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The twice-yearly *British Academy Review* contains articles illustrating the wide range of scholarship which the British Academy promotes in its role as the UK's academy for the humanities and social sciences.

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Suggestions for articles by current and former British Academy grant- and post-holders, as well as by Fellows of the British Academy, are very welcome. Suggestions may be sent to the Editor, James Rivington, at pubs@britac.ac.uk

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Cover illustration: Mural of Che Guevara, in the sprawling *barrio* '23 de Enero', in Caracas, Venezuela. The mural is used by locals as a navigational landmark. See article on pages 16–19.

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The two lead articles address issues of current public interest, and it is intended that future issues of the *British Academy Review* will provide such a platform for topical debate.

This issue also has a strong international flavour. Articles reveal both the impact of globalisation at the local level, and how local situations can defy simple global assumptions – as well as showcasing the wide range of scholarship on international subjects that is supported by the British Academy.

Trust in Public Life

On 10 November 2008, the British Academy hosted a panel discussion, chaired by Professor Peter Hennessy FBA, to consider whether public trust in our major public institutions has fallen as much as is widely suggested. The panellists were Baroness Onora O'Neill (President of the British Academy, who gave the 2002 BBC Reith Lectures on 'A Question of Trust'), Richard Wilson (former Cabinet Secretary, now Lord Wilson of Dinton), and Mark Thompson (Director-General of the BBC). In this extract from the occasion, **Richard Wilson** considers public trust in government and politicians.

THE DEPARTURE LOUNGE at Logan Airport, Boston, at 6 o'clock last Wednesday morning was deserted and rather depressing, apart from an Afro-Asian cleaner in the café area who was beaming at the world. I wished her good morning and she burst out, rather shyly, 'Have you heard? Obama has won!' We talked and, remembering that this evening's session was coming up, I said to her, 'Do you trust him?' She was very indignant and she said, 'Of course I trust him. He is my man. He is going to change my life.' Those were her actual words: I rushed off and wrote them on a piece of paper, because I found her delight very moving. But I was torn between my pleasure in her delight, and my fear that I knew the rest of the story already and that she was going to be disappointed. What I would like to do is to explore that cleaner's reaction. I want to offer you a sort of Sir Humphrey meets Onora O'Neill by way of my cleaner at Boston Airport.

I am going to begin with my conclusions. I am going to suggest that it is useful to distinguish between three things. First, public trust in public figures and institutions, by which I mean a willingness on the part of the public to believe that those individuals and institutions will behave in accordance with accepted principles and conventions when they are out of sight; a willingness to rely on them to behave properly at all times, or at any rate when they are on duty. I am not convinced that there has been a decline in public trust in this sense.

I distinguish that from public suspicion of the motives of people in public life and of the language they use. On this, I suspect (I can't

prove it) that there has indeed been an increase in this suspicion and I would argue that in moderation, suspicion is healthy when dealing with power.

My third area that I distinguish is public expectations of what people in public life will achieve on their behalf. I will argue that this is where the real problems lie: not in a decline



Figure 1: Barack Obama promises 'change' in his campaign for the US Presidency.

in public trust, but with disappointed public expectations, and that the basic challenge is either to promise less, or to find a way of delivering more.

Trust in public figures and institutions

Now I am going to take the headings one by one. First, trust in public figures and institutions. It is at least arguable that the public are, if anything, too trusting, rather than that their trust is declining. In the absence of a written constitution, the workings of many of our major institutions – the monarchy, parliament, government, the judiciary, the civil service, our armed forces – depend heavily on trust; that is, on a willingness to believe that people in positions of power are working in accordance with accepted principles and conventions when they are out of sight.

Onora O'Neill, in her fourth Reith Lecture, said that it had become extraordinarily hard to prevent the spread of information. But when I was working in government, I was often surprised at how little information leaked out about the business of government. The public know very little about what ministers say to each other in private when taking decisions; or about their discussions with their civil servants; or about what judges say to each other in private about cases before them; or about what politicians in Parliament say when they converse through the usual channels; or about what the head of state says when she counsels successive Prime Ministers, as she has done for over half a century; or about what our armed forces are doing beyond what those in power are prepared to tell us, which is usually guarded. The press, of course, sometimes obtain leaks; and there is Peter Hennessy in his helicopter; but they cover only a tiny fraction of the daily life of the public sector.

I happen to think that there is a certain sense in keeping policy discussion private. There needs to be room in which people can disagree or say silly things without feeling that it is about to appear in the press. There is a public good in that. More than that, to try to monitor everything that went on in private in public institutions would be beyond the power of anyone. I find Onora O'Neill's analysis on openness and transparency very persuasive.

Even so, there are times when our watchdogs, Parliament and the media in particular, allow those in power considerable latitude. We are, for instance, surprisingly casual about constitutional matters. One of the purposes of a constitution is to regulate the distribution and exercise of power by the institutions of the state. In many societies, this can be a matter of the keenest interest, even of life and death for citizens. And yet in Britain we have undergone, with very little public comment at the time, a quarter of a century of major constitutional change. It has included, for instance, entry into the Common Market and the EU, devolution for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, reform of the House of Lords, the introduction of human rights (or should I say human duties) legislation and freedom of information legislation, and the introduction of a plethora of different forms of voting systems. While the changes took place, the public took relatively little apparent interest. They were hugely trusting. Most comment has only come later, often many years later.

One could argue that, rather than a loss of trust by the public in public institutions, what we have seen over the last decade has been a loss of trust in the public on the part of government. Widespread surveillance on closed-circuit television, routine searches at airports, police monitoring of our cars, prolonged detention without trial, constraints on physical contact between teachers and young pupils, the passage of anti-terrorist legislation so wide that it can be used to confiscate the assets of Icelandic people who are clearly not terrorists. All these and many other things are, no doubt, directed primarily at terrorists and criminals, but they can be interpreted as indicating that the government does not trust any of us, and yet the public meekly accept these things and trust government not abuse their power.

It is not that the public are apathetic. There is a public appetite to know more about what goes on inside our public institutions, and a lot of curiosity about public figures. There is a public willingness to be involved in making a contribution through voluntary activity. The growth of the voluntary sector over the last 25 years is one of the un-sung stories of this country. In Cambridge University alone, 8250 staff and students gave up 370,000 hours of their time for voluntary work in 2006/07.

There is, of course, genuine concern if something appears to have gone wrong, say through the cash for honours affair. Once roused to anger, public indignation is a terrible thing. Many a politician has suffered when their private behaviour has crossed the line of what is regarded as publicly acceptable. But these are exceptions. My point is that the public are, on the whole, remarkably tolerant and that our public life is still largely built on trust.

Suspicion of motives and language

Let me turn to my second point. I would argue that people are fundamentally trusting, but that they are also increasingly inclined to be sceptical about the motives and language of people in public life and public institutions. There is a widespread perception, fair or unfair, that people in public life want to win and to retain power, and therefore they will say whatever they need to say in order to make a good impression of themselves and to portray their opponents in a bad light. For instance, professional news management in government nowadays gives a lot of thought to definition. The American writer Thomas Sacks said, 'In the animal kingdom, the rule is eat or be eaten. In the human kingdom, define or be defined.' Much of modern political language in exchange illustrates this. We hear it every week in Prime Minister's questions, the battle to define or be defined. The public gradually learn this and filter what they hear to allow for it.

It is important to understand why public figures and institutions behave as they do. They carry out their business in the glare of publicity and in the face of intense adversarial politics. Their jobs are very difficult and demanding. Power and influence often depend on reputation, on an individual's perceived effectiveness in what they do; their ability to form good relationships and their ability to perform persuasively in public. These things are not easy to achieve in jobs which frequently require unpopular choices and the simplified explanation of complex issues. We are all familiar with what results. Lying is rare, I would maintain. But there is a constant pressure to engage in half-truths which ignore embarrassment, spin which makes a story sound better than it is, and



Figure 2: Participants at the 'Trust in Public Life' panel discussion: Lord Wilson of Dinton, Professor Peter Hennessy FBA (Chairman), Baroness O'Neill (President of the British Academy), and Mark Thompson. Photo: David Graeme-Baker.

invasions and jargon which avoid admission of failure.

It would not be accurate or fair to label every public pronouncement in this way. There are other motives in public life, including a wish for public service, and a desire to do good or to achieve a particular policy end for altruistic reasons. It is important to allow that motives are often honourable, and that even the most manipulative language may contain the truth. But the growth of professional news management has, I suggest, been paralleled by increased sophistication in the way that public pronouncements are received by the media and the public. So we are in a bind.

Increasingly professional news management is matched by an increasingly suspicious audience. I see no easy way out of this. More use of plain English would help. So would a requirement on the press to public corrections of inaccurate reporting with the same degree of prominence as the original error. But on the whole I would argue that the bind which I have described is the price which we have to pay for a lively, messy democracy and that only the workings of democracy itself can get us out of it.

