities should seek to promote? Will those values have changed when the computational perspective becomes our only or even our major scholarly lens? Is there value in a long-term commitment to print? Might it be timely to reflect upon the value of the ends to which the digital is a useful means? These are the questions that should be setting our agendas within the humanities and informing our discussions around the academic book of the future. ■

I'd like to make a plea for material books and what they best represent.

3. Crossick, p. 25.

4. N. Katherine Hayles, *My Mother Was a Computer: Digital Subjects and Literary Texts* (2005), p. 243.

5. Crossick, p. 15.

6. Hayles, p. 33.

Five librarians discuss the future of the academic book

Christina Kamposiori reports on what librarians are thinking



Christina Kamposiori is Programme Officer, Research Libraries UK (RLUK).

In the spirit of the second Academic Book Week taking place in January 2017, Research Libraries UK (RLUK) decided to conduct interviews with academic librarians holding different positions in the library, in order to find out about their expert views on the future of the academic book.

The professionals who very kindly contributed their time and expertise for the purposes of this article were: (1) Liz Waller, Head of Library and Archives, and leader of a team of senior managers delivering Library and Archives services

to the academic, student and wider community at the University of York; (2) Beth Clark, Head of Digital Scholarship and Innovation at LSE Library; (3) Stuart Sharp, Joint Head of Acquisitions and Access, a large department purchasing the content and managing electronic availability of the content in the Library of the University of Glasgow; (4) Rozz Evans, Head of Collection Strategy for UCL Library Services and leader of the Collection Development Services team at the UCL Institute of Education; and (5) Dr Jessica Gardner, Director of Library Services and University Librarian, University of Bristol.

After each interviewee briefly described their role in the library, they discussed issues around the format, purpose and use of the future academic book, as well as the way in which they expect that these will be shaped by their community's needs. Moreover, we invited them to express their opinion on how they see the role of libraries and librarians developing as a result, and how this will differ from that of other stakeholders, such as authors, publishers, and booksellers. Finally, we asked

Though dissemination of knowledge will remain the main purpose of the academic book, its format will adapt to evolving needs.

them to outline the skills that librarians need to develop in order to respond efficiently to any challenges that the future academic book may bring.

According to the librarians' perspective, the future of the academic book looks increasingly digital and dynamic, while its content is easily accessible. Although print will still continue to exist because of the trust that academics have developed in it, authors and readers will probably be offered a variety of formats, shorter or longer, to choose from. So, even though dissemination of knowledge will remain as the main purpose and use of the academic book, its format will adapt to the researchers' and students' evolving needs. Improving impact will also constitute one of the concerns of the stakeholders of the future academic book; employing complementary dissemination strategies or moving to the 'mainstream' public reading realm can be two potential avenues for increasing impact. Our professionals argued:

I believe there will be an increase in born digital 'books' which will offer new ways of engaging with the content, and new ways of presenting ideas. Whilst the idea of the book as the output for a sustained period of research will still hold good, I believe that the purpose of the book – the communication of ideas – will remain, but may manifest itself in different ways – perhaps offering a platform for the presentation of ongoing research and academic debate. *(interviewee 1)*

Readers will be offered a wider choice of formats, with long-form print still playing an important role. However, we will also see more 'fragmented' books with content repackaged into other outputs, e.g. course materials. *(2)*

A relatively small number of titles will cross into more mainstream public reading, and I suspect that, to improve 'impact', publishers and academics will expand this. *(3)*

Access needs to be simpler and more consistent, and ebooks need to be much more flexible in terms of sharing, downloading and manipulating content. *(4)*

We are seeing publishers and academics with marketing and engagement strategies that move beyond the book to include ways of pushing ideas through social media, with blogs, video etc. *(5)*

Academics' changing publishing practices, often driven by the Research Excellence Framework (REF), funding and career requirements will be one of the main factors impacting on the future of the academic book.

On the other hand, students' needs for increased access to context across devices and platforms will influence the development and future of textbooks. Yet, personal reading habits and differences in publishing behaviour and needs across academic disciplines are additional issues that will contribute to the shaping of the future academic book.

The way in which academics share their work is beginning to change, with new technologies and methodologies being embraced by a minority, but this will become more prevalent as the richness of this transmission is acknowledged and further developed. (1)

The future academic book will continue to be shaped by drivers such as the REF, research funder requirements, academic promotion procedures, and the established norms for publication in certain fields. (2)

I could see open access e-textbooks, if successfully developed, challenging some standard textbook publishing in some subjects, but the models are challenging and the effects will be limited. I think the biggest move will be towards ebook-only academic books, purchased, as is increasingly the case with SHEDL [Scottish Higher Education Digital Library] in Scotland, through evidence-based or subscription deals, with limited DRM [Digital Rights Management]. (3)

The drivers for 'any time, any place, any device' are powerful ones, particularly for students to access content wherever they are in the world, and for content to be re-used and re-purposed in different contexts. The needs of students in this regard will continue to drive up digital innovation in the future of the academic book. But it is a balance. We shouldn't ignore the fact that for many of us – including students – print remains a preferred format for reading long-form, and that in the arts, humanities and social sciences the long-form academic book is a reflection of discipline craft, of deep analysis and thinking formed into a long argument or discourse. (5)

Considering the impact that these changes will have on libraries, the professionals interviewed told us that new models of publishing and collaboration are likely to emerge. Libraries will have an active role in the design of resources and content, while strongly influencing the deals with publishers over content and resource subscriptions. As part of this more dynamic role, the role of libraries as open access publishers may expand, with existing successful initiatives, such as UCL Press and White Rose University Press, leading the way.

Already libraries are supporting open access publishing in their institutions, e.g. UCL Press and White Rose University Press, and with new formats the potential for the library to become involved in supporting 'publishing' increases. The library should be well placed to partner with the academic community in exploring new dissemination outlets. (1)

Increasingly we see librarians providing support for authors during the whole research cycle, providing advice on systematic reviews, RDM [Research Data Management], open access publishing, bibliometrics, managing research outputs, and minting DOIs [Digital Object Identifiers]. In future, librarians are likely to develop this support role for authors, providing advice on publication, funding and licensing options, liaising with publishers and booksellers, and in some cases actively developing a publishing role themselves, providing open access platforms and supporting university presses. (2)

The libraries' role will be to facilitate the content on the 'big deals' with publishers, and less time, effort and resources will need to be spent on the development of new print collections. (3)

Librarians need to continue to advocate robustly (and collectively) on behalf of their users in terms of establishing what is and is not acceptable in terms of the purchase of/ subscription to this content. (4)

Libraries are not simply 'consumers' of information resources, but increasingly involved in influencing how they are designed (for instance to help improve accessibility and licensing for ebooks), and in content (for instance in collaborative design of multimedia educational resources). We are also seeing models where libraries are becoming publishers, working to innovate and enable open access monographs as the academy works to take back some control over research dissemination. (5)

Based on the above comments, librarians' role will also expand and include the provision of support to scholars throughout the research life-cycle; from advice on funding resources to open access publishing support. However, in order to meet the demands and responsibilities of this new role, collaboration is crucial. According to the professionals that took part in the interviews, boundaries between stakeholders have become blurred, opening up new opportunities for partnerships.

The lines between author, publisher, bookseller and librarian may become blurred as we explore the potential for new and innovative partnerships. (1)

I believe the HE library profession needs to come together collaboratively to ensure that academics, who are the producers of this academic book content, are fully informed when it comes to making publishing decisions. (4)

I think we will see academic librarians working in closer partnership with authors and publishers, particularly with the growth in university press initiatives. (5)

Libraries will have an active role in the design of resources and content.

As a result, the skills that library professionals need to develop – according to these five librarians – range from a deeper understanding of the research and publishing process, to technical, communication, negotiation and marketing skills. Actually, collaboration and communication are key, not only for forming strong partnerships



English Faculty Library shelves, Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford. PHOTO: K.T. BRUCE.

across institutions and industry partners, but also for building a robust internal community of professionals who have an active role in the library and a unique set of skills. Beth Clark, Stuart Sharp, Rozz Evans and Liz Waller outline the skills that librarians need in order to tackle the challenges associated with the future academic book efficiently:

Continued development of scholarly communications skills (bibliometrics, RDM, open access etc.), plus enhanced metadata, discovery and digital preservation to ensure long-term access to multi-format content. Advising authors on licensing content for accessibility and reuse e.g. text and data mining. Supporting new publication models either financially or practically, providing platforms to support innovative publishing, and developing technical skills to support this. (2)

We need to be able to utilise improved use of analytics to evaluate the value of content, the skills to ensure that the content is easily discoverable to our users, and improved negotiating skills when up against publishers with experienced sales staff. We need to improve marketing skills to ensure that the content purchased is known and explained to the relevant users. (3)

Greater understanding of publishing for all librarians, not just those working in acquisitions teams, a proactive

approach to explaining how this works to academics and students, and a willingness to articulate problems across the sector and in dialogue with publishers. Ability to work with academics in terms of what content is published and how, and more involvement in course planning. Selection of books for courses will, of course, remain the domain of academic staff, but they need to be in a position to make well-informed decisions and there is a role there for librarians. (4)

Librarians supporting academic publishing will need a deeper understanding of the research process and of academic practice and thinking, a knowledge of publishing processes and of new platforms and technologies which might be exploited. New publishing formats will require us to think about how we support discovery and potentially curation and preservation challenges presented by fluid, digital formats. It will be an exciting new world in which librarians can utilise existing skills sets in new ways, and embrace new skills, knowledge and understanding. (1)

Indeed, the future of the academic book may entail new challenges for libraries and their professionals, in terms of infrastructure, skills and resources. Yet, it also promises to open up new opportunities for co-operation across sectors, as well as new types of engagement with their audience, making the academic library a lively and innovative space for creating and sharing knowledge. ■

Measuring sticks

David Hand explains to the *British Academy Review* how measurement touches on almost every aspect of the modern world



David J. Hand is Emeritus Professor of Mathematics at Imperial College London, and a Fellow of the British Academy. He is the author of *Measurement: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2016).

Tell us about your own interest in measurement and statistics. Have you always been a numbers man?

I had a conventional introduction to statistics for professional statisticians. I started with a Maths degree, but then I did a Masters in Statistics, so my interest really stemmed from that period. I have to say that before I did the Masters I did not really know what statistics was. I think this is quite common for people with Maths degrees, because they get a very cursory introduction to it. Since then, I have obviously become an enthusiast for statistics and data.

Where for you is the fascination? Is it the intellectual ingenuity of manipulating numbers or is it about how numbers can help explain our world?

My interest and enthusiasm lie not so much in the intellectual challenge of manipulating these things, as in the fact that statistics is all about squeezing illumination and understanding from data. I sometimes say that statisticians see things that nobody else has seen before. They analyse the data and out pops something new. It is a very exciting discipline.

You start your book *Measurement: A Very Short Introduction* by talking about the historical origins of measurement, about the very early need to measure the physical world, and how over time

this required agreement on consistent measurement standards of increasing precision.

If you go back a few hundred years, you find that every village had its own way of measuring length or weight. That, of course, caused all sorts of problems with trade and communication. Gradually over the course of time, things became more consistent. We now have the metric system, which is not quite worldwide but is fairly universal.

The need for precision advances as civilisation advances. Maybe a sixteenth of an inch was sufficient precision for a width measurement when you were building carts to be drawn by horses. But if you are building a motorcar or an aircraft or rocket engine, a sixteenth of an inch is not sufficiently accurate; you need it to be thousandths of an inch.

How have those improvements been reached?

I think of it as a leapfrog act. Advances in technical prowess enable you to develop new ways of measuring things, which then complement the demands of new things to be made. Once you have developed new ways of measuring things, new possibilities are opened up.

You explain that a major motivation between developments in quantification was the need to control society. And you have an intriguing account of how the gathering and summarising of social and economic phenomena revealed patterns and regularities, and how this led to an interplay of statistical ideas between 19th-century social scientists and physicists.

This is a fascinating story. At the moment, we are in a period where people are exploring something called

econophysics, and saying that the ideas of statistical mechanics can be applied to the social world.

But if you look back in history, there is a much more subtle and alternating relationship. People such as Adolphe Quetelet came up with the notion that you can describe regularities in society. Individual people behave in all sorts of different ways, but if you look at them *en masse* you find extraordinary regularities. You find that the number of suicides from particular methods are fairly constant over time. This is quite remarkable, because someone thinking of killing themselves doesn't look at the figures and think, 'I'd better hang myself to make sure that the numbers come out right.'

People working in statistical thermodynamics, like Ludwig Boltzmann and James Clerk Maxwell, saw what had been going on in this area of the social sciences, and realised that you could apply the same ideas to understand how large numbers of atoms and molecules behaved. This leapfrog has continued, with social sciences looking back at the physical sciences, and then the physical sciences looking back to the social sciences.

The way that the social sciences can have huge benefits for the physical sciences, perhaps over centuries, is something that cannot be picked up as 'impact' factors in research assessment exercises.

You quote the idea that measurement actually creates society. As we devise new things to be measured – gross domestic product, consumer price index – we call into existence new social concepts.

This is Ken Alder's idea: that measurements create society. I think it's a very nice idea and there is a lot of truth to it.

The point about measurement of economic and social phenomena is that they are higher-level entities. For example, the unemployment rate is something that refers to a society as a whole, not to a particular individual. And as we begin to describe this higher-level entity – inflation or unemployment – in some sense we are creating the thing we are talking about.

Perhaps here I could contrast measuring economic or psychological things, with measuring physical things like length and weight, because the procedures are rather different.

When we measure length or weight, we try to establish a formal mapping of the objects we are measuring to numbers, so that the relationship between the objects is matched by the relationship between numbers. For example, *this* object forces the scale pan down, so we will assign to it a number representing its weight that is bigger than that for the other object. That is 'representational' measurement. We are trying to represent the relationships in the real world by the relationships in our numbers.

In contrast, you have what is called 'pragmatic' measurement. Things like inflation or well-being are heav-

ily pragmatic measurement concepts, where you are defining the concept through the way you describe how to measure it. You are simultaneously measuring and defining the concept. That is very different from measuring something like weight.

Things become more complicated as we strive to go beyond the easily countable. How do we measure well-being?

I have written another book on measuring well-being.¹ And it *is* quite complicated. I have been particularly interested in measuring national well-being. National well-being has individual components, such as the happiness of individuals, but higher-level things like sustainability also need to be taken into account: if a society or nation appears to be doing very well but is consuming non-sustainable resources at a very rapid rate so that it is going to burn out within 20 years, it will not in fact be doing very well.

You hint at some risks in measuring higher-level entities. You use the term 'reification': if something has a name, if some measure has been devised, then it must exist in the real world even if it's just an artificial construct.

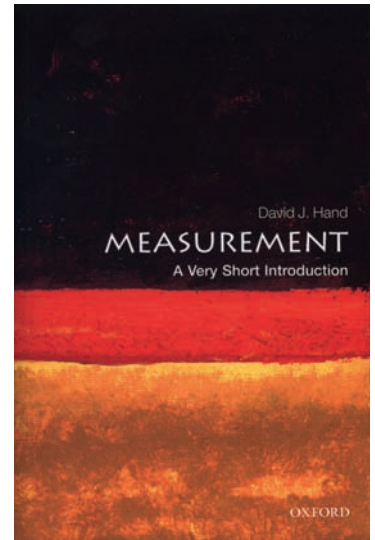
Reification is an interesting and rather controversial topic. If you can apparently measure something and use it in a helpful way – predict things with it, make decisions and take actions based on it – it's very easy to forget the fact it might not actually be something real. It might just be a construct you have created, which is useful. The topic has a controversial history.

And there is the idea that 'what gets measured gets done'.

That's the last in an increasingly dramatic series of statements: 'you measure what matters'; 'what you measure begins to matter'; 'what gets measured gets done'.

The saying 'what gets measured gets done' represents the fact that in an ideal world perhaps what we would like to measure is something quite elaborate and complicated, but because it's elaborate and complicated we simplify and measure something related to it that we can actually measure. That then becomes the focus of any actions and decisions we may take.

In the Wells Fargo scandal, which was revealed in September 2016, staff performance was measured by how much their customers opened other accounts. This led



David J. Hand, *Measurement: A Very Short Introduction*, was published by Oxford University Press in October 2016.

1. Paul Allin P. and David J. Hand, *The Wellbeing of Nations: Meaning, Motive, and Measurement* (Wiley, 2014).



to staff opening accounts without customers knowing anything about it.

The public has a rather schizophrenic attitude to measurement and statistics. We all feel the desire not to be considered as just a statistic – ‘I am not a number, I am a free man’ (to quote Number 6 in *The Prisoner*). And we fear that measurement robs us of intuitive insights and nuances. You argue that the analysis of mass data really can be turned to the benefit of the individual.

Measurement is all about accumulating evidence and gaining understanding. The fact that you can measure something cannot detract from the nuances and understanding you do have. It can only give you something more, something additional.

We may not want to be considered as just a statistic – ‘I am not a number, I am a human being’ – but we are never just a statistic.

Statistics is typically seen as about mass phenomena: you are aggregating, you are summarising, you are calculating a mean, a variance, etc. You are looking at the whole bundle of people together, and the individual seems to play a part in that. In fact, statistics also works in the other direction. Think about what many of these statistical methods are used for. For example, in a clinical trial you will be trying to find out whether treatment A is better than treatment B for some illness. You will do that by looking at a mass of people. You will give half of them treatment A and half of them treatment B and see how things, on average, pan out. But what you are then going to do is apply whichever treatment you decide is the better one to the next individual with a disease who comes through the door. You will match the data on that individual, diagnose them based on data and measurements, decide they have a particular illness,

and then from the mass of data and information that you have obtained using your statistic model, decide what treatment to give to them.

So statistics is not just about mass phenomena; it’s also about the individual.

The flipside of our schizophrenic attitude is that we all love a statistic. We are all hooked on numbers emblazoned on newspaper pages. Here there is the risk of the media obsessing about a particular measurement score, which may itself be a summarising of other scores or a statistic that is just a provisional estimate, or about fluctuations in numbers that

have no statistical significance.

‘Ninety per cent of statistics are made up, including this one.’ We need a better understanding of statistics and data – of what they mean and the critical eye with which you have to approach statistics. Just because somebody says 90 per cent of statistics are made up, you should never accept that at face value. You should think: could this be right? Is this realistic? Does it conform to what else I know? That is a kind of skill and understanding, which is increasingly important for the community at large to acquire.

Is there also need for more understanding of how incomplete and provisional statistics are, and how much what is being shown by statistics is still going to be subject to change because it’s a work in progress? Is that a failure to understand the scientific process that might be behind the statistic that is the headline figure?

If you read the papers or watch the television, you will see that one day coffee is good for you and the next it’s bad for you. You find different reports arising from different studies. The statistics get updated. You get a report that the UK sends £350 million a week to Europe, and then you get a comment saying that’s wrong because a lot of the money is sent back. People need to understand these things in the context of the scientific process.

The popular image of science is that it’s a bundle of facts which have been, in some senses, proven. But science is really about presenting contingent theories that describe the facts you know, but which are always subject to possible change as you gain greater understanding as more facts come along. Science is always subject to change, is always potentially temporary. If you want absolute truths you have to go to either pure mathematics or religion, I am afraid.

There is that perennial public scepticism that anything can be proved by manipulating the numbers. You mentioned the EU referendum where statistics quoted by experts and others fared badly. How worried are you by this reputational damage?

This is unfortunate, because the reputational damage should stick to the people who are misreporting the statistics. The £350 million is a good example. Whether deliberately or through ignorance, the facts were distorted. It is unfortunate if statistics is maligned as a consequence of that, when the criticism ought to be put elsewhere.

You have published two books in the *Very Short Introductions* series: this one on measurement and an earlier one on statistics. Have you written these in order to help improve perceptions of these subjects?

I think I wrote them for different reasons. I wrote the *Statistics* one² because there was this terrible misunderstanding of what statistics is about: there has been a perception that it is a dry, dull, dusty discipline involving arithmetic skills. Nothing could be further from the truth. Modern statistics with powerful computers is all about probing data, looking for interesting structures and relationships. You don't have to be able to add up numbers anymore. It is a good idea if you have some intuitive understanding so that you can spot that, when

Statistics is not just about mass phenomena; it's also about the individual.

the number comes out as 1,000, it actually should be more like 10. But you don't have to be able to invert a matrix by hand or anything like that. At the touch of a button, the computer will do it. So I start that book by saying

that statistics is the most exciting of disciplines, and I hope to convince people that that is the case.

In respect of the *Measurement* book, I have been fascinated by measurement for some time. When I did my Maths degree I specialised in my final year in mathematical physics, where people measure things like length, weight and velocity. After my PhD, I moved to the Institute of Psychiatry where I spent 10 years collaborating with psychologists, psychiatrists and pharmacologists and the like, who were measuring things like opinion, depression or pain. It was quite clear that what they meant by measurement was very different from what the physicists meant by measurement. So I became fascinated by the range of approaches and concepts to which the word measurement is applied. I wrote a larger, much more technical book about it a few years ago,³ and I wanted to reach a wider audience with the issues so hence this new short book.

Was it easy to condense so much information into an accessible form?

