

## Ffion Hughes: Reflecting on the Rhodes Scholarship



Ffion at her Oxford matriculation.

I learned that I'd won the Rhodes Scholarship via video call. Deep in the COVID pandemic, my Montréal apartment had become my home, my classroom, and my library – so it was only fitting that I should hear this life-changing news from my makeshift work-from-home setup. Gobsnapped, I breathlessly called my family, attempting to process what this meant for my future. Then I treated myself to a big supermarket outing, that ultimate COVID-era thrill.

At that point, I struggled to understand Oxford in anything but the abstract. The University's rich history, extraordinary architecture, and outsized impact seemed the stuff of lore, far removed from my Canadian reality.

As I mulled over colleges and programs, I had a hard time envisioning myself outfitted in one of Oxford's iconic academic gowns. The sense of surrealness persisted after I was admitted to a Master's program in the History of Medicine, based at Exeter College. And my awe merely mounted upon my arrival in Oxford, where the University's gothic buildings left me absolutely « bouche bée ». (British prices also left me astonished, albeit less favourably so.)

Gradually, though, my new reality began to sink in. As I set up my new flat, picked up the Oxford lingo, and learned to cycle on the left side of the road, I grew accustomed to the University's many idiosyncrasies. I dressed up in academic garb ("sub fuse") for matriculation day, enjoyed many delicious (and some not-so-delicious) formal dinners, and fell into a rhythm with my coursework. Yet every once in a while, I'd take a moment to look up, and that sense of awe would bubble up once again.

Of course, I also learned that Oxford has its dark sides. Faithful to my roots in critical history – developed during my years as a McGill History student – I began working as a guide with the tour company Uncomfortable Oxford. Our tours focus on the aspects of Oxford that are too often glossed over, offering a more nuanced understanding of the University's local and global impact. Through my work as a guide, I learned how Oxford's prestige was built upon dynamics of exclusion, racism, colonialism, and elitism. While it can be easy to be drawn in by the University's beauty and wealth, it's crucial to engage critically with these histories – and to consider how their legacies persist. Given my position as a Rhodes Scholar, I feel a particular sense of responsibility in this respect. Cecil Rhodes was a racist, a colonialist, and an exploitative capitalist, yet his eponymous scholarship enabled my Oxford experience.

Rhodes' ongoing prominence in Oxford is a major source of controversy. In addition to the Rhodes Scholarship, the statue of Rhodes that towers over High Street represents a key flashpoint. Quite rightly, activists cast these inheritances as monuments to imperialism, glorifying a man who committed innumerable harms. Working for Uncomfortable Oxford has pushed me to wrestle with the impact of Rhodes' actions, and the need to re-evaluate his legacy. If key symbols of Rhodes' imperialism retain pride of place, can Oxford ever truly become an inclusive institution? How should we grapple with these uncomfortable histories, particularly when they are enshrined in stone? These questions bring to mind numerous debates from across the world, including recent reassessments of McGill's own founder. I can't profess to have all the right answers, but I know that ignoring these uncomfortable issues merely perpetuates a problematic status quo. To this end, I actively strive to expose and defy Cecil Rhodes' colonialist mission – and I think he deserves a much less glorified standing in the Oxford of today.

Lest you think that my Oxford years involved everything *but* studying, I should assure you that academics were a vital part of my experience. During my first year, I put my McGill History studies to good use as a History of Medicine MSc student. Supported by expert professors and a wonderful supervisor, I learned about health, disease, and medical practice across geographical and temporal contexts. I also conducted original research on the history of mental health, colonialism, and substance dependence, eventually writing a dissertation on opioids in Canada. I even had the privilege of presenting some of my work at an academic conference in Mexico, before heading to Library & Archives Canada to conduct primary source research. Learning to use microfilm was a frustrating ordeal, but I also got to enjoy the historian's ultimate thrill: perusing physical, original documents from deep in the archives.

While my love for history only grew during my MSc, I decided to use my second Oxford year to explore a different field. Just weeks after submitting my history dissertation, I launched into a Master of Public Policy – no wonder I'm so exhausted these days! I had long been nursing an interest in policy, particularly given the modern salience of my drug history research. The MPP enabled me to pivot into the policy realm, while further galvanizing my interest in homelessness, substance use, and mental health. I was fortunate enough to wrap up the program with an internship focused on youth homelessness in Canada, working with the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness/Making the Shift.

As I write this, I'm still in that strange post-submission haze. I handed in my final assignment just last week, marking the end of my time as an Oxford Master's student. The intervening days have been full of momentous questions and (exciting?) uncertainty, as I mull over which opportunity to pursue. I've moved into a strange liminal space, literally and figuratively packing up my life without knowing my next destination. But I'm simultaneously filled with a profound sense of gratitude for my time in Oxford – and, of course, a deep need to catch up on sleep!

### IN THIS ISSUE

2: Chair's Greeting– Catherine Desbarats  
In Memoriam: Professor Peter Hoffman  
3: Congratulations!  
4-5: Incoming Faculty and Post-Docs

6-7: The first McDonald's in Russia – Kristy Ironside  
8-9: New Books  
10-11: A Department in the World  
12-13: Student Association Reports  
Congratulations to Our New PhDs

14: Lobsters Are More Than Good Eating – Suzanne Morton  
15: The History of HSA Student Publications– Kristen Howard  
16-17: Looting in Antiquity? – Brahm Kleinman

18-19: News and Events: Year in Review  
20: Creating the Emil Hošek MA fellowship in European history: A conversation with Chaviva Hošek

# Chair's Welcome



Dear readers, welcome to the 2023 edition of *Chronos*. This year's edition speaks to the extraordinary talent, vision, and drive among the members of the Department of History and Classical Studies. From Ffion Hughes's Oxford reflections on page one to Chaviva Hošek's generosity on page 20, you will be amazed by all the work that we have done this year.

At the undergraduate level, Classics students read the *Bacchae* on top of Mount Royal, produced an excellent

Classics play, and published *two* student journals—*Hirundo* and *Volare*. The History Students Association hosted trivia nights and lectures, published another terrific volume of *Historical Discourses*, and were voted Most Outstanding Departmental Association, Most Outstanding Events, Most Outstanding Academics, and Most Outstanding Internal Affairs by their peers in the Arts Undergraduate Society. Graduate students supported each other's research at raucous Topics on Tap nights, organized successful book sales to support graduate events, and took the Cundill Fringe into the mainstream. Colleagues have published award-winning books, embarked on grant-winning research, and given prize-winning courses. This year, four of our own—Professor Wendell Nü Laryea Adjetej, Professor Martin Sirois, Professor Brahm Kleinman, and Professor Andrea Farran—were

awarded teaching distinctions by both the Principal of the University and the Arts Undergraduate Society. What a testimony to the immense talent and dedication of our faculty!

This year, our editors, Professor Elizabeth Elbourne and PhD Candidate Hannah Sparwasser Soroka, have chosen to spotlight the public outreach activities of the Department. As you will see, between curatorial activities, op-eds, interviews, and dozens of podcast episodes, this truly is "A Department in the World."

It is also a Department that is ever-changing. Our remarkable colleague Professor Robin Yates, jointly appointed in History and Classical Studies and in East Asian Studies, has retired after a long and distinguished career as a historian of ancient China. This year also saw the loss of Professor Peter Hoffmann as well as the arrival of three extremely gifted new hires, Professor Sabine Cadeau, Professor Jacob Blanc, and Professor Emma Teitelman. Professor Hoffmann leaves the Department a legacy of not only his research and teaching accomplishments but the Peter C. Hoffmann Chair in German History, which we will fill this year. Our Classics programme is also hiring a Greek historian who will occupy the John MacNaughton Chair in Classics.

In closing, let me extend a particular thanks to the two people who have pulled *Chronos* together with their customary verve and generosity: Professor Elizabeth Elbourne, and PhD student Hannah Sparwasser Soroka. Together, they make a true *équipe du tonnerre*... *Félicitations!*

## In memoriam: Peter C. Hoffmann



Professor Peter Hoffmann died on January 6, 2023. He was a giant in the history of twentieth-century Germany, known particularly for his monumental work on the German resistance to Hitler. He worked at McGill for fifty years, where he was a respected teacher to generations of undergraduate and graduate students. He was Emeritus William Kingsford Professor of History, Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada,

and recipient of the Federal Republic of Germany's Officers' Cross of Merit 1st Class, among many other honours. He was particularly proud to have been awarded the H. Noel Fieldhouse Award for Excellence in Teaching by McGill's Faculty of Arts.

Peter Hoffmann was born in Dresden in 1930, three years before Hitler seized power. The family soon returned, however, to Stuttgart, Württemberg where they had deep roots. As Gina Thomas describes in a memorial in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Peter Hoffmann's father Wilhelm, an academic librarian, ran courier services for the resistance, using his professional activities in Switzerland as cover. He knew in advance about the plan spearheaded by General Claus von Stauffenberg in 1944 to assassinate Hitler and establish an alternate government, and indeed was entrusted in July 1944 by Adam von Trott with "a pistol which he asked be delivered to Trott's wife in Berlin."

Peter Hoffmann did his doctoral work on diplomatic relations between Bavaria and Württemberg during the Crimean War. His life's work would be, however, the history of the resistance, beginning with his field-defining work *Widerstand, Staatsstreich, Attentat - Der Kampf der Opposition gegen Hitler*, published in 1969. His work included a monumental biography of von Stauffenberg. He was preoccupied by trying

to understand the disasters of Germany's history in the twentieth century, including how Nazism was possible.

Peter Hoffmann educated and mentored generations of students. Eliza Woods was inspired by her undergraduate work with Peter Hoffmann to pursue a career teaching history. "He inspired me to expect more of myself and look beyond the grades on my transcript and inwardly question whether there is more I could do to better understand the past." Former student Ellen Gilley, now a lawyer, states that it is hard to overestimate the impact not only of Professor Hoffmann's classes but also his kindness. "Analytically, he taught me to be exacting and rigorous and not distracted by initial theories. Most of all, through his group seminars, he showed me the value of sharing knowledge and seeing others as teammates and colleagues, not competitors." Dr. Colin Gilmour, Professor Hoffmann's youngest PhD student, recalls Peter Hoffmann's meticulous research and fidelity to the evidence. His most indelible memories were, however, personal: "Closing my eyes I see him, as always, with his trademark bowtie, sitting amidst the columns of books that went from floor to ceiling in his small office gathering his hand-written notes and green, blue and red overhead transparencies (!). Likewise, I recall the amused look in his eyes whenever I, the young grad student, would angle towards the elevator when leaving his office. Peter Hoffmann, the then 85-year-old professor, always took the stairs."

Professor Hoffmann will also be remembered for his academic leadership, including chairing the Department. The Library's collection in German history stands as a rich testament to his insistence on libraries' centrality to University teaching, research and scholarship. The Peter C. Hoffmann Chair in German History, another milestone of his career, owes everything to his vision, determination, and scholarship. In addition to his personal contribution, he devoted five years of undeterred fundraising efforts to ensure that German history will be taught at McGill at a high level in perpetuity.

Peter Hoffmann leaves his wife of 63 years, Helga, who tirelessly supported his intellectual work; his children Susan and Peter; and many others whose lives he touched.