Disappointed public expectations

My third point related to expectations aroused by politicians and the fulfilment or disappointment of those expectations. The public do have an instinct to project their hopes and longings onto their leaders. Those projections may be unrealistic, but if widely shared they can have powerful political significance. A politician who can understand the mood of the public and give voice to it in a way which mobilises support, is hugely powerful.

There are, however, two dimensions to this aspect of public trust. One is the leadership which inspires the public trust. To a large extent this is a matter of overcoming the suspicion which I described just now, and voicing public concerns in a way which resonates with the public. The large majorities won by the Thatcher and Blair governments suggest that there is no decline in the willingness of the public to trust, if the rhetoric and personalities match the mood.

But the other half of the coin is the need for such leadership, once it has won power, to deliver on its promises. If I had more time, I was going to quote figures that show the degree to which Stalin is still trusted in the

Soviet Union. Public trust is undoubtedly a complex matter, but such cases are rare. For most ordinary political leaders, the challenge is to satisfy the expectations which have been aroused, and to avoid a reckoning at the next election which might come if there had been much disappointment.

It seems to me that this is where the real issues arise. The problem is not about a decline in public trust, but about rising public expectations of government and the corresponding struggle of people and institutions in public life to fulfil those expectations and to avoid disappointment.

There is much to debate here. In many ways, the questions are more about management than politics, or at any rate, more about the relationship between management and politics. How can public service be improved without the incentives and disciplines of the marketplace? How can the needs of good politics be reconciled to the needs of good management? – because, believe me, they are not the same. Why do manifestos seem to matter so little once a government has been elected? Why do political leaders so frequently promise more than they can deliver? Do they need more training for the job, or do we all need a more realistic understanding of what the public sector can deliver?

These are real areas for debate, and they are more important than any decline in public trust as such. Policies for improving the performance of public services have been a major preoccupation for central government for decades. Either the public sector should promise less and perform less, or we need some breakthrough in the way our public services are run, which does not involve the micro-management which Onora O'Neill has described so effectively.

To return to my cleaner in Boston, I am not worried that her trust in Obama will decline.



Figure 3: Mark Thompson and Richard Wilson.

The very fact of his election is, in some way, a vindication of her trust in him, and I would not be surprised if the American election last Tuesday was an event which she will remember with pleasure for the rest of her life. What bothers me is that he may have promised more than he can deliver, and her expectations of him may be disappointed. Time alone will tell.

Richard Wilson was Secretary of the Cabinet in the early years of the Blair government, from 1998 to 2002. Lord Wilson is now Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, non-executive chairman of the banker C. Hoare & Co., and a non-executive director of BSkyB.

An audio recording of the whole 'Trust in Public Life' panel discussion can be found via www.britac.ac.uk/events

THE PANEL DISCUSSION on 10 November 2008 took place immediately after the BBC had been hit by a storm of controversy following the Radio 2 'prank calls' broadcast by Russell Brand and Jonathan Ross. Mark Thompson, Director-General of the BBC, who spoke about 'trust in the media', opened his remarks with a reference to the recent episode.

The first thing I wanted to say is that I am almost in a category of one, in a sense of being the leader of a major media organisation who sends out its investigative journalists and its film crews and its men and women with microphones, but also sometimes finds himself absolutely on the receiving end of all of the above. I have both sensations. I have the sensation of being the Editor in Chief for the BBC, and trying to co-ordinate and lead the BBC in the way that it holds other institutions in this country to account. But sometimes when we get it wrong, which we do from time to time – and sometimes, as we did in the matter of the Russell Brand Show, we get it pretty badly wrong – I find myself absolutely in the same spot as the politician, or increasingly the banker perhaps now, arriving on the pavement to discover two or three hundred people. When you open the door of the car, one of the photographers hops into the car, and you say, 'Do you want to drive off, or should I?'

That sense of the all-pervasive attention of the British media in the matter of trust and accountability is interesting when you are on the receiving end. Two thoughts from me. Firstly, paradoxically, when there are problems with trust in institutions in which people lay a great deal of trust, the terrible thing that is public indignation becomes most intense. People really do, understandably, get indignant when they feel that trust has been betrayed in almost any way.

Secondly, after the events of the last couple of weeks, my own sense has been that, although it can be punishing and it can feel pretty uncomfortable and tough when a public institution makes a significant mistake, I don't think it is unfair or unreasonable that it should be held to account. And I say that having been very recently on the receiving end of it.

The Good Friday Agreement, Ten Years On

On 5 November 2008, the Institute of Irish Studies at Liverpool University hosted a panel discussion, in partnership with the British Academy. The panel brought together key players who had brokered the 1998 Agreement, with others who are currently involved in the long-term process of cementing peace by facilitating reconciliation. The event was opened by Lord David Owen, Chancellor of the University. It was chaired by the Director of the Institute, **Professor Marianne Elliott FBA**, who served on one of the peace commissions preceding the Good Friday Agreement, and continues to write on issues underlying the conflict: here she reports on the evening's discussion. The event attracted a capacity audience of nearly 200 members of the public, the academic community and students. The previous weekend the homecoming parade of Royal Irish Regiment soldiers from Afghanistan had highlighted the tensions and problems remaining and a number of speakers referred to it in their comments.

Lord Owen opened the proceedings by drawing on his own experiences in conflict zones and describing the various peace lectures and programmes organised by the Institute of Irish Studies over the past decade. Given the current reality, whereby it is the extremes (Sinn Féin and the DUP) who are sharing power in Northern Ireland, seemingly

having walked away with the spoils, he drew attention to the problem of middle parties such as the SDLP and Ulster Unionists being sidelined, and called for a secondary mechanism to be opened up to broaden the political spectrum.

Jonathan Powell had been Tony Blair's Chief of Staff. He had been central to brokering the Good Friday Agreement, and maintained contact with the contesting parties through to the successful decommissioning of IRA weapons and the setting up of the devolved power-sharing structures of 2007. His perseverance had shown the importance of continuity of personnel in bringing conflicts to an end. On 5 November he delivered what Dr Maurice Hayes called 'a master-class on peace negotiating'. He was keen to stress that Northern Ireland was not similar to other conflict zones and much of his experience in ending the war was not transferable. That said, he believed that Northern Ireland offered key lessons in conflict resolution.

The first was to understand fully the history of the conflict and accept that peace, as with the Good Friday Agreement, might be 'an agreement to disagree'. Secondly, ending conflict is a process. Whatever the troughs and pain along the way, it should be kept going, giving hope that it will eventually

break through. In the Middle East the absence of a clear process allowed the Oslo Accord to unravel.

Thirdly, an element of 'constructive ambiguity' helped. But there are dangers to the necessary vagueness, and he pointed to a key speech by Tony Blair which terminated the vagueness and the unravelling which had started to happen. Fourthly, 'strong facilitators' are needed: it is sovereign governments which can make things happen, Britain in the case of Northern Ireland, the US in the Middle East. Fifthly, both sides need to accept that there is no military solution. The fact that this had already happened in the 1970s in Northern Ireland is a grim reminder of what a long haul peace-building can be. The Sri Lankan Government, he thought, had thrown away its peace-initiative by thinking it could actually defeat the Tamil Tigers. Lastly, you should always keep the door open to your enemies – as the British Government had to the IRA – even Al Quaida. He also thought that peace in Northern Ireland was brought about by a number of remarkable leaders: Mo Mowlam, David Trimble, Gerry Adams, Ian Paisley and Tony Blair, whose 'messianic zeal', whilst often criticised, was needed in Northern Ireland.

Dr Maurice Hayes (former Northern Ireland Ombudsman, member of the Patten Commission on policing) applauded those who had brokered the Good Friday Agreement and made daily life so much better for people in Northern Ireland. He traced the building-blocks, the handing-on of the baton from the time of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, the key players who had done so, including John Major and Peter Brooke. He recognised the problems and difficulties, and thought the major victory for Unionism (in having the Union recognised by all parties to the negotiations) was undersold to its supporters by its leaders. Sinn Féin had sacrificed far



Figure 1: Irish Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, US Senator George Mitchell, and Minister Tony Blair shake hands after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement on 10 April 1998. Photo: Dan Chung/AFP/Getty Images.