It was very frustrating to condense it all. I had to leave out so many good stories. One of my favourite anecdotes which I could not get into the *Measurement* book is about the litre, the unit of volume. It had been proposed that an uppercase 'L' should be used for litre rather than a lowercase 'l' to distinguish it typographically from the number '1'. But the convention is that capital letters are only used as symbols if the unit is named after somebody. So it is capital 'V' for Volt (named after Alessandro Volta), and capital 'A' for Amp (named after André-Marie Ampère), whereas it is lowercase 'm' for metre. To overcome this gap, in 1978 Kenneth Woolner at the University of Waterloo in Canada wrote a spoof article in a chemistry newsletter giving an account of a 'Claude Émile Jean-Baptiste Litre', an 18th-century glass manufacturer, who was good at creating cylinders and very accurate in calibrating them. He created a whole biography for this Litre. Of course, not everyone who read it realised it was a spoof. It even appeared in *Collier's Encyclopaedia*. And Woolner received letters from school teachers saying, 'This is fascinating. Can you give me the references?' The spoof ran and ran. Somebody else wrote an article describing Litre's daughter so Millicent Litre! Unfortunately, I could not get any of that into *Measurement: A Very Short Introduction*. ■

The British Academy has undertaken extensive work to address the deficit in quantitative skills (QS) and statistical literacy in the UK, arguing that the ability to understand and interpret data and statistics is an essential feature of life in the 21st century: vital for the economy, for our society and for us as individuals.

This activity falls under the Academy's Quantitative Skills Programme (QS), guided by the British Academy's High Level Strategy Group for Quantitative Skills, chaired by Professor Sir Ian Diamond FBA.

To find out more, visit www.britishacademy.ac.uk/count-us-in

2. David J. Hand, *Statistics: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2008).
 3. David J. Hand, *Measurement Theory and Practice: The World Through Quantification* (Edward Arnold, 2004).

Pursuing power in Europe, 1815–1914

Richard J. Evans talks about his book *The Pursuit of Power: Europe 1815–1914*, in conversation with Ruth Harris



Professor Sir Richard Evans is President of Wolfson College, Cambridge, and Provost of Gresham College, London; he was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 1993.



Ruth Harris is Senior Research Fellow at All Souls and Professor in Modern European History at the University of Oxford; she was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 2011.

What led you to write this compendious history of Europe in the way that you've done?

Nowadays I'm mostly known as a historian of Nazi Germany, but that's a relatively recent interest. It started when I got involved as an expert witness in the Holocaust denial libel action brought by David Irving against Deborah Lipstadt, the American historian (the trial was held in 2000). That led me to write a three-volume history of Nazi Germany,¹ largely because the lawyers said they couldn't find a really good one that went into any detail. But in 1995, when I had been asked by Penguin to write a volume on the period 1815–1914 in their *Penguin History of Europe* series, I was mainly known as a 19th-century historian. So after I'd finished the Third Reich books, it was great coming back to this in 2009, to get back to my earlier teaching, bring it up to date and learn new things.

The book owes a lot to my formation as a historian at Oxford in the late 1960s and early to mid '70s, when there was an explosion of new interest in social history. The English Marxist historians were just publishing their major works; the History Workshop movement was beginning; and I was fortunate enough to be a graduate student at St Antony's College, where friends of mine were doing modern French history, heavily influenced by the *Annales* school. More recently, when I came back to this topic after doing nothing about it between 1995 and 2009, cultural, global and transnational history had come onto the scene. I tried to fold all of those influences into this book – which is one reason why it's so long.

The other reason for the book's length is that, between the commissioning of the book and my saying 'OK, I'm ready to do it,' Penguin decided, after their experience in the history boom of the late 1990s and early 2000s, that only blockbusters really sell. They said, 'The contract is for 120,000 words, but could you please

1. Richard J. Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich* (Penguin, 2003); *The Third Reich in Power, 1933–1939* (Penguin, 2005); *The Third Reich at War* (Penguin, 2008).

deliver 280,000?’ After a moment of shock horror, I thought, actually that’s great, because it allows me to go into a lot of detail, precisely to give this very broad coverage of pretty well every aspect of history in the 19th century, which I would not have been able to do if it had been a shorter book.

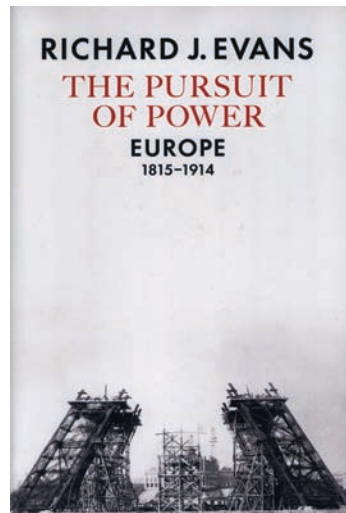
The value of the book is indeed its scope, range and detail. It enabled me as a reader to hook onto things that are of great interest to me about people and movements.

I am very struck by your account of emancipation. You argue that one of the distinctive features of the 19th century was the number of people who were emancipated. Could you explore a bit more this shift in social relations?

I began with the fact that around 85 per cent of the population lived in the countryside until well into the second half of the 19th century. But in the economic, social, political, general histories of 19th-century Europe, you find there are only a few pages about the peasantry. I think people have been influenced by Marx’s characterisation of ‘the idiocy of rural life’: these are the people that get left behind by industrialisation. So I thought I would give them their due.

Despite the French Revolution, in the 1820s and ’30s serfdom still existed across large swathes of the continent — in particular in central and eastern Europe (including European Russia) — and I think that’s something that’s not sufficiently known. There was a whole process of emancipation where the serfs were freed — partly because states wanted to cement the loyalty of their inhabitants and give them some interest in the state, partly because the serfs had been rebelling, sometimes violently. So the emancipation of millions and millions of people in the rural population was a characteristic of Europe right through the 19th century. (Astonishingly, there were a few pockets where serfdom still existed until the 1920s.)

Again, over half the population were women. In most books on 19th-century Europe, you have a few paragraphs on the rise of ‘feminism’. It seemed to me really important to bring women into the picture, to look at their lives, work, family, their experiences. Here again, despite the French Revolution which was very much a men’s affair, in the early 19th century women pretty much didn’t have any rights at all. Their property — if they had any — was the property of their husband or their father. They couldn’t join professions. They really didn’t have any education, so female illiteracy rates were far higher. There was a long process of the emancipa-



Richard J. Evans, *The Pursuit of Power: Europe 1815–1914*, was published by Allen Lane in September 2016.

tion of women — giving them more rights — again, mostly fought for by themselves. Later on in the century, particularly after 1900, some nationalist movements, such as in Finland or Czechoslovakia, actually campaigned for women to get the vote, because they saw them as the educators of the next generation, and wanted them to bring up their children as Finnish and Czech nationalists.

You don’t just talk about the question of women’s rights. You also see things in gender terms. This is a remarkable achievement for a mainstream European history book.

I do try and bring gender in where I can. Quite often gender is used as a synonym for women. But I try and talk about masculinity. For example, why did men in the middle of the century suddenly start growing enormous beards? It’s a striking

feature when you look at any photographs or paintings of statesmen, politicians, engineers, etc., so I talk about that as a sign of masculinity. You did get some people explicitly saying that. For example, the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, who had a vast moustache which covered most of the bottom half of his face, was said by one of

his acolytes to grow it to emphasise his masculinity. I think this was a response to the beginnings of the rise of feminism and the extension of more rights to women.

Why did men in the middle of the century suddenly start growing enormous beards?

It’s very important to have a human dimension of history, not just a lot of dry facts. I try and fold in quotations, experiences, anecdotes and stories. And I begin each chapter with a life story. There are four men and four women who make up the life stories of the eight chapters.

Those introductions to the chapters are some of the best passages in the book. Are these people chosen because they exemplify contradictions and paradoxes? Are they there simply because, although the 19th century seems close, it’s actually still very much a foreign country?

I chose these eight individuals partly for their intrinsic interest, their vividness, and partly to bring across the difference between 19th-century people and their sensibilities, consciousness and behaviour and those of the 20th century. The 19th century is indeed quite strange in some ways. It’s now a few years since the last people who lived in the 19th century have died. In comparison to the 20th century, we don’t know a lot about it. I wanted to bring across the strangeness.

I picked each one from a different country. I found myself looking for an interesting Scandinavian woman, which I found rather difficult. In the end I came across Fredrika Bremer, who was a Swedish novelist in the 1840s and '50s, whose works are now completely forgotten outside Sweden. I chose her because, like all the other characters, she raises a number of the questions that are discussed in the chapter as a whole.

She starts the chapter I call 'The Age of Emotion' in contrast to 'The Age of Reason' in the 18th century. Fredrika Bremer was religious, and that relates to the way religion turned into a more feeling, emotional phenomenon and practice, involving things like apparitions of the Virgin Mary, about which of course you yourself have written. She was a novelist, so that brings us into literature and the way in which it was influenced by gothic and romantic themes. There's a fantastic scene in one of her novels where a beautiful young blind woman — Fredrika Bremer felt she was rather ugly, so the most beautiful women in her novels are blind or afflicted in some other way — stands in the middle of a thunderstorm on a precipice and shouts, 'I'm free, I'm free.' (To my great disappointment, she doesn't jump off, she just goes back home and dies peacefully.)

Bremer's life also raises a lot of questions about women and gender. Because she was unmarried, when her father died her elder brother had all the income from her novels. He drank and gambled it away until he died a miserable death, fortunately early. She had no other male relatives, so she campaigned for unmarried women's rights. So there are many things in her life story that make her very interesting, and raise the questions that I deal with in that chapter.

I'd like to discuss with you the choice of title, *The Pursuit of Power*. In your Preface, you contrast power with glory, and you explain that different forms of power were pursued in the 19th century.

What struck me is the fact that power became a very diverse but central way in which people framed their ambitions and their lives in the 19th century.

Tim Blanning's *The Pursuit of Glory: Europe 1648–1815* — the preceding volume in the *Penguin History of Europe* series — is really defined by the upper classes and the elites in the 18th century.² Glory and honour were absolutely essential concepts. They faded a bit in the 19th century, but didn't completely go away — you can even see them in the outbreak of the First World War.

But more and more, as education spreads across the population, as society becomes more complex, as industrialisation and urbanisation change things, as you have this process of emancipation — which raises the question of 'what do we do with our freedom?' — you can see political parties emerging in the second half of the 19th century, struggling for power through elections, over government, in legislative assemblies. You can see

the competition for economic power by great industrialists. The pursuit of profit is also, in a way, a pursuit of power over other people. You can see trade unions, workers struggling for power over their own lives against the monopoly of power by their employers. You can see the Impressionists in revolt against the power of the Academies: they want to determine their own artistic careers and expression. So power is a very diverse phenomenon.

As usual, when you're writing a book, you can't think of a title. I suddenly thought of it one day in the bath, which is where all the great ideas come from. I thought, Tim Blanning's book is *The Pursuit of Glory*. What was the key thing that people were pursuing in the 19th century, across the board? It was power — but power understood in this very varied way. One or two people have remarked that *The Pursuit of Power* sounds an old-fashioned title, all about diplomatic and high political history. But that's not what I mean by power. And the whole literature on power in the last 30–40 years has been getting away from that rather simple political concept.

One of your character portraits explores the relationship between emancipation and power.

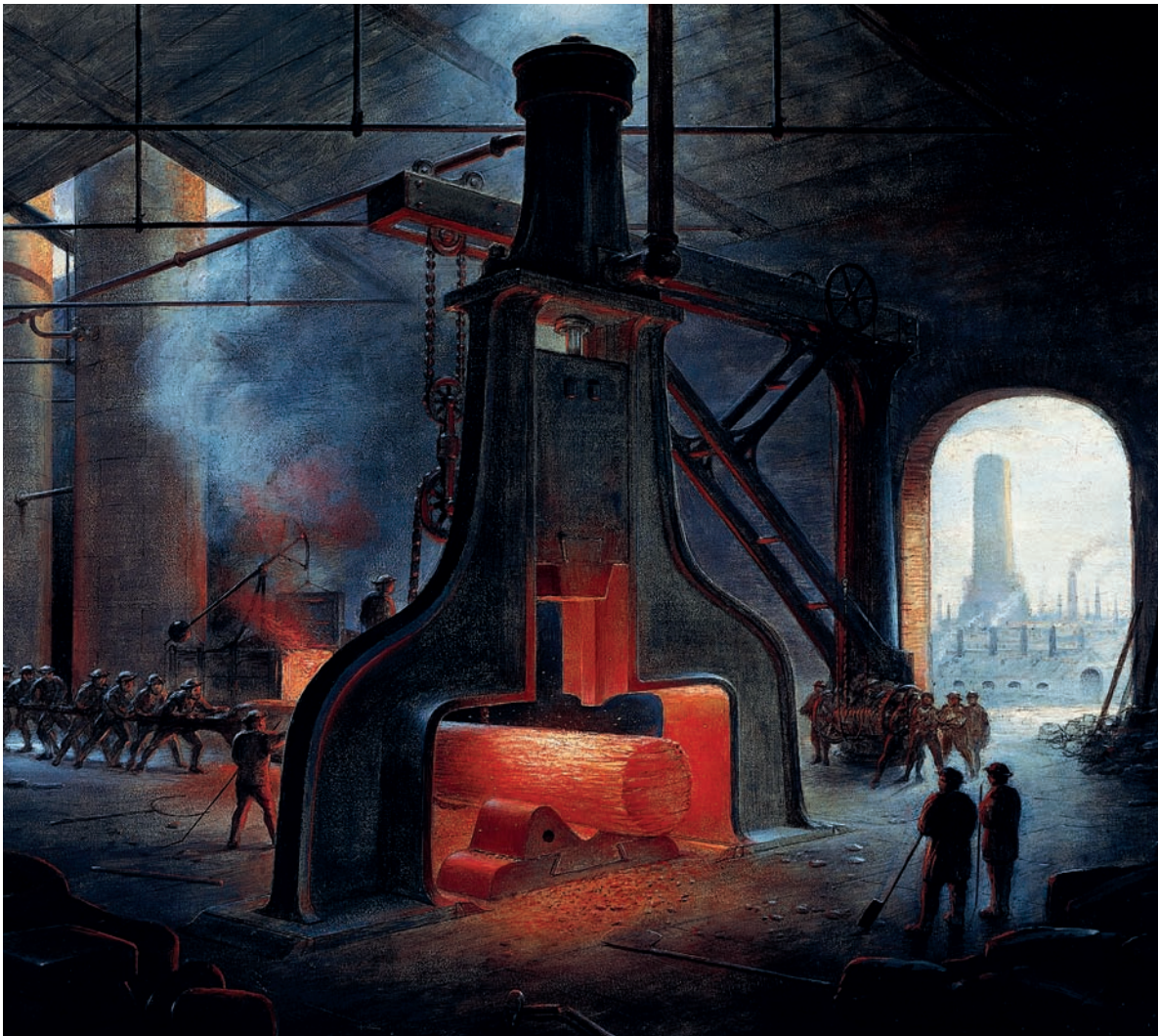
I begin my chapter 'The Paradoxes of Freedom', on the economy in society from 1815 to 1848, with the autobiography of a Russian serf, Savva Dmitrievich Purlevsky, who unusually could read and write. It's clear that what he really resented was the fact that his seigneur, his landlord, had the power to have him whipped, could tell him what to do, make him work without pay. It's that lowly status and the fact that he couldn't control his own life. In the end he ran away, when he was threatened with being whipped. He found refuge in a sect called the Skoptsy, who were 'Old Believers' in the Orthodox tradition. But he then discovered that they practised self-castration as an ascetic form of life, so he ran away again before he was recruited by them. What comes through his life story is his burning resentment and his desire to have power over his own life.

I think you're right to concentrate on the offended dignity of the man. This leads me back to that remarkable chapter on 'The Age of Emotion'. What are your thoughts about this romantic investigation of the self, and its relationship to other trends that you talk about: mechanisation, mass society, atomisation?

Yes, educated people increasingly believed, particularly going back to the Romantic movement in the 1820s and '30s, in the authenticity of their feelings as a guide to life, as the foundation of everything else — in absolute contrast to the 18th-century Enlightenment, when they wanted to repress feelings and put intellect at the centre of identity.

I argue that this was a very gendered phenomenon. Because of the growth of parliaments and the increasing

2. Tim Blanning, *The Pursuit of Glory: Europe 1648–1815* (Allen Lane, 2007). Professor Blanning was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 1990.



The 19th century was a period of exciting technological innovation. In this 1871 painting, James Nasmyth depicts his invention, the steam hammer, at work in his foundry near Manchester. IMAGE: DE AGOSTINI PICTURE LIBRARY/GETTY IMAGES.

power of elections, men needed to show that they were responsible by repressing their emotions. Emotionality was assigned to women. If you look in encyclopaedias for the definitions of ‘men’ and ‘women’, they became increasingly gendered along emotional lines as the century progressed. (Later on, when the struggle for women’s votes started, women who were active in these campaigns also — at least in public — began to repress their emotions and reject this idea that women were not responsible adults.)

I think that there are many ways in which the expression of emotion was linked to different areas of life. There was an increased feeling that industrialisation and the machine age were reducing people to automata, and that they needed to be freed from this as well. It’s very interesting how the rhetoric of anti-slavery — which was a big cause in the first half of the 19th century — came into other struggles. For example, feminism was a struggle against the enslavement of women: women needed to gain control over their own lives and not be told what to think or feel by men. In the factory, trade unionists struggled for workers’ rights, and they began to argue for more

leisure time: in early industrialisation, a 12- or 14-hour working day allowed nobody any time at all for expressing themselves or developing in other ways.

One of the ways in which you bring out the sense that this period is a foreign country is by describing the awe associated with new inventions and technologies. This is the opposite of the idea that mechanisation necessarily leads to de-humanisation. What do you think is the balance between optimism and pessimism in the century?

One of the striking things about the 19th century is how few wars there were in contrast to the 18th and the 20th centuries, how localised they were — not global like in the 18th or 20th century — how short they were, how few countries they involved, how limited their objectives were. Whether it was Bismarck’s wars of German unification, or Italian unification, or the Crimean War, they were all fairly brief. In comparison to the 18th and 20th centuries, there was not a lot of bloodshed. That seems to me to be particularly a product of the so-called

Concert of Europe. Because they had seen the huge damage that the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars had inflicted upon society and the established order, statesmen agreed that, if there was a problem, you held a congress or conference and tried to sort things out. So in that respect I take a rather positive view.

It was also a period of massive technological innovation, which just got faster and faster. Of course, it's still getting faster now. But this was the century in which technological innovation really kicked off. By the beginning of 1815, the railways are only just over the horizon, the telegraph is over the horizon. By 1911, you've got aircraft dropping bombs on Libya in a colonial war, you've got the machine gun — so there is a negative side of innovation. But you also have the motor car, you've got the sewing machine — you could go on and on.

People did find this very exciting. I quote a survey at the end of the 19th century in which they asked a lot of people what the next century was going to be like. The overwhelming response was, 'It's going to be fantastic, it's going to be wonderful, the best century ever.' Of course, they got that very wrong for the first half of the 20th century. But there was a good deal of optimism. Progress was the great mantra of the 19th century.

How did the development of transnational and global history in the last 15 years help you in thinking about Europe's place in the wider world?

One of the benefits of the long delay in my starting this book between 1995 and 2009 was that the growth of global history happened. I was able to see European history from 1815 to 1914 as a period in which Europe dominated the world. This is the only period in history where Europe was richer, stronger, more powerful, better armed, and more influential than other continents. In the 18th century, you've got other great empires — the Ottoman, the Chinese, the Mughal empire in India. In the 20th century the European empires collapse.

The 19th century is not just a century of colonialism — in particular, of course, the scramble for Africa. It's also a period in which Europe's interactions with the rest of the world became much more intense. Some 60 million Europeans left the continent, mostly for the Americas, carrying European concepts, practices, ideas, civilisation. So the boundaries of Europe became porous. Gradually, when they got to America, Argentina, Australia or wherever, they began to drift away from the original European models. Of course, a lot of people came back: a third or more Italians came back, repeatedly, sometimes for good, sometimes just to visit their homeland. So there is a lot more intense interaction.

And, as the century progressed, American technology and its impact upon Europe became much more

important. The great example is the aeroplane, but there are many others. American influences on the European economy became more powerful, and America seemed more and more to be the future.

To come full circle, I will end by asking you how writing this work on European history has changed your work on German history.

You mentioned transnational history — the idea of looking at phenomena, ideas, concepts, inventions, that transcend individual nations and have an impact upon the whole of Europe. I try in my book to pick out transnational elements. For example, one of the figures I discuss in the book is the intellectual, political leader of Greek independence, Kapodistrias, who actually served time as a Russian foreign minister. Or if you look at the history of revolutions in Europe, you find Poles everywhere. The Polish were the one nation in the 19th century who were constantly, violently rebelling — against the Russians (in particular), the Austrians and the Prussians. And if they couldn't get anywhere in Poland, they headed off to Italy and tried to take part in a revolution there. There were a lot of these characters who moved around Europe.