# Congratulations!

## FACULTY GRANTS, AWARDS, & HONOURS

**Professor Wendell Nii Laryea Adjete**y was awarded the Principal's Prize for Excellence in Teaching, Assistant Professor Category. **Professor Martin Sirois** won the Principals Prize for Excellence in Teaching, Faculty Lecturer Category. **Professor Brahm Kleiman** was awarded the Arts Undergraduate Society Teaching Award for Most Outstanding Professor in the Faculty of Arts. **Professor Andrea Farran** was honoured with the Arts Undergraduate Society Teaching Award for Most Outstanding Professor in the Faculty of Arts. **Professor Kristy Ironside** was a runner-up for the 2023 Principal's Prize for Public Engagement Through Media, in the Emerging Researcher category. **Professor Kristy Ironside** was also named a William Dawson Scholar.

**Professor Lorenz Lüthi** won a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Grant for the project "Occupied and Divided Berlin, 1945-1994." **Professor Brian Cowan** was awarded the Residential Scholars Award from the Yale Center for British Art. **Professor Brian Lewis** was the Birkelund Fellow at the National Humanities Center in North Carolina from September-April and spent Trinity Term (April-June) as the Oliver Smithies Visiting Lecturer at Balliol College, Oxford.

**Professor Edward Dunsworth's** book *Harvesting Labour: Tobacco and the Global Making of Canada's Agricultural Workforce* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2022) was awarded the Henry A. Wallace Award from the Agricultural History Society (US) for the best book on agricultural history outside the United States in 2022 and nominated for the Wilson Institute for Canadian History Book Prize. **Professor Daviken Studnicki-Gizbert's** book *The Three Deaths of Cerro de San Pedro: Four Centuries of Extractivism in a Small Mexican Mining Town* (UNC Press, 2023) was nominated for the Canadian Historical Association's Wallace K. Ferguson Prize for outstanding work in a field other than Canadian history.

## GRADUATE STUDENTS

**Professor Alexandra Ketchum** (PhD, 2018) won the 2023 McGill Principal's Prize for Public Engagement Through Media, in the Emerging Researcher category. **Professor Ketchum** also obtained a tenure-track position at McGill's Institute for Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies. **Dr. Nathan Ince** (PhD, 2022) obtained a tenure-track appointment as Associate Professor in the history of Québec and of preindustrial Canada in the Department of History at the Université de Sherbrooke. **Dr. M. Max Hamon** (PhD, 2018) obtained a tenure-track position in the Department of History at the University of Northern British Columbia. **Dr. Hussam Ahmed** (PhD, 2018) obtained a tenure-track position in the history of the modern Middle East in the Department of History at Carleton University. **Dr. Rebecca Robinson** (PhD, 2017) obtained a tenure-track position as an assistant professor in the Department of History at Hong Kong Baptist University.

**Rishma Johal** (PhD 6) was a 2022-2023 Fulbright Visiting Student Researcher Award based at the University of Wash-

ington's Center for the Study of the Pacific Northwest. She was also a visiting fellow at the Eccles Centre at Simon Fraser University. **Azizul Rasel** (PhD 3) won a doctoral award from the Fonds de Recherche du Québec— Société et Culture. **Dr. Nathan Ince** (PhD, 2022) was awarded the Canadian Historical Review prize for best article published in the journal in 2022 for his article "As Long as that Fire Burned": Indigenous Warriors and Political Order in Upper Canada, 1837–42."

**Zoe Neubauer** (PhD 2) was awarded McGill's Abner Kingman fellowship. Incoming PhD student **Cian Dinan** was awarded McGill's Peter Cundill Fellowship in History. **Michael Avanzato** (PhD2) also holds a Cundill Fellowship. **Jonathan Harper** (PhD2) won a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Bombardier fellowship. **Madhulagna Halder** (PhD 3) was awarded a Graduate Mobility Fund to support fieldwork in Kolkata and Dhaka. **Riley Wallace** (PhD 4) received a Schull-Yang International Experience Award to support archival research in London. **Esther Guillen** (PhD 5) was awarded funding from the Department of History and Classical Studies' Graduate Excellence fund to support her participation in the Italian Centre for Advanced Studies on Religions (CISSR) Conference in Early Christianity in Bertinoro, Italy. **Riley Wallace** (PhD 4), **Hannah Sparwasser Soroka** (PhD 3), and **Michael Avanzato** (PhD 2) all received Graduate Research Enhancement and Travel awards to support their participation on the Northeast Conference on British Studies in Halifax, NS.

The 2022 Halina Czarnocka Graduate Fellowship was awarded to **Ahmad Malik** (MA) and **Grace Farran** (MA).

## UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT PRIZES

**Marie-Christine Levesque** was awarded the Henry Chapman Gold Medal. **Elizabeth Renison Deerkoski** received the Barbara Scott Scholarship. **Shaam Jayesh Beed**, **Audrey Grace Michel**, and **Emma Weiser** won Sir Edward Beatty Memorial Scholarships in Classics. **Adam Zanin** received the Charles Alexander Scholarship. **Hadley Reese** and **Rodrigo Lamar Matos** won Sir William Peterson Memorial Awards. **Jenna Dubé**, **Carys Foulds**, **Zoe Louchet**, **Anastasia Paraskevopoulos**, **Zachary Powell**, **Adam Rosengarten**, and **Lauren Schubak** were awarded Paul F. McCullagh Prizes in Ancient Greek and Latin. **Madeleine McGrath** received the Dr. James Barclay Scholarship. **Audrey Grace Michel** won the Woodhead Memorial Prize in Greek and Latin. **Camille Therese Deslongchamps** was awarded the Paul F. McCullagh Scholarship for Study Away. **Anthony Georgaros** won the Montreal AHEPA Prize for Hellenic Studies at McGill.

**Nina Arcuri** received the Audrey Charlton Award. **Elijah Mateo Aedo-Castillo** won the Guy Champagne Scholarship in Canadian History. **Nandini Khatar** won the Senator Lazarus Phillips Award. **Julianne Eleanor Smith** was awarded a Sara and Maurice Greenblatt Scholarship. **Wilton Bompey** won the Madelene Hodgson Prize in History. **Anas Taleb** was awarded the Historical Society's Prize. **Adrienne Neufeld** received the Howard Weinroth Memorial Essay Prize.

## INCOMING FACULTY AND POST-DOCS

### Professor Jacob Blanc

Born and raised in San Francisco, Jacob Blanc received his BA from the University of California-San Diego. After a year working in southern Chile—with a brief, career-altering trip to Brazil—he undertook a PhD in Latin American history at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. After completing his PhD in 2017, he worked at the University of Edinburgh, receiving tenure in 2022, before accepting the new job at McGill starting in 2023.

Jacob Blanc's research explores the overlap of human rights and social movements across 20th century Latin America, with a particular focus on Brazil.

His first book, *Before the Flood: the Itaipu Dam and the Visibility of Rural Brazil* (Duke University Press, 2019) traces the protest movements of farmers, peasants, and indigenous groups in Brazil who were displaced by the Itaipu hydroelectric dam in the 1970s and 1980s. At the nexus of global energy regimes, Cold War militarism, and grassroots social movements, the book's central concept of visibility tethers the actions of displaced groups to the more endemic issues of repression, resistance, and representation in Latin America.

His second book (forthcoming with Duke University Press) uses the Prestes Column rebellion in the 1920s to chart a spatial history of development and nationalism in Brazil. Whereas the legend of the column—and all existing scholarship—has focused on the heroic details of the 15,000-mile rebel march across the country, he reinterprets its legacy through the symbolism of Brazil's interior. The book is titled *The Prestes Column: an Interior History of Modern Brazil*.

A third book (also forthcoming, with the University of North Carolina Press) is a biography of a former political prisoner and exile. *Searching for Memory: Abúzio Palmar and the Shadow of Dictatorship* offers more than just a straightforward biography. By placing his nearly forty hours of interviews with Palmar in dialogue with the public speaking, writing, and advocacy that he has conducted since the late 1990s, he explores the methodological implications of using oral histories to study the legacies of authoritarian rule.

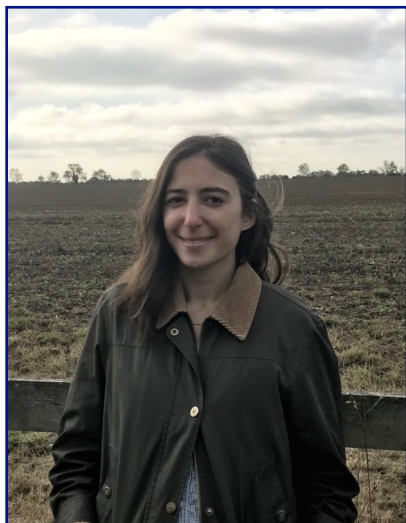
He is also cross-appointed with the Institute for the Study of International Development.



Jacob Blanc

### Professor Emma Teitelman

Emma Teitelman is an expert in American history, specializing in history of labor, inequality, and state formation, especially during Reconstruction and the late-nineteenth century. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in History from Wesleyan University in 2010 and a Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania in 2018. Her dissertation was entitled “Governing the Peripheries: The Social Reconstruction of the South and West After the American Civil War.” Prior to arriving at McGill, Dr. Teitelman was an Assistant Research Professor of History and Associate Director of the Richards Civil War Era Center at the University of Pennsylvania (2021-2023). She also held a Mellon Post-Doctoral Research Fellow in American History at Oxford University from 2018-2021.



Emma Teitelman

Dr. Teitelman's research has received numerous accolades. Her dissertation research was supported by a variety of fellowships at the University of Pennsylvania, including the Doris G. Quinn Foundation Dissertation Fellowship and the Annenberg History Fellowship. Her article, “The Properties of Capitalism: Industrial Enclosures in the South and the West After the American Civil War,” published in the *Journal of American History* in 2020, won the Organization of American Historians' Louis Pelzer Memorial Award.

In addition to her award-winning 2020 article, Emma Teitelman has written for academic journals including *New Labor Forum*, *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History*, and the *Western Historical Quarterly*. She has contributed pieces to digital publications *Phenomenal World* and *The American Yamp: A Free and Online, Collaboratively Built American History Textbook*. Her book, *Lumber and Lodes: The Social Reconstruction of the South and the West After the American Civil War*, is under contract with Harvard University Press.

Emma Teitelman joins the Department of History and Classical Studies as Assistant Professor of American History. She teaches surveys in modern U.S. history and courses on labor, the U.S. welfare state, and American capitalism.



## Professor Sabine Cadeau

The Department is delighted to welcome Dr. Sabine Cadeau as an Associate Professor of Caribbean and Latin American history. Dr. Cadeau has a research and teaching interest in the early modern Atlantic world, as well as in modern Latin American and Caribbean history. She has particular expertise in the history of Haiti and of the Dominican Republic, as well as in the history of the African diaspora.