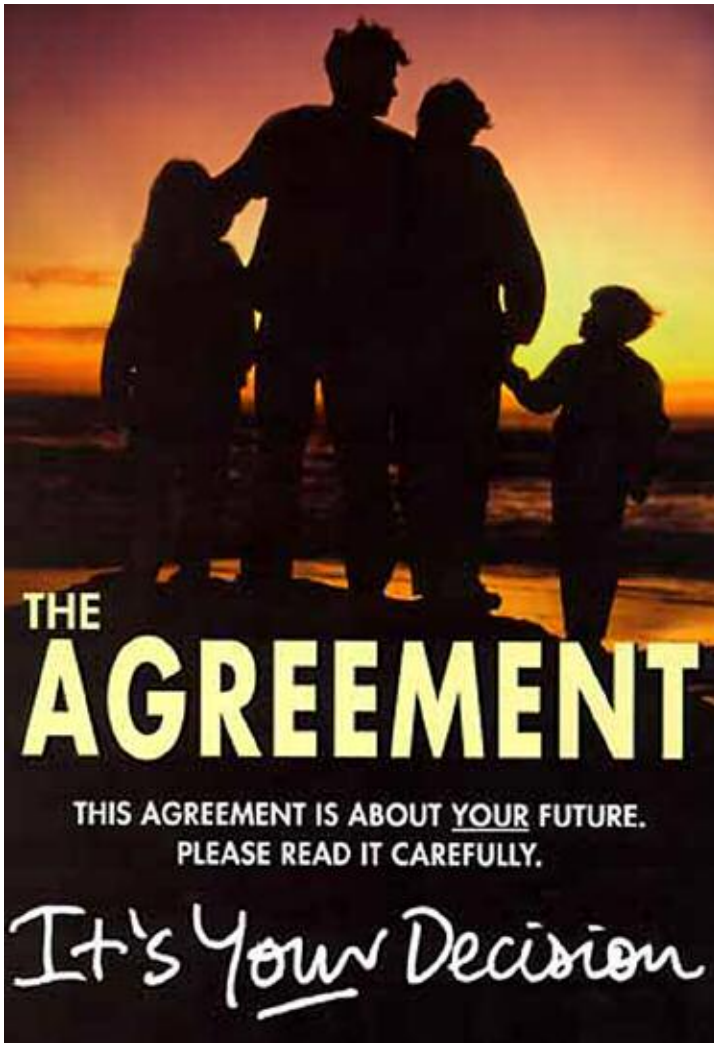


Figure 2:
The Agreement,
published ahead
of the May 1998
referendum.

Discussion then moved on from the high politics of peacemaking and the historic nature of what had been achieved in 1998, to the festering problems which remain, notably sectarianism. In both Duncan Morrow's and Malachi O'Doherty's presentations (and in the open discussion which followed), there were calls to the sovereign governments not to step away and assume that peace had been achieved. **Dr Duncan Morrow**, former academic, now Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council, posited a choice between 'truce' and 'transformation', and he felt less optimistic than he had done a year ago. He thought the history of Northern Ireland had been one of 'containment', allowing Britain and Ireland to walk away, leaving those inside to deal with the problem. In the aftermath of the Good Friday Agreement he warned that devolution was a 'truce' rather than 'transformation', and that the agreement to disagree had not created sufficient agreement. There was an absence of a shared vision, a tendency to speak in 'green' or 'orange' terms, where levels of historic hatred can be easily rekindled. He paid tribute to the remarkable transformation brought about in policing by the Patten Commission (1999). But there had been little else since, and he concluded by applying the idea of a Gramscian moment to the current state of the peace process in Northern Ireland: 'the old is dead, but the new is not yet born.'

more and he pointed to an under-applauded achievement for which Sinn Féin should be given credit: the breaking of the age-old cycle of republican violence without a major split. He agreed that the politicians needed to act more responsibly by taking responsibility, rather than creating a political vacuum. And (citing Sinn Féin protests at the soldiers' homecoming parade) he criticised them for not allowing to others the 'parity of esteem' they demanded for themselves. But he was optimistic, for he thought the extremes had moved to the centre.

David Cooney, Irish Ambassador to the UK and before that to the United Nations, felt it important to emphasise that the constitutional issue (i.e. whether Northern Ireland should remain British or be re-united with the rest of Ireland) was no longer ambiguous. It was not 'parked'. The Good Friday Agreement

had explicitly declared that you could be British, Irish or both in Northern Ireland; that it was for the people of Northern Ireland to decide their future and thereafter for those North and South to do so. And since the Unionist tradition was that of the majority, it may have looked as if they had won. In fact everyone had, but the *quid pro quo* for Unionism was that Northern Ireland had to change, and he thought the removal of symbols, the devolution of policing and the passage of an Irish Language Act were taking far too long. None, he explained, involved a diminution of Britishness. On the other hand, he too was critical of how republicans had rejected the army's right to its homecoming parade. Despite the hiccups, he drew attention to another major gain of the Good Friday Agreement: the huge improvement in British-Irish relations. 'I am,' he admitted, 'the luckiest Irish Ambassador ever to hold the job.'

The idea that we may have achieved peace but not transformation was taken a stage further by Belfast journalist, writer and broadcaster, **Malachi O'Doherty**. Could violence return, he asked? He thought that we should not be too complacent in thinking that it would not. The Good Friday Agreement was a miracle, but there have been few since. Dangerous sectarianism was still in the air and the 'sectarian needling' of each other by Sinn Féin and the DUP was conflict by other means. Neither, he thought, was showing sufficient consideration for the problems of the other. He then analysed in detail the event which had been raised by several other panellists: the very tense situation which had developed around the Royal Irish Regiment parade the previous weekend. Here Sinn Féin had played the sectarian card by calling a counter parade. As a result, where perhaps only several hundred

army supporters might have attended the parade, 30,000 did so, a dangerous clash only being averted by the paramilitaries policing their own sides. It was a sharp reminder that the underlying causes of the conflict remain

combustible and sectarianism is rife. The main churches may now be preaching reconciliation, but, as Malachi O'Doherty explained, the evangelical supporters of the DUP remain outside ecumenism.

In the open discussion which followed, there was some bridging of the gap that seemed to have opened up between the sustained political and diplomatic activities which had produced the Good Friday Agreement miracle, and the reality of continuing communal tensions on the ground. The fear that the British and Irish governments would turn their back on the province was calmed. Even so, it was up to the parties themselves to make the deal, though they needed reminding that the deal was a trust and not theirs to wreck. They needed to move beyond playing to their side's gallery (and fears), instead selling the Good Friday Agreement as having made Northern Ireland a better place to live. Ultimately, as Maurice Hayes concluded, people's insecurities needed calming by hundreds of small acts; these needed championing from the top and he thought we should not underestimate what is going on at this level.



Figure 3: Participants at the panel discussion. Back row, left to right: Jonathan Powell, Duncan Morrow, David Cooney, Maurice Hayes, Tim Brassell (British Academy, Director of External Relations). Front row, left to right: David Owen, Marianne Elliott (Chair), Malachi O'Doherty.

Professor Marianne Elliott OBE FBA is Director,
Institute of Irish Studies, University of Liverpool.

Latin America, the Caribbean, and the British Academy

Professor Linda Newson FBA, *Chairman of the British Academy's Area Panel for Latin America and the Caribbean*, describes how the Academy supports research on – and with – this dynamic part of the world.

The Latin America and the Caribbean Panel was formally established in 2005, along with an Africa Panel, following a decision by the International Policy Committee to broaden and deepen the British Academy's connections with parts of the world with which it had previously had no institutional relationship. The Panel currently comprises ten academics drawn from humanities and social science disciplines in UK universities, together with the presidents of the Society for Latin American Studies and Society for Caribbean Studies, and representatives of the British Council and British Museum.

Institutional agreements and partnerships

The British Academy's traditional approach to establishing formal links with institutions overseas has been through signing agreements with similar academies overseas. However, for the most part such institutions do not exist in Latin America and the

Caribbean. At best, the interests of the humanities and social scientists fall under the umbrella of academies for the sciences. In seeking to establish agreements the Panel therefore decided to focus on the major funding agencies of selected countries.

One of those was CAPES (Brazilian Federal Agency for Support and Evaluation of Graduate Education), and in September 2007 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with them and the Brazilian Academy of Sciences. This is the first agreement that the British Academy has made with any institution in Latin America and the Caribbean. Aimed at facilitating research collaboration, it also provides for an annual meeting of scholars in both countries on an agenda of common interest. The first meeting was held in Rio de Janeiro in November 2008 on the topic of 'Debating Difference in Contemporary Society' (Figure 1). Leading social scientists from the UK and Brazil dissected the theoretical framework through which difference is discussed, debated inequality in the labour market and in modern multicultural society, and considered the intersection between violence and sexuality and its role in the construction of gender difference.

At the same time progress is being made in signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Consejo de Ciencias Sociales in Cuba, which it is hoped will provide support for UK scholars researching in and on Cuba.

Partnerships between institutions in the UK and those in Latin American and Caribbean countries are encouraged through our flagship scheme, the UK–Latin America and the Caribbean Link Programme. This provides awards of up to £20,000 each to support a programme of seminars on a topic of mutual interest within the humanities and social sciences, with one held in the UK and the other in a Latin American or Caribbean country. So far the topics have included social policy and inequality, stardom in Brazilian cinema, disability, archaeology and linguistics in the Andes (reported on page 11), and governance in the non-independent Caribbean (Figure 2). The programme is still in its infancy, but these awards have already produced significant publications and, as intended, have resulted in formal agreements between partner institutions that will

Figure 1: A discussion session during the 'Debating Difference in Contemporary Society' meeting, held in Rio de Janeiro in November 2008.





Figure 2:
From a poster
advertising a
British Academy-
supported
seminar, held at
the University of
Puerto Rico in
April 2008.

extend beyond the lifetime of the awards. Not surprisingly, these awards are highly competitive: while receiving over thirty applications a year, at present we can only commit to supporting two.