Looking at the history of Europe in this context does of course have an impact on my own work on German history. In a collection of my essays published in 2015, *The Third Reich in History and Memory*,³ I discuss recent historiographical trends in the history of Nazi Germany. Where did the Nazis get their ideas from? There has been a long-established tradition that sees Nazi ideology as coming from Germany, from the accumulation of different kinds of ideas within Germany — anti-democratic ideas. Nowadays, it's much more fruitful and interesting to look at the very varied sources of Nazi ideology: the French racism of Gobineau, ideas from Britain of Social Darwinism, 'elite theory' from Pareto and other Italian theorists, or anti-Bolshevism from the Russian counter-revolution in 1918–19. So it was a very diverse set of ideas that the Nazis appropriated and melded together.

When you study the history of an individual country, particularly a very problematical one such as that of Nazi Germany, you can gain a lot by looking at the broader picture. ■

There was a good deal of optimism. Progress was the great mantra of the 19th century.

3. Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich in History and Memory* (Little, Brown, 2015).

A long look at the Russian Revolution

Steve Smith talks to the *British Academy Review* about his new book, *Russia in Revolution: An Empire in Crisis, 1890–1928*

Your new book on *Russia in Revolution* is obviously well timed for the 1917 centenary. When did you start plotting it?

I was approached by Oxford University Press trade books back in 2013 and I signed a contract in June 2014, with a submission date of February 2016. So by my standards, I wrote the book, which runs to 450 pages, fairly quickly.

Who is the book written for?

For many years I taught a Special Subject on the Russian Revolution at the University of Essex. I had in mind a book that would serve as a comprehensive but challenging introduction to the subject for my former third-year undergraduates, and also for the large public that exists in the UK that has an appetite for history. That means keeping historiographical debate to a minimum, yet signalling issues that are historically contentious. I confess, too, that I was writing in the hope that — by virtue of the fact that I cover political, economic, military, social, cultural history, offer some bold arguments, and choose some little-known examples — I would have something of interest to say to my academic colleagues.

What are the challenges for a historian in writing about a subject that still evokes political passions?

Well, writing about the Russian Revolution is political in a way that writing about the Anglo-Saxons is not (which is not to deny that all history writing is implicated to some extent in the politics of the present). Even so, since the collapse of Communism — and the decline of the left internationally — the Russian Revolution has ceased to be relevant to contemporary politics in the way it was during the Cold War. It's hard to find anyone — and I include myself — who would want to write about the Russian Revolution with a view to affording the

Soviet Union a kind of legitimacy as did, for example, E.H. Carr (which doesn't invalidate the work he did). We can all agree that it led to one of the worst tyrannies in the 20th century. At the same time, I reckon it's become harder for us to *understand* the Russian Revolution than it was in the 1970s (or in 1945, when many on the right conceded that for all its faults, the Soviet Union with its strong state, planned economy and patriotic citizenry had made an outstanding contribution to the defeat of fascism). I'd argue that although our knowledge of the Russian Revolution has increased, it has become harder for

us to understand the ideals and passions that galvanised revolutionaries to believe that a violent transformation of the existing social order was necessary to bring about an advance in the human condition. We live in a world in which the (historically very recent) discourse of human rights, admirable in all kinds of ways, has served, on the one hand, to sensitise us to the flagrant violations by states of the innate dignity of the human person and, on the other, to marginalise collective values such as those of distributive justice, socio-economic equality, or the common good. So long as the Cold War lasted, these were values that continued to

resonate in the political mainstream, at least in Europe, and to chime, however distantly, with those of 1917. Today we see very clearly the millions of victims, and yet our intellectual and imaginative understanding of what made the ideal of socialist society so attractive to millions is constrained. We shall not understand the Bolsheviks unless we see that, for all their contempt for the 'bourgeoisie' and their willingness to use terror to sustain their power, they were fired by outrage at the exploitation that lay at the heart of capitalism and at the raging nationalism that had led Europe into the carnage of the First World War.



Stephen A. Smith is Professor of History at the University of Oxford; he was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 2014.

What new source material has become available in recent years for the study of this subject?

The breakthrough came after 1991 when the archives of the Soviet Union — with some exceptions, such as those of the KGB — became open to scholars. One consequence was that scholars moved away from researching the history of the Revolution and civil war towards researching the Stalin and post-Stalin eras about which we knew much less. Nevertheless historians did begin to work on topics in the early history of the Soviet Union that had been taboo while the Soviet Union lasted, such as the history of the Whites, the history of the Church, the history of working-class and especially peasant resistance to the Bolsheviks, and the history of the socialist opposition parties. But we need to remember that historians do not just respond to the sources at their disposal, they respond to wider trends in their discipline. One example is the interest in empires across the historical profession, which has inspired historians to investigate the impact of the Russian Revolution on the non-Russian peoples of the empire, and to understand why in the Russian case it was possible for the Bolsheviks to reconstitute an empire of sorts.

You say that the man who doomed the imperial regime to extinction was Tsar Nicholas II himself. How?

It is beyond question that the roots of the Russian Revolution go deep. The collapse of the tsarist regime in February 1917 was ultimately rooted in a systemic crisis brought about by economic and social modernisation, a crisis that was massively exacerbated by the First World War. From the 1860s, and especially from the 1890s, the autocracy strove to keep its place among the major European powers by industrialising the country and by modernising its armed forces, but this unleashed new social and political forces, notably industrial workers, capitalists and the professional middle classes, which eroded the social base of the autocracy. It led to increasing demands that the autocracy grant its subjects civil and political rights and, in the case of the peasantry and working class, radical improvement in their living and working conditions. It was these demands, raised in the context of a war with Japan, which led to the outbreak of a massive revolution in 1905. In October 1905 Nicholas II was compelled to make significant political

concessions in the shape of a parliament and civil and political rights. During the years from 1905 to 1914 a civil society expanded, evident in the expansion of the press, the proliferation of voluntary societies, and in a new consumer culture. There was some reason to think that the country was moving away from revolution, as the countryside quietened, as industry revived after 1910, and as the armed forces were strengthened. Yet efforts to enact reform legislation were scuppered by the stalemate that set in in relation between

the parliament and government. Many in the political elite hoped that the outbreak of war might revitalise the constitutional settlement promised in the 1905 October Manifesto, but Nicholas's determination to maintain his divinely ordained position as all-powerful autocrat alienated the parliament, the middle-class public and many in high-ranking positions in government and the army. In September 1915 he assumed the full control of the armed forces, leaving the conduct of government largely to his wife, Alexandra, with the support of the peasant holy man, Grigori Rasputin. For people at all levels of society, Rasputin became a symbol of the 'dark forces' that they believed were undermining Russia. The autocracy came to a humiliating end in February 1917 for many reasons, but in a political system where ultimate authority rested in the figure of one man, Nicholas must bear prime responsibility for the failure of political reform after 1905.

You say that Russia's involvement in the First World War ultimately proved fatal both to the imperial regime and to the possibility of a democratic alternative. Why?

The demands of 'total war' strained the Russian economy. The needs of the armed forces were met, but the civilian population increasingly suffered as a result of inflation and shortages of subsistence items. In 1913 Russia had been the world's largest exporter of grain and the blockade imposed by Germany put an end to exports. This ought to have meant that there was plenty of grain to feed the people in the cities and the provinces that relied on grain imports. But the upset in the grain market caused by the need to feed the army — not least, fixed prices on the sale of grain — together with the decline in production of consumer goods and a snarl-up in the transport system discouraged peasants from marketing grain.

In all, about 16 million Russians were mobilised into the armed forces, though most were not active in the field. Russia's military performance improved after a disastrous first year (when half the casualties of the war were suffered). By winter 1916 there was growing war weariness, but the army remained intact as a fighting force. The February Revolution in 1917 came about not as a result of military defeat, but as a result of the combination of utter frustration with the tsar on the part of the elites and mounting dissatisfaction with food shortages and the burdens of war on the part of the common people.

Following the February Revolution, the problems in the economy went from bad to worse, with rocketing inflation, severe shortages of grain and consumer goods, gridlock in transportation, along with lay-offs of workers in the war industries. As far as the war itself was concerned, the hope of the new Provisional Government was that the overthrow of the autocracy would inspire the army and navy to fight with renewed vigour. For their part, soldiers and sailors expected the new government to do all in its power to bring about a democratic peace. The role of the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries, who dominated the Petrograd Soviet of Workers'



and Soldiers' Deputies and who enjoyed the support of a majority of the population, proved critical. They devised a plan for a peace settlement but failed to get the Provisional Government to back it, not least because they were afraid of a backlash on the part of the generals. Worse, they ended up joining the Provisional Government, and Alexander Kerensky assumed responsibility for a new offensive on the Eastern Front. This rapidly turned into a rout and shifted mass opinion away from the moderate socialists towards the Bolsheviks who had been steadfast in their denunciation of the war as an imperialist war and of the Provisional Government as a government of 'capitalists and landlords'.

You talk about 'the deeper structuring forces' that assert themselves on Russian history.

What are these?

The great 19th-century historian Vasilii Kliuchevskii once remarked that the fundamental characteristic of Russia's history was 'colonisation on a boundless and inhospitable plain'. Lacking natural frontiers, Russia's landlocked plains, backward economy, and poverty-stricken peasantry left it vulnerable to invasion, on the one hand, and to severe winters and drought, on the other. When the Bolsheviks seized power, bent on creating socialism in an economically backward society, they were optimistic that the problems of economic backwardness and vulnerability to invasion would be overcome by the spread of the revolution to the more advanced countries of western Europe. As the Bolshevik regime stabilised in a hostile international environment in the 1920s, it found itself facing the deeper structuring forces of geography, geopolitics, climate, a limited market and an absence of capital, traditions of bureaucratic government, and the ingrained patterns of a religious and patriarchal peasant culture. The Bolsheviks did not become captive to these forces, as Stalin's 'revolution from above' demonstrated, but in many areas a new 'realism' swamped many of the more utopian ideals of the early years of the revolution, and a new synthesis of revolutionary and traditional culture gradually crystallised.

This is an area of history where counterfactual speculation is too tempting a pursuit. What might have happened if Lenin had been followed by Bukharin or Trotsky rather than Stalin?

Economic backwardness and international isolation were major constraints on the Bolshevik regime in the 1920s. We may doubt whether Bukharin's vision of socialism at a snail's pace could have narrowed the economic and military gap between the Soviet Union and the capitalist powers, or whether Trotsky could have furthered the revolution in the advanced capitalist countries that he saw as necessary for the ultimate victory of socialism in Russia. Both Trotsky and Bukharin stood for a greater degree of democracy within the Bolshevik party than Stalin was prepared to tolerate, yet it is doubtful that either would have broken with the authoritarian system bequeathed

by Lenin. Indeed Lenin must bear some responsibility for the institutions and culture that allowed Stalin to rise to power. Nevertheless one crucial feature of the system he bequeathed was the primacy of the party leader. Had Bukharin been Lenin's successor it is inconceivable that he would have unleashed mass violence on the peasantry, as Stalin did; and while Trotsky shared Stalin's determination to smash the fetters of socio-economic backwardness, it is hard to credit that he would have ordered the elimination of the kulaks as a class or crash industrialisation at the expense of the working class. These policies were reflective of Stalin's personality, his utter indifference to the human cost of what he called the 'Great Break'. If continuities between Leninism and Stalinism were real, the 'revolution from above' launched by Stalin also introduced real *dis*-continuity, in wreaking havoc upon Soviet society. The institutions of rule may not have changed, but the unrestrained use of force, the cult of personality, paranoia about encirclement and internal wreckers, and spiralling terror across an entire society, all underlined the qualitative differences between Stalin and his two main rivals.

Is it too early to say what might be the achievements of the Russian Revolution?

I doubt we'll ever speak of the 'achievements' of the Russian Revolution. It failed according to its own lights, and as we look back through the Second World War, the Stalinist terror and the violence of civil war, it's hard to see much that is positive. The Soviet contribution to the defeat of fascism was certainly an achievement, but it is one clouded by the repressive character of the Soviet regime. In addition, after the Second World War the Soviet Union did improve the education and health of its population, more so, say, than Latin American regimes at comparable level of development. But the human cost had been enormous.

That said, if we may not speak of achievements, the Russian Revolution did raise fundamental questions about how justice, equality, and freedom can be reconciled, questions that remain relevant today. We have lost belief in politics, in the capacity of governments, parties and ideologies to remake economic, social and political relations in any radical fashion. We are content to leave that to markets and multinational corporations. Yet the Russian Revolution sought to establish an international order purged of exploitation and oppression, and if its achievements in this respect were limited and its methods certainly suspect, the political ambition that it released may prove to be an inspiration as we in the 21st century struggle to tackle massive problems of global inequality and planetary destruction. ■

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Russia in Revolution: An Empire in Crisis, 1890–1928, by S.A. Smith, is published by Oxford University Press in January 2017.

The impact of Moses Finley

Robin Osborne explains how the most widely known 20th-century ancient historian made his mark



Robin Osborne is Professor of Ancient History at the University of Cambridge. He was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 2006.

There is no denying the impact of Moses Finley (1912–1986). His books sold ∞ and continue to sell ∞ enough copies to support a Junior Research Fellowship at Darwin College, Cambridge, where he was master from 1976 to 1982. In the 1960s, his voice was known to any listener to the Third Programme, his articles and reviews familiar to any reader of the weeklies and broadsheets. Numerous pupils remember his as the teaching that made most impression, the intellectual inspiration that set them on their way to academic careers. For the last 60 years it has been impossible for an undergraduate to touch on

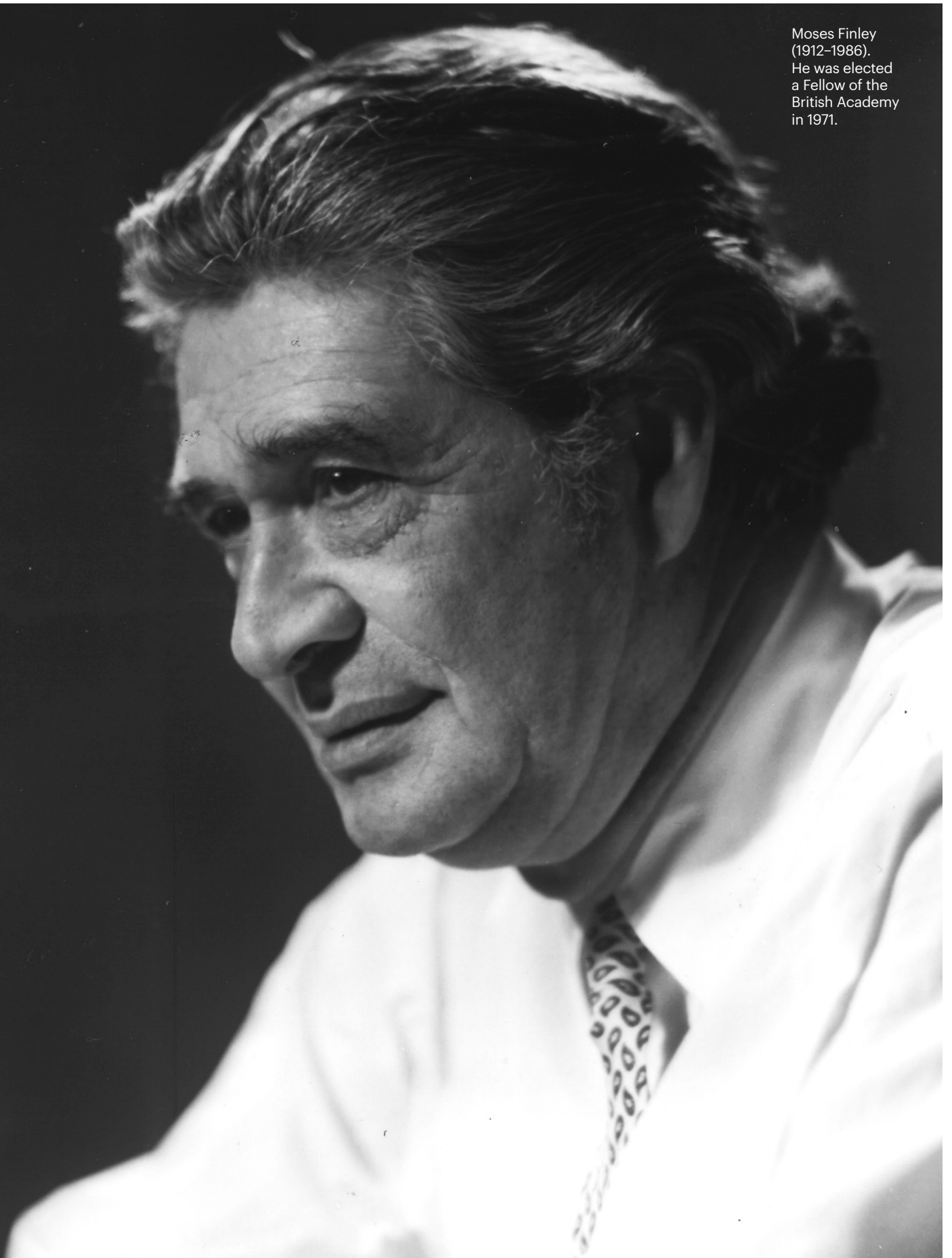
Greek history without being set to read something that Finley wrote. His books and articles were not merely reprinted in his lifetime, but have been re-issued in a whole range of formats since his death. No living ancient historian ∞ and only Arnaldo Momigliano among the dead ∞ can match his place in the citation indices.

But what exactly was it about Finley and his work that secured this lasting impact? The centenary of Finley's birth fell at a time when the UK academic establishment was having to think about impact as never before, because of the decision that the research assessment exercise, 'REF 2014', would measure not just the academic quality of research publications and of the research environments that university departments offered, but also the reach and significance of the impact that their research had made. So while conferences in the USA investigated Finley's early career there, and a conference on the continent examined his work and its continental reception, it seemed apt to direct the UK commemoration of his life, held in Cambridge where he spent his last 30 years, to examining how he achieved his impact.

What emerged from the three days of discussion in Cambridge, and is now between hard covers as *M.I. Finley: An Ancient Historian and his Impact*, offers something of a cautionary tale. For Finley's impact came not from the publication of any one seminal book, but primarily from the force of his personality and the authority which his own peculiar academic formation and the dramatic circumstances of his entry into the academic world in the United Kingdom gave him. Whether as lecturer in the classroom, as supervisor in his office, as broadcaster in front of a microphone, it was with his commanding intelligence and the moral force of his pronouncements that Finley captivated and commanded attention. That charismatic authority continues to make his work compelling today.

A child prodigy who hit New York news headlines when he achieved his M.A. at Columbia University at the age of 17, Finley was initially trained in law and then subsequently through the 1930s, when he worked as a fact-checker for *The Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* and an editor and translator for the Institute for Social Research, in social science. Although as early as 1932 he was declaring that 'the study of ancient history has reached an impasse' and (as Moses Finkelstein) he first published on Greek history in 1935, Finley (as he had then become) embarked on his PhD only in the late 1940s. Finley's PhD concerned a quite obscure class of Athenian inscriptions, stones that marked the mortgaging of real estate, which raised a number of tricky technical questions. They were ideally suited to Finley's training in law and social science, but unsurprisingly when *Studies in Land and Credit* was published in 1952, it attracted only specialist attention. What captured much wider attention was Finley's summons before the McCarran committee and decision to take the 5th Amendment rather than answer the question of whether he had ever been a member of the Communist Party.

Moses Finley
(1912–1986).
He was elected
a Fellow of the
British Academy
in 1971.



Dismissed from his position at Rutgers University, Finley found himself welcomed to Britain by figures not known for their left-wing views.

Finley himself later avoided all discussion of his early years (*Finley* contains a hilarious newly-discovered transcript of a radio interview with Finley in which his ways of avoiding the question of why he left the USA can be admired), and never did answer the question of whether he had been a member of the Communist party. But if he did not himself trade on either his left-wing past or his refugee status, these certainly affected how others reacted to him; his impact on the continent, in particular, came in part from left-wing ancient historians recognising in Finley, almost alone among the English-speaking historians of Greece and Rome, a fellow-traveller. Finley's personal experience lent political force to his words, and his deep knowledge of social science produced feelings of inadequacy in other ancient historians and classicists. A notable exception was Geoffrey de Ste. Croix, who did much practically to facilitate Finley's settling in Britain and who remained close to Finley for 20 years until their friendship ended, in part over what de Ste. Croix saw as Finley's desertion of Marx for Weber in *The Ancient Economy*. It also gave him an entrée into the world of social and economic historians more generally; among the first generation of pupils strongly influenced by Finley in Cambridge were a remarkably large number of undergraduates reading for the History Tripos (among their number John Dunn and Quentin Skinner), who were attracted to seminars that Finley and A.H.M. Jones ran together.

By the time Finley arrived in Cambridge he had published not simply his doctoral dissertation, but the book that, more than any other, made him widely known in the academic world — *The World of Odysseus*. Historical readings of the Homeric poems were not new, and assessment of the poems against the archaeological record was expected. But Finley offered a historical reading of a different sort, finding in the poems a coherent world of values and expectations, a world in particular lubricated by gift-giving. Finley recognised that this world did not align with the world of the Mycenaean palaces in

which it was popular to place the kings named in the poems, but nor did he think that it belonged to the time of Homer himself. Instead he suggested that the world described in the Homeric poems should be recognised as a Dark Age world, the memory of which had been preserved in the formulas and set-scenes transmitted in the oral epic tradition and from which Homer built the epics that we know.