Dr. Cadeau's 2022 book *More Than a Massacre: Racial Violence and Citizenship in the Haitian-Dominican Borderlands*, published with Cambridge University Press, won the 2023 Latin America Studies Bryce Wood Book Prize and the 2023 Raphael Lemkin Book Award from the Institute for the Study of Genocide. The Raphael Lemkin prize committee commented that they selected *More Than a Massacre* for its "methodological sophistication, impressive analysis, and compelling arguments about an understudied case". Dr. Cadeau is currently completing a second book, *Bonds and Bondage: Financial Capitalism and the Legacies of Atlantic Slavery at the University of Cambridge*. This work emerged from the commissioned Cambridge Legacies of Enslavement Inquiry that began in 2019, and studies the University of Cambridge's multiple relationships with slave-trading companies. She is also working on a further monograph, *Victims in Their Own Words: Remembering the Forgotten 1937 Haitian Massacre*, which builds on oral history fieldwork with survivors and centres the interpretations of survivors. Before coming to McGill, Dr. Cadeau was most recently a lecturer in African Diaspora History at the School of Oriental and African Studies. From 2020-22 she worked as a postdoctoral research fellow, Legacies of Enslavement Inquiry, at the Centre for African Studies, University of Cambridge.

Dr. Cadeau earned her PhD from the University of Chicago in 2015. She also holds an MA degree from the University of Chicago in Caribbean and Atlantic World History and an MA from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in Latin American and Caribbean Studies, as well as a BA from the Xavier University of Louisiana. In addition to English, she speaks Haitian Kreyòl, Spanish, French and Brazilian Portuguese. In her spare time, she likes to travel with family.



Sabine Cadeau

## Dr. Darren Reid



Darren Reid

Welcome to Dr. Darren Reid, who will hold a SSHRC (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council) postdoctoral fellowship in the Department of History and Classical Studies from 2023 to 2025. Dr. Reid studies British imperial histories and the experiences of colonialism, with a particular focus on struggles over Indigenous rights in the British settler empire. His postdoctoral project, "Colonial saboteurs? Settler-led Indigenous rights organizations in the Anglo World, 1840-1940", focuses on the controversial projects of settler humanitarianism. Dr. Reid will be working with Elizabeth Elbourne as his supervisor.

Dr. Reid earned his PhD in 2023 from University College London. His thesis was entitled "Indigenous and Settler Correspondence with the Aborigines' Protection Society: Negotiating Imperialism from within Canada, South Africa, and New Zealand, 1850-1900". He holds both an MA and a BA in History from the University of Victoria.

Dr. Reid has published a number of articles, including most recently "Compound Dispossession in southern Ontario: converging trajectories of colonial dispossession and inter-Indigenous conflict, 1886-1900" in the *Journal of Canadian Studies*. As he puts it, he is also "passionate about digital humanities and the various applications of technology for research, teaching and dissemination, from big data analysis to video games to augmented reality exhibitions". He has written about video games and the practice of history, including most recently "Video game development as public history: practical reflections on making a video game for historical public engagement", forthcoming in *The Public Historian*. He spends most of his spare time with his eight-month-old son, eagerly anticipating being able to play historical video games together someday.

## THE FIRST MCDONALD'S IN RUSSIA

Professor Kristy Ironside

Procrastinating one afternoon in late January 2020, I happened to click on a news item that popped up on Facebook from Bored Panda, a Lithuanian website that repackages lighthearted images and news content. Entitled “[The First McDonald's In Moscow Opened In 1990, And These 27 Pics Show How Insane It All Was](#),” it showed the construction of the first McDonald's restaurant on Pushkin Square in downtown Moscow and the hordes of people who showed up to try their very first Big Macs, fries, and milkshakes during its grand opening on January 31, 1990. The article, two years old, was being recirculated in connection with celebrations planned for the restaurant's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Russia.

I was well aware that McDonald's entry in the Soviet Union was a massive spectacle at the time; in fact, I use an image from that day at the top of my syllabus for my seminar on Russia in the 1990s. But scrolling down the page, I stumbled upon an intriguing detail that was news to me: “The Moscow McDonald's initiative was a joint venture between McDonald's of Canada and the Moscow city council. A plan first envisioned when George Cohon, founder, and CEO of McDonald's Canada, met Soviet Union officials at the '76 Summer Olympics in Montreal.” Wait, I thought: it was McDonald's Canada that brought it to Moscow? Not McDonald's parent company in the United States? McDonald's, in my mind, was such a quintessentially American company and symbol of American capitalism and consumerism. But yes, indeed, it was McDonald's Canada and its CEO, George Cohon, who was responsible for bringing McDonald's to Moscow, and the plan really was hatched at the company's 4000<sup>th</sup> restaurant near Atwater Market in downtown Montreal.

I realized that I didn't know a lot about the economic mechanisms that had facilitated McDonald's arrival in Moscow, and I started looking into the history of joint ventures—I'm a historian of Soviet and Russian political economy, after all. While I found a lot of dated information, much of it written by business and management scholars advising Western firms on how to crack into the mysterious and bureaucracy-laden Soviet market, I found

almost nothing written by historians. Hmm, I thought, this would make for a great article. The policy was announced by Mikhail Gorbachev in January 1987 as he attempted to open up and reinvigorate the Soviet economy under the banner of perestroika. The story of Western brands' arrival in the Soviet Union is often told in connection with its collapse, as tacit proof that its leadership had given up on the planned socialist economy, but I was intrigued by the question of what they had hoped to accomplish by cooperating with Western capitalist firms like McDonald's, in the first place, since I doubted they saw it then as a harbinger of the system's demise.



Opening day for McDonald's-Moscow, January 31, 1990.

I wrote to McDonald's, asking if I could ask George Cohon a few questions about his involvement and, a few days later, his secretary wrote back to me saying that he was sending me his memoirs and would answer my questions after I'd read the book. About a week later, a copy of his quirky and rambling mem-

oirs, [To Russia with Fries](#), arrived in my pigeonhole in the seventh-floor mailroom in Leacock, along with a DVD copy of CTV News' video coverage of the grand opening celebrations. The book was dedicated to me and signed by George Cohon, himself: “This will make for good bedtime reading,” he wrote, “because it will help you sleep.” Cohon, I soon learned, is well known for his sense of humour. I've since obtained a copy of a special edition of his memoirs he had made to look like an old Russian medieval chronicle, a subtle reference to the long and tortuous path from the 1976 meeting in Montreal to the 1990 grand opening in Moscow.

That March, I planned to travel to Moscow to conduct research on another book project, and I planned to spend some of my time in the archives there looking into joint ventures for my planned article. But—given the date, you can probably see where this is heading—I never made it to Moscow. I was literally standing in the Russian consulate checking my email on my phone, my passport and visa in hand, when McGill made the announcement that it was shutting down for two weeks while it figured out how to respond to COVID. Like all other Montrealers, I spent the



next nearly two years working from home and physically confined to a very small radius. I shelved my McDonald's joint venture project for the time being.

Then, in the fall of 2021, as academia started to transition back toward in-person conferencing, I was asked to present something at a workshop on the history and political economy of Russia and Eurasia held at my doctoral alma mater, the University of Chicago. I immediately thought about my McDonald's joint venture paper. I traveled to Chicago in December and presented the paper, and I was blown away by its reception. The conference attendees had so many excellent questions for me. There is something to this, I thought; I should really finish that article and get it published as soon as possible.

World events once again got in the way. Two months later, and just as I was once again making plans to return to Moscow, Russia attacked Ukraine. The response from Western governments was swift: they slapped Russia with coordinated financial sanctions designed to hamper its ability to pay for the war. Western firms in the Russian market also came under intense moral pressure from their customers and from activists to end their economic activities there. Firms that decided to stay in faced intense criticism: the Yale management professor Jeffrey Sonnenfeld started a [website](#) tracking the status of Western firms' operations in Russia; meanwhile, memes circulated on Twitter and other social media condemning companies who stayed put.

McDonald's was not one of the first companies to pull out. Instead, it "hit pause" on its operations and continued to pay its Russian employees in the meantime while it decided what to do. This won it great criticism: Sonnenfeld criticized it as a "[screaming anomaly that's bewildering to all its peers](#)." Finally, on May 16, 2022, after nearly three months of deliberations, McDonald's announced that it was ending its 32-year presence in Russia. McDonald's CEO Chris Kempczinski sent a [letter](#) to the "McFamily" in which he said that:

"Hope is what brought McDonald's to the Russian market 32 years ago. Hope for a country that was opening itself to the world after decades of isolation. Hope that the world was becoming a little more connected – and that being able to get the same Big Mac in Moscow that you got in Chicago was a tangible (and tasty) symbol of our growing connection. We entered Russia because of the hope and promise our brand came to signify. For three decades, our presence in Russia inspired adages that went beyond our food — from "burger diplomacy" to a "McDonald's peace theory" — and embodied the greater

purpose and impact that brands like ours can have in the world. McDonald's in Russia embodied the very notion of glasnost and took on outsized significance."

It was not an "easy decision" to leave, he concluded, "but the end-state is clear."

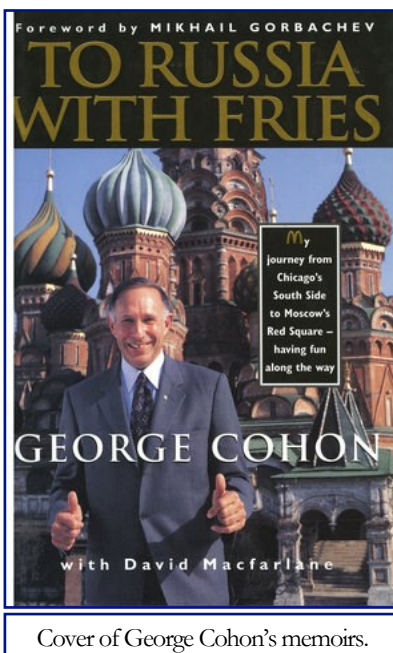
As Kempczinski's quote demonstrates, an enormous amount of symbolic importance has been attached to both the entry and exit of McDonald's from Russia. I learned this from personal experience: after the war began, I spoke to dozens of journalists about the impact of sanctions on the Russian economy, and, perhaps more than anything else, they wanted to know about what McDonald's leaving meant—to Russian citizens, but also to Westerners like me, who have spent a lot of time in Moscow. As I explained on NPR's [All Things Considered](#), although I'm not the biggest fan of McDonald's food, its leaving was "... sad because it also shows that, you know, 30 years of economic integration with the rest of the world is coming to this very abrupt end. It takes a very long time to rebuild those relationships and, as it turns out, not very long to blow them up entirely."

I've given up on my plans to write an article about the McDonald's-Moscow joint venture. Now I'm writing a full-length book tentatively entitled *McDonald's and the Opening and Closing of Russia*. This book will use the story of McDonald's in Russia as a frame to discuss the country's transformation from communism to a peculiar and illiberal form of capitalism. The story of McDonald's entry and exit is also the story of Russia moving away from openness and international cooperation under Gorbachev to turning its back on the world under Vladimir Putin.