Other opportunities for support

The other scheme which has helped develop links with individuals in Latin America and the Caribbean is the Visiting Fellowship Programme, which is run by the British Academy's International Policy Committee. This scheme enables early-career scholars from overseas, working in any branch of the humanities or social sciences, to spend two to six months in the UK undertaking a clearly specified research project. Some funding is earmarked for scholars from Latin America and the Caribbean, and so far seventeen awards have been made on topics as diverse as Shakespeare in Caribbean literature, graffiti in Pompeii, post-conflict societies in South Africa and Colombia, the sociology of domestic maids in Brazil, and black British Caribbean migrants in Cuba (see page 21).

Of course it should be stressed that these dedicated funding opportunities are not the only way in which the British Academy supports research on and with this region. In the 2007/08 academic year, the Academy

made research grants totalling over £500,000 for work relating to Latin America and the Caribbean. One example is the work on the urban slums of Brazil, Venezuela and Bolivia, reported on page 16.

In addition, through its Learned Societies Programme, the British Academy supports the Joint Initiative for the Study of Latin America and the Caribbean (JISLAC) – a consortium comprising the Society for Latin American Studies, the Society for Caribbean Studies, and the Standing Conference of Centres of Latin American Studies.

Research co-operation

The Latin America and the Caribbean Panel also plays a national role in facilitating research co-operation and funding. In March 2008 it held a conference on Latin American and the Caribbean Research Funding. The aim was to bring together the major funders of research on the region in the UK and from Latin America to exchange information on their funding policies and strategies. It was attended by representatives from DIUS, DFID, ESRC, the British Council, and from CAPES (Brazil) and the Consejo de Ciencias Sociales (Cuba), and about thirty scholars from UK universities. It was clear from the conference that there was a need to improve communication between the scholarly

community and government, and that attempts should be made to develop links with European organisations. The latter is actively being pursued.

It is the intention that a follow-up conference will be held, but it was thought appropriate first to commission a review of the state of Latin American and Caribbean studies in the UK; this is scheduled to appear in Spring 2009. This is being undertaken alongside the development, by JISLAC, of a research portal of scholars' interests.

Wider communication of research

The Latin America and the Caribbean Panel has been particularly active in conceiving and supporting a number of events that have attracted wide audiences. Particularly successful was the symposium that was held at the Academy on 'Mexico City through History and Culture' in October 2007. This symposium involved some of the most eminent scholars of Mexican history and culture from both Mexico and the UK. The keynote speaker was Mexico's foremost urban chronicler, Carlos Monsiváis, an extract of whose talk appears on page 19. The symposium attracted a capacity audience and was broadcast on Mexican television. The full papers presented at the symposium are to be published in the British Academy's

Occasional Papers series in 2009. Through this event the Panel has developed a close working relationship with the Mexican Embassy, with whom it intends to mount a significant conference and other events on the centenary of the 1910 Mexican Revolution.

Meanwhile, we have supported a number of events focusing on film, including conferences on film and the Falklands/Malvinas war (Warwick University), and on urban Latin America in film and music (University of Manchester). In November 2008 Professor Paul Julian Smith, newly elected a Fellow

of the Academy, gave a lecture on 'Transnational Cinemas' – to link up with the 7th Discovering Latin America Film Festival (Figure 3). Professor Smith examined three theoretical models of transnational cinemas, which he illustrated with films clips and insights into films that were shortly to be premiered in the UK. His lecture drew a large audience that included many people from outside the academic world.

For 2009 the Panel has planned a study day on Mexican food history. This is to be held at the British Museum in association with the Moctezuma exhibition – the last in the

Museum's series of very popular exhibitions focusing on emperors.

More on the British Academy's International Engagement programmes, and on the work of its Area Panels, can be found via www.britac.ac.uk/intl

Figure 3: *The 2008 film 'Blindness', by the Brazilian film director Fernando Meirelles, is discussed by Professor Paul Julian Smith FBA at the British Academy, November 2008.*



Not the Incas? Weaving Archaeology and Language into a Single New Prehistory

In September 2008, the British Academy sponsored a unique gathering of world specialists in the prehistory of the Andes.

Dr Paul Heggarty and Dr David Beresford-Jones, the conveners and specialists respectively in the linguistics and archaeology of the region, discuss this test-case in how to converge the divergent perspectives of various branches of the humanities into a single, coherent vision of the human past.

For tourists and scholars alike, few vanished civilisations outdo the Incas in mystique: their wilful choice of breathtaking natural settings for a string of 'lost cities'; the enigmatic, haphazard perfection of their stonework; and their calamitous end at the hands of a tiny band of Spanish adventurers.

The story of this final cataclysmic clash of civilisations is well known; but for all periods before the conquest our sources are mute. The Incas had won and run their 'Stone Age' Empire with neither sword nor pen. They have left us no true history — or at least none we can yet decipher. They encoded their records not in texts but in multi-coloured strings, knotted intricately together into both 'accounting' and 'narrative' versions of the *kipu* (Figure 1). So elaborate was this record-keeping system that not only did it enable them to administer their vast, mountainous

realm, but it has also frustrated the best efforts of generations of would-be code-breaker scholars.

So to piece together an understanding of the human past in the Andes we must look instead to a range of other tools across the humanities. For archaeologists, a succession of civilisations rose and fell in the Central Andes to leave one of the richest material culture records on Earth, ideally preserved in one of its driest deserts along Peru's Pacific coast. Historians and anthropologists, meanwhile, negotiate the many pitfalls in interpreting the conflicting mytho-histories of the Incas, as recorded only through the distorting prism of the conquistadors' world-view. And perhaps least expected is how, by comparing a plethora of indigenous languages and dialects across the Andes, linguists can infer rich *historical* detail in the patterns of their origins. Together these might tell us the tale of the Andean past, a rich seam in the story of humankind. For the Andes rank prominently among humanity's

rare independent hearths of agriculture and the development of a 'pristine' civilisation, with a pedigree of five millennia upon which the Incas are but the icing on the cake.

Yet while each of the disciplines of prehistory opens up its own partial window on the past, frustratingly their different perspectives do not yet converge into a coherent, focused vision. On the contrary, specialists in each field have all too long proceeded largely in ignorance of great strides being taken in the others. The prospects are all the brighter, then, for a spectacular advance in our understanding, if we can at last weave all these disparate stories together. Indeed, the Andes prove a valuable case-study for how one might achieve a more holistic view of prehistory in other regions of the world too. The task is all the more urgent here, as both our archaeological and linguistic records are progressively and irrecoverably destroyed: by 'grave-looting' to supply the market in illicit antiquities; and by the inexorable, imminent extinction of almost all indigenous languages.



Figure 1: *The 'kipu': an Inca-era example of the undeciphered Andean record-keeping (and narrative?) system.*