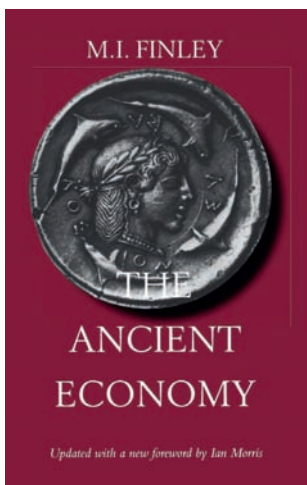
Reviews recognised in *The World of Odysseus* a quite fresh voice, in terms of how Finley wrote as well as what he wrote. One schoolmaster described the book as 'scholarly without being

pedantic, interesting, full of judgements that surprise, yet are obvious when one stops to think'. Although those expert in the field were widely sceptical of both Finley's methods and his detailed conclusions, such was the attractiveness of the writing that the book became — and in many circles remains — a staple of reading lists given to students from the sixth-form upwards; for most of its readers it was the first book about Homer or about Greek history that they read. The book also proved timely: although written before Michael Ventris's decipherment of Linear B, that decipherment added a new element to our knowledge of the late Bronze Age world, and in Finley's view confirmed his judgement that that was not the world of the Homeric poems. Finley became an obvious person to ask to express a view on such matters, and on 6 March 1957 his voice was first heard on the airwaves in a symposium with Sinclair Hood and Denys Page to mark the publication of Ventris and Chadwick's *Documents in Mycenaean Greek*.

Radio talks, frequently then published in the *Listener*, became the basis for a substantial part of Finley's publications over the next decade. Even his most enduring contribution to the study of Athenian democracy, a paper on 'The Athenian Demagogues' published in *Past and Present* in 1962, began life as two radio talks published in the *Listener* in the previous year. Indeed,

with the exception of his *Ancient Sicily* over which he laboured for a decade, Finley's book publications after *The World of Odysseus* all started life in oral form, either as radio talks (e.g. those in *Aspects of Antiquity*) or as lectures. This facilitated a rather selective engagement with existing scholarship and a frequently polemical tone. One is rarely left in doubt that there are good and bad ways of writing history and that Finley's way is the right way. Finley's moral seriousness was something that distinguished him from many other historians, and very often his polemic has a moral edge. This is particularly true of Finley's work on slavery, a topic which he first broached in the late 1950s, with a classic paper asking whether Greek civilisation was based on slavery, which he taught as a final-year option in Cambridge, and which led to a particularly scathing attack on Joseph Vogt and the 'Mainz school' of studies of slavery in his *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology* (1980).

Finley's views of the nature of the ancient economy are in many ways already formed in *Studies in Land and Credit* and *The World of Odysseus*, but it was only when he was asked to deliver the most prestigious of all series of classical lectures, the Sather lectures at Berkeley, in 1972 that he drew together his views of the economy of the ancient world in general in *The Ancient Economy*. *The Ancient Economy* engaged scholarly controversy from



the moment of its publication, and has become the single work with which other scholars have most argued. Finley maintained both that there was no ancient science of economics and that the application of concepts drawn from modern economics was inappropriate. He insisted that there was no integrated economy across either the Greek or the Roman world, and that the ancient world experienced technological stagnation and no economic growth. He made no attempt to address issues of demography, productivity, or levels of consumption – indeed all quantification is eschewed. Not only was Finley dismissive of attempts to quantify aspects of the ancient economy on the basis of figures given in literary texts or of archaeological data, in *The Ancient Economy* he used comparative data in a very partial way, stressing contrasts rather than seeking to build on similarities; he chose to structure his account of the economy not around (relations of) production, distribution and consumption but around a series of polarised relationships, ‘master and slave’, ‘town and country’, effectively replicating the approach of the moralising ancient sources from which he drew his illustrative examples.

Received from the start with some scepticism, *The Ancient Economy* nevertheless dictated the terms of the academic debate about the economy of the Greek and Roman world for the next generation. Part of the reason for this is that whereas in his earlier work Finley had rarely explicitly brought into the discussion the work of the social scientists with which he had been engaged in his early career, in the 1970s he became much more willing to organise his work around these ideas and in particular the ideas of Max Weber. In the 1960s Finley had been a central figure in the successful attempt to replace the teaching of Greek and Roman history in schools as a mere political narrative with a syllabus in which A level students were encouraged to work directly from the ancient texts, and those who participated in his final-year courses in Cambridge comment on the documentation that they were expected to master. But in the 1970s and 1980s Finley became ever more insistent that constructing an historical argument in relation to the ancient world demanded formulating a model, and that the piling up of data, whether culled from literary sources or from archaeology, would never constitute history, since historical claims were always claims about how the data were connected. When in his retirement Finley was asked to deliver the J.H. Gray lectures at Cambridge, he focused entirely on method – *Ancient History: Evidence and Models*.

There is no doubt that Finley offered something that the other Greek and Roman historians of his day did not offer. Where his ancient history colleagues began from the explication of texts, Finley began from questions – questions that were not about events but about structures. Those who recall Finley’s lectures largely attribute his impact to his lecturing without notes, or at least with rather discreet notes, in a world where others read their lectures. But it was surely as important or more important that he

left his audience with questions to ask of the material they read and principles upon which to guide their reading.

Finley’s impact conforms rather poorly to the model which looks for a publication to which the impact can be linked. *The Ancient Economy* has been much argued over within the field, but has had little long-term effect on understanding either of the Greek and Roman world or of how to write ancient economic history. In as far as there is a publication that embodies the very real impact Finley made, it would be *Ancient History: Evidence and Models* – a book published 30 years after Finley made his initial splash and which accounts for less than 5 per cent of the citations of his work. Few of Finley’s substantive claims long survived critical scrutiny, but that is rather beside the point. It was by virtue of his charismatic personality, given yet more force by the circumstances in which he left the USA, and not by any particular book or article or even any particular argument, that he convinced a very wide range of readers and academic colleagues that it was possible to ask questions not simply about the political and military narrative of ancient history, but about the structure of ancient society and about social values. And he convinced them that if they were to ask and to answer such questions they needed to pay attention to the way those questions were answered for other societies and periods, and not least in the contemporary world. Both the agenda and the intellectual armoury of the Greek and Roman historian was massively expanded – and has continued to expand ever since. ■



M.I. Finley: An Ancient Historian and his Impact, edited by Daniel Jew, Robin Osborne and Michael Scott, was published by Cambridge University Press in October 2016.

Includes: ‘The making of Moses Finley’, by Daniel P. Tompkins; ‘The impact of Studies in Land and Credit’, by Paul Millett; ‘Finley’s impact on Homer’, by Robin

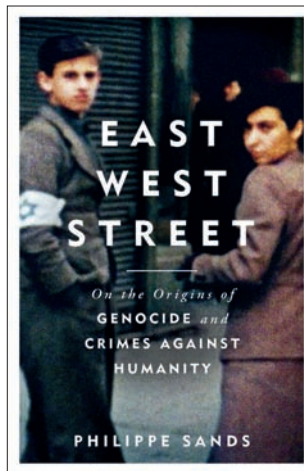
Osborne; ‘Finley’s slavery’, by Kostas Vlassopoulos; ‘Finley and Sicily’, by Jonathan R.W. Prag; ‘Finley and the teaching of ancient history’, by Dorothy J. Thompson; ‘Finley’s journalism’, by Mary Beard; ‘Finley and the University of Cambridge’, by Geoffrey Lloyd; ‘Finley and other scholars: the case of Finley and Momigliano’, by Peter Garnsey; ‘Finley’s democracy’, by Paul Cartledge; ‘Finley and the ancient economy’, by Alessandro Launaro; ‘Finley and archaeology’, by Jennifer Gates-Foster; ‘Finley’s impact on the continent’, by Wilfried Nippel; ‘Measuring Finley’s impact’, by Walter Scheidel. Robin Osborne has drawn freely on the work of these contributors in the writing of this article.

Lessons for extraordinary times

Audio or video recordings of most British Academy events are made available via the Academy's website shortly afterwards (www.britishacademy.ac.uk/recordings).

For example, you can watch a video of the event held by the British Academy in November to showcase the four titles shortlisted for the 2016 Baillie Gifford Prize for Non-Fiction. Philippe Sands talked at length about his book *East West Street: On the Origins of Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2016) which went on to win the prize. He revealed the origins of its innovative structure, including advice he received during the years of working on it: 'At one point I said to my agent in London "Maybe this is two books; maybe it's just too complex to tell a personal story *and* a big political legal story." And she said "Absolutely not; the difference of this book is that you've got to keep them together."

Also available on the Academy's website (via www.britishacademy.ac.uk/fellow-talk) are recordings of



Fellows of the British Academy in conversation on matters relating to their work and interests. Here are three examples.

What's wrong with a Bill of Rights?

The British Academy has been publishing a series of briefings on the UK's relationship with the European Convention on Human Rights, and on the implications of proposals to replace the Human Rights Act with a Bill of Rights for the UK. To accompany the publication in August 2016 of the briefings on the implications for Scotland and for Northern Ireland, the Academy posted

a recording of a conversation between the two reports' authors – Professor Christine Bell FBA and Professor Colin Harvey. They suggested that the proposals seemed to underplay the complications that would arise from the devolution settlements that now exist for different parts of the UK. Professor Bell observed: 'I've never really been able to work out whether the apparent legal illiteracy in some of the proposals and documents was

naivety, or in fact because this isn't really being played out as a legal argument but a political one. I suppose as a lawyer that's a bit disturbing. And also as a citizen with a stake in things working coherently and legally and lawfully, it's disconcerting to see the legal niceties and complications being almost ignorantly by-passed. And aside from the legalisms of whether consent is needed from the Scottish Parliament, the Scottish Government has been fairly clear that it is. And it seems to me that as a political matter that puts us in the realm of constitutional crisis – in that if we have a constitutional dispute which the constitution does not have the tools to resolve, then that would seem to me a classic definition of a constitutional crisis.¹

Warming tales of Cold War summits

In a conversation recorded in July 2016, the former BBC diplomatic correspondent, Bridget Kendall, talked to Dr Kristina Spohr and Professor David Reynolds FBA about the book they have edited, *Transcending the Cold War: Summits, Statecraft, and the Dissolution of Bipolarity in Europe, 1970–1990* (Oxford University Press, 2016). In a fascinating discussion of how world events could be shaped by the personal interactions between leaders,



Bridget Kendall described how difficult it was for journalists just to find out what was going on at these Cold War summits – with the more limited communications technology at that time, and under pressure to file a story. ‘Often, the simple lexicon of a summit dominated, because you had to grasp something. So, “the handshake”. Or two people standing on the

steps together. And some simple message.’ And she said the summit leaders were aware of this. ‘When Mikhail Gorbachev first met Reagan in Geneva, it was November 1985. And Gorbachev was intensely irritated that Ronald Reagan turned up without a hat on, whereas he – being a Russian who takes the cold seriously – had on his homburg. And he felt he had to take it off. And he didn't really want to: he thought it was ill-advised because of the weather. But given the symbolism that the press would grasp, it was really important that there was parity. And similarly, I remember Raisa Gorbacheva telling us later that she was very put out that Nancy Reagan

‘I remember Raisa Gorbacheva telling us that she was very put out that Nancy Reagan had so many outfits.’



had so many outfits. And she used to collaborate with one particular Soviet designer to try to keep her end up, because obviously they wanted to make a new statement on the world. I remember she said “Nancy Reagan has so many image makers, *stolko image makerov*” – they didn't even have a Russian word for it – “I handled it on my own. It was very hard for me to keep my end up.” So this visual geometry was intensely important in those days. And I think that was partly because the press couldn't quickly grasp anything more complicated.’

Can we count on the polls?

In a conversation recorded in September 2016, Professor John Curtice FBA talked to the British Academy's Chief Executive, Alun Evans, about the performance of the opinion polling industry during the three recent close contests: the 2014 Scottish Referendum, the 2015 General Election, and the 2016 EU Referendum. In that last case, Professor Curtice suggested that perhaps the pollsters succumbed to the presumption that ‘surely at the end of the day the country isn't going to vote leave’, and during the referendum campaign they constantly refined their methods in ways that tended to skew the figures towards ‘Remain’. Nevertheless, he explained why opinion polling always had a crucial role to play. ‘Our understanding of what lies behind the Brexit vote, what lies behind Trump, what lies behind Marine Le Pen, is the result of survey research. That's what tells us that it's people with relatively few educational qualifications, older people, people who are culturally challenged by immigration, people who are concerned about the economic consequences of globalisation. Leaving aside the headline-grabbing horse-race aspect, opinion polling – together with much more broadly academic survey research – is crucial for enabling us to understand *why* people are doing what they're doing, and therefore ensuring that politicians of all political persuasions are adequately informed about the messages that come out of the ballot box.’

1. The briefings on Scotland and on Northern Ireland (published in August 2016), and those on Wales and on the UK's international human rights obligations (published in November 2016) can be found via www.britishtacademy.ac.uk/european-convention-human-rights

On the trail of Lenin

Catherine Merridale, author of *Lenin on the Train*, describes how she re-enacted his momentous journey of 1917



Catherine Merridale has held a series of posts at British universities, including Cambridge, Bristol and London, before becoming a full-time writer in 2014; she was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 2016.

'You are on the trail of Lenin?' The uniformed concierge looked puzzled as she scanned my notepad and the pile of cameras. 'You mean John Lennon?' It was an answer that I had learned to anticipate, but coming from the lips of a woman with a Russian accent it was still a bit of a surprise. The Russia that I used to know was piled with Lenins. When I first went there in the 1980s, every schoolroom had its Lenin bust, every office its portrait and every town its massive, dowdy looking statue. But Lenins like those are firmly out of fashion now. The leader's corpse may still be on display inside the mausoleum under Mr Putin's office window, but Stalin is the man for Russians now. They like their heroes glamorous and dressed in shiny boots. That dreary Uncle Lenin

never led his country in a war, and these days his beloved ideology is not even a joke.

I've grown quite used to Lenin dead. But all the same I'd like to find out more about the version who was very much alive. What's more, I'd like to put him back in our collective history. There is a tendency to think of Russia as a place apart, but its story is bound to all of ours; Lenin's revolution was itself designed and planned in Europe's heart.

With those priorities in mind, I set off on an eight-day dash on continental railways. The idea was to recreate the journey Lenin made in April 1917 when he returned to Russia on his famous sealed train. I planned to follow his exact schedule, to track his route, and like an old-world spy I would look for his spoor. I set out on 9 April from his narrow street in the old quarter of Zurich. From there, my walk took me past the Public Library where Lenin liked to work, a grand stone palace that proclaims the virtues of meticulous research. A little further on, across the river, Zurich's central station is a relic of the same

great *belle époque*, the age of steam and watch-chains, bankers, science and shameful international diplomacy. As I produced my ticket for the short ride to the German border, I could imagine Lenin on the platform next to me, enjoying bourgeois Switzerland for one last time and simultaneously hating it.

But placing him in Germany was different. As my train slid north-east to Frankfurt, I could see nothing of the scenes that Lenin knew, no ghosts left over from the First World War. Instead, concrete and glass proclaimed the victory of high-tech industry and engineering, the rejection of Marxism in favour of prosperity. No city demonstrated that more strikingly than Berlin, where there is no trace of the station where Lenin's train was parked for one uncomfortable April night. With its out-sized advertising and gleaming shops, the 10-year-old Hauptbahnhof could be a cathedral to capitalist enterprise, while that monument to Soviet power, the Berlin wall, would have vanished completely if someone hadn't thought to rebuild a short stretch of it a few years ago for the tourists to photograph.

I had more luck, of course, when I got to St Petersburg. There is a Lenin right outside the Finland Station, after all. He stands high on an armoured car, his arm outstretched for emphasis, and he is calling the world to rise in revolution. That statue was one of the first — the man who made it had seen the living leader for himself — and for a moment I thought I felt a brief jolt of vitality. But when I started visiting the Lenin shrines, those tiny sparks were soon snuffed out. I spent an afternoon in the

apartment where the Lenins lived for three months after their return, but saw more lace and fancy needlework than traces of conspiracy. I had prepared myself for red flags, weapons, secret ink, but what I found was an upright piano and a collection of antimacassars. Lenin may have said that Communism was Soviet power plus the electrification of the whole country, but his sisters deemed that occult rays from naked lightbulbs harmed his health, and veiled them all with heavy shades and hand-





Lenin addressing the Petrograd crowd on the night of 4/17 April 1917. Painting by A.M. Lyubimov (1879–1955), in Museum of Political History, St Petersburg. PHOTO: FRANK PAYNE.

Lenin is still out there somewhere in the bloodstained past – relentless, single-minded, violent – and one day even Russians must make peace with him.

sewn beaded fringes. Meanwhile, his wife passed idle moments sketching in a little book, and what she drew were round-eyed children, kittens and dear little puppies with their hair in curls.

Within a decade of the leader's death, Stalin had latched on to every dull, repressive scrap of Lenin to create a dismal cult. Each lampshade and embroidered pillowcase was treated as a holy relic and thus safely, permanently dead. These days the clock in Lenin's parlour does not work, but no-one dares to send it out to be repaired. They can't afford to call a specialist to fix it, either, so it just stands there, as lifeless as the idea of Leninism itself.

As Putin's government prepares for the Revolution's centenary in 2017, its members hope that Lenin will remain forgotten in the dust. Their spotlight will not shine on him but rather on Nicholas II – tsar, saint and martyr – and also on the other victims of the Revolution (never precisely defined). That way, the message will be patriotic, proud, a further affirmation of the quasi-holy qualities of the strong new Russian state.

But I set out to track the other Lenin, the live one, and I think I found him. He was there in his writings,

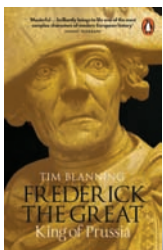
he was present in the memories of everyone whose path he crossed. Most vividly of all, after eight tense days on slow-moving trains, he was the man who didn't sit down with a beer, easing boots off weary feet, but launched into tub-thumping speeches, disdaining the ideas of rest or food. It was this Lenin who changed Russia and the world, coaxing belief from disappointed citizens, launching a carnivorous class war, building his Soviet Union on the ruins of the late empire. He is still out there somewhere in the bloodstained past – relentless, single-minded, violent – and one day even Russians must make peace with him. ■

This article is the text of Catherine Merridale's contribution to the January 2017 edition of 'From Our Fellows', a regular podcast in which Fellows of the British Academy offer brief reflections on what is currently interesting them (www.britishacademy.ac.uk/from-our-fellows).

Lenin on the Train, by Catherine Merridale, was published by Allen Lane in October 2016.

Books that won British Academy prizes in 2016

The British Academy awards a range of prizes and medals each year. Some are for scholarly cumulative achievement over an extended period, but others recognise individual publications that have made a mark. Here are the citations for three books that were honoured by the British Academy in 2016



A British Academy Medal was awarded to Professor Tim Blanning FBA, for *Frederick the Great: King of Prussia*

Professor Blanning is one of the leading historians in the world of European history in the 'long' 18th century. He has written seminal works on the political, social cultural and intellectual history of Germany and Austria. He has produced pioneering comparative work relating developments in Britain to those in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries. His writing on European musical culture in the same period is also regarded as seminal. Throughout his career he has written books that appeal to both general readers and specialists; translations have appeared in several languages. His biography of Frederick the Great exemplifies all his virtues as an historian. It is a marvellous analysis of a complex and notoriously elusive monarch, whose intellectual and cultural achievements were as significant as his military prowess and his achievements as ruler of Brandenburg-Prussia for four decades. He dominated the European diplomatic stage; he was regarded as an equal by many of the major thinkers of the age, including Voltaire, Diderot and Kant. In German historiography his reputation has been ambivalent: some have praised him as a military genius who laid the foundations for the later German nation state; others have blamed him for reinforcing attitudes that led to the

Third Reich and the Holocaust. Blanning's book is the first study that transcends all these older prejudices and presents us with a nuanced biography of a remarkable human being, writer, musician and intellectual, as well as one of the most important rulers of 18th-century Europe. *Frederick the Great: King of Prussia*, by Tim Blanning, was published by Allen Lane in 2015, and reissued as a Penguin paperback in October 2016.



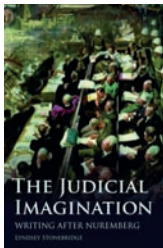
A British Academy Medal was awarded to Professor David Lowenthal FBA, for *The Past is a Foreign Country – Revisited*

David Lowenthal embarked on his illustrious career with a Harvard degree awarded in 1943; today he remains active in scholarship and debates over history, heritage and landscape on both sides of the Atlantic. His celebrated work *The Past is a Foreign Country* (1985) appeared at a moment of intense controversy over heritage policy, and Lowenthal's advice was sought by bodies such as English Heritage, UNESCO, ICOMOS and the British Museum. Thirty years later, Cambridge University Press have published the successor volume, *The Past is a Foreign Country* Revisited. I cannot think of any scholar in the UK today whose work has had such enduring influence in both academic and policy arenas, both nationally and internationally.