*Kristy Ironside is Associate Professor of Russian History and William Dawson Scholar at McGill. She researches and teaches on the history of the Soviet Union and modern Russia, with a special focus on its political, social, and economic shifts. In addition to writing her book on McDonald's, she is also working on two projects, on the history of the Soviet Union's relationship to international copyright, and a biography of the Soviet Union's photographic, literary, and music agent in America in the 1930s-1940s, who was one of the first people registered under the Foreign Agents Registration Act.*

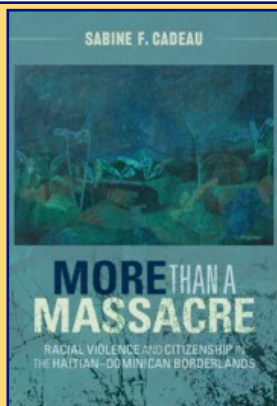


Listen to Kristy Ironside discuss the "McDonald's Invasion" on the podcast Business Movers.



Cover of George Cohon's memoirs.

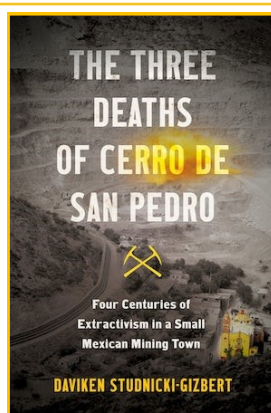
# NEW BOOKS



Sabine Cadeau, *More than a Massacre: Racial Violence and Citizenship in the Haitian-Dominican Borderlands* (Cambridge University Press)

“Sabine F. Cadeau traces a successively worsening campaign of explicitly racialized anti-Haitian repression that began in 1919 under the American Occupiers, accelerated in 1930 with the rise of Trujillo, and culminated in 1937 with the slaughter of an estimated twenty thousand civilians.”

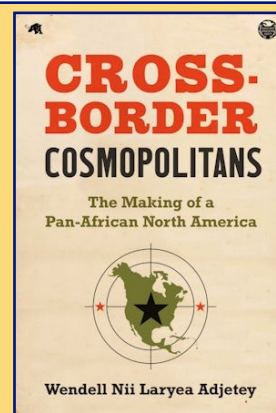
Winner of the 2023 Latin American Studies Association Bryce Wood Book Prize and of the 2023 Raphael Lemkin Book Award.



Daviken Gizbert-Studnicki, *The Three Deaths of Cerro de San Pedro: Four Centuries of Extractivism in a Small Mexican Mining Town* (UNC Press)

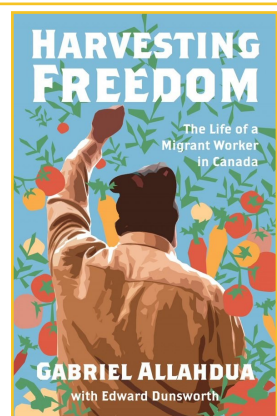
“Chronicling Cerro de San Pedro's operations from the time of the Spanish conquest to the present, [this book] transcends standard narratives of boom and bust to envision a multcentury series of mining cycles, first operated under Spanish rule, then by North American industry, and today in the post-NAFTA world of transnational capitalism.”

Shortlisted for the Canadian Historical Association's Wallace K. Ferguson Prize.



Wendell Nii Laryea Adjete, *Cross-Border Cosmopolitans: The Making of a Pan-African North America* (UNC Press)

“By contending that twentieth-century global Black liberation movements began within the U.S.-Canadian borderlands as cross-border, continental struggles, *Cross-Border Cosmopolitans* reveals the revolutionary legacies of the Underground Railroad and America's Great Migration and the hemispheric and transatlantic dimensions of this history.”



Gabriel Allandua with Edward Dunsforth, *Harvesting Freedom: The Life of a Migrant Worker in Canada* (Between the Lines)

“In this singular firsthand account, a former migrant worker reveals a disturbing system of exploitation at the heart of Canada's farm labour system [...] *Harvesting Freedom* shows Canada's place in the long history of slavery, colonialism, and inequality that has linked the Caribbean to the wider world for half a millennium—but also the tireless determination of Caribbean people to fight for their freedom.”



Gershon Hundert (ed.), Dov Ber Ben Yehuda Birkenthal, *Divre binah; Zichronot*, vol. 1 (Bialik Institute)

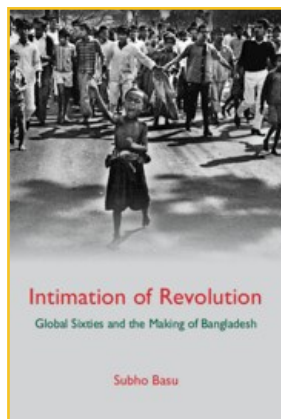
“The author was a merchant who lived in Galicia in the 18th century and important wine from the Tokaj region. The books he wrote are a memoir, and a history of messianism that focuses mainly on events he witnessed.”



Gershon Hundert (ed.), Dov Ber Ben Yehuda Birkenthal, *Divre binah; Zichronot*, vol. 2 (Bialik Institute)

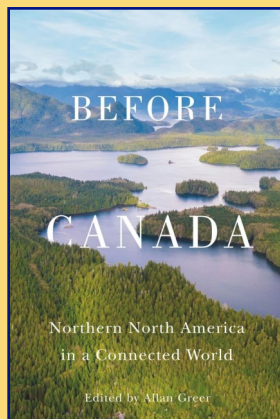
“The author was a merchant who lived in Galicia in the 18th century and important wine from the Tokaj region. The books he wrote are a memoir, and a history of messianism that focuses mainly on events he witnessed.”





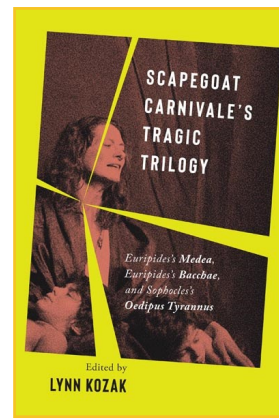
Subho Basu, *Intimation of Revolution: Global Sixties and the Making of Bangladesh* (Cambridge University Press)

“Intimation of Revolution studies the rise of Bengali nationalism in East Pakistan in the 1950s and 60s by showcasing the interactions between global politics and local social and economic developments. It argues that the revolution of 1969 and the national liberation struggle of 1971 were informed by the 'global sixties' that transformed the political landscape of Pakistan and facilitated the birth of Bangladesh.”



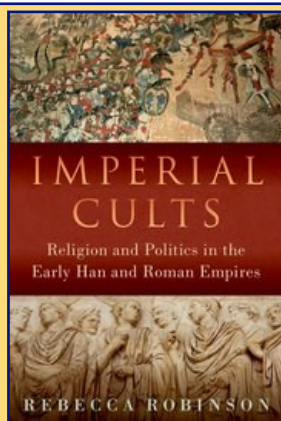
Allan Greer (ed.) *Before Canada: Northern North America in a Connected World* (De Gruyter)

“The story of Canada stretches back over centuries and millennia, well before the emergence of the modern nation-state. It features the complex evolution of Indigenous societies as well as the incursions of Europeans fishers, explorers and colonizers. In *Before Canada*, archaeologists, historians and literary scholars combine to reveal the latest research findings on this fascinating early period.”



Lynn Kozak (ed.), *Scapegoat Carnivale's Tragic Trilogy: Euripides's Medea, Euripides's Bacchae, and Sophocles's Oedipus Tyrannus* (McGill-Queen's University Press)

“Between 2010 and 2017 Scapegoat Carnivale presented new performances of Euripides's *Medea* and *Bacchae* and Sophocles's *Oedipus Tyrannus*. This book reproduces Scapegoat's adaptations and invites readers to encounter these texts, giving them the tools to better understand where they came from and their relevance in contemporary theatre and life.”



Rebecca Robinson, *Imperial Cults: Religion and Empire in Early China and Rome* (Oxford University Press)

“Imperial Cults is a comparative study of the transformation of imperial religion and imperial authority in the early Han and Roman empires. [...] By using the comparative approach, the author not only reveals similar trends in the formation of ancient empires, but also shows how new perspectives on familiar material can be found when engaging with other societies.”

Rebecca Robinson earned a PhD in History and Classical Studies in 2017.



Amanda Ricci, *Countercurrents: Women's Movements in Postwar Montreal* (McGill-Queen's University Press)

“Bringing to light previously overlooked archival and oral sources, Amanda Ricci introduces a new cast of characters to the history of feminism in Quebec. The book presents a unique portrait of the resurgence of feminist activism, demonstrating its deep roots in Indigenous and Black communities, its transnational scope, and its wide-ranging inspirations and preoccupations.”

Based on Ricci's 2016 dissertation in the Department of History and Classical Studies.



Alex D. Ketchum, *Ingredients for Revolution: A History of American Feminist Restaurants, Cafes, and Coffeehouses* (Concordia University Press)

“Brimming with illuminating archival research, interviews with influential restaurateurs, and illustrated with photographs, menus, posters, and calendars, *Ingredients for Revolution* is a fundamental work of women's history, food history, and cultural history.”

Alex D. Ketchum earned a PhD in History and Classical Studies in 2018. This is her second book.

## A DEPARTMENT IN THE WORLD

Our historians write great academic articles with many lengthy footnotes, but they also reach out beyond the pages of the academic journal to open public conversations. History and Classical Studies is also a department in the world. In 2022-23 our students and faculty members wrote blog posts, penned op-eds, appeared on and produced podcasts, advised on museum exhibitions, and carried out public interest research. Here is a taste of recent activity.

Professor **Judith Szapor's** 2021 exhibition "The Numerus Clausus vs. Women," which originally opened at Budapest's 2B Gallery in 2021, moved to Bonn's Women's Museum for display from 20.11.2022 to 8.01.2023.

Professor **Allan Greer** consulted on an exhibition about the *patriotes* at l'Espace muséal du manoir Globensky in St. Eustache, QC. Professor Greer also spoke at the 2023 congress of Québec history teachers on Québec's place in Global History.

Professor **Laila Parsons** was interviewed extensively about her work on the history of British Mandate Palestine for a TV documentary produced by al-Araby TV, in commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the Nakba.



The poster for Professor Szapor's exhibition in Bonn.

I enjoy writing op-eds because they help me with other aspects of my work and because they make me feel—rightly or wrongly—that I'm contributing in some sense to the wider world of ideas. On the first point, writing op-eds requires brevity and clarity, neither of which comes to me naturally. Newspaper editors do not want to hear about scholarly debates and show limited patience for hand-wringing nuance. They require writers to get to the point, in 800 words or less. Working on such essays forces me to sharpen my arguments, to identify my best evidence, and to render my ideas in direct, telling prose. So, this helps when I return to much longer scholarly articles, or when I prepare lectures.

On the second point, lots of people read op-eds, for better and worse. Writing for such audiences can be jarring—I've received my share of emails that clearly violate the rule, "if you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all"—but I've also gotten plenty of thoughtful responses and interesting viewpoints. Either way, I find writing op-eds to be rewarding and exciting.

- Professor **Jason Opal**, Department of History and Classical Studies

Professor Opal has recently written op-eds for *The Globe and Mail* and *The Conversation* on the history of measles and the Democrats' approach to the United States' constitution, respectively.



Edward Dunsworth

Professor **Edward Dunsworth** wrote an op-ed for *Active History*, entitled "Bored Stiff: A Cranky Historian on ChatGPT."

PhD Candidate **Felicia Gabriele** wrote a piece for *Electric Literature* on HBO's adaptation of Elena Ferrante's *My Brilliant Friend* and reproductive justice.