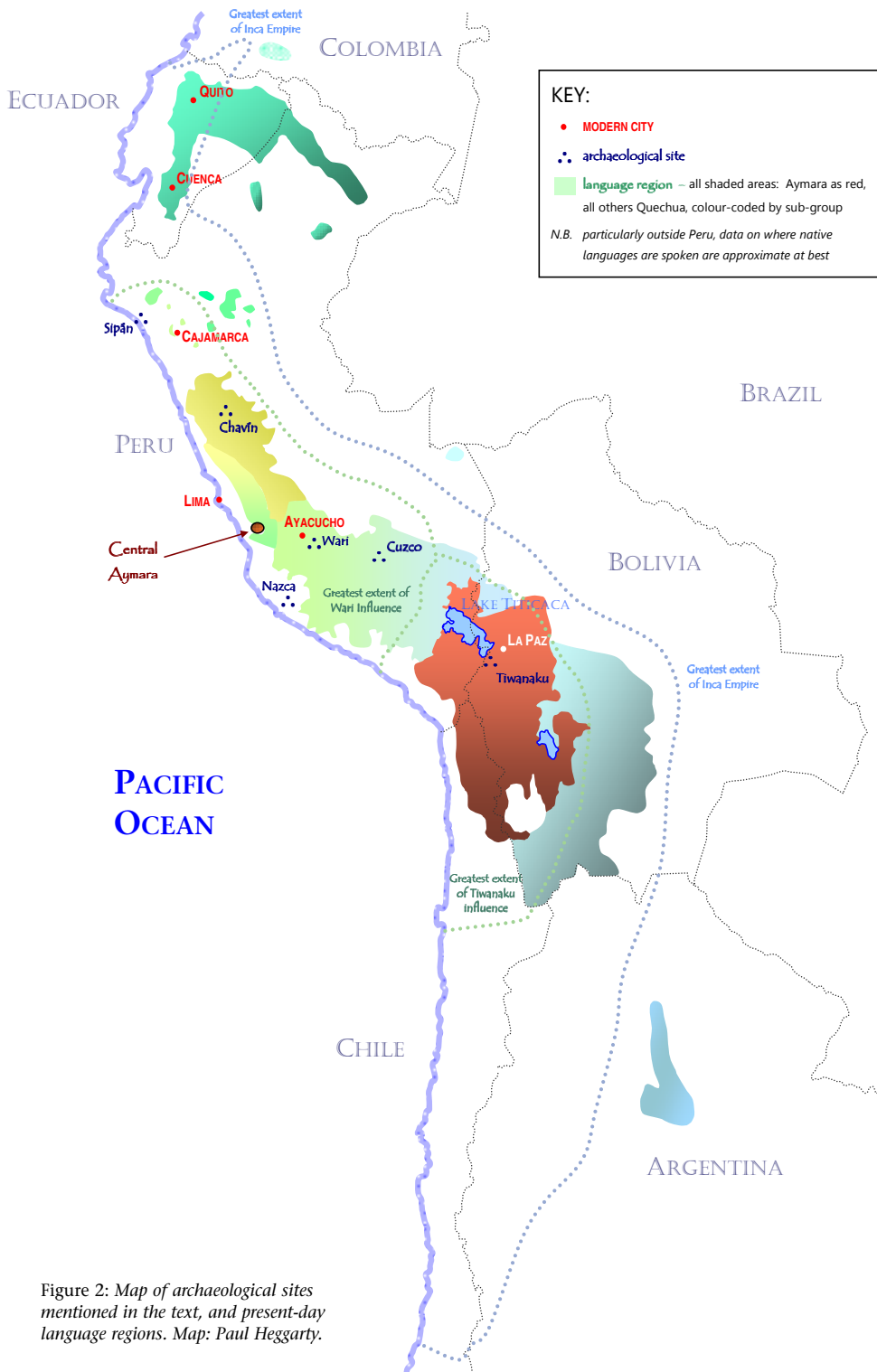


Figure 2: Map of archaeological sites mentioned in the text, and present-day language regions. Map: Paul Heggarty.

Archaeology and Linguistics in the Andes is a research project under the British Academy’s UK–Latin America/Caribbean Link Programme, to facilitate just such a meeting of minds between specialists in all fields with a stake in uncovering the rich prehistory of the region. It is founded upon a partnership

between the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research at the University of Cambridge, and the linguistics and archaeology departments at one of the leading universities in the Andean countries themselves, the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (PUCP) in Lima.

Our UK phase was held in September 2008. A three-day specialists’ symposium was held in Cambridge, followed by a further one-day focus on the post-conquest period at the Institute for the Study of the Americas (University of London). Both institutes provided top-up funding of their own to welcome leading authorities also from North America and continental Europe. Finally, our key international visitors gave an open day of publicly-oriented lectures, hosted by the Americas section at the British Museum. In 2009 the programme moves to the Andean countries themselves, where the British Academy’s funding will allow a group of UK specialists to play a leading role in a follow-up symposium at the PUCP, then a public lecture series there and in other cities across the Andes. Three separate volumes of proceedings are being prepared, arising out of each of the symposia.

The Cambridge symposium served first to shatter convincingly a number of popular myths about the language history of the Andes, not only peddled among tourists and guidebooks to Peru, but until now still all too current even among archaeologists and historians.

The greatest survivor from the speech of the Americas before the conquest is Quechua. Yet few appreciate that it is not a single language, but a language family whose time-depth and expansion have significant historical implications. Despite half a millennium of decline under the domination of Spanish, especially acute in recent decades, it clings on as the native speech of an ‘ageing population’ of perhaps seven million speakers, scattered from southernmost Colombia to north-western Argentina, a living human link to their roots in the time before Columbus. Cuzco itself, the former Inca capital, remains today a heartland of Quechua: the language of porters on the Inca Trail, for instance, and of the very name of *Machu Picchu* (*Old Peak*).

The geographical distribution of Quechua today even makes for an uncannily close overlap with the greatest extent of the Inca Empire in the fateful year 1532 (see Figure 2). The Incas themselves promoted Quechua as their ‘official language’ of Empire. The parallels seem obvious with how Rome once drove the expansion of Latin — since transformed into its various modern

descendants, the *Romance* languages Portuguese, Spanish, Catalan, French, Italian and *Romanian*. So it was the Incas, surely, who were likewise responsible for spreading the Quechua language family?

The other great linguistic survivor in the Andes is Aymara, in regions centred on Lake Titicaca and the ancient realm of Tiwanaku, whose ruins stand near its southern, Bolivian shore. Again, modern language geography fits neatly with the extent of an ancient state, and the 'linguistics and archaeology' game seems easy. All too easy, in fact; for a closer inspection of the language data turns out to betray Aymara's spread here as far too recent to be compatible with the millennium or more elapsed since Tiwanaku fell. Nor can it explain Aymara's 'long lost cousin' still spoken many hundreds of miles to the north east, in a few isolated mountain villages inland from Lima.

More strikingly still, linguistics also convincingly explodes the popular myth that sees all Quechua as the work of the Incas. For while the far-flung dialects of Ecuador and Bolivia may well be imputed to their imperial ambition, Quechua had spread far across Peru many centuries before the Incas first rose out of obscurity. Their own heartland, meanwhile, is dotted with placenames that are not Quechua but Aymara: the river *Vilcanota* flowing through the 'Sacred Valley of the Incas', past *Ollantaytambo*, site of a pitched battle against the conquistadors; even *Cuzco* itself, the 'owl stone', recalling one of the Incas' origin myths (the popular 'navel of the world' etymology seems quite unfounded). Spanish chronicles even report a 'secret language' of the Inca nobility, citing a few verses that betray clear Aymara origins, and point at an even earlier stage perhaps to Puquina, the likely real language of Tiwanaku, in line with another Inca origin myth.

In short, the Andes provide an object lesson in how comparative linguistics can tear up any simple assumptions based on where languages happen to be spoken today. Our first symposium set about wiping the slate clean, to start afresh from first principles in how to go about linking the different disciplines of prehistory. Direct, strong correspondences need to be established on each of three key levels: geography, chronology and causation. In other words,

archaeological and linguistic patterns must match in the right place, at the right time, and for the right reason. Particular importance was attached to how language spreads do not 'just happen' in a demographic and social vacuum. As with Rome, spectacular linguistic impact occurs *only* when a language has behind it a real-world driving force of a scale to match. On these principles, the conveners launched the symposium with a radically new proposal for the prehistory of the Andes, deliberately provocative for cross-disciplinary thinking and debate.

Archaeologists see the chronology of the region as a sequence of three 'Horizons', periods of interaction or unity across great expanses of the Central Andes; the last of these was the Inca Empire, for instance. Between these came two 'Intermediate' Periods, when that unity broke down into smaller and more regionally limited polities: among them Nazca, responsible for 'drawing' the famous Lines; and Moche, whose splendour is now revealed through the royal tombs of Sipán. The conveners proposed a working principle that great language expansions can occur only when suitable forces are there to drive them. In the Andes, this means that it is the wider-spread Horizons, not the Intermediate Periods, that offer the most natural explanations for the Quechua and Aymara dispersals. The Inca 'Late Horizon' (c. 1470–1532) was too

recent to account for either, however, leaving just the two previous 'Horizons' in contention as drivers of the two major language families.

In geography, both families had fairly similar early distributions, each making for a reasonable fit with the extent of either 'Horizon' (see Figure 2). The Early Horizon (c. 800 BC to AD 100) was focused on the great 'temples' of Chavín de Huantar in the north-central highlands of Peru (Figure 3). The Middle Horizon (c. 500–1000), meanwhile, was centred on the vast site of Wari, near the modern city of Ayacucho in the south-central highlands.

In chronology, however, it seems clear from the relative strength of the two families that an earlier, now weaker Aymara spread came first, followed more recently by a more powerful Quechua overlay. This logic points, then, to Chavín as the homeland of Aymara, with the Early Horizon to propel its dispersal; while Quechua's origins would lie near Ayacucho, whence it expanded in concert with the Wari Empire during the Middle Horizon (Figure 4). This new vision entirely overturns traditional proposals (as well as calling for an entirely new classification of

Figure 3: A 'Chavinoid' feline from excavations in 2007 funded by the British Academy in Ullujaya, Ica: 600 km south of the Chavin homeland, at the far frontier of the Early Horizon – perhaps also the age of the first major language expansion in the Andes. Photo: D. Beresford-Jones.



how the regional variants of Quechua all relate to each other).

Such a provocative and straightforward proposal duly achieved the desired result: a vigorous cross-disciplinary debate through-out the Cambridge symposium. Naturally, alternative scenarios were advanced, two in particular, which illustrate other aspects crucial to working out how archaeological and linguistic patterns might go together. Could the Wari Middle Horizon alone have driven *both* language expansions? In this case, might the linguistic contrast reflect instead a division between a high-altitude population, speaking Aymara and living mostly from potato crops and camelid-herding; and Quechua-speakers living at mid-elevations, cultivating primarily maize? Alternatively, could the main Quechua expansion have occurred in two distinct stages, the first driven by the Chavín Early Horizon, the second by the Wari Middle Horizon? Perhaps most indicative of the progress made was how soon the existing traditional proposals, established since the 1970s, were effectively abandoned by almost all participants.