The Past is a Foreign Country ✕ *Revisited*, a 660-page *tour de force*, is much more than a second edition. Nonetheless it bears the hallmarks of its erudite and inspiring predecessor so acclaimed by reviewers. The new book invites readers to contemplate the manifold ways in which history engages, illuminates and deceives us in the here and now: Lowenthal shows us what it means to come to terms with a past that is always in the process of being re-made. The book is a magnificent achievement, and the culmination of a remarkable career.

The Past is a Foreign Country – Revisited, by David Lowenthal, was published by Cambridge University Press in 2015.

A British Academy Medal was also awarded to Dr Susan E. Kelly for her latest two titles in the British Academy’s own Anglo-Saxon Charters series: *Charters of Chertsey Abbey* and *Charters of Christ Church Canterbury*. The latter title was jointly edited with the late Professor Nicholas Brooks FBA, and an article by him about the Canterbury archive was published in *British Academy Review*, Issue 24 (Summer 2014).



The Rose Mary Crawshay Prize for 2016 was awarded to Professor Lyndsey Stonebridge, for *The Judicial Imagination: Writing After Nuremberg*.

This highly distinguished book is a powerfully original work of scholarship and thought. Stonebridge juxtaposes six women writers not commonly associated with one another ✕ Hannah Arendt, Rebecca West, Muriel Spark, Elizabeth Bowen, Martha Gellhorn and Iris Murdoch ✕ all of whom attended post-war judicial processes in Europe. Their response to the Nuremberg trials (West), Eichmann (Arendt, Spark), and the Paris Peace Conference (Bowen and Gellhorn attended all three events, while Murdoch was on the continent at this time) is in different ways to attempt to forge a new reading of justice and a new language of the law that went beyond trauma. This was outside the rhetoric of human rights, the nation state and the language of witnessing. She argues that this Anglo-American cosmopolitanism founded ‘a new kind of human being’ through its insight that the blinding nature of war crime ‘perpetuates itself in the discourses intended to put it on trial’, and turns both to philosophical writing and to the novel to explore statelessness, and the ‘unpredictable hazards’ of the liberal self, to consider whether the genre can ground a new political and ethical order. This is an intellectually gripping work of enormous range and depth.

The Judicial Imagination: Writing After Nuremberg, by Lyndsey Stonebridge, was published by Edinburgh University Press in 2011.



At the British Academy Prizes and Medals Ceremony held on 27 September 2016, Professor Lyndsey Stonebridge said:

“In *The Judicial Imagination* I was interested in how writers, women writers (which is why winning the Rose Mary Crawshay Prize is so particularly meaningful for me) responded to new ideas about justice and human rights in the wake of the Second World War. Reading Rebecca West on the Nuremberg Trials, Hannah Arendt (and Muriel Spark!) on the Eichmann Trial, and Iris Murdoch on working with Yugoslav refugees taught me a lot about how crucial the imagination – storytelling – is to thinking about justice in the face of appalling violence and cruelty.

‘This morning I flew back from Sicily where I’ve been at a workshop organised by Fellow of the British Academy, Professor Dame Marina Warner. Italy, like Greece and Turkey, is bearing the brunt of the refugee crisis. The workshop brought together academics, writers, musicians, performers with young refugees, to tell stories – to narrate our present darkness. I’m honoured to accept this prize in the name of all those storytellers committed to imagining new forms of justice today.’

A new introduction to Islam

At a ceremony in October 2016, Carole Hillenbrand offered some personal reflections on receiving the 'Nayef Al-Rodhan Prize for Transcultural Understanding' for her book *Islam: A New Historical Introduction*



Carole Hillenbrand is Professor of Islamic History at the University of St Andrews, and Professor Emerita of Islamic History at the University of Edinburgh. She was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 2007.

I am most grateful to Dr Nayef Al-Rodhan for his vision, philanthropy and great generosity in setting up this prize and thereby encouraging dialogue, tolerance and understanding between cultures and faiths. This is something that the world sorely needs. I am enormously happy and honoured to receive this prize.

In the recent context of 9/11, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the collapse of Syria and the flood of migrants from Muslim lands making their painful way to a haven somewhere in Europe, it has never been more important for people in the West to learn about, and to understand, the Muslim

world. This is a time when that world is rarely absent from our newspapers and TV screens, a time of wars and rumours of wars, and when public attitudes to Muslims at large are fraught with hostility and misunderstanding. So there is the most urgent need to combat the massed forces of prejudice and ignorance.

My book, then, is one person's response to that need. It comes in its two editions, one for the American and one for the global market. It has already been translated into Korean and Italian and further translations into Czech, Hungarian, Japanese and Chinese are

under way. So there is plainly a widespread enthusiasm for it. But I confess that I embarked with some trepidation on the task of writing it, conscious of the many scholars, journalists and concerned people, both Muslim and non-Muslim, who had attempted something similar over the last century or so. That alone gave me a heavy sense of responsibility. I knew that I would constantly have to generalise while not sacrificing accuracy. Obviously the book had to be as accessible and as readable as possible. Yet it also had to cover a lot of ground, and so the nine core chapters of the book, with their one-word titles, instantly direct readers to whatever aspect of Islam they want to investigate. And those one-word titles are



Professor Carole Hillenbrand FBA receives the Nayef Al-Rodhan Prize for Transcultural Understanding from Dr Nayef Al-Rodhan, at a ceremony held at the British Academy on 31 October 2016. This is the most valuable of the British Academy's prizes, worth £25,000. It was founded by Dr Al-Rodhan in 2013 to honour outstanding work that illustrates the interconnected nature of cultures and civilisations.

all carefully chosen; they are intended to challenge the curiosity of readers.

This is in one sense a textbook; my publishers, the incomparable Thames and Hudson, fervently hope that it will be widely adopted as a core text in hundreds of freshman courses in the USA and Canada on religion, on Islam and on Asian and of course Islamic history. In fact this is already happening. That is, so to speak, the school and college dimension. But I also wrote it with another constituency in mind, and here too I had the full support of Thames and Hudson. That is the wider public, a public that has had its fill of shrill, tendentious rants from the media on the subject of Islam as a faith and a culture, and is hungry for a more accurate and balanced account.

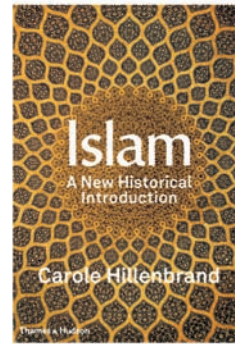
And I hope that I can claim still more for this book. It is close to my heart for despite occasional evidence to the contrary, academics have hearts as well as minds. I am gradually coming to the end of my career, and into this book I have poured the fruit of almost half a century of reading and thinking and teaching about Islam, not only as a religion but also as a culture of world standing. This book is a meditation on all of that, and on my lifelong specialised work as an Islamic historian, and as a teacher of Arabic and Persian. The book also reflects a personal lived experience of many very different Muslim societies. For underpinning my academic work is something quite other, but equally valuable, namely the vivid memories of travels which have taken me the length and breadth of the Muslim world, from Senegal to South-east Asia, interspersed with lengthy stays in Syria, Jerusalem and Iran. Those travels began exactly 50 years ago and they continue apace. They put real people on the page as well as ideas. And if the book reflects the profound respect and admiration that I have for the Muslim world, its

culture and its people, I shall be well pleased.

This book, then, is an attempt to give readers a bird's-eye view of the beliefs and practices of Islam from a historical perspective. That is something to emphasise for essentially this is a book about a faith. It is framed by an introduction and a closing chapter entitled 'Tomorrow'. That, incidentally, is a chapter that is already scheduled for revision in a second edition, and indeed I have already re-visited it for the Italian edition that was published earlier in 2016. The list of contents focuses on nine core topics for Muhammad, the Qur'an, Faith, Law, Diversity, Thought, Sufism, Jihad, and Women. Each of these has between five and nine sub-sections, also listed under each major chapter heading. This is intended to make it as easy as possible to track down the discussion of a given topic.

Authors customarily thank their publishers. And so they should. But in my case this is anything but a formality. I count myself very fortunate to have had a stellar team from Thames and Hudson who have watched over every stage of the book, from its conception to the day of publication.

And I would like to express again my enormous gratitude to Dr Nayef Al-Rodhan. By founding this prize he has made an ongoing and far-sighted contribution to the cause of harmony and peace between the multiple faiths and cultures that make up our complex and globalised world. ■



Islam: A New Historical Introduction, by Carole Hillenbrand, was published in 2015 by Thames & Hudson.

Professor Dame Helen Wallace FBA, who chaired the prize jury, said:

The focus of this prize on 'transcultural understanding' is in some ways too appropriate for the challenging times in which we live. We have identified a fine prize winner. Let me read out the citation:

'The jury recommends the award of the prize to Professor Carole Hillenbrand for her volume *Islam: A New Historical Introduction*, and for the body of her scholarship on which it draws. The volume summarises in an unusually accessible and finely presented form important insights into Islam in its variety of contexts and regions in ways that speak to many of our current challenges in understanding the Islamic world and its beliefs. The jury applauds Professor Hillenbrand's endeavours in translating scholarly analysis and deep historical knowledge into a



volume designed to promote public understanding. These reflect her active engagement throughout her professional life in promoting the study of the Islamic world in the wider academic community as well as in organisations such as CARA (the Council for At-Risk Academics).'

Professor Hillenbrand has a fine record of scholarly achievement and of professional engagement. Her historical work delves deeply into Islamic history across a range of countries, her scholarship

hugely strengthened by her remarkable command of languages. This underpins Professor Hillenbrand's empathetic understanding of many different cultures and traditions.

However, the award of this prize needs more than fine scholarship: it requires that it is communicated to wider audiences. Professor Hillenbrand writes in her preface to this volume that her aim was to reach general readers 'interested in understanding complex current events happening in the name of Islam'. This is indeed a subject which calls for thoughtful and nuanced analysis. I commend the volume to you all wholeheartedly – and not least because it is a beautifully produced volume with outstanding illustrations.

Turkey and the West: Whatever went wrong?

David Logan offers an explanation of a complicated and evolving relationship



Sir David Logan was Chairman of the British Institute at Ankara until November 2016. He served as British Ambassador to Turkey from 1997 to 2001.

History is notoriously one damn thing after another. What makes it interesting is which things are *post hoc* and which are *propter hoc*. No country makes study of this more important than does Turkey, sucked as it is towards the vortex of Middle Eastern turmoil. It is the mission of the British Institute at Ankara, one of the British Academy-supported British International Research Institutes, to understand the history of Turkey and to put contemporary issues in the region in historical context.

Only 10 years ago, the defining features of Turkey were its multiparty democracy and its membership of NATO for more than 60 years. It was the bastion of the alliance's southern flank, with EU accession negotiations in progress since 2004, and an economy growing faster than all others in the world apart from China's.

Now we think of populist government, terrorism, regional instability, Russian opportunism, the failure of Western strategic vision, and the loss of external traction on the part of the EU. All these have impacted forcibly on Turkey's prosperity, stability and governance. How has this come about?

For some understanding of what has happened we need to go back at least to the transformation of the Ottoman Empire into the Turkish Republic and the states that were artificially created in the Middle East from part of the rest of the Empire by the victorious British and French after the First World War.

The creation of a westward-looking secular Republic from the ashes of the Empire was an extraordinary achievement by Atatürk, one of the great statesmen of the first part of the 20th century. However, Atatürk died prematurely; and his reforms never gained the whole-hearted adherence of all Turks. One way of regarding the current dominance of President Erdoğan's party, and the

loyal support of many Turks for measures which many outsiders regard as undemocratic, is as retaliation for years of rule by Atatürk's secularist elite which ignored and repressed the concerns and traditions of the devout and conservative Anatolian population.

Moreover, the current turmoil and crisis in states such as Syria, Iraq and Lebanon, carved out of the former Ottoman realm by Sykes and Picot, arguably demonstrate a Western failure to understand the inapplicability of the alien Western notion of the nation state to the region, where society was underpinned by identity derived from ethnicity, tribe or sect.

After the Second World War, global politics was dominated by the confrontation between the Soviet Union and the West. In this context, Turkey assumed great strategic importance. It shared a border with the Soviet Union and, across the Black Sea, with other Warsaw Pact States. It controlled Soviet access from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean via the Bosphorus. Membership of NATO and of CENTO (whose other members were Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, and the UK) contained risks as well as advantages for Turkey, but connection with the West (a key part of Atatürk's legacy) and protection against the old enemy, Russia, provided by membership of NATO prevailed. Turkey's first approach to the EEC, as it then was, was made in the 1960s. It represented an expression of the country's European destiny rather than an expectation of imminent membership. However, by the time of the break-up of the Soviet Union and the reconfiguration of post-communist Europe, Turkey's objective of membership became concrete, and the domestic reform process was carried forward so successfully, particularly at the start of the AKP era in 2002, that negotiations formally started in 2004. Good progress was initially made.

The tectonic plates started to shift with the fall of the Soviet Union and the liberation of the Eastern European states. The loss of Soviet influence, both generally and specifically in Turkey's region (for example in Syria), led

to the release of hitherto suppressed nationalist, ethnic and sectarian differences in the Balkans and the Middle East, often aggravated by the ambitions and whims of local dictators.

In 1990, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. Turkish President Özal threw his weight behind the American-led coalition against him, calculating that Turkey's interests lay in a continuing close relationship with the sole remaining superpower. But he did so in the face of opposition from most Turks, who believed that the cost, in terms of regional political relationships, the risk of the break-up of Iraq, and the loss of trade with Turkey's Arab neighbours was too high a price to pay. Both the Foreign Minister and the Chief of the General staff resigned.

Further strains on Turkey's traditional foreign policy bearings came with the violent dismemberment of Yugoslavia. Many Turks come from the old Ottoman lands in the Balkans. They were angered by what they saw as initial Western indifference to the fate of the Bosnian Muslims at the hands of the Christian Serbs.

Closer to home, the demise of the Soviet Union led to other new foreign policy challenges, with conflict breaking out between newly independent Armenia and Azerbaijan, with which Turkey has close ethnic and cultural links. The enlargement of the EU gathered impetus. But Turkey resented being overtaken by the Eastern Europeans in the EU membership queue, and rightly regarded the accession of southern Cyprus, before the island was reunited, as a betrayal by the Europeans.

Throughout the 1990s, the US aim of getting rid of Saddam was a major source of policy difficulty for Turkey. The relationship with the United States remained important and Turkey came under heavy US pressure to play an active role in bringing down Saddam. But the likely damage to the Turkish economy and to Middle Eastern

relationships remained a serious concern. Besides, fears about the risks contained in a break-up of Iraq were now aggravated by the rise of domestic terrorism from the Kurdish PKK because of the latter's links with some of the Kurds of Northern Iraq.

9/11 settled the American debate about how to bring down Saddam; preparations for war, which included invasion from the north through Turkish territory and the use of Turkish resources, began. The crisis coincided with the installation of the new and inexperienced

AKP government in Turkey, which was confronted with the old dilemma in the starkest of terms. When the proposal to accept the Americans plans was put to the Turkish parliament, it was rejected by a small margin. (Ironically, particular concerns included the absence of a second Security Council resolution, and no convincing plan for post-Saddam Iraq, just as among most of the US's Western European allies.) The furious reaction in

the United States stirred a debate in both countries as to the value of the bilateral relationship.

Meanwhile, and only partly coincidentally, the new AKP government embarked on a fundamental foreign policy review. Unlike its secularist, military-influenced predecessors, it did not view its external relations exclusively through the optic of security; political interest, trade and historical relationships should be important drivers. Besides, policy should be based on the calculation that Turkey lay at the centre of a region of its own, where it had multiple and complex relationships, rather than at the edge of another region (Europe) in relation to which it appeared to be a perpetual and peripheral supplicant.

For a period, this new approach seemed very successful, in particular in relation to Turkey's Arab neighbours to the south, with whom trade burgeoned and old historical and cultural connections were revived. Before

Turkey resented being overtaken by the Eastern Europeans in the EU membership queue.

long, however, the inherent flaws in a policy based on the notion of ‘zero problems with our neighbours’ emerged, and Turks started to joke that they had ‘zero neighbours without problems’. Support for President Morsi’s government in Egypt, topped with Western acquiescence, led Turkey into the Sunni side in the increasingly confrontational Sunni/Shiite divide in the Middle East. Latterly, President Erdoğan seems to have actively promoted this sectarian approach.

Sectarianist division in the region was closely connected with the failure of Western policy towards Iraq, which left the country more at risk of break-up than ever (raising the prospect of an independent Kurdistan) as well as being partially occupied by ISIS, itself given Sunni credibility by Western error. The horrific dismemberment of Syria initially put Turkey in the position of supporting the Western alliance, at the cost of ISIS terrorist attacks in Turkey as retribution, and of confronting Kurdish forces in Northern Syria which they believe to be closely linked to the PKK, but which are also fighting alongside American forces against ISIS in Syria. These contradictions have placed strains on Turkish traditional relationships which come close to the unmanageable.

Meanwhile, the Syrian tragedy has had a major impact on Turkey’s complex relationship with Russia, now so different from the Cold War stand-off with the Soviet Union. Turkey is heavily dependent on Russia for energy; trade and tourism matter to both. But Turkey has ethnic ties to the Chechens (who have used Turkey as a haven) and with the Tatars of Crimea, now occupied by Russia. In November 2015, vehement Turkish opposition to Assad in the face of Russian support for the Syrian regime resulted in direct confrontation, with the Turks shooting down a Russian fighter allegedly in Turkish airspace.

However, the emergence of Russia as a key player in the determination of Syria’s future has led Turkey to accept that the removal of Assad, supported by both Russia and Iran, is no longer a feasible near-term objective. At the same time, the Turks regard the risk of the Kurdish enclaves on their border with Syria taking control of the entire Syrian side as an unacceptable threat. These are the Kurds who have been effective fighters against ISIS, supported by the United States. The result has been that the Turks decided to subordinate their hostility towards Assad to their concerns about the Syrian Kurds, and, distancing themselves from the United States, to co-operate with Russia to try to achieve a ceasefire and eventual settlement, culminating in the Russian/Turkish Security Council resolution of 31 December 2016.

These developments have taken place against a background in which the Turkish government now sees co-operation with

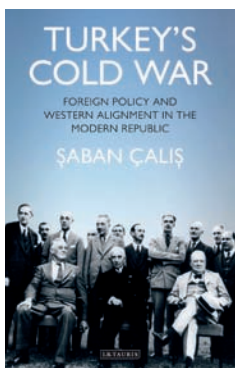
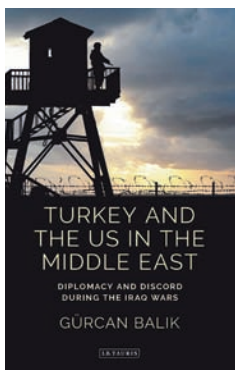
Russia (and also China) as a way of demonstrating its semi-detached relationship with the West; and Russia probably has the ‘Finlandisation’ of Turkey as its objective. But semi-detachment is not stable. Turkish and Russian interests in Syria will be very hard to reconcile in the longer term. And, while Turkish and Western policies in the Middle East may not always coincide, the reasons why Turkey joined NATO and developed a steadily closer relationship with the EU reflect deep security, trade and societal affinities. These now need to be anchored in renewed and strengthened ties.

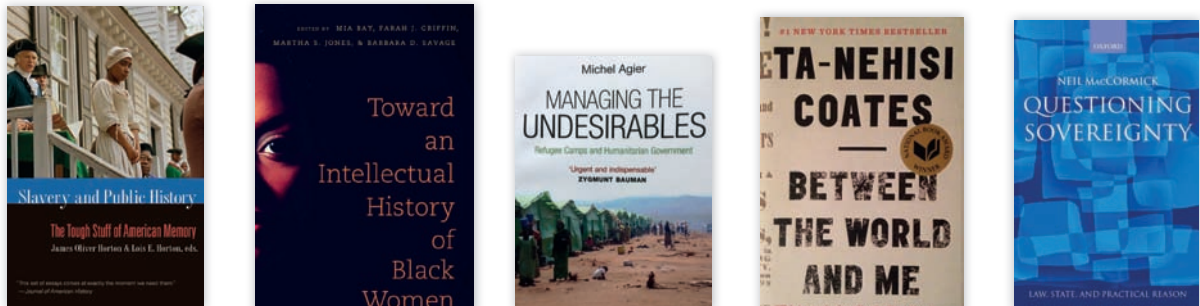
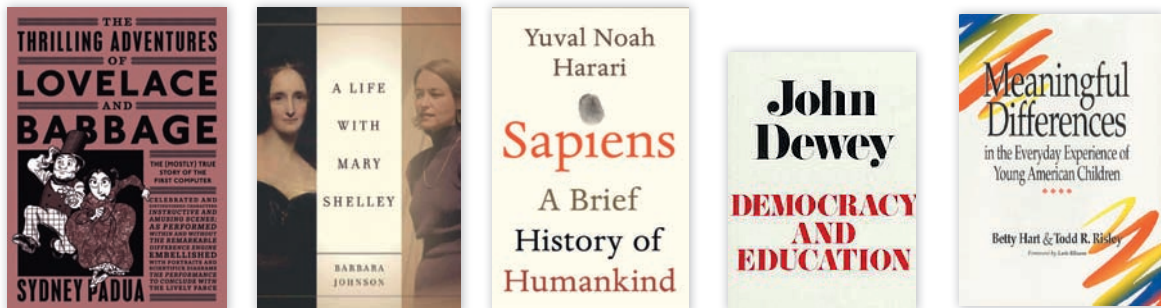
Responsibility for the relationship break down between Turkey and the West lies in part with neglect by an inward-looking European Union, preoccupied with economic challenges, and by a US administration uncertain and hesitant in pursuit of its overseas interests. Neither has been ready to invest the necessary political capital in its management. On the Turkish side, demanding policy challenges seem often to have been met not with prudent planning based on fundamental national interest, but on short-term opportunism, partly intended to irritate the West and partly to generate agreeable headlines for a domestic audience.