PhD Candidate **Rishma Johal** was invited to speak at the Center for the Study of the Pacific Northwest on "Migrant Settlerhood" at Work in British Columbia: South Asian Migration and Indigenous Displacement from Land and Labour, 1903-1930."



PhD Candidate **Felicia Gabriele** appeared on *Bonnets at Dawn* to discuss abolitionist literature.

PhD Candidate **Rishma Johal** was interviewed on *The Muktsar Dialogues*, a Punjabi-language podcast published by Khalsa College.



Rishma Johal

“Letters Home” is a short series podcast enlivening and exploring the letters of the English sisters Elizabeth Gwillim and Mary Symonds in 1801-1807 while they were in Madras, India. The letters, read aloud by **Rosie Noskowitz** (McGill BA ‘24) and **Amber Craig** (McGill BA ‘25) are followed by conversations with the researchers in ornithology, history of science, botany, art history, and more. Interviews explore researcher’s experience with the materials through their chosen field and background, highlighting their case study or chapter from the forthcoming book *Women, Environment, Networks of Empire*. The episodes will be released fall of 2023, highlighting the work of McGill graduate students and researchers on campus and across the world. “It is such a pleasure to talk to experts in the field about these resources, and I’m thrilled to make it available in a popular format, expanding the audience of what could otherwise seem obscure. I’m also looking to take people along on my journey of becoming a historian, making the academic discipline more transparent to those who are learning or outside of academia,” commented producer and host **Ciel Haviland** (MA History ‘23). She is working in collaboration with the Gwillim Project in Rare Books and Special Collections and the McGill Dean of the Arts Development Fund.



The Indian Ocean World Centre produces the *Indian Ocean World Podcast*, which interviews scholars from around the world about their research into environmental and climate history.

#### A SPOTIFY PLAYLIST OF OUR PODCAST APPEARANCES:



OR LISTEN WHEREVER  
YOU GET YOUR PODCASTS.



Professor **Kristy Ironside** has been interviewed on numerous radio programmes and podcasts, including NPR’s *All Things Considered*, CBC Radio, and *The Economist: Money Matters*, as an expert on Russian economic history. She has also appeared on Wondery’s *Business Movers* series on the first McDonald’s in Russia.

Professor **Lynn Kozak** was a guest on an episode of CBC’s *Ideas* about Alfred Hitchcock’s *The Birds* (1953) and the Daphne du Maurier story that inspired it.

Several members of the Department have been invited on podcasts to discuss their recent books:

- Professor **Elizabeth Elbourne**, *New Books Network, Exchanges: A Cambridge UP Podcast*.
- Professor **Wendell Nii Laryea Adjetej**, *New Books Network*.
- Professor **Edward Dunsworth**, *Witness to Yesterday (The Champlain Society Podcast on Canadian History)*.



The 2022-2023 HSA Executive, photo courtesy of Lis Riveros  
 Back row: Matthew Tussman (VP Events), Reagan Coles (VP Internal), Will Bompey (VP Communications)  
 Middle Row: Antonina Nikolaev (FYR), Gwynivere Schooler (VP Finance), Selena Cai (VP Academic), Hanna Schmoelz (VP External)  
 Front: Lis Riveros (President)

The History Students' Association had a very successful year. The HSA hosted seven main events throughout the Fall and Winter semesters, concluding with a two-hundred-person "End of Year" formal. Hosting our annual "Haunted Histories" in October, Professors Elizabeth Elbourne, Brian Cowan, and Travis Bruce kicked off our Halloween lecture series with stories ranging from "Mediterranean Cannibalism" to "English Bodysnatching." In November, our well-loved and well-attended Fall Trivia saw students compete to prove their knowledge of McGill history. Our winter semester saw the return of "Love in the Time Of" presentations, highlighted by Professor Leonard Moore's guitar-playing skills of a traditional American folk song and students sending professors Valentine's appreciation messages. For the first time in HSA History, tote bags were sold and created with student-made designs.

The launch of *Historical Discourses XXXVII* allowed our editors-in-chief, editors, writers, and students to celebrate the publication and enjoy one another's academic company. In addition, proving a successful end to a great year, the HSA was awarded four awards out of seven categories at the Arts Undergraduate Society's Awards Ceremony, annually held to celebrate the twenty-four undergraduate associations in McGill Arts. Taking home Most Outstanding Departmental Association, Most Outstanding Events, Most Outstanding Academics, and Most Outstanding Internal Affairs—combined with runner-up nominations for Most Outstanding President and Most Outstanding Communications—the HSA celebrated multiple unprecedented wins.

The HSA can only function with the help of our professors, students, and executive members in creating a welcoming and lively community. To this end, a big thank you must be given to all who attended and supported the HSA's success in 2022-2023. Regarding next year, after a competitive election, Matthew Tussman (VP Events), Selena Cai (VP Academic), Will Bompey (VP Communications), Gwynivere Schooler (VP Finance), and Antonina Nikolaev (FYR) will be continuing to work hard as the HSA executive in 2023-2024.

## CLASSICS STUDENT ASSOCIATION

This year, the CSA saw a full and lively year of activities, both social and academic, with our return to the first, complete year in person since 2019. I warmly thank my team of executives and members-at-large for their dedication, effort, and creativity, as well as the professors and faculty lecturers who have always supported us so actively in and outside of the classroom. What is most "classic" about Classics is, I hope this year shows, our curiosity and concern for all people, past and present.

We began the year with BYOBacchae, an annual, oral reading of a Greek or Latin play at the top of Mt. Royal, and a bar night at McKibben's. Thanks to generous donations from alumni and professors, our book sale in October helped us fundraise extra costs incurred by our return in person, while we were still able to borrow from COVID-era flexibility with a well-attended online graduate school panel. In November, the CSA also collaborated with the AUS's weekly Bar-des-Arts to offer a fun, themed "toga night." We concluded the fall with our much-loved Wine and Cheese, a night of food, drink, and conversation which celebrated the hard work of Classics students and faculty.

February and March are always particularly exciting months for the Classics program. From February 2 to 10, the Classics Play presented *Ithacan Idol Presents: The Odyssey*, directed by myself and Emma Weiser. Exploring Odysseus as an unknown character, the play parallels diverse literary receptions across eras and the spontaneity of ancient rhapsodic performance. We met with an excellent response: Three out of our four shows at the Théâtre Sainte-Catherine were sold out, with an additional performance in Westmount. We were also thankful to host Professor Yukai Li (Carleton University) who reflected on epic similes through philosophy of cinema in his talk, "Beyond the action-image: Odysseus as spectator in Deleuze's Cinema." From March 15 to 17, the CSA collaborated with students from Université de Montréal and Concordia University in our 15th annual Montreal Undergraduate Classics Colloquium. The CSA is proud to offer the opportunity for undergraduates to present their research annually.

Our final April event, our Spring Wine and Cheese, summarized a year of thoughtful undergraduate engagement with Classics, both scholarly and creatively through our 21st publication of *Hirundo*, McGill's undergraduate Classics journal, and *Volare's* 6.1 "Katabasis" and 6.2 "Heroides" volumes, dedicated to Classics-inspired art, writing, and other creative responses. As this year comes to a close, another one begins. I look forward to another term as CSA president with a new executive team who I anticipate will bring another exciting year of events, lectures, and creative projects.

## Audrey Michel



Still from the 2023 Classics Play. Photo courtesy of Audrey Michel



The History and Classics Graduate Students' Association had a great year. Coming out of COVID allowed us to welcome the new Ph.D. and Master's cohort with several community-building events. *Topics on Tap* saw a series of excellent talks by students, including Jakub Ferencik ("The Emergence of Nation-States and the Crisis of Democracy in the V4"), Raphaela van Oers ("Assessing Stigma and Prejudice in British Newspapers: Daily Mirror and Daily Mail Coverage of HIV/Aids in the 1980s"), Teddy Paikin ("Imperialism and the Origins of Capitalist Development: An Intellectual History of the Brenner Debate, Dependency Theory and World Systems"), Theo Fady ("We live in Muck and filth": The British press and the end of the St. Giles Rookery, 1849-1853"), Mike Avanzato ("An Evangelist, a Cartographer, and a Spy Walk into a Bar: The Bizarre Story of the Palestine Exploration Fund's Imperial Network"), Madhulagna Halder ("The Ghosts are Calling! Women in Bengali Horror Films"). We also

### Come to Topics on Tap!

Friday, November 25<sup>th</sup> 6-8pm  
Thomson House Room 406



Poster for Theo Fady's Topics on Tap presentation

organized two successful book sales which recouped some funds for future events and lessened the stress on professors' creaking bookshelves. Finally, the *Cundill Fringe* has gone mainstream: graduate students Donnie Morard, Raphaela van Oers, and Luc Foster each defended one of the finalists for the Cundill Prize in a panel chaired Professor Melissa Shaw. Thank you especially to Dr. Twisha Singh for her work with the Cundill festival organizers to bring this event to life and set the table for future events that bring together the HCGSA and Cundill. This year the HCGSA will be busy planning the next McGill-Queen's Graduate Conference in History, set for Winter 2024.

A heartfelt thank you to all the HCGSA members: Donnie Morard (Finance Director and AGSEM delegate), Zoe Neubauer (Topics on Tap Director, AGSEM delegate), Jiarui Xue (Events Director), Frank Xuanyun Gong (Academic Director), Briar Bennett-Flammer (Academic Director), and Riley Wallace (Communications Director).

## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEW PhDs

**Ruxandra Canache:** "Spaces of Marginality and Cultures of Dissent at the Black Sea in Socialist Romania"

Supervisor: Catherine LeGrand

**Eleanor Coulter:** "Geographies of space and time: narrative structures in the maps of Jean-Baptiste Bourguignon d'Anville"

Supervisor: Nicholas Dew

**Urvi Desai:** "Birth Control in Bombay: Market, Technology, and Health, 1930-1960"

Supervisor: Subho Basu

**Courtney Krolikoski:** "Neither sinner nor outcast: communal responses to leprosy in Bologna, 1116-1347"

Supervisors: Faith Wallis and Travis Bruce

**Sonya Pihura:** "Conceptions, Uses, and Transformations of Wetland Environments in England c.1000-1400"

Supervisors: Faith Wallis and Travis Bruce

**Twisha Singh:** "Infamous Performers: A Study of Creative Labour and Socio-Political Identity of Stage Actresses in London and Calcutta, 1850-1950"

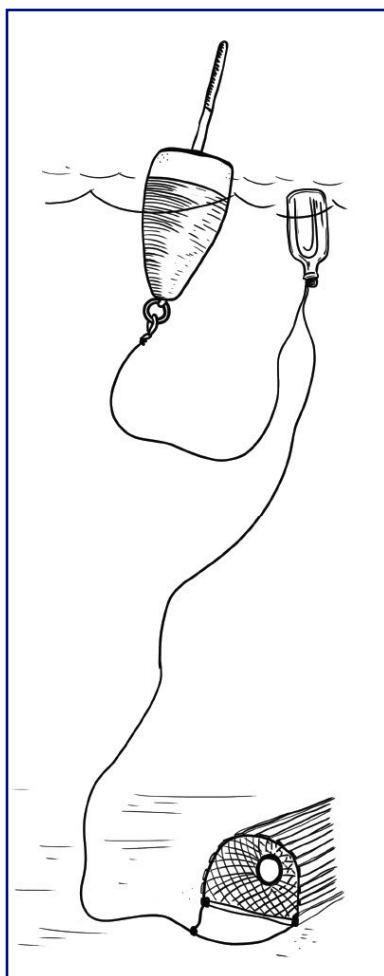
Supervisors: Subho Basu and Elizabeth Elbourne