The Cambridge symposium closed with a look even further back in time, to the single deepest ‘big picture’ question in bringing archaeology and linguistics together. A leading but highly controversial hypothesis is that the driving force behind many of the earliest and greatest language dispersals in human prehistory was ‘the coming of agriculture’, the transition from a hunter-gatherer way of life to settled farming. This is claimed to have spread the Indo-European and Afro-Asiatic language families, for instance, and those of Meso-America.

Inexplicably, given their status as one of humanity’s precious few independent hearths of agriculture, the Central Andes have so far been all but entirely overlooked in this great debate. Archaeology now understands that the origins of agriculture in South America lie as far back in time as they do in the Old World and Meso-America: some nine or ten millennia. But quite unlike those regions, the Andes do *not* host any great

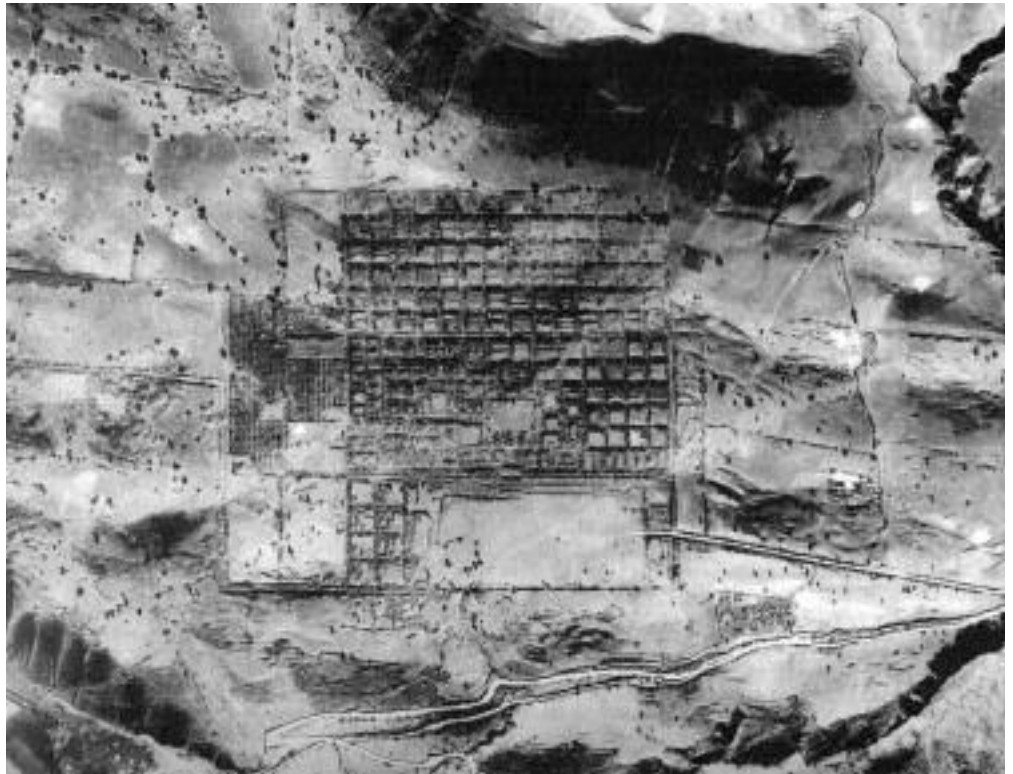


Figure 4: Aerial view of Pikillaqta, a Wari outpost south-east of Cuzco – witness to the Wari Middle Horizon’s imperial reach. Courtesy of the Servicio Aerofotográfico Nacional, Peru.

language families that expanded remotely so long ago. So if the ‘coming of agriculture’ really was so powerful a driver of language dispersal, then what happened to it in the Andes, where it appears signally to have failed to leave any visible linguistic impact?

On this question too, the conveners kicked off cross-disciplinary thinking at the symposium by exploring a number of important idiosyncrasies in the Andean context, which led agriculture to develop here in ways very different to the Old World. The Andes are characterised by: (a) extreme topographical and ecological diversity, from coastal desert to high-altitude tundra to Amazonian rainforest; (b) few large mammals, with only camelids domesticated; (c) exceptionally rich marine resources, so fishing could provide an alternative form of protein; and (d) no true cereal crop, until maize arrived relatively late from Meso-America.

So despite the very early origins of farming here, these Andean idiosyncrasies conspired to postpone when developments could eventually come together into an expansive, cereal-based ‘agricultural package’. Not until some three thousand years ago did agriculture

in the Andes cross this critical threshold of intensification, which *does* at last bring us into the plausible date-range for the Aymara and Quechua language dispersals. Simultaneously, the archaeological record detects the first ‘Horizon’ across the region — and a sudden spread of maize-based agriculture. Could it not be this that fed a population expansion, and with it a language spread too? The Middle Horizon may in turn represent a second quantum leap, thanks to further improvements in maize strains. Moreover, both expansions were further driven by step-changes in ‘agricultural technology’: the construction of the vast arrays of terracing and irrigation that so characterise Andean landscapes to this day (Figure 5).

These cases illustrate how feedback between the disciplines can advance understanding in each: here the linguistic patterns in turn inform the key debate among archaeologists as to the precise nature of the Early and Middle ‘Horizons’. Were they loose networks of relationships based on a shared religious cult and trading links? Or much more than that: military conquest empires, akin to the Incas, rooted ultimately in demographic growth built on agricultural expansion?

Certainly, *some* force must have driven major language spreads around these times, and this in itself argues for a stronger rather than a weaker view of what these archaeological Horizons really were.

Finally, this case-study in agriculture–language dispersals holds out lessons valuable far beyond the Andes. The whole hypothesis needs serious revision, to take into account key requirements that until now were simply taken as read because they were present in how agriculture developed in the Old World context. To confer real advantages in subsistence, an agricultural package must ideally include protein (preferably large domesticated animals), and above all the flexible, storable starch source of a true cereal crop. And to drive a major *dispersal* of language, it needs also to be *expansive*: a

mobile food-web able to be propagated successfully to surrounding regions — if necessary by controlling growing seasons through ‘agricultural technologies’ such as terracing and irrigation.

To be sure, the greatest questions in the prehistory of the Andes remain far from resolved; but sound foundations have now been laid for a much deeper understanding between the various disciplines involved. The Cambridge and London symposia brought together a first ever quorum of world specialists from across these fields, whose papers will fill the first volumes dedicated to the interface between them. The debate is well underway at last, and great strides have already been taken. The scene is well set for the 2009 meeting ‘in situ’, in the shadow of the Andes themselves.

Dr Paul Heggarty is a fellow and research associate in linguistics at the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, University of Cambridge. Dr David Beresford-Jones has been a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow, working in the George Pitt-Rivers Archaeobotanical Laboratory, McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, University of Cambridge. He is working on a book entitled *Putting the Tree back into the Landscape: An Archaeological Case-Study of Ecological and Cultural Collapse on the South Coast of Peru*, to be published as a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship Monograph. Their jointly-authored article ‘Agriculture and Language Dispersals’ will be published in *Current Anthropology* in 2009.

Figure 5: Colca, south Peru. Vast arrays of terracing have defined the agricultural landscape of the Andes for millennia. Photo: Paul Heggarty.



DE-CENTRING OUR GAZE: The Urban Slums of Brazil, Venezuela and Bolivia

Enormous political, economic, social and cultural changes are currently having an impact on the entire region of Latin America.

Dr Jeremy Lester has been studying the new configurations of social and political protagonists, and here describes some emerging challenges to the traditional order.

THEY emerge out of a desolate, grey wasteland not so much as if they have taken root, but more like they have been deposited there, abandoned. And as they ascend higher and higher, layer upon layer, not only do they defy any sense of order and meaning, they seem to defy the very laws of gravity itself. Only a mysterious counterplay of forces holds them upright. Both in their form and in the overall impact they have on one's perceptions, these constructions of reinforced concrete and lead by the contemporary artist Anselm Kiefer are both symbols of claustrophobic suffocation and memorials to precariousness (Figure 1). Looking at them, one can almost feel oneself teetering on the edge.

Kiefer's works have often been described as expressive of great violence and great humanity. These Babel-like bricolages are also concrete expressions of the miserable conditions of much of the global urban landscape today; a boundless world-space of infinite uncertainty, and an all too clear recognition that along with a 'new global order' has come a 'new spatial order' as well. As the



Figure 1: Anselm Kiefer, 'The Seven Heavenly Palaces', in Hangar Bicocca, Milan. Photo source: <http://alexvcook.blogspot.com>

This UN report – which bears the main title *The Challenge of Slums* – has been rightly described as the first truly global audit of urban poverty. But it was, and it remains, much more than that. It is also a veritable *j'accuse!* of global proportions and pulls no punches in fully indicting neo-liberalism and its concomitant 'structural adjustment programmes' as the biggest single cause of this urban

poverty, inequality and deprivation. Unfortunately, though, as is so often the case with UN reports, it was a *j'accuse* without political bite. It could lament, harangue, blame and shame, but it could do little else besides. Even more unfortunately, it could seemingly take soothing comfort from what it saw as evidence that poor people remain far more politically apathetic than affluent groups. The age-old fear of the wealthy elite, that the poor would rise up *en masse*, was without foundation it assured us.