This situation is remediable. President Trump and new leaders in France and Germany in 2017 should recognise the importance of Turkey as a regional power and its centrality to management of the Middle East. President Erdoğan, for his part, should come to see that the threat of regional turmoil of Turkey can best be handled within the framework of policy rooted in stable relationships and long-term interest. But practical realisation of this community of interest requires courage, flexibility and commitment on both sides. And success will depend on a better understanding of the cultural, regional and historical factors which, since the end of the Cold War, have driven attitudes and policy on both sides. Lack of understanding and expertise in the Middle East has been heavily responsible for the mistakes by the West made in Iraq and elsewhere.

This takes us back to the British Institute at Ankara, whose *Contemporary Turkey* series, published in collaboration with I.B. Tauris includes titles such as *Turkey and the Politics of National Identity*, edited by Shane Brennan and Marc Herzog; *Turkey and the US in the Middle East: Diplomacy and Discord during the Iraq Wars*, by Gürcan Balık (published May 2016); and *Turkey’s Cold War: Foreign Policy and Western Alignment in the Modern Republic*, by Şaban Çalış (published January 2017). These are important contributions to the understanding of Turkey and its foreign policy relationships. There is an urgent need for this understanding if we are to rediscover the kind of alliance between Turkey and the West which serves the interests of both in today’s unstable Middle East. ■

The British Institute at Ankara’s *Contemporary Turkey* series is published by I.B. Tauris.





The book that has influenced me most in the last 12 months

Ten British Academy-supported early career scholars reveal the books that made the greatest impact on them in 2016

British Academy Rising Star Engagement Awards (BARSEAs) enable distinguished early career academics to enhance their skills and career development through the organisation of interdisciplinary networking activities. Ten of those who received BARSEAs in 2016 tell us about books that helped shape the thinking behind their projects.

Paul Fleet



Whilst this book has not come from a typical university press stable, it has given me the same satiation of knowledge and hunger for further enquiry that one would

expect from any academic book. Sydney Padua's *The Thrilling Adventures of Lovelace and Babbage: The (Mostly) True Story of the First Computer* is a wonderful fusion on several levels. It brings together the two characters of Ada Lovelace and Charles Babbage in a graphic novel that tells the story of the Analytical Engine and coding. And like the characters, it fuses the disciplines of science and arts & humanities in its content and presentation. It is rich with footnotes and endnotes that enhance the narrative, thereby providing empirical data alongside an engaging storyline.

The first part of the book is a story of two people who came together in a joint goal by combining their individual discipline strengths. The later section masquerades as fictional crime-solving adventures, but really these

support the first section as engaging vignettes of the ideas and documents of Lovelace and Babbage alongside other pioneers of technology in the early Victorian era. Particularly enjoyable in this later section is the chapter ‘Mr Boole comes to Tea’, which could be read as a useful reminder of what can happen to meaning when metrics are applied without context. It is this bringing together of science and arts & humanities that is one of my key research areas. And it won a BARSEA grant for my project ‘#forgetting2remember’, which has seen the public engage with science and music in co-productions that explore the role of women in science.

Padua states in her introduction to the book that ‘it was in the research that I fatally fell in love’, and it is this love shared by subject disciplines that is worth remembering as we move into a new climate of interdisciplinary research in Higher Education. In the spirit of this book, I’d like to leave you with one of my favourite quotes on collaboration in academia. It is a campaign slogan from the University of Utah and exemplifies why we can be stronger together: ‘Science can tell you how to clone a tyrannosaurus rex. Humanities can tell you why this might be a bad idea.’

Dr Paul Fleet of Newcastle University was discussing *The Thrilling Adventures of Lovelace and Babbage: The (Mostly) True Story of the First Computer*, by Sydney Padua (Penguin, 2016).

Catherine Redford



Barbara Johnson’s *A Life with Mary Shelley* collects together Johnson’s work on Shelley from her first essay in 1980 to the last project that Johnson completed before her death in 2009 – a study of Shelley and her circle. Mary Shelley is best known as the author of *Frankenstein*, but she also wrote a number of other novels, short stories, and biographies. My research is currently focused on a novel that she published in 1826 called *The Last Man*, which imagines the Last Man on earth following a global plague. Johnson’s deconstructive reading of this text has been a big influence on my research over the years, so I’ve enjoyed revisiting her essays in this volume. Her work has encouraged me to embrace some of the apparent difficulties that confront the reader of this novel: the Last Man’s suspension between life and death; Shelley’s use of a typically Romantic style to mark the end of Romanticism; and the question not only of where we start to speak of ‘the end’, but where we finish.

My BARSEA project is concerned with how academics can deliver English literature outreach projects in schools, sharing our research with GCSE and A-level students. Johnson’s intelligent yet accessible approach to Mary Shelley has helped to shape the way in which I introduce students of this age to *The Last Man*, and I often

find myself asking questions that Johnson has posed of the novel – for example, why not a Last Woman? – in my outreach sessions. It’s hugely rewarding to see some of the answers that school students come up with, showing that they’re fully capable of engaging with serious academic thought.

Dr Catherine Redford of the University of Oxford was discussing *A Life with Mary Shelley*, by Barbara Johnson (Stanford University Press, 2014).

Teodora Gliga



Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind, by Yuval Noah Harari, is not a history book and everything a history book should be. I knew this would be an intriguing, mind-opening read when, early on, I was asked to ‘Think for a moment about the Agricultural Revolution from the viewpoint of wheat.’ It is exactly these perspective-reversing games that psychologists like myself use as research tools.

I am interested in the perspective of humans faced with the unknown: I want to figure out why we find not knowing so unnerving and learning so rewarding. Many other species seek information to gain better access to food or mates, but humans seem unique in the amount of time we spend on learning for its own sake. Because the seeds of curiosity seem to be present very early in life – in infants’ babbling and endless showing and pointing gestures – I have always thought that human genetic baggage must have gained something extra in that respect recently in our evolutionary history. Harari’s description of the human Cognitive Revolution – when about 70,000 years ago *Homo sapiens* left Africa to spread all over the earth – sounds to me exactly like this turning point. Better planning abilities and collaboration might explain how we were able to cross the open sea to reach Australia, but not why we would have wanted to do so. However, it was his chapter on ‘The Discovery of Ignorance’, i.e. the beginning of the scientific (re-)discovery of the world, that made me wonder whether there might also be a second stage in human development, when children come to realise that they or others are sometimes ignorant. How may that change the way they seek information?

In October 2016, we dwelt on all these questions and others during a three-day workshop on ‘Neurocuriosity’, organised by the Centre for Brain and Cognitive Development at Birkbeck, University of London, and funded by a BARSEA grant.

Dr Teodora Gliga of Birkbeck, University of London, was discussing *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*, by Yuval Noah Harari (English language edition: Harper, 2014).

The seeds of curiosity seem to be present very early in life.

Pamela Woolner



Last year I returned to John Dewey's *Democracy and Education* – first published in 1916, and attracting attention through reaching its centenary year. I'd read it when I was doing my teacher training, and enjoyed it, but found that Dewey's ideas about democracy ('democracy is more than a form of government') and schools ('a projection in type of the society we should like to realise') were explained so clearly that they seemed like self-evident good sense rather than novel thinking.

When I now come back to the book 20 years later, having ended up as a researcher in education with an interest in learning environments, I am struck by a quite different theme running through Dewey's proposals. He is very clear that, although every situation is potentially educational, learning is not a transmission process and we therefore need to organise and orchestrate carefully to induce the learning we want to develop. Appearing to have foreseen my slow construction of an understanding of the relationship of school space to student learning, Dewey states pithily that: 'We never educate directly, but indirectly by means of the environment.' He goes on to point out that we therefore need to think carefully about how we 'design environments' to educate our young people.

These ideas make sense of the way I have come to research and work with school communities to enable them to understand and develop their learning spaces. They have been specifically influential in relation to my BARSEA-supported project. 'Art and SOLE' aims to combine the student-led learning of Self Organised Learning Environments (SOLEs) with arts education. We are working with education practitioners (in schools, museums and community space), visual artists and early career researchers to design hands-on, arts-rich environments for student-initiated learning. I think Dewey would understand.

Dr Pamela Woolner of Newcastle University was discussing *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, by John Dewey (1916).

Sophie von Stumm



In *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children*, Betty Hart and Todd Risely summarise their seminal research from the 1960s on children's language development. For their main study, trained research assistants paid 27 monthly home visits to 42 families who had recently had a child. During each visit, the research assistants followed the child around the home with a tape recorder and microphone in hand, while simultaneously taking notes, to document the words that the child spoke and heard over the course of

an hour. The data showed that by the age of 3 years some children will have heard 30 million words, while others only heard 10 million words. This dramatic difference in early life language experience affects children's later cognitive, verbal and academic development.

Today, new technologies enable recording children's language at home for longer periods of time – that is, for entire days rather than just one hour – and thus, we can now validate Hart and Risely's estimates for the first time through direct empirical observation. We also have automated algorithms available that analyse several hours of recordings in split seconds, while back in the 1960s Hart and Risely's team took about 30 hours to process a single one-hour recording (which explains why their book was published in 1995, ten years after the data collection was complete).

The vast potential that novel assessment technologies bring for research is not limited to studying children's language, but they have benefits for all empirical science. It is therefore important to train early career researchers in the application of these technologies, which was the focus of my BARSEA-supported event, 'Better Data: Technologies for Measuring Behaviour', held in October 2016.

Dr Sophie von Stumm of Goldsmiths, University of London was discussing *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children*, by Betty Hart and Todd R. Risely (Brookes Publishing, 1995).

Katie Donington



Having recently moved into an American Studies department following six years working with the 'Legacies of British Slave-ownership' project, I have been thinking through some of the interconnections and disjunctions between the UK/Caribbean and US experiences of slavery. As an interdisciplinary historian with a background in museums, the book *Slavery and Public History: The tough stuff of American memory* appeals to me because it engages with the ways in which academic and public histories intersect. There are chapters on the representation of slavery in museums, memorials, heritage sites, schools, libraries and tourism. The book explores the relationship between history, memory and identity through the prism of slavery, and in doing so exposes the racialised fault lines of American society.

At a time in which the populist nationalism of Donald Trump has co-existed with the emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement, it seems that race relations are once again a key ground of political contestation. The unfinished business of slavery and its legacies forms an important part of any national conversation about equality and social justice. As the book reminds us 'The critical question is not simply how people remember their past but how they deal

with and ultimately learn from the “tough stuff” of their history.’

Britain’s history of slavery and empire — the ways it has been both represented and hidden — is a similarly controversial subject. I have been awarded a BARSEA for the project ‘Re-presenting slavery: Making a public usable past.’ This project brings together academics and public historians to think about how we can work together to create a dialogue about slavery within the UK context. The book *Slavery and Public History* concludes with a powerful statement that brings meaning to this project going forwards: ‘Conscientious remembrance is more than a necessary expansion of the nation’s narrative. It is an act of moral engagement, a declaration that there are other... lives too long forgotten that count.’

Dr Katie Donington of the University of Nottingham was discussing *Slavery and Public History: The tough stuff of American memory*, edited by James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton (University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

Imaobong Umoren



Toward an Intellectual History of Black Women — a volume of essays edited by a group of eminent scholars all working in the fields of African American, Caribbean and African history and literature — is one of the first pieces of scholarship to put the political and social thought of black women at the centre. While intellectual history on both sides of the Atlantic remains predominantly white and male, this study positions black women as making important contributions.

Chapters in the volume range from the early modern era to contemporary times, and encompass an international focus on women of African descent on the continent and in the diaspora. The collection deepened my knowledge of writers, activists, poets and academics such as Merze Tate, Phillis Wheatley, Frances E.W. Harper, Marie Vieux, Ann Petry, June Jordan, Alice Walker, Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti and Florynce Kennedy, to name a few.

It also inspired me to consider the networks that many of these women were a part of which drove their intellectual development. My BARSEA project has examined how women’s networks contributed to attempts to cultivate gender equality from the 19th century to the present. A graduate and early career workshop was held in May 2016, and was followed by a two-day international conference in September which brought together researchers and students from the UK, US, Mauritius, India, the Philippines, Finland, Germany, and Poland. Women’s networks — both formal and informal — have played an important role

in forging intellectual thought and activism. Exploring the expansiveness and limitations of women’s networks and networking helps researchers understand their complexity and enduring relevance.

Dr Imaobong Umoren of the University of Oxford was discussing *Toward an Intellectual History of Black Women*, edited by Mia E. Bay, Farah J. Griffin, Martha S. Jones, and Barbara D. Savage (University of North Carolina Press, 2015).

Julie Norman



Though not a traditional academic book, *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates has become almost required reading for scholars and students interested in American race relations. Though widely read in the United States, I was surprised by the book’s limited readership in the UK and elsewhere. Despite the US context, the book offers an intellectually nuanced approach to thinking about political struggle and social justice which has challenged my own thinking on activism in Israel-Palestine and other conflict areas where I situate my research.

In the field of peace and conflict studies, and in Israel-Palestine in particular, writings and research often focus on how to cultivate hope. From David Shulman’s *Dark Hope: Working for Peace in Israel and Palestine* (2007), to Richard Falk’s *Palestine: The Legitimacy of Hope* (2014), the ‘politics of hope’ (Sacks 2000) is increasingly part of peace and conflict discourse.

In *Between the World and Me* however, Coates challenges the ‘comforting narrative’ of hope, but he does so without resorting to cynicism. He states: ‘This is not despair. These are the preferences of the universe itself:

verbs over nouns, actions over states, struggle over hope’. This quote in particular stood out to me because, in the conflict areas I research, there is often a lack of hope, but there is still struggle, perseverance, and resilience. Indeed, there is often an assumption that resilience reflects the maintenance of hope, even in the worst of circumstances.

But Coates has challenged me to rethink that notion; perhaps resilience is not based on hope, but rather on choosing to act and struggle even despite the lack of hope.

This idea crystallised for me at my BARSEA-supported event, which brought together youth leaders engaged in cross-community work in Israel-Palestine with others doing similar work in Northern Ireland, along with early-career researchers interested in community-based research. At one point in the conversation, a participant asked the youth leaders how they maintain hope. Sofie, a young Palestinian woman, responded: ‘If I’m honest, I don’t have hope. I try to

Perhaps resilience is based on choosing to act despite the lack of hope.

hope, but it isn't real, it's just something I make up to tell myself. But I still choose to be an activist and I do what I can, even if I don't feel hope.'

As a researcher who has written widely on non-violent movements in the Middle East in particular, I always assumed that hope was almost an essential ingredient for activism. But after the BARSEA event and reading *Between the World and Me*, I've been challenged to re-evaluate how hope functions in political struggle and activism. I still acknowledge the value and, at times, the necessity of hope, but I also recognise that for some, the absence of hope is not necessarily despair, but rather a rejection of complacency and a commitment to action. Dr Julie M. Norman of Queen's University Belfast was discussing *Between the World and Me*, by Ta-Nehisi Coates (Spiegel & Grau, 2015).

Mark Doidge



The heart-rending photos of Alan Kurdi's limp, lifeless body on the Greek shoreline in September 2015 demonstrated the conflict within the 'refugee crisis'. Symbolically, he died at the border between Europe and the rest of the world. Furthermore, on the one hand, these children and adults were human beings who stirred visceral emotions of humanity and suffering. On the other, some sections of society, politicians and the media have seen them as human detritus, and seek to keep them at the margins of (European) society. Zygmunt Bauman has highlighted this response when he suggested that refugees are seen as 'human refuse'.

In *Managing the Undesirables: Refugee Camps and Humanitarian Government*, the anthropologist Michel Agier takes the reader into the marginal world of 'undesirables'. Through extensive ethnographic fieldwork in Africa, alongside humanitarian work with Médecins Sans Frontières, he showcases the work of humanitarian organisations and aid workers and how they have become the de facto state for those without a nation state and whom other nation states refuse to assist.

Agier beautifully demonstrates the relationship between 'the humanitarian world (the hand that cares) and the police and military ordering (the hand that strikes) on the part of the world as a whole'. Agier argues that humanitarian responses are increasingly about management and policing. Even the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which was set up for the protection of refugees in 1951, has shifted from this primary role to one of controlling them for nation states who provide their funding.

This book directly links to my BARSEA-funded project entitled 'Refugees Welcome: Football Fans and Diversity in European Football'. For many, football is a peripheral policy activity. Yet across Europe, fans have established teams, raised money and actively promoted the inclusion of refugees in European society.

The BARSEA project brings together these groups with policy-makers to move both football and refugees away from the borders.

Dr Mark Doidge of the University of Brighton was discussing *Managing the Undesirables: Refugee Camps and Humanitarian Government*, by Michel Agier (English language edition: Polity Press, 2011).

Yseult Marique



Repeated demonstrations demanding a referendum on independence in Catalonia, the Leave side winning the Brexit referendum, the mounting calls for further referenda on EU membership in Italy, France, the Netherlands, Denmark or even Germany ... all these intensifying challenges convey how European citizens long to be more closely involved in transforming radically the living together in Europe. The shaping of such a European project is core to *Questioning Sovereignty*, a book where in 1999 Neil MacCormick set out an intellectual framework for the place of Scotland within the United Kingdom and Europe.

Beyond suggesting a political structure, a 'European Commonwealth', fostering purposes (peace, security and economic well-being) shared by European peoples, MacCormick also explored the respective roles of markets and civil society in contributing to individual freedom and the collective good. He emphasised subsidiarity and pluralism as necessary ingredients to make this a democratic endeavour. Then freedom ≠ freedom from undue state intervention and as the capacity for self-fulfilment within the social groups citizens belong to ≠ would be able to flourish for both individual and collective benefits.

The turbulent times that currently shatter Europe require academics to engage with civil society, legal practitioners and policy-makers to find ways to nurture diversity, pluralism and opportunities for individual self-fulfilment and to contribute to a European Commonwealth. Comparative public law in particular is a discipline that can provide stimulating exchanges, and bring to a wider audience much needed insights into foreign identities, historical choices and political cultures. Thanks to a BARSEA grant, the project 'Comparative Public Law and European Legal Identity ≠ Opportunities and Challenges' (run by the University of Essex School of Law) is extremely pleased to seek inspiration in Neil MacCormick's framework and hopes to contribute in a little way to the ongoing discussions on the future relationships between the United Kingdom and Europe. ■

Dr Yseult Marique of the University of Essex was discussing *Questioning Sovereignty: Law, State, and Nation in the European Commonwealth*, by Neil MacCormick (Oxford University Press, 1999). Neil MacCormick (1941–2009) was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 1986.

Broadbrows and book clubs

Dr Nicola Wilson introduces us to the Book Society and its cultural influence



Dr Nicola Wilson is Lecturer in Book and Publishing Studies at the University of Reading. Her current book project, funded by a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship, is *Broadbrows and Book Clubs: The Book Society, 1929–69*.

How do we choose the books that we read and decide to put on our shelves? What does it mean to follow the advice of a book club judge or selection committee? What were the most popular book club choices of the recent past?

I have been exploring some of these questions through my research on the Book Society, the first monthly book sales club set up in Britain, which ran between April 1929 and the late 1960s. Each month, the Book Society sent a new full-price book through the post to its tens of thousands of members living in the UK and overseas. Facing protest from the bookselling industry initially and lambasted by the critics, it nevertheless enabled a wide reading public to consider themselves book-buyers and to build up collections of newly published books at a time when book-buying was still considered privileged and rare.