Dr. Coulter and Dr. Krolikoski at their Fall 2022 Graduation. Photo courtesy of Courtney Krolikoski

# LOBSTERS ARE MORE THAN GOOD EATING

Professor Suzanne Morton



Buoy and Trap. Image by  
Marieke de Roos

If you were to picture the image of a traditional fishery, it would not be surprising if a lobster trap with a small inshore boat came to mind. In many ways the lobster fishery IS a traditional fishery. Over time fishers adopted motorboats that expanded their range fished, came to use mechanized haulers that allowed them to set traps in deeper water, and installed sonar technologies to see ocean bottoms, but regulations froze the basic gear for catching lobsters in early twentieth-century technology. It is one of the only fisheries where the fish participate in their capture – lobsters move to the bait rather than be passively scooped up by gigantic nets hauled by large industrial vessels. My book *Contested Catch: Lobsters, Localism and Canada's Atlantic Coast, 1870-1970* urges you to think differently about what is today,

Canada's most valuable fishery. The lobster fishery is the result of industrialization and transportation changes in the second half of the nineteenth century that permitted preservation through canning and allowed a safe product to get to consumers. The nature of lobster's distribution and the need to immediately process live animals meant that fishing and processing remained decentralized for almost the first hundred years.

The book argues that the development and regulation of the lobster fishery were shaped by the habits of the lobster itself, changing technologies, markets, and ideas about the state. Most importantly, the fishery's development and regulation were fundamentally formed by local and social relations. Local contexts provided meaning, complexity, mutability, and limits to state power and in turn tell us not only about the lobster fishery but also a great deal about the Canadian state at both the local and federal level. The book covers the period from the dramatic expansion of the commercial industry around 1870 until the late 1960s when the lobster fishery became the first restricted access ocean fishery on Canada's East Coast.

Lobster was the first fishery that the new Canadian state had

to regulate from scratch and 2023 marks the hundredth anniversary of the first efforts. This was itself a challenge as Ottawa was controlled by men who Nova Scotian politician Joseph Howe described in 1867 as "who live above the tide, and who know little and care less for our interest or our experience." This resulted in a fascinating mix of imposed (and often ignored) regulations that the federal state had no capacity to enforce, local traditions, or often some combination of the two. From the moment commercial lobster fishing took off, it was almost universally understood that this was a resource that could easily be over-exploited and some kind of management was necessary. The issue was always what regulations were needed, and who got to decide.

Before the late 1960s, lobster was neither a state-managed commodity nor a communally managed natural resource. It was both, with the added complexity of certain access rights strongly associated with individuals or families. These incongruent strategies were held concurrently, and this resulted in conflict. For nearly the first hundred years of its existence, the commercial lobster fishery was a modified open commons. Anyone could fish but fishermen were subject to community mores and an ever-changing series of state regulations, both imposed and requested, whose objectives were a mixture of conservation, price stabilization through supply-side management, and measures to aid the enforcement of the regulations themselves. There was flagrant poaching and violent direct action or vigilantism against those not conforming with community standards or state authorities with the audacity to enforce the law. Although *Contested Catch's* archival research ends with the formal closure of the lobster fishery commons for most of the region by 1970, it sets the stage for the complexity of post 1990s Indigenous issues. The decision to title the book *Contested Catch* was intended to strike a resonant chord with the present-day fishery and provide a historical context that emphasizes that formal and informal regulations around lobster have always been contentious.

Exploring the lobster fishery offers insights into the difficulty that Ottawa had in establishing distant control over regional resources as federal law conflicted with concurrently emerging local customs and practices. It was one of the many places where the state and its citizens negotiated their relationship. Regulation of the lobster fishery could be the face of the state in dispensing charity and patronage or Ottawa responding to threats to its coercive power through force or indifference. The lobster question changed over the last 150 years, but it is still one that turns on local politics as much as economics and the environment.

*Suzanne Morton is a specialist in Atlantic Canadian, gender history, and the state. She is the author of four monographs and former co-editor of both the Canadian Historical Review and Acadiensis. She has taught in the Department since 1992.*



Undergraduates in the Department of History and Classical Studies currently create three publications: *Historical Discourses* (founded 1987), *Hirundo* (founded 2001), and *Volare* (founded 2017). Today, these publications provide students with an outlet for their coursework beyond the myCourses Assignments dropbox, but each publication has its own unique history.

### **Historical Discourses**

*Historical Discourses* is one of the oldest student journals in the Faculty of Arts. Jonathan Becker (McGill '87), one of the journal's founding editors-in-chief and now Director of the Center for Civic Engagement and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Bard College, remembers the initial idea for *Historical Discourses* developing one evening at Gertrude's – known to students today as Gert's Bar and Café. Becker and several of his classmates, including co-editor-in-chief Trevor Dickie, were planning to apply to graduate school. Noticing the importance of publishing in academia but lacking a sufficient venue in which to publish as undergraduates, they founded their own journal.

Both Becker and his classmate Govind Sreenivasan, today an Associate Professor of History at Brandeis University, indicated that their McGill coursework and experiences with *Historical Discourses* were crucial in preparing them for graduate school. Sreenivasan credited his experience as an author and editor with providing him a sense of how historians operate. In its 36-year history, *Historical Discourses* has published hundreds of student essays, providing a forum for excellent term papers, professional development, and even foreshadowing academic careers for many, as for Drs. Becker and Sreenivasan.

### **Hirundo and Volare**

Fifteen years later, students founded *Hirundo* under the guidance of Classics Professor T. Wade Richardson. The first volume of *Hirundo* was interdisciplinary in nature, with members of the editorial board coming from Classics, Philosophy, Religious Studies, Sanskrit, and Economics – to name a few. Authorship and editorship with *Hirundo* has likewise foreshadowed continued graduate studies for some. For example, Dr. Jenny Pelletier (McGill '02) is now a Post-doctoral Researcher in the Centre for Ancient, Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy at KU Leuven (Belgium). Dr. Brahm Kleinman (McGill '10, '12), a beloved Faculty Lecturer in Classics, began his academic career as an editor, author, and finally editor-in-chief of *Hirundo*. Author Neha Rahman (McGill '20) was named a Gates Cambridge scholar and earned an MPhil in Classics before pursuing a career in tech.

As a journal, *Hirundo* has always offered a bit of flair. The first volume included announcements for Latin and Greek sight translation competitions, tips for sight translation, and even a list of Classics reference sources at the McGill Library. Volume 2 (2002) included several ancient recipes ranging from spiced wine to savory cheesecake. Volume 7 (2009) introduced an entirely new feature: a photo

'essay' in the back matter. Such creative additions continued, ranging from art to original poetry. As a first-year student, Rahman felt hesitant to publish a serious academic essay in *Hirundo*, but was comfortable writing poetry in ancient meter. After publishing her poem "Mission Statement" in vol. 15, Rahman was then invited to recite and discuss her poem at a Classics' Student Association event, leading to the inauguration of *Rostra*, an undergraduate speaker series associated with *Hirundo*.

Drawing on this creative history, Aris Keshav (McGill '18) founded *Volare*, a student magazine dedicated to the creative submissions that had previously been relegated only to back matter. *Volare* includes not only poetry, prose, and photos, but fanart, illustration, and any other non-academic work that draws on the classic tradition. Issues are published more frequently, usually twice a term, and are generally thematic, with the most recent issue (6.2) titled *Heroïdes*, with submissions "seek[ing] to explore the perspective of women in antiquity, be it historical figures, goddesses, or the scorned lovers of famous heroes who often get the short end of the stick."

### **Conclusion**

Founding editors and original authors in *Historical Discourses*, *Hirundo*, and *Volare* were all pleased and impressed that their journals continue today thanks to the continued diligence of McGill undergrads. Becker was delighted that the journal he helped to found in the 1980s continues today, and noted that he has many professional publications on his shelf that have not stood the test of time. In the words of Rahman, "it's hard to be a Classics student and *not* hear about things like *Hirundo* and *Volare*." Sreenivasan advised that students continue to print journals rather than relying solely on digital versions. Historians today are grappling with the vulnerability of virtual documents, and Sreenivasan suggests that it is in students' interests, as well as the interest of the Department of History and Classical Studies as a whole, to physically archive our student publications for continued access and preservation. With that suggestion in mind, the library is currently missing several volumes of our student journals. If you have a physical or digital copy of the following journals, please get in touch with Liaison Librarian Kristen Howard ([kristen.howard@mcgill.ca](mailto:kristen.howard@mcgill.ca)) to ensure the longevity of student work.

*Historical Discourses* Vols. 31 (2017), 32 (2018), 33 (2019), 34 (2020)  
*Hirundo* Vol. 16 (2018)

Thank you to Jonathan Becker, Trevor Dickie, Govind Sreenivasan, Jenny Pelletier, and Neha Rahman for their time in sharing their memories of the HCS student journals.

*Kristen C. Howard is the Liaison Librarian for History, Classical Studies, Indigenous Studies, and Religious Studies at McGill University. Kristen completed a PhD in History at the University of Arizona (2020) and a Master of Information Studies at McGill (2022). Her current research projects include a citation analysis of student journals with a focus on *Historical Discourses*.*