It was also a report that in many ways started from a false dialectical position. Its authors too readily assumed that from the basis of exclusion, the desire would be a simple one of inclusion. In other words, what the excluded slum dweller really wants is to be included inside a more humane capitalist logic of desire. It is almost as though they were being conceived as the future sites for McDonalds. But this is not necessarily the case; far from it. Exclusion can likewise negate the desire for inclusion if the inclusion being offered is not qualitatively different.

If we think of slums only as spaces of misery and degradation, only as places where all hope has been abandoned, nothing could be further from the truth. They can also be places of immense internal cohesion, identity and solidarity; places where values are renewed, despite exclusion. Often this cohesion has been shaped and defined by purely defensive mechanisms. After all, attacks against them have invariably been the sole recognition of their existence. Not any more. After years of defensive resistance, the moment has arrived of offensive attack. Not everywhere to be sure, but in some places at least – most notably in South America – this is assuredly the trend. Here at least it is almost as though their own inward gaze has been transformed outwards. The precarious structures now rise above the grey sky and the constant fog that has always enveloped them. They are rising above the storm clouds of despair and one can feel the clouds tremble.

My research took me to three destinations in South America – Brazil, Venezuela and Bolivia – in order to investigate and assess the challenges posed by and to the slums, and the changes that have been set in place in recent years, not so much from above (at the level of the state), but from below, by the inhabitants themselves. And that the changes have primarily come from below is not surprising. After all, if anything truly characterises the nature of slum life it is a condition in which the state is almost entirely absent. Each country's experiences and solutions have been, and remain, very different, although there are also some common points between them.

In Brazil's case, for example, the real politicisation and radicalisation of the poor sectors has not so much taken place inside the *favelas*, so much as at the 'entrance' and 'exit' points. By 'entrance' point, I mean



Figure 2: Searching for water at a new MST land occupation, approximately 100 km from Rio de Janeiro. Photo: Jeremy Lester.

amongst the peasants in the surrounding countryside. After all, it is the peasant migration to the cities that swells the ever-growing slum population. Brazil, however, has seen the rise of one of the strongest, most organised and most radical of left-wing peasant movements in the (post) modern age. Known as the Movement of Rural Landless Workers (MST), for the last 20 years or more it has been conducting massive land occupations in order to offer a better, more secure form of existence to the peasants precisely in order to *discourage* them from migrating to the cities. And the social consequences of these land occupations are startling to behold. Plots of *unused* land that used to belong to *latifundists* have not only been made fertile and productive but have also seen the rise of brand new communities which are completely self-organised and self-administered (Figure 2).

The really new phenomenon in Brazil, however, is at the 'exit' point of the *favelas* with the recent creation of a new movement in the cities – the Movement of Homeless Workers (MTST). Shortly before my arrival in the country, the MTST had just carried out its most audacious urban land occupation thus far, with 12,000 people occupying a massive unused plot of land on the outskirts of São Paulo (Figure 3). There is an astonishing sense of pride and dignity etched on the faces of these families that are desperately trying to build a new life for themselves in the hardest of all economic, social, political and security conditions (where the threat of forced removal, as well as right-wing paramilitary incursions, is a daily phenomenon).

In Venezuela, the changes taking place in the slums of Caracas and other cities are, if anything, even more remarkable. This is due to the fact that unlike in Brazil, the current government of Hugo Chávez has made the social and economic development of the slums one of the primary objectives of his 'Bolivarian Revolution'. Again, however, it is the initiatives from below that leave the biggest impression. Most of my research in Caracas was conducted in '23 de Enero', a large

sprawling hillside *barrio* very close to the city centre (Figure 4). Rarely have I witnessed such intimacy of political solidarity as here. 'Life is revolution', Antonio Gramsci once remarked. But here the contrary is equally true. Revolution *is* life.

Walking around the labyrinth of paths and alleys, no one can be left in any doubt about the seriousness of the political convictions at work. They are literally on display everywhere. Never have I seen a territorial space so covered in revolutionary murals. And what 'spatial stories' they tell. For here the walls not only embrace the words and pictures lovingly grafted on to them, they speak to you directly. To this day, most of the official maps of Caracas only show grey or white spots where the *barrios* and the *ranchos* are located. Most streets are not detailed and have only ever been informally named, if at all. But this is no problem whatsoever in '23 de Enero'. Everyone simply orientates oneself here with reference to the murals. 'Turn left at the José Martí, carry on down the Che Guevara with cigar...' (Figure 5). 'Chávez did not produce the revolutionary changes now under way in the country, we produced him,' is the naturally proud response of the residents of the neighbourhood.

Last stop, Bolivia. To be precise, El Alto – the highest city in the world, 'capital of the clouds'. Dirty, degenerate, dust-filled El Alto. Proud,



Figure 3: The MTST occupation at Itapequerica da Serra, on the outskirts of São Paulo. Photo: Jeremy Lester.



Figure 4: A view of 23 de Enero, Caracas. Photo: Jeremy Lester.



Figure 5: Che Guevara mural in 23 de Enero, Caracas. Photo: Jeremy Lester.

Figure 6: Leaders of the main Workers' Federation (the COR) in El Alto. Photo: Jeremy Lester.



dignified, feared El Alto. The opposing adjectives are as inseparable as Siamese twins. To enter El Alto is to enter a different world. It is like leaving your normal perceptions and perspectives behind you at the entrance. Nothing at all can prepare you for this first impact. The only thing one can do is to follow the sound advice of Marc Augé; we need to re-learn completely the ways in which we both see and think the kind of spaces that are around us in this world of *surmodernité*, and that means first and foremost de-centring our gaze.¹

On the outskirts of the 'city' – how stately, how noble this label sounds, but this is what El Alto has officially been since 1988, with a population now close to one million – are the newest inhabitants from the surrounding plains. You can identify them immediately. Their huts have been constructed out of the only material available to them: light brown adobe bricks. And their peasant origins are unmistakable. It is not only a question of their skin colour or their traditional peasant costumes. When they uprooted from the land, they crossed the 'frontier' with everything in their possession. In the small enclosed courtyards of their huts can be seen their most prized possessions –



Figure 7: Protesters in El Alto during the October 2003 clashes with the military, which left 73 residents dead during 10 days of violence. Photo: Indymedia.

llamas, sheep, goats, donkeys and, above all, pigs – all of them eking out a survival in the dust and rubbish-strewn mud, for this is no city of tarmac or cement. Asphalt here is a prized commodity beyond the reach of most feet.

As the space before one is laid bare, and as one begins to penetrate its depths, the scenery and the surroundings change. The density of the place, and its accompanying humidity, is almost asphyxiating. One is literally sucked, breathless, into a hole that seemingly has no bottom. There are people everywhere, moving bodies, thousands and thousands of them, coming and going in constant perpetual motion. Together, these bodies of human existence generate a cacophony of noise that is barely short of ear splitting. It is the sound of daily human survival.

Why does one come here, to this ancient land of *Alaj-Pacha* (Land in Heaven)? One comes here quite simply to have a different conception of the world. It is not a voyage of nostalgia, but one of memory rehabilitation. In short, it is a voyage of understanding the contemporary hegemonic landscape of struggle, for in the last decade El Alto has become the self-proclaimed, but universally acknowledged, 'headquarters of the most revolutionary city in the Western hemisphere'. Moreover, at least for the residents themselves, nearly all of whom belong to the class of 'precarious workers' in both the formal and, more usually, the 'informal' economy, where the factory of today is the street, it is also 'the proud sentinel of a new kind of democracy in Bolivia' (Figure 6). And they are labels not to be taken lightly. As a result of constant revolutionary uprisings by the largely Aymaran population in the city, two 'neo-liberal' presidents were removed from power in 2003 and 2005 (Figure 7), thus paving the way for the historic victory of Evo Morales in the elections of December 2005 – the first elected indigenous President of any South American country.

While many have made of the poor quarters, the slums, the periphery, an *aneu logou* (a place deprived of sense and meaningful speech), in the places that I visited one comes away more and more convinced that they have made for themselves (or are trying to make for themselves) the beginnings of something completely opposite – a new kind of *polis*.

This new *polis* is very different to be sure from the original ancient Greek version, but it nevertheless does possess some of its essential constituent features. It is a political space that knows only equals. It is one that possesses a similar conception of freedom. It is one that primarily acts as 'a guarantee against the futility of individual life' (to borrow the words of Hannah Arendt). And equally as important, it is a political space founded upon courage.

Let me, therefore, conclude with the words of Bertolt Brecht: '[It] is ... the poorest of all that makes Honour their guest / It's out of the meanest hovel that comes forth / Irresistible greatness.'²

Notes

- 1 Marc Augé, *Non-Lieux: Introduction à une anthropologie de la surmodernité* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1992), p. 49.
- 2 Bertolt Brecht, 'Supply and Demand', in John Willett (ed. and trans.), *Bertolt Brecht: Poems and Songs from the Plays* (London: Methuen, 1992), p. 98.