Many well-known works of the mid-20th century — including E.M. Delafield's *Diary of a Provincial Lady* (1930), Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* (1938), Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* (1945), and Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960) — were pushed toward bestseller status by the Book Society and its readers. A Choice title meant mass sales. Records in publishers' archives show that a Choice nomination from the Book Society meant a guaranteed additional order of 7,000 copies for the first edition — an enormous amount when typical hardback sales to bookshops and libraries were on average between 3,000 and 5,000 copies. Like Richard & Judy and Oprah

today, the Book Society's influence went beyond that of their paying members, as monthly choices were widely advertised in the press, in libraries and bookshops. Many more people subscribed to its monthly journal, *The Book Society News*, than bought books directly from it. Boots Booklovers library explained to their staff after the Second World War that the Book Society's 'choice has become a standard of literary advice very well respected throughout the country. Even people who do not belong to the Book Society, are prepared to order these volumes through libraries, so that most publishers are exceedingly pleased to have one of their titles chosen.'¹

The Book Society was modelled on the phenomenally successful American Book-of-the-Month Club, set up by adman Harry Scherman in 1926 to encourage greater book-buying among a reluctant-to-purchase reading public. In the United States, Scherman had found that readers could be persuaded to buy a new book each month if consumer loyalty and brand recognition were carefully cultivated. In Britain, the 'pernicious habit of book borrowing', as H.G. Wells put it, was firmly entrenched in the inter-war period, and booksellers were sceptical that readers would follow an American lead.² But they did. By 1939 the Book Society had over 10,000 members, and was viewed as a useful means of getting the latest books out to those living in the country or away from a major town, and without ready access to bookshops. Between 30 and 40 per cent of the club's members lived overseas. Empire and its decline is an important aspect of the Book Society's founding, its textual choices, and ultimate redundancy in the late 1960s.

We know a lot about the American Book-of-the-Month Club thanks to the extensive preservation of its records and the seminal research of Joan Shelley Rubin

1. Boots Booklovers Library, First Literary Course, 'Ninth Paper: Publishers and Bestsellers', box 460, Alliance Boots Archive & Museum Collection, Nottingham.
2. H.G. Wells, 'Interviews with Famous Authors', *The Book Window: A Guide to Book Buying and Book Reading*, 1:1 (July 1927), 3–4.

and Janice Radway.³ It is widely seen as an important part of 20th-century American literary culture. But the significance of the Book Society has not often been recognised. This is partly due to the loss of the club's records, and the fact that it is no longer, unlike the American Book-of-the-Month Club, a going commercial concern. One of the areas my research has focused on is the connections between the two clubs, and to what extent the joint choices they made over a 40-year period (where, that is, a text was nominated as a Book-of-the-Month on both sides of the Atlantic) may have contributed towards a shared sense of reading community. The clubs operated separately in financial terms and were generally careful to differentiate between their choices, but there were many textual cross-overs as well as personal connections between the two sets of judges. Especially popular book club authors on both sides of the Atlantic include Rosamond Lehmann, C.S. Forester (author of the Hornblower series), John P. Marquand (later a judge on the Book-of-the-Month Club), and Winston Churchill.

Broadbrows

When the Book Society was set up at the end of the 1920s, debates about the politics of reading, public standards, and the so-called stratification of literature and publishing were rife. With its model of distribution and guided reading, the Book Society didn't fare well in contemporary rhetoric of the battle of the brows. The most vicious critique came from Cambridge academic Q.D. Leavis, wife of F.R. Leavis and part of the powerful Scrutiny group, who argued that new methods of book distribution and the rush of 'middlemen' between author and reader were promoting ever-widening 'levels of reading public' and helping to 'standardize different levels of taste'.⁴ In a damning assessment for her *Fiction and the Reading Public* (1932), Leavis wrote that the Book Society 'confer[red] authority on a taste for the second-rate', organising and setting up 'a middlebrow standard of values'.⁵

There is now a great deal of academic work on the messy contours of the middlebrow.⁶ This research has worked to reclaim its pleasures and complexities, its differing aesthetics and politics, rejecting the too easy dismissal of its readers and, by extension, their tastes. The Book Society and its judges were actively involved in such debates, upholding conservative, anti-modernist values from the 1930s to the late 1960s. In their monthly choices and recommendations, the Book Society offered an eclectic but fundamentally traditional programme of

readable literary fiction, historical novels, travel literature, and biographies. They were 'Broadbrows' as judge J.B. Priestley put it, those 'who snap their fingers at fashions, who only ask that a thing should have character and art, should be enthralling, and do not give a fig whether it is popular or unpopular, born in Blackburn or Baku'.⁷ Chairman of the selection committee Hugh Walpole fired regular shots at the literati in the club's monthly journal: 'It would be amusing suddenly to defend a statement,' he wrote, 'that the half-dozen best living novelists in England are not the well-known and customary names, Woolf, Huxley, Maugham and so on, but rather, Forrest Reid, Charles Marriott, L.H. Myers, Elizabeth Bowen, C.S. Forester and Helen Simpson. The thing is not so preposterous as it sounds, and a good case could be made out.'⁸ The choices and recommendations of the Book Society were deliberately varied and included the 'well-known' (and highly respected) like Woolf. But there was a sustained push to reassure readers that there was continued value in apparently old-fashioned forms and tastes.

A lot of my research has focused on this question of the middlebrow dimensions of the Book Society, considering how the club sits in more established literary-critical narratives and histories of popular reading and tastes. I have also been drawn to the lives of the individual judges involved with the club, all of whom were influential taste-makers, critics, and literary celebrities, whose views and opinions were crucial in capturing the club's many thousands of paying members. The initial set of Book Society judges were writers Hugh Walpole, J.B. Priestley, Clemence Dane, Sylvia Lynd, and Oxford academic George Stuart Gordon. Later came Compton Mackenzie, Edmund Blunden, Cecil Day-Lewis and, in the post-war period, William Golding, Daniel Gordon and Isobel Quigly. The first group of judges, assembled by novelist Hugh Walpole when he was asked to be Chair, were associated with the Hampstead set circulating around the Irish writers Robert and Sylvia Lynd. Robert Lynd was a well-known newspaper critic and essayist, his wife Sylvia a poet, critic and formidable literary judge (her work for the Book



3. There are readers' reports in the Beinecke and the Library of Congress, and materials relating to the Club's judges at the Universities of Vermont and Columbia. See Joan Shelley Rubin, *The Making of Middlebrow Culture* (University of North Carolina Press, 1992); Janice Radway, *A Feeling for Books: The Book-of-the-Month Club, Literary Taste, and Middle-Class Desire* (University of North Carolina Press, 1997).
 4. Q.D. Leavis, *Fiction and the Reading Public* (Harmondsworth: Peregrine, 1979), p. 31–2.
 5. Q.D. Leavis, *Fiction and the Reading Public* (1932; Peregrine, 1979), p. 34.
 6. See for instance *Middlebrow Literary Cultures: The Battle of the Brows, 1920–60*, edited by Erica Brown and Mary Grover (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); and Faye Hammill, 'Middlebrow: An Interdisciplinary Transatlantic Research Network', www.middlebrow-network.com/About.aspx
 7. J.B. Priestley, 'High, Low, Broad', *Saturday Review* (20 February 1926), 222; reprinted in *Open House: A Book of Essays* (Heinemann, 1930), p. 166.
 8. Hugh Walpole, 'Review: November Choice. Flying Colours by C. S. Forester including A Ship of the Nile', *Book Society News* (November 1938), 9–11 at 9.

Society carried over into her suggestions for the *Femina Vie-Heureuse* literary prize, which she twice chaired). The writers, publishers, and critics that partied at the Lynds' Friday night salons were of a different set to the high-brows of Bloomsbury. Priestley's 'broadbrows' is a witty, affectionate term for the Book Society judges and their aesthetic choices, capturing both the diversity of the club's monthly reading and satirising the rigidity of these lines in the sand.

Revisions

A lot of my previous research has focused on the extent to which influential book-buyers and distributors, like circulating libraries in the first half of the 20th century, were able to exert influence upon writers and in publishing houses.⁹ Records in publishers' archives can reveal the tangible changes made to texts in deference to certain sections of the reading public. The Book Society is illuminating on this score. I first became interested in the impact of the Book Society because of the various changes in pricing and production made to Virginia Woolf's *Flush* (1933) to meet the demands of the Book Society (these changes involved choice of paper, number of illustrations, size of the first edition).¹⁰ Further research has revealed a significant editorial impact on some of its selections. The Book Society selection committee — like the American Book-of-the-Month Club — received

copies of new and forthcoming books from publishing houses in proof form. This meant that the judges could make important interventions on the text before it went into print. Previous critics examining the readers' reports of the American Book-of-the-Month Club have shown the interventions of the club's judges on iconic American texts, including Richard Wright's *Native Son*, a Book-of-the-Month in March 1940, where sexuality was toned down so as not to offend the club's more

conservative members.¹¹ For the Book Society, it is Irish writer Sylvia Lynd who seems to have had a close eye on questions of morality and the general readers' tastes. We know for instance from surviving correspondence that after reading the publisher's copy in proof form she personally suggested changes that were then taken up in George Blake's *The Shipbuilders* (1935), Eric Linklater's *Juan in America* (1931), and Vita Sackville-West's *The Edwardians* (1930). This challenges the view that the Book Society was only a book distributor (even if a particularly influential one) aiding the spread and distribution of works already in print, by showing that the

club and its judges had an important influence on the pre-publication of texts as well.

I have had a great deal of fun reading and discovering Book Society Choices for this project and am steadily building up my own collection. Some of these books, all of which were publishers' first editions (part of the cultural cachet of membership) still carry the Book Society bookplate sent out with each copy and names of their original owners. The clubs' records of membership have been lost but individual stories emerge, like that of Dr Mary M.G. Hooper (1892–1954), an early medical student at St Andrew's who was a Book Society member in the 1930s when she was living and practising in Northern Alberta, Canada.¹²

I have recently started a blog to highlight the diversity of Book Society Choices and some of their most interesting, bestselling reads, as a potential resource for book clubs and anyone interested in our recent reading past: 'The Book Society 1929–69: A guide to the bestselling monthly book club authors of the twentieth century'.¹³ Please get in touch!¹⁴ ■

The club and its judges had an important influence on the pre-publication of texts.

The piece of Book Society publicity material reproduced on page 45 is from the John Johnson Collection of Printed Ephemera, Bodleian Libraries, Oxford.

9. See www.reading.ac.uk/english-literature/Research/ell-novel-project.aspx

10. See 'Virginia Woolf, Hugh Walpole, The Hogarth Press and the Book Society', *ELH*, 79:1 (Spring 2012), 237–60.

11. See for instance Radway, *A Feeling for Books*, pp. 286–7; Jaime Harker, *America the Middlebrow: Women's Novels, Progressivism and Middlebrow Authorship between the Wars* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), pp. 164–5.

12. With thanks to Luath Grant Ferguson, who made contact through the project blog.

13. <https://thebooksocietysite.com/>

14. n.l.wilson@reading.ac.uk

Projecting the medieval

Two new British Academy volumes of source material for the study of medieval Britain

The British Academy publishes a range of research resources, including series of edited texts and illustrated catalogues of archaeological artefacts, produced through long-running British Academy Research Projects. Recent publications have made available a range of medieval content – including several volumes in the *Auctores Britannici Medii Aevi* series, which publishes editions and translations of important works of medieval British thought.

Discussed further in this article are two illustrated volumes that provide evidence for very different aspects of the medieval world.

Anglo-Saxon coins – catalogued

The Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles (SCBI) series was conceived in the 1950s, at a time when it was feared that a number of major coin collections – mostly private – were about to be dispersed. There was a desire that coin collections should be recorded in a way that would make them accessible to scholars for posterity.

At that time, there was much less contact between academic historians, and numismatists, who tended to be people studying coins in their spare time, or people working in museums. In the case of Anglo-Saxon coinage, on which the SCBI series has been particularly strong, an unusually close relationship between academics and numismatists was emerging.

Dr Rory Naismith, General Editor of SCBI explains the value of the series: ‘The study of coin evidence gives you a great new window onto one dimension of the Anglo-Saxon economy. Coins were not used for everything.

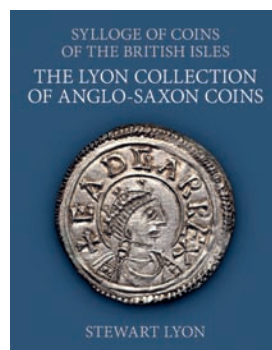
They were mainly silver coins, so were valuable compared to what we are used to nowadays – each Anglo-Saxon penny having the equivalent of probably several tens of pounds in buying power. You would look very hard if you dropped one.’

The 68th volume in the SCBI series is a catalogue of the collection of Anglo-Saxon coins assembled by Stewart Lyon. Dr Lyon first became interested in coins and in collecting them as a schoolboy. ‘I’m not quite sure exactly how. The story is that I found a George III half crown in a sewing box of my mother’s, but that may be more imaginary than factual.’ He put together a small collection of coins, ‘with an occasional incursion into Anglo Saxon coins’.

In the 1950s, he was encouraged by Michael Dolley, a curator at the British Museum, to do some research on the abundant copper coinage of the 9th-century Kingdom of Northumbria, a series in which he had become interested. ‘I travelled the country, examining collections of these, particularly ones in York. I very soon came to the conclusion that much of what had been written

about them, mainly in the 19th century, was misguided.’ In his profession as an actuary, Lyon was used to looking for patterns, and this has been the essence of most of his numismatic work: ‘looking for patterns in data, in portraits, in inscriptions and so forth’. In the new SCBI volume, Lyon has brought up to date his research on this Northumbrian coinage and what it can tell us.

A die is a piece of metal used to impress an image on one side of a coin. When you examine two coins, you



sometimes find that the dies used to strike them must have been the same: this is called a die link. Looking at die linking patterns has been a constant part of Lyon's work. And that in turn has driven his collecting choices. He would look to acquire examples of new dies, new styles of die engraving; or coins bearing the names of different moneyers (the person accountable for the production of a coin) or different towns where the coins had been minted. 'Essentially, if I had developed an idea about style in relation to a part of the country, it was useful to build up at least a small number of examples of the coins concerned.'

And that makes Lyon's collection different to museum collections – particularly ones acquired through hoard finds. If you have a major hoard in a collection, that gives you an insight into a narrow period of coinage. Instead, Lyon's collection is dominated by his exploration of the chronological and geographical classifications of particular coinages – such as the *Small Cross* coins of King Æthelred II (the Unready). 'It is a very lumpy collection, essentially research-based. That's why I think it's valuable to publish it in the SCBI series.'

The evidence contained in this published collection provides unique insights for the historian. Even when the coins bear the king's head, variations in coin design can reveal regional administrative autonomy – as, for example, in the case of Æthelflæd, the Lady of the Mercians (d. 918), during part of the reign of her brother, King Edward the Elder (899–924), or by Edgar in England north of the Thames during the reign of his brother King Eadwig (957–9).

Even when England was first conquered by Sweyn and then Cnut in the early 11th century (1013–16), coins continued to be issued in the name of Æthelred II. Cnut did not produce coins as king of England perhaps until his coronation. What was it that entitled a king to put his name on the coinage? Dr Lyon says: 'I don't think we can answer that question. But one does get the impression that at this time there had to be a very definite acceptance of a ruler before his name was put on the coinage.'

Thirteenth-century music manuscripts – illustrated

The British Academy's *Early English Church Music* (EECM) series aims to make available church music by British composers from Anglo-Saxon times to the Commonwealth.

The 57th volume in the EECM series, published in November 2016, is a landmark facsimile edition containing 13th-century sources of polyphonic music. Very few manuscripts survive, and the 350-odd colour images in this volume reproduce almost the entire corpus of English music manuscripts found in Great Britain, Germany, France and the USA.

According to Professor Magnus Williamson, EECM's General Editor, 'perhaps the most important single concentration of sources is the Worcester Fragments, remnants of three substantial codices from the third quarter of the 13th century, and of emblematic status in the history of British music. These books were originally used at Worcester's Benedictine cathedral priory, dismembered by 1530, and subsequently found in the bindings of books now in the British Library, the Bodleian and Worcester Cathedral Library. A facsimile edition of this type enables its editors, William Summers and Peter Lefferts, to reunite the surviving leaves of the Worcester codices for the first time since the 1520s.'

The volume dramatically shows the advantages of full colour reproduction. Scribes' working methods and page-layout are intelligible; alternations of black and

red ink, so characteristic of medieval manuscripts, can be seen in the elegant superimposition of black notes on red staves; and stains and fading can be seen in context. This has been made possible through the British Academy's financial support, and also by the increasing affordability of colour reproduction of digital images.¹ A generous page size means that nearly all of the manuscripts

can be printed at 100 per cent, thereby avoiding the need for images to be cropped or misleadingly re-scaled.

'The images are rightly excellent because the musical contents are of outstanding interest,' says Professor Williamson. 'The 13th century witnessed a transformational flowering of polyphonic learning in Britain, as native musicians, led by the monastic houses, absorbed and customised Parisian traditions. In particular, the manuscripts included in EECM 57 show clearly the standing of English polyphony during the long reigns of Henry III and his son Edward I.' Distinctive and memorable compositions such as the Reading rota (British Library, Harley 978 – see facing page) and the conductus-rondellus *Flos regalis* (Corpus Christi College, Oxford, 489) are included in the volume, along with manuscripts from Arbroath, Bury St Edmunds, Canterbury, Coventry, Durham, Ely, Lanthony by Gloucester, Meaux Abbey (Yorkshire), Ramsey, Revesby, St Andrews, Thame, and Westminster.

The repertory is largely a diaspora of fragments – one of the reasons for its relative neglect, and also a rationale for publishing the whole corpus in a single volume. A facsimile of this type will throw vivid new light upon a repertory that, in the words of Summers and Lefferts, 'has long languished in the shadow of the achievements of thirteenth-century France'. ■

Further information about these and other British Academy titles can be found via www.britishacademy.ac.uk/british-academy-publications

The 13th century witnessed a transformational flowering of polyphonic learning in Britain.

1. The digital images for this facsimile edition have been supplied by Digital Image Archive of Medieval Music (www.diamm.ac.uk).

Pumer is icumen in. Hude sing cucu. Growep sed and blowep
Perspice xpicola que dignacio celicus agrico

med and springe þe wde nu. Sing cucu twe bletep after
la pro uicis vicio filio non partens exposu

lomb. Houy after calue cu. Bulluc stertep. bucke uertep
it mortis exicio Qui captiuos semiuuos

gurie sing cucu. Cucu cucu Wel singes þu cucu ne siwik
a supplicio vite donat et secum coronat in ce

Pu nauer nu.
u so u o.

Ping cucu nu. Sing cucu.
hoc repetio un' quociens op' est: faciens pau'facionem in fine.

Ping cucu. Sing cucu nu.
hoc dicit ali' pau'ans in medio tñ in fine. Si immediate repetes pncipiu'

BRITISH MUSEUM

The 13th-century rota, *Sumer is icumen in* (or *Perspice christicola*), from British Library, Harley 978, fo. 11v. This book was copied at the Benedictine Reading Abbey during the reign of Henry III (soon after 1265). Two voice-parts sing the repeating pes 'Sing cucu'; the red cross on the first stave shows the time-lapse before each succeeding singer enters with the canonic upper voice-part.

Burnt books: The British Academy and the restoration of two academic libraries

Louvain

Early in the First World War, on 25 August 1914, the German army set fire to the Belgian city of Louvain. The burning and looting lasted for five days, and Louvain's ancient library was destroyed.

At a meeting on 10 March 1915, the British Academy's President, Lord Reay 'submitted to the Council [of the British Academy] certain preliminary proposals received by him from the Institut de France with reference to the formation of an International Committee for collecting books and gifts for a new Library for the University of Louvain; Lord Reay explained that the idea was that the British Academy should help the proposal by means of a Special Committee, and by delegating Representatives to serve on the International Committee.' The Academy's Council responded positively – though at the same time they 'wished to emphasise their opinion that the project should not be allowed to weaken in any way the responsibility of the Germans in respect of the destruction of the Library'.¹

At its meeting on 3 June 1915, the Council again discussed the Louvain Library 'movement', and resolved 'that a British Committee be formed to consist of the aforementioned Fellows with power to add to their number other Fellows of the Academy, together with representatives of the Universities, the Royal and other learned Societies, such other institutions as may be asked to send delegates to serve on the Committee, to which Committee other distinguished persons might be added.' The list of seven 'aforementioned' Fellows of the British Academy included two members of Asquith's new coalition government – Mr Arthur Balfour and Lord Curzon.²

Inevitably, the restoration of the library at Louvain would have to wait until the end of the war, when the Germans would no longer be occupying the city.

Tokyo

Just a few years later, on the other side of the world, a natural disaster destroyed another library. On 1 September 1923 at 11.58am, an earthquake of magnitude 7.9

devastated Tokyo. The earthquake hit just as people were preparing their lunch and, in a city largely made of wood, it was fire that caused the greatest amount of damage and loss of life. At Tokyo Imperial University, 700,000 library books went up in flames.

On 20 October 1923, Lord Curzon FBA, who was now Britain's Foreign Secretary, wrote to (now) Lord Balfour FBA, who had become President of the British Academy. 'The Foreign Office have just received through our Embassy at Tokyo an appeal from Tokyo Imperial University for books to restore their library, which was destroyed by fire at the time of the recent earthquake. I am writing to you as President of the British Academy to enquire whether anything can be done on a national or possibly international basis to help the Tokyo University, on lines similar to those adopted in the case of Louvain.' Curzon recalled that both he and Balfour had served on the Louvain committee set up by the British Academy. Curzon went on to explain the Foreign Office's motivations. 'The appeal of the Imperial University, which is the training-ground of almost all the future officials of the Japanese Government, offers an opportunity to provide a permanent evidence of our feelings; and our assistance in this direction would be greatly appreciated in Japan – a country where education commands so much attention. I hope therefore that the British Academy may find it possible to interest itself in this proposal.'