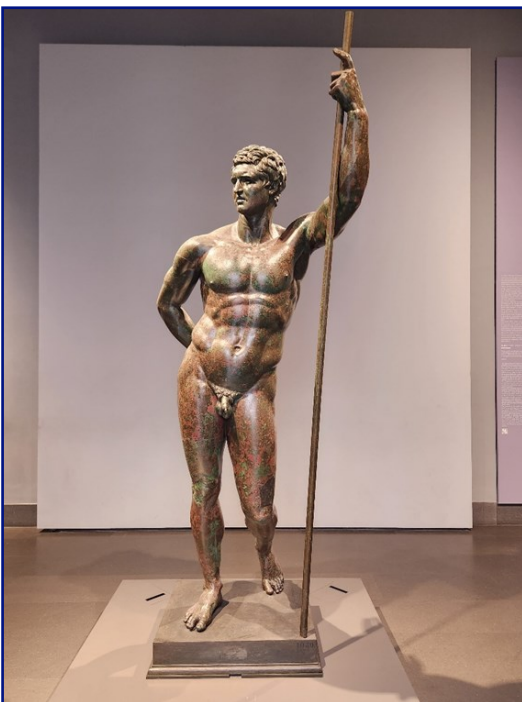


Student Journals. Photo courtesy of Kristen Howard

## LOOTING IN ANTIQUITY?

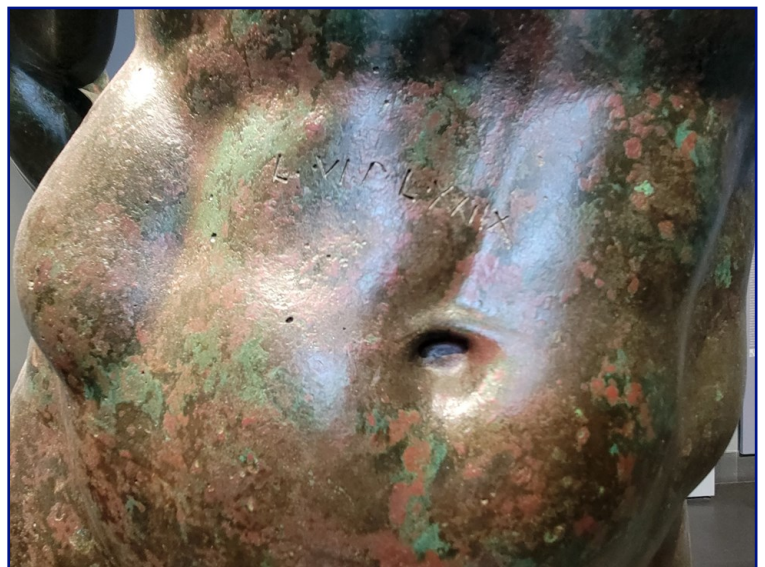
Professor Brahm Kleinman

In the middle of the 80s B.C., prosecutors put the young Pompey, soon to be known as “Pompey the Great,” on trial for the theft of public property (*peculatus*). Pompey and his father, the recently deceased Pompeius Strabo, had spent much of the last decade fighting in internal Roman conflicts: the Social War of 91-89 B.C. against Rome’s Italian allies, and the civil war that erupted in 88 B.C. between the Roman politicians Marius, Sulla, and others. Now under attack for embezzling war plunder from the Italian town of Asculum, Pompey claimed that a freed slave of his father had been responsible for most of the thefts. Prosecutors, however, maintained that Pompey maintained possession of certain hunting nets and books from Asculum. According to Plutarch (*Pomp.* 4.1-2), our main source for this trial, Pompey had in fact taken these objects, but lost them to partisans of Marius when they ransacked his home during the civil war; Pompey and his father had fought on Sulla’s side. Pompey’s dignity during this trial won him great acclaim. He was eventually acquitted, partially due to his sudden engagement to Antistia, the daughter of the praetor who was presiding over the trial. Yet presumably the inability to prove that Pompey still had possession of the hunting nets and books also weakened the prosecution’s case, as Plutarch’s narrative suggests. The fact that looters had stolen them meant his accusers had no physical proof.



The “Terme Ruler,” c. 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. Now in the *Palazzo Massimo* museum in Rome.

This strange anecdote, and especially the focus on hunting nets and books, first drew my attention to the primary topic of my research: public accountability in the middle and late Roman Republic (c. 200-50 B.C.). I especially consider tensions and misconduct surrounding Roman magistrates’ interactions with non-Romans, whether Italian allies, foreign enemies, or those who had become subjects of the Roman empire: “provincials.” Consuls and praetors, the elected Roman magistrates with the highest status, mainly spent their terms on military campaigns or governing provinces, whether in Italy, Spain, Greece, Asia Minor, North Africa, or Gaul. These commanders and governors, once no longer in Rome, were generally freed from the oversight of the senate and people and had opportunities to act in ways that were contrary to legal and cultural norms. Their return to the city and private life led to tensions, since they had to reintegrate into a political culture that stressed power-sharing and seek the approval of their peers for their (often) unilateral decisions. Many attempts to hold ex-officials accountable therefore centered on their conduct in foreign contexts, whether because of their handling of plunder, thefts from provincials, cruelty to allies, unilateral foreign policy, or other problems. Yet there is no single Latin word for accountability, and during the Republic, the Romans never developed institutional, regular systems of public accountability of the kind we find in many Greek *poleis* of the Classical and Hellenistic period, an absence noted by some late Republican Romans, such as Cicero, with apprehension (*Cic. Leg.* 3.11, 47).



Close-up of an inventory inscription on the “Terme Ruler”.



Yet to “render an account” (*rationem reddere*), whether legally, culturally, or politically, became increasingly important as Rome’s empire expanded and the potential for misconduct amplified.

Despite Cicero’s alarm, it is in fact this flexibility that fascinates me. One of my research interests in Roman Republican history has been the interplay between law, imperialism, and cultural practices. So many legal and political attempts to hold former officials accountable, as recorded in our sources, seem to hinge on individual objects, like Pompey’s hunting nets and books. The visibility – or invisibility – of luxury objects became centre-pieces of controversy or symbols of more serious issues.

Hunting nets, for example, were associated with the Greek aristocratic and royal pastime of animal hunting, not, according to some, a “traditionally” Roman elite pursuit. Their significance in Pompey’s trial therefore extended beyond the legal, and perhaps were meant to show his pretensions to royalty.

As Romans increasingly faced controversy for

their “misappropriations” of objects, the Roman elite cultural practice of keeping account books (*libri rationum*) to keep track of money and these goods became an increasingly public virtue. Whereas in the 180s B.C., the Roman war hero Scipio Africanus tore his accounts to shreds when asked by the senate to produce them, his grandson Scipio Aemilianus advertised his accounts publicly and by choice to show off his alleged honesty. Even a statue such as the Terme Ruler, a Greek bronze of a Hellenistic prince that was probably plundered and brought to Italy in the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C., shows this Roman preoccupation with the proper cataloguing of material objects: an inventory number has been inscribed onto the statue’s stomach. One major goal of my research is to explain why “objects” remained a pri-

ority in self-regulation: although Rome’s allies and subjects complained of many types of abuses, thefts and extortions were the most likely to receive redress or to lead to a conviction.

In the story of Pompey, another actor also appears on the scene: the freed slave of his father, Alexander. Although Roman Republican elites liked to claim that they were the ones recording their own accounts, the reality was quite different. Freedmen and slaves often acted as political and economic agents for their owners and former owners, and they, along with public scribes (who were often freedmen), were responsible for handling and registering wealth acquired abroad. The Pom-

pey anecdote perhaps shows one effect of this practice: the deflection of blame onto those of lower status in times of trouble. But more generally in the 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C., we begin to see elite anxieties about the abilities of their freedmen and slaves to profit from Roman power. The topic of accountability provides a window into Roman interactions



A frieze depicting a scribe (far left, with an assistant holding records) recording the census on the so-called “Altar of Domitius Ahenobarbus” from c. the first century B.C. In the Louvre Museum.

with their subjects and Roman misgivings about the Roman empire’s imperialism and administration. It also, however, can be used to examine Roman anxieties about social mobility and the effects of empire upon it.

*Brahm Kleinman is a Faculty Lecturer in the Department of History and Classical Studies. He has taught at McGill since 2018 and regularly offers Roman and Greek history, culture, and language courses. His research interests encompass Roman politics, culture, and provincial administration, alongside Greco-Roman historiography*

## INDIAN OCEAN WORLD CENTRE

2022-3 has been another busy year for the IOWC, with both activities that contributed over recent years to the centre's success, and others exploring new directions.

The most important novel initiative has been the launch of an international network on Slavery, Bondage, and the Environment in the Indian Ocean World. This network, which currently has 85 members from institutions in five continents, is designed to put scholars from across the humanities and social sciences who are working at the intersections of slavery and environmental studies into conversation with each other. The success of our endeavour was illustrated in the network's inaugural online conference and workshop, which we hosted in May 2023. The network and its events will lead to international, interdisciplinary collaborations, some of which are already in the works. News of these will be posted on the network website.

We were also pleased to relaunch our in-person speaker series. Organised in conjunction with our podcast series, which we established during the pandemic, we welcomed in the 2022-23 academic year 6 guest speakers from the Greater Montreal area who spoke on topics that ranged from 1960s global activism in Dar es Salaam to penal farms in the American colonial Philippines. It was also great to see so many of *Chronos*' readers at these events and to hear your comments on our podcast series. Thank you for your ongoing support; we look forward to welcoming and hearing from you moving forwards.

The IOWC continues to be at the forefront of research innovation. One reflection of this is the success of our application to have our *Journal of Indian Ocean World Studies* indexed on SCOPUS. This followed the publication of two issues in the 2022-3 academic year, which included a mixture of original research articles, book reviews, and review essays. We have also continued to support the work of junior scholars, notably with the publication of two working papers (we would be interested to hear from any students who have written papers on Indian Ocean World issues), as well as through the employment of 8 McGill undergraduate research assistants.

Additionally, the Appraising Risk Partnership, led by Prof. Gwyn Campbell, entered its 5<sup>th</sup> year, and Dr. Philip Gooding's climate history research funded by a SSHRC Insight Development Grant entered its 2<sup>nd</sup>. Our publication highlights include Prof. Campbell's co-edited volume on Perceptions and Representations of the Malagasy Environment Across Cultures, Dr. Gooding's collaborative article that integrates historical and climatological methods to reconstruct past climatic conditions in inland Tanzania, and Alexander Springer's (one of our undergraduate RAs) blog post that digitally visualises 19<sup>th</sup>-century disease data from India.

### Indian Ocean World Centre

#### Fall Speaker Series

Refreshments served

**Michael Avanzato** - PhD candidate, History & Classical Studies, McGill  
"An Evangelist, a Cartographer, & a Spy Walk into a Bar: The Bizarre Story of the Palestine Exploration Fund's Imperial Network"

**Aug 30** - Rm 116, Peterson Hall, 3:00 - 5:00

**Dr. Kazuo Takamura** - Institute for the Study of International Development, McGill  
"Paradox of 'Alternatives'? Illiberal Effects of 'Alternatives to Immigration Detention' in Japan"

**Sept 27** - Rm 116, Peterson Hall, 3:00 - 5:00

**Prof. Julie Soleil Archambault** - Sociology & Anthropology, Concordia  
"Exercising Rights: Health, Fitness, & the Street in Urban Mozambique"

**Oct 18** - Rm 116, Peterson Hall, 3:00 - 5:00

**Prof. Esmat Elhalaby** - Historical & Cultural Studies, Toronto (Scarborough)  
"Al-Masudi's Voyage: Empire, Decolonization, & Area Study in India"

**Nov 1** - Rm 116, Peterson Hall, 3:00 - 5:00

**Prof. Mathieu Boisvert** - Science des religions, UQAM

"Analysis of Some Events Prior to & After the 2019 Indian Federal Elections: Foresight to the 2024 Elections"

**Nov 22** - Rm 116, Peterson Hall, 3:00 - 5:00

#### General Inquiries

[www.indianoceancentre.org](http://www.indianoceancentre.org)  
[iowc@mcgill.ca](mailto:iowc@mcgill.ca)



### The IOWC's Fall 2023 Speaker Series

## CUNDILL HISTORY PRIZE 2022-2023



Department of History and Classical Studies  
Students with Marjoleine Kars. Photo courtesy  
of Elizabeth Elbourne

The Cundill History Prize was established in 2008 by former McGill student Peter Cundill. Today it is the world's largest book prize in History, awarded each year to a book exemplifying ground-breaking historical scholarship, superb writing and the capacity to inform public conversation. The prize is administered by the Cundill Foundation but based at McGill. Last year the three finalists were Ada Ferrer, for *Cuba: An American History*, Vladimir Zubok for *Collapse: The Fall of the Soviet Union* and Tiya Miles, *All That She Carried: The Journey of Ashley's Sack, a Black Family Keepsake*. The winner, determined by a distinguished jury headed by environmental historian J.R. McNeil, was Tiya Miles. As juror Martha S. Jones observed, "Tiya Miles' *All That She Carried* is a history that reminds us about what makes us human. The book brings determined research and eloquent compassion to the story of an enslaved mother and her daughter just as they are doomed to be separated, and then discovers how one mother's love survived across time and space in the form of a simple cotton sack". Other jury members were Misha Glenn, Yasmin Khan and Kenda Mutongi. The day before the prize ceremony, last year's winner Marjoleine Kars gave a wonderful public lecture, "A Great Slave Revolt Up Close: Guyana, 1763." Dr. Kars also generously met with students and faculty in the department, sharing her insights about history-writing over a lunchtime seminar. On the morning of the ceremony, the Department's own Kristy Ironside moderated a forum between the finalists, "Passionate histories: The historian and the politics of truth", while graduate students Donnie Morard (PhD 2), Raphaela van Oers (MA), and Luc Foster (MA) debated the merits of each work in a thoughtful panel discussion. Before the hard work of the jury began, a triage jury of McGill historians chaired by Catherine Desbarats helped whittle the list down.