On 24 October, Balfour reported to the Secretary of the British Academy, Sir Israel Gollancz, that he had been approached in this way by Curzon. 'I have replied that I would at once do all that I could to help the Foreign Office to carry out his plan.' His memory of the Louvain example was clearly less sharp than Curzon's: 'Though I appear to have been mixed up in the Louvain scheme, I have very little recollection of it; but I have no doubt that Lord Curzon is right in thinking that that is the precedent that ought to be followed.'³

Once fired up, Balfour grasped the need to co-ordinate the British efforts to rebuild the library in Tokyo. Without 'some effective attempt to organize the work of restoration,' he wrote, 'confusion and duplication will

1. Incidents from the sack of Louvain by the Germans would feature in the *Report of the Committee on Alleged German Outrages*, which was published in May 1915. At the time, this Government-commissioned report constituted something of a propaganda coup for the British. The Committee was chaired by Viscount Bryce, incoming President of the British Academy; other members included Sir Frederick Pollock FBA and H.A.L. Fisher FBA.

2. Both Arthur Balfour and George Nathaniel Curzon were Founding Fellows of the British Academy when it was established in 1902. Balfour was Prime Minister 1902–1905, and later as Foreign Secretary he was author of the 'Balfour Declaration' in 1917.

3. Curzon and Balfour letters, BAA/GOV/2/2/5.

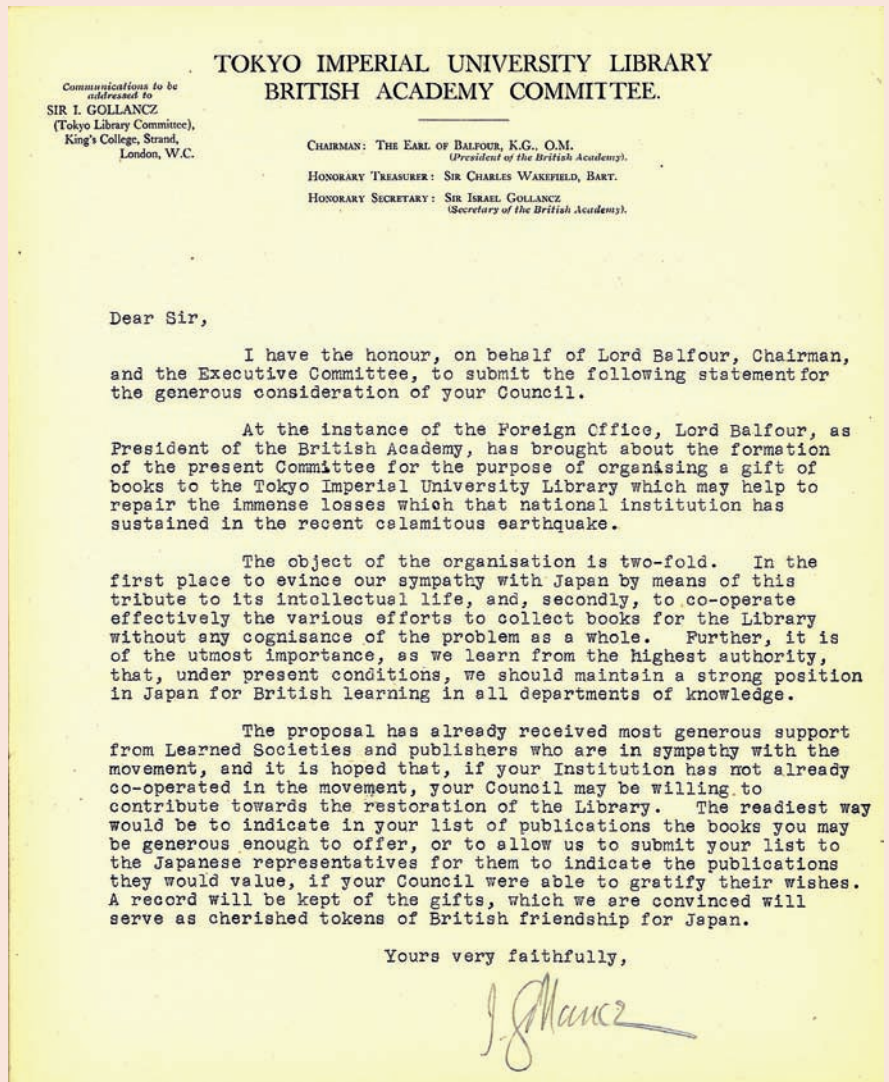
Letter from Sir Israel Gollancz FBA, Honorary Secretary of the Tokyo Imperial University Library British Academy Committee, sent in March 1924 to the Councils of various learned societies, asking for contributions of books to help restore the destroyed library. BA457.

inevitably occur; much will be left undone that might have been done; and much will be done twice over. In these circumstances I propose, as President of the British Academy, to bring forward at the next meeting of the Council [on 5 December 1923] a formal resolution to the effect that a representative Committee be appointed to deal with the problem as a whole. This was the course adopted in 1915 in the case of the Library of Louvain; and the plan seems to have worked satisfactorily.⁴

On 10 December 1923, the British Academy hosted a ‘General Meeting’ of representatives of learned societies and selected scholars to discuss the matter. That meeting endorsed the proposal that a co-operative effort should be made to restore the English section of the Tokyo Imperial University Library, and appointed an Executive Committee to move things forward.

Illustrated is an example of one of the letters sent out in early 1924 by the ‘Tokyo Imperial University Library British Academy Committee’ to solicit the donation of books. The letterhead clearly shows the Committee’s Chairman was Lord Balfour, President of the British Academy; the Honorary Secretary was Sir Israel Gollancz, Secretary of the British Academy; and the Honorary Treasurer was Sir Charles Wakefield, a past and future benefactor of the British Academy,⁵ who generously paid the Committee’s clerical and office expenses out of his own pocket.

From the outset, the Foreign Office recognised that the library could not be restored through donations alone. On 2 August 1924, Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald wrote to the Japanese Ambassador to report that the Government was ‘anxious to give practical support to the work undertaken by the British Academy in collecting books in this country to supply the University’s needs’, and that Parliament had voted the sum of £25,000



for the purchase of books. ‘It is proposed to spend this sum in consultation with the British Academy Committee, which is already, I understand, in close relations with you’.⁶

Israel Gollancz took on responsibility for co-ordinating the lists of books being donated and bought for the Tokyo Imperial University Library. In this he was ably assisted first by Miss E.M. Pool, and then by Miss D.W. Pearson. After graduating from King’s College London in 1922 where she had been tutored by Gollancz, Doris Pearson had spent a few years teaching before applying to assist Gollancz with the Tokyo book project in January 1926; ‘Well,’ said Sir Israel at the end of the interview, ‘I have also asked people trained in librarianship to come along to see me, but I am going to offer this post to you.’⁷ And so began Doris’s long career at the British Academy — she was the sole paid member of staff until 1949, and retired in 1972 after 46 years of service. ■

4. Quoted in ‘Report on the British Gift of Books to the Tokyo Imperial University Library’, BA465.
 5. See ‘Charles Wakefield and the British Academy’s first home’, *British Academy Review*, 21 (January 2013), 64–6.
 6. Quoted in ‘Report on the British Gift of Books’.
 7. Autobiographical note, BA416.

Where We Live Now: An approach to policy and growth that is centred on place

Jamiesha Majevalia reports on the progress of a British Academy project

Scale of place

Since late 2015, the British Academy public policy team has been leading a project on place-based policy-making. Through *Where We Live Now*, we have sought to draw on both humanities and social sciences to understand what places mean to people and why, and to use that

understanding to propose ways in which policy-making can be improved. In particular, the Academy has sought to understand the scale at which people relate to place, and how this has an impact on the scale at which policy is directed. Often people relate to many places – where they live, work and spend their leisure time – but public policy fails to connect with these different experiences of place. Similarly, having a ‘sense of place’ depends on the lived experience and can be as small as a street, or as large as a city, county or region, and is by no means mutually exclusive between the two ends of the spectrum.

All of this has consequences for policy-making. How we organise local and regional policy has major implications for the vital services people rely on. This also raises tensions in how national policy is decided, interpreted and cascaded down to city and local authorities. Related

to this are questions of infrastructure – how we support strong UK cities, which are better connected, as thriving hubs of economic and social activity. To this end, a lot of investment has gone into City and Growth

Deals. But this begs the question about the geographic limits of a growth deal. What is the future for rural, often isolated places that are left out of such deals, albeit unintentionally?

Place and productivity

We started off the project by working with the Place Alliance to host the fourth ‘Big Meet’ in October 2015. This biannual conference brings together academics, practitioners and policy-makers to discuss a key issue or theme related to place. The Big Meet 4 focused on ‘a place for living’ – how to balance housing quality and supply, as well as how to take advantage of the devolution of resources to achieve these objectives. At this conference, Rt Hon Brandon Lewis MP, then Minister for Housing and Planning, commented, ‘an increased focus on good quality design could help us to deliver more homes, at a quicker pace, which communities can feel proud of.’ Generally, participants agreed that, whilst the Government should set the tone and strategic ambitions, it is up to local areas including towns and cities to agree and work out how to achieve local housing supply objectives, with place quality as a central component.

Our project then turned to finding test cases of place-based thinking. The focus of national discussion was (and still is) productivity – how to achieve local and regional growth, what new ways of thinking could be harnessed to do more with less, or to improve what is already being attempted via City and Growth Deals. We worked with Fellows of the British Academy and an expert working group to think about places where we could have useful discussions about the project questions. The



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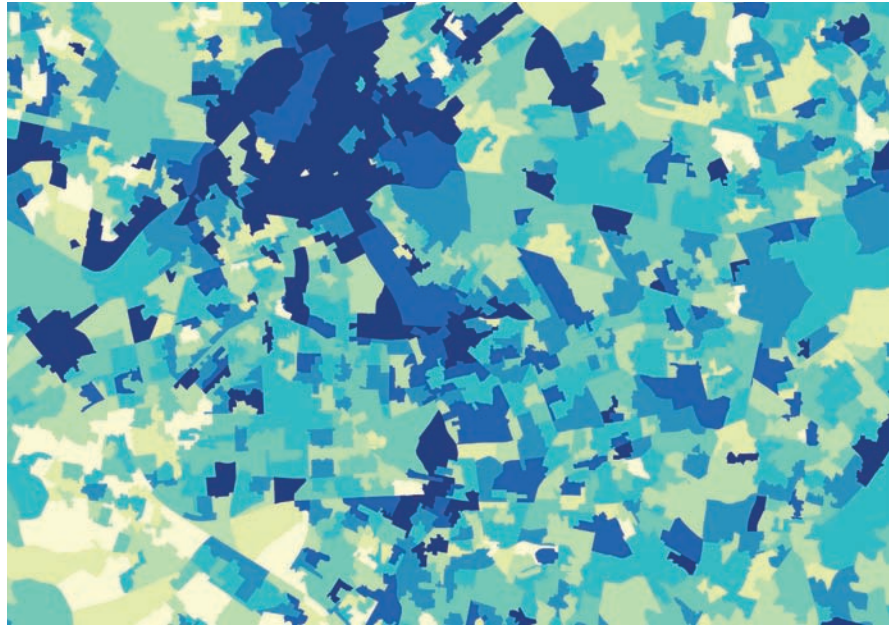
overarching considerations were: ‘What makes a “good” place?’ and ‘What would a place-based approach look like here? What else would it include, that is not part of a generic economic strategy?’

We held these discussions in Manchester, the focal point of the ‘northern powerhouse’; in Cornwall, a county with significant tourism activity and a strong industrial and cultural heritage; in Cardiff, to discuss the interrelated issues of socio-economic deprivation and health inequalities across Wales; and finally in London, where housing and inequality are the key current priorities for local government. In each of these places, we engaged with academic institutions, including relevant research centres that look at local economic development or environmental interaction; and with local authorities and related public bodies, think tanks and charities looking at employment and community engagement based or operating in the region, as well as regional offices of major bodies like the National Trust and Historic England.

Willingness, knowledge and governance

Many interesting observations and ideas came out of these discussions. In the midst of general consternation and frustration at the siloed nature of much of public service policy-making and delivery, we found a great willingness from all to work together better, but scant idea of how best to do that. This is starkest amongst front-line services staff, who are aware that in deprived communities they are not the only people delivering services and often seek better ‘joining up’ at the local level. For example, in Cornwall the Health & Wellbeing Board operates in continuous communication with the Local Enterprise Partnership and the Local Nature Partnership, with Cornwall Council at the centre, to produce joined-up solutions to employment, health and sustainability issues. Place can offer a useful lens to reconsider key issues, such as how best to deliver community support, health and well-being services, social and benefit services, education and lifelong learning including skills development in an integrated way. Many practitioners believe that this could both save money and improve services.

Related to the issue of operating in silos is the need for joined-up policy to address the health consequences of socio-economic deprivation. The issues are systemic and wide-ranging. Unemployment has impacts far beyond income, to both physical and mental health. Local solutions for health inequalities must address these connections. An excellent proposal for addressing some of these gaps is a cultural barometer that looks at the ability of the entire health services architecture to be reoriented towards a systems-thinking



A map of Manchester in which the darker colours indicate higher concentrations of households experiencing one dimension of deprivation (Census 2011).

approach. Two excellent examples of genuine co-production with communities are the Gellideg Foundation in Merthyr Tydfil, and People and Work (P&W) based in Cardiff. Gellideg was founded by residents on a social housing estate to develop an anti-poverty strategy, and P&W conducts community-based action research to offer connected solutions to health, employment and education.

Similarly, traditional measures of productivity and success are no longer seen as relevant to addressing some of these systemic challenges. Many of our discussions suggested a need to change what we consider the end goal, and look instead to well-being and a sustainable life course. In a more mobile society, some of the social infrastructure we used to rely on needs to be re-thought. This raises questions about what we consider ‘good work’ to be today, and what the responsibility of the employer should be to nurture skills and general health and well-being. An excellent example is the ‘Just Work’ research programme led by Professor Jill Rubery FBA of the University of Manchester, in partnership with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. This programme will work with employers in the North East to explore challenges around developing and sustaining decent work in Greater Manchester.

Zooming out of the hyper-local, we come to the thorny issue of infrastructure and development. We are now more focused on housing supply than at any point in the last 15 years, but there is still a dearth of meaningful solutions – we need more housing and faster, improved regional transport infrastructure, and quicker implementation of technologies such as high-speed broadband and Google Fibre to support businesses. Everybody agreed, however, that the key to this is good governance at the local level to engage people in thinking about the

needs and possibilities of their place – matched by a willingness at the national policy-making level to delegate decisions. Local leadership is best placed to consider the needs of the local population, and prioritise these weighty issues accordingly.

Our disciplines at the heart of ‘place’

As we approach the culmination of this project, we are thinking about its legacy. Much of the output can be found on the web.¹ A set of tools and ideas that can be easily embedded and implemented will be presented to government. We will highlight how place-based policy can help develop a sustainable future for cities (on which the Government is currently focused), as well as supporting local authorities and local services to work better together.

A separate companion publication is also in production, looking more thematically at different perspectives on place. The project has drawn on many sources of data from across the social sciences, such as health and employment data as well as social media. However, the humanities disciplines we have tapped into are very much at the heart of this project. Perspectives from anthropology, literature, cinema and history tell us why place matters, about the deep connections we make to places, as well as the significant emotional turmoil that place change, or policies insensitive to place, can wreak. For the British Academy, the objective of *Where We Live Now* has been to make the case for place-based policy-making – and in doing that we have also made the case for better appreciation of the contribution that the humanities and social sciences can bring to policy-making. ■

Governing England: How the British Academy is seeking to inform and influence debate about devolution in England

The *Governing England* project was established by the British Academy in Spring 2016 to further understanding of the government and governance of England. The project seeks to inform academic work on the British constitution as it is changed by devolution – both across the UK and within England. *Governing England* contains six strands which draw together a variety of issues relating to England: (1) England in the UK Parliament; (2) the impact of devolution on Whitehall; (3) fiscal devolution within England; (4) mayors and regional governance; (5) the future of the political parties; (6) English identity.

Each of these strands is crucial to how England is governed and how responsive political institutions are felt to be. *Governing England* examines how England is represented within the UK Parliament, such as whether English Votes for English Laws (EVEL) is sufficient to alleviate public perceptions of unfairness around the West Lothian Question.

Devolution, and measures such as EVEL, also have an impact on Whitehall. *Governing England* examines how UK-wide devolution has opened a number of debates about how Whitehall can differentiate between what it does for all of the UK and what it does for England and Wales, or for England only. As devolution within England itself progresses, powers that once were held within Whitehall are beginning to be transferred to local levels.

Different areas of England have varying needs. What works for one area, and what is desired in another, may be very different. *Governing England* is holding a series of regional round tables to explore how suitable alternative governance models are felt to be by local communities. The regional events are bringing together politicians and practitioners from local and national politics as well as businesses, academics and other interested parties in order to investigate regional devolution in England and what future devolution deals should look like.

Political parties will be changed by devolution, and *Governing England* assesses the ways in which this may have an impact on them. Devolution within England offers parties new ways to engage with different regions and areas as well the possibility of renewal through success in regions considered closed to them. New mayors open the possibility of high-profile individuals representing their party across the country, so devolution presents both a challenge and an opportunity to all political parties. *Governing England* held events at the Labour and Conservative party conferences in September/October 2016 on the effect on each party of devolution within England, including questions such as whether Labour may soon have a specific English party.

Governing England seeks to understand English identity and whether regional identities influence how people wish to be governed, such as their openness to certain institutions such as mayors or regional assemblies.

The *Governing England* project will utilise a variety of formats to disseminate our findings. A book will be published in 2018 with a long-term view of the issues around English governance and identity, while articles more responsive to the changing political climate will be available on the *Governing England* blog. On the 5 July 2017, the British Academy will hold a conference on *Governing England* in order to bring some of the leading academics in each area together with practitioners in the field to discuss and debate the issues raised. A series of panels will explore each strand, and bring the strands together on cross-cutting issues such as identity. If you wish to attend the conference, please contact Martin Rogers at m.rogers@britac.ac.uk.

More details about *Governing England* can be found at www.britishacademy.ac.uk/governing-england

1. www.wherewelivenow.com



Robotics, AI and Society

The British Academy's themed season of events in spring 2017 considers what a robotic future might look like and where it might take us

Recent advances in robotics and AI are revolutionising business, society and our personal lives. While some people welcome the arrival of driverless cars and delivery drones, others are unsettled by smart machines taking on an increasingly complex array of roles. In addition to the potential social and economic benefits associated with AI, new ways of working, dating, and engaging in military warfare raise ethical questions and provoke concern. Yet how justified are fears about this second machine age? All six events in the season are free and open to all.

Tuesday 31 January 2017, 6.30pm, London

Do we need robot law?

British Academy Debate

Advances in AI have enabled developments in robotics, from driverless vehicles to medical robots. But what happens if a machine disobeys an action, and who is to blame if things go wrong? Can current governance mechanisms lessen the risks and empower us to adopt new technologies, or do we need new laws and guidelines?

Friday 3 February 2017, 6.30pm, London

Love, sex and marriage ... with a robot?

British Academy Late

Designers are producing robots that are increasingly human-like in appearance and actions. From sophisticated machines we can chat to, through to lifelike sex robots, these creations have the potential to change how humans date, have sex or fall in love. But do we really want and need artificial companionship? Join us as we explore the future of romantic relationships.

Monday 13 February 2017, 6.30pm, London

Creating Humans

In conversation

Writers Sam Vincent and Jonathan Brackley discuss their writing partnership, artificial intelligence and what they hope fans take away from the hit TV series *Humans*. Live subtitling will be provided at this event.

Tuesday 21 February 2017, 6.30pm, Leicester

Are we ready for robot relationships?

British Academy Debate

Companion robots designed to interact, assist and socialise with humans are a growing focus of the robotics industry. Some developers are looking to create innovative caregiving solutions to help ageing populations, while others are focusing on the creation of human-like sex robots. Join our panel as they discuss the pros and cons of human-robot relationships.

With thanks to De Montfort University.

Wednesday 1 March 2017, 6.30pm, Bristol

Does AI pose a threat to society?

British Academy Debate

The idea of a robotic takeover – a staple of Hollywood sci-fi – taps into the fear that machines will eventually surpass humans in general intelligence. Yet does AI really pose a risk to society, especially when current technology is nowhere near those sci-fi scenarios? We ask whether recent developments in AI technology raise fresh concerns and how they might be addressed.

With thanks to the University of the West of England.

Wednesday 22 March 2017, 6.30pm, London

Work less, play more: Can humans benefit from robots in the workplace?

British Academy Debate

If, as experts warn, large numbers of jobs are at risk of automation over the next 20 years, are we likely to encounter scenes of social upheaval? Or are media reports of robots stealing our jobs misdirected? If machines can save us time and open up new types of roles, then surely we should embrace the change? ■

The four British Academy Debates are organised in partnership with

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More information about the season – including registration details – can be found via www.britishacademy.ac.uk/robotics

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The British Academy's purpose is to inspire and support high achievement in the humanities and social sciences throughout the UK and internationally, and to promote their public value.