The Cundill History Prize will be awarded at the Winner's Ceremony on November 8, 2023.

For more on the Cundill History Prize or Festival, please see: <https://www.cundillprize.com/>



## PHRIXOS PAPACHRISTIDIS CHAIR IN MODERN GREEK STUDIES

McGill University's History and Classical Studies Department offers a unique opportunity for students to engage in a field course set in beautiful, sunny Greece. Since June 2015, university students from across North America have come together for an intensive month-long course that goes beyond the traditional classroom. This program delves deep into the intricate dimensions of ancient and modern Greek history and culture, primarily situated in Thessaloniki, a city renowned for its vibrancy and cosmopolitan nature, boasting a history of over two millennia. Thessaloniki has even earned distinction as a favoured culinary haven, acknowledged by none other than The New York Times! During the third week, participants embark on a week-long Grand Tour, retracing the steps of illustrious "Grand Tourists" like Chateaubriand, Lord Byron, Mark Twain, and Lawrence Durrell, visiting various cities and historical landmarks. The course weeks are meticulously organized around distinct thematic focal points, offering a diverse range of site experiences, such as exploring Alexander the Great and the opulent tombs of Macedonia to the modern facets of Athens and its state-of-the-art museums. From the magnificence of Epidaurus' ancient theatre to the imperial palace and hippodrome complex of Thessaloniki's Late Antiquity era, and further encompassing the awe-inspiring array of Byzantine churches and the distinctive UNESCO-designated monastic sites of Meteora... to name a few! Engaging with the legacy of diverse cultures within Greece prompts students to learn and reflect on critical themes of this year: Heritage site management, the impact of hypertourism and Climate change; Artefact curation and restitution claims; Human mobilities in the Mediterranean and the coexistence of two worlds; Global South Migrants and Global North Tourists. Amidst these weighty social issues, students find reprieve swimming in the beautiful salty beaches of Greece, relish in its delectable cuisine that caters to every palate, and bask in the glow of sunset accompanied by the melodies of traditional Greek bouzoukia! As we begin the course as strangers, we not only end with a whole new breadth of knowledge but friendships, memories and laughs that will last a lifetime (and some new recipes!). The McGill Summer Studies in Greece presents a truly once-in-a-lifetime experience for students and a dream of any history lover! Keep an eye out for updates as we prepare our application for the 2024 season!



The 2023 cohort. Photo courtesy of Michaela Michalopoulos.

## THE YAN P. LIN CENTRE



Michael Gomez (NYU) delivers the 2022 Yan P. Lin Outreach Lecture. Photo courtesy of Griet Vankeerberghen.

The Yan P. Lin Centre for Freedom and Global Orders in the Ancient and Modern Worlds was founded in 2015 after a generous donation of Dr. Yan P. Lin (Ph.D., 1992). The Lin Centre is composed of six independently operating research groups, each group loosely affiliated with one or more departments or even faculties. Lin Centre funds are used to organize lectures, workshops, and conferences. Two of these research groups, Global Pasts (formerly Global Antiquities), and Transitions and Global Modernities, have always been closely associated with the Department of History and Classical Studies, and have over the past years been able to create stimulating exchanges between guests from outside, and faculty members and students in History at McGill. During the 2022-2023 academic year, Transitions and Global Modernities organized lectures, and a one-day workshop entitled "Bringing the Orthodox back in: Historical Views on the Politics and Economics of Orthodoxy in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> c." Global Pasts initiated its "Materiality of Texts" lecture series, leading to interesting cross-cultural conversations on such topics as the material basis of Roman literacy (Hella Eckard, Reading), Roman divinatory texts (Duncan MacRae, Berkeley), South

Indian temple inscriptions (Leslie Orr, Concordia), and Han Chinese silk manuscripts (Luke Waring, Austin). Global Pasts, in collaboration with Wendell Adjetej, also organized an outreach lecture by Michael Gomez (New York University and author of *African Dominion*) entitled 'The Concept of "Race" and Medieval Africa.' The Lin Centre organizes one lecture each spring that seeks to bridge the interests of the various research groups. The 2023 annual lecture 'Value Capture' was superbly delivered by C. Thi Ngyuen (Utah) at the end of March; Ngyuen's lecture sought to celebrate the creation of the Lin Centre's newest research, Human Nature and Values in the Digital Age. For more on the Centre, see <https://www.mcgill.ca/lin-centre/about>

## THE MONTREAL BRITISH HISTORY SEMINAR

The Montreal British History Seminar had an excellent year. Over the past twenty-six years, the MBHS has provided a forum for those interested in British history across Montreal and the region, particularly faculty and graduate students. In 2022-23 we continued the practice, begun during Covid, of organizing two on-line public lectures a year with the North East Conference of British Studies; our speakers were Michelle Brock (Washington and Lee University) on the culture of covenanting in seventeenth-century Scotland and Robert Tittler (emeritus, Concordia University) on Tudor history and the Institute for Historical Research. At the same time, we returned to a full slate of in-person seminars on campus, in our old home of Thomson House. Speakers included Beat Kümin of the University of Warwick, Lisa Ford of the University of New South Wales, Ted McCormick of Concordia, PhD candidates Nathan Ince and Twisha Singh, both of HCS, McGill and Fiona Ritchie of McGill's Department of English, on topics ranging from the history of actresses in the public sphere to slavery and martial law in the Caribbean. We were grateful to be able to return to in-person informal discussion after seminars. Covid has taught us to take none of this lightly!



Celebrating after Prof. McCormick's talk.

## CREATING THE EMIL HOŠEK MA FELLOWSHIP IN EUROPEAN HISTORY: A CONVERSATION WITH CHAVIVA HOŠEK

Professor Chaviva Hošek has multiple accomplishments over a long and distinguished career, including ten years as the President of the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research. So too did her mother, a strong and talented woman who survived Auschwitz. Dr. Hošek reflects, however, that her father, his life “mangled” by the history of the twentieth century, did not fully “get that chance to rebuild”. Dr. Hošek has created awards for Indigenous students in memory of her husband. To honour her father, however, she turned to music and to history. “The least I can do is give money to people who study the horrors of central Europe”.

Chaviva Hošek’s father Emil Hošek was born in 1911 and her mother Hedy Weisz in 1925, in Ruthenia, under the Carpathian mountains. Ruthenia was then the eastern province of Czechoslovakia, a country that had been cobbled together in 1918 and would be uncoupled by Adolf Hitler. “As a gift to the fascists” Hitler gifted Southern Carpathian Ruthenia to Hungary as part of the Munich accords. By the end of the war, all the town’s Jewish population would have been conscripted as slave labour, transported to concentration camps or shot.

Emil Hošek, like many other Jews from central and eastern Europe was multilingual and accustomed to a world of multiple identities. His family was religious, and he spoke Yiddish, but he also spoke Czech and the Hungarian that was the dominant language of the more secular Jewish community. Before the war, he was married, although not to Hedy – who was young but even then “the prettiest and smartest girl in town”. Hedy’s father ran the estate of Baron Perenyi, where plums were grown to make slivovitz. Emil would lend his future father-in-law a motor cycle to travel around the estate.

During the first four years of the war, the Hungarian government deported thousands of Jews to Poland (where most were killed) and organized Jewish slave labour brigades many of whose members also died. Emil was forced into a slave labour brigade to support the fascist soldiers marching into Ukraine and Russia. When the Nazi incursion failed, he walked back through Ukraine to his home village Nagyszollos/ Vinogradov. There he discovered that his wife had been murdered in Bergen-Belsen, that one of his eighteen year-old twin brothers had died at Theresienstadt and that the other had disappeared. His parents had also been murdered in Auschwitz, but two sisters had survived. Emil joined the Czech army, was appointed a captain, and participated in the liberation of Prague under General Svoboda.

In March 1944 German forces occupied Hungary and installed a puppet regime. The transportation of Jews to Auschwitz began almost immediately. Chaviva Hošek’s mother and two aunts, all adolescent girls, were transported to Auschwitz from their home town, as was her uncle, then fourteen. Twelve-year old Ilona was murdered on the first day. Hedy and Aliza survived and were part of the brutal forced march from Auschwitz as the allies closed in. Mercifully, Dr. Hošek recounts, her grandmother had died of cancer in January 1944 and so was spared Auschwitz. “It was so long ago and yet also yesterday”.

After the war, Hedy and Aliza were in northern Germany. A family story recounts that after the German guards disappeared, one day some Russian soldiers told Hedy not to go home: “if you go home, Stalin will keep you there”. In 1945 they were moved to Czechoslovakia. On the way, they were told by a soldier from their home town that their father Wilmos had died of typhoid at Mauthausen, a few days after the end of the war, but that their little brother was alive. Emil met Hedy again in Prague in May of 1945 and asked her to marry him. Dr. Hošek reflects that at our juncture it is hard to understand such hasty marriages, but that the desire for normalcy after the war was so great, the need for family and the hope for some kind of life so powerful that many people rushed to marry: sometimes wedding guests would decide to use the wedding canopy themselves. It was an unstoppable hope for life after death.

Dr. Hošek remembers that her parents were the best of friends, supported each other through everything and had a very good life. In the aftermath of war, the couple went to Chomutov in Czechoslovakia where Chaviva, their only child, was born. They then went to Israel in 1949, before coming to Montreal in 1952. Emil was unable to find work for a while but eventually worked as a book keeper and as an office manager. Hedy worked as the comptroller of a large textile manufacturing firm in Montreal; in later life she moved to New York, where she died in 2015. Chaviva grew up in Montreal, eventually attending McGill. Emil died in 1966. His daughter remembers his brilliance, his intellectual curiosity, his political engagement, his love for his family and friends and his strength. In his honour she wants central European history to be studied and remembered, in all its complexity. She says she sometimes thinks of her entire childhood as a long conversation with her father.

The Department is profoundly grateful to Dr. Chaviva Hošek for this marvelous gift.



Chaviva Hošek