Dr Jeremy Lester is Senior Lecturer in the School of Politics and International Relations, University of Reading. In 2006, he received a British Academy Small Research Grant for a two-year project on 'Globalisation's Tempest: The Struggle for Hegemony in Latin America'.

Mexico City's Metro (a voyage to the end of the squeeze)

Mexico City is a city of contrasts, of change and tradition, which has long captured the imagination of chroniclers and poets alike. The British Academy and the Mexican Embassy to the UK organised an event to celebrate this diversity, tracing the history of the city from its pre-Columbian origins to its transition into modernity, whilst exploring its rich cultural heritage, and in spring 2009 the Academy is publishing the presentations. The book begins with an atmospheric prologue by the famous Mexican writer and journalist, Carlos Monsiváis. In this extract, he captures the essence of Mexico City's metro system.

EVERY day, close to five million people make use of Mexico City's metro, fighting a vicious battle for oxygen and millimetres. Long gone the marvellous scene of Oliver Hardy and Stan Laurel in Mexico, watching countless individuals getting out of a taxi. That was a surreal metaphor, in any case; this is something entirely different: turmoil in a nutshell. The city – its essence, its idiosyncrasies – plays itself out in the metro. Passengers are sullen or raucous, rueful or exasperated. They burst out in choral monologues or keep quiet (doubtless in an effort to communicate telepathically with their inner self). Reluctant paragons of tolerance, they boast the energy to remain upright in a stampede, to slim and instantly regain their customary body types with each squeeze. The close proximity to so many bodies breeds – and cushions – *impure* thoughts, and, in two or three seconds, give *impure* a holy definition. In the metro, the legacy of institutionalized corruption, ecological devastation, and the repression of human rights is formally passed on to each passenger and to the legions he or she potentially contains (each passenger will

engender a carriage-full; in California in 2006, 52 per cent of new borns were of Hispanic origin, most of them Mexican: the invasion of the bellies, said the racist). They keep this heritage alive: it's the 'humanism of the squeeze'.

While one cannot claim as the ancient saying that what feeds ten people will also feed eleven, one can assert that where a thousand fit, ten thousand will be crammed, for space is more fertile than food. In all the world, there is nothing so flexible as space; there's always room for one more, and another and another, and in the metro, human density is not a sign of the struggle for life, but of the opposite. Who said objects cannot occupy the same space at the same time? In the metro, the laws of molecular structure lose their universal validity, bodies merge like spiritual essences, and transcorporeal graftings are commonplace.

One can attain pluralism by venturing into the metro at peak hours (feats of warlike retreat, already calling for their Xenophon), or by venturing into public housing projects where privacy is a matter of weaving and



Figure 1: *Solidarity. Mexico City metro.* Photo © Francisco Mata Rosas.

dodging, an aspiration contradicted by packed streets and families breeding in front of the television set. There are so many of us that even the most outlandish thought is shared by millions. There are so many of us, who cares if the next man agrees or disagrees?

Figure 2: *The Squeeze*.
Metro entrance in the
Zocalo. Photo ©
Francisco Mata Rosas.



There are so many of us that the real miracle is getting home, closing the front door, and seeing the crowds magically diminish.

How could one not be a pluralist, when subway trips teach us the virtues of unity in diversity? How could one not be a pluralist, when identity is constructed by pushing and shoving, and maintained by the mysteries of population explosion? Prejudices become personal views, demography takes the place of tradition, and we remember this about the past: there used to be fewer people, and the old minorities (in contrast to the current majorities) counterbalanced their numerical handicap by spending time outdoors. Claustrophobia arose – a hunger for fresh air, for a life that could never go underground and could never be compared to a descent into hell – and street life prospered. Then came the metro, and agoraphobia became fashionable.

Is it possible to score in the metro? Many say yes, it's a piece of cake, because if the metro

represents the city and recreates the street, it must by necessity contain sex – all kinds of sex. Packed into subway cars, humankind reverts to primal chaos, a *horror vacui* that is fertile ground for propositions, the rubbing of bodies, lustful advances frustrated by lack of differentiation, surreptitious grinding, blatant grinding, risk taking, and other transgressions. It's all the same in the end. The metro abolishes singularity, anonymity, chastity, desire – mere individual reactions that become insignificant in the larger scale of things, in which a former 'many' is the only precedent for the current 'too many'. It's all the same whether one enters or exits. But machismo still reigns supreme.

The metro's perpetual novelty consists of concentrating the entire country into one square metre. A feat of hospitality, each carriage becomes a biblical metaphor, generating space for loners, couples, families, tribes, progenies. The metro dissolves the boundaries between bodies; there is room for everyone, after all.¹

Note

¹ Parts of this extract are based on a translation of Carlos Monsiváis' work in Rubén Gallo (ed.), *The Mexico City Reader*, trans. Lorna Scott Fox (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004). The photographs are by Francisco Mata Rosas, one of Mexico City's most illuminating photographic chroniclers. Born in Mexico City in 1958, his work has been exhibited throughout Latin America, North America and Europe.

Mexico City through History and Culture, edited by Linda A Newson & John P King (British Academy Occasional Papers, No 13) will be published for the British Academy by Oxford University Press. For more see www.britac.ac.uk/pubs

Empire beyond the Imperial Domain: British Colonial Encounters in Cuba

Dr Jorge L. Giovannetti held a *British Academy Visiting Fellowship at the Caribbean Studies Centre, London Metropolitan University in 2006, and has subsequently completed a history of British Caribbean migrants in Cuba. Here he discusses an archive of correspondence that reveals British Imperial attitudes to race.*

The year 2008 marked the sixtieth anniversary of the arrival of the *S.S. Empire Windrush* to Tilbury. The event symbolises for some the beginning of 'multicultural' Britain, and for others the beginning of Britain's encounter with its colonial 'others' at home. These 'others' were not only colonial, but racial others; black British subjects were now at the centre of the Empire. In 1948, Prime Minister Clement Attlee, facing some concerns about the *Windrush's* Jamaican passengers, noted that it was 'traditional that British subjects' of 'whatever race or colour' be admitted freely into the United Kingdom. It would be a 'mistake to take any measure which would tend to weaken the goodwill and loyalty of the Colonies towards Britain', and more so at a moment when the country was 'importing foreign labour in large numbers'.¹

The underlying dilemmas of race, labour and Empire illustrated in Attlee's letter were not new. The arrival of Caribbean migrants in Britain was both a continuation of Britain's encounters with its colonial others, and another stage in the history of Caribbean people serving as foreign migrant labour. Moreover, at the time of Attlee's letter, in other locations beyond the imperial domain, the 'loyalty' of British Caribbean migrant workers was seen as 'merely sentimental' and British authorities aimed at 'loosening' the ties with the Empire.² A look at those other locations might help us see 1948 in a different light, confronting what Stuart Hall once called Britain's 'loss of historical memory' about race and Empire.³

During the five decades before 1948, thousands of people from the British Caribbean migrated from their colonial homelands to places throughout the Americas as workers. Railways in Central America and even as far as Brazil and Ecuador, plantations in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and the Hispanic Caribbean, oil in the southern Caribbean, and farms in the northern United States were some of the economic ventures that attracted these labourers. Cuba alone received more than 250,000 British Caribbean migrants to work mostly in its booming sugar industry. Unable to make a living in the British Caribbean colonies due to the economic control of the planter classes, and oppressed by the colonial regime, the landless and marginalized British Afro-Antilleans would end up leaving their islands to become the labour force behind the production of Cuban sugar. After the United States, Britain was Cuba's most important outlet for sugar, an item produced in the Cuban sugar cane plantations mostly by foreign migrant labourers, including colonial British subjects.

As I set out to research the history of British Caribbean migrants in Cuba, I found that it was in this experience that many migrants

faced the racial politics and ideology of Empire, before they ever arrived in the United Kingdom. It is no secret to Caribbean scholars that unearthing their past requires a journey to the lands and archives of the former colonisers, in this case the British National Archives in Kew. The Foreign Office papers are the repository of reports on the many British Caribbean migrants across the Americas, but also of some surviving letters written by the migrants themselves.

In places like Cuba, black Caribbean migrant labourers were subject to social and racial discrimination. Cuban elites during the era of the Republic constructed their nation as 'white' and governments in Cuba had historically feared any social, cultural, or political influence from neighbouring islands with larger Afro-Caribbean populations. Black British Antilleans thus became the victims of Cuban racism. Their response as British subjects was to appeal to the British consuls for support. As migrants wrote numerous letters to their representatives, the principal job of British consuls and ministers in Cuba became that of dealing with imperial subjects in a foreign territory, rather than other (more 'important') duties related to trade and



Kitchen at Cuban American Sugar Company's Quarantine Station, Puerto Padre, Cuba, 1920s. Photo from Agricultura y zootecnia.

commerce. This encounter of the black migrants with the white representatives of the British Empire was in itself a colonial encounter with the ‘other’ – taking place, not in the centre of Empire (as in 1948) or its periphery (i.e. the colonies), but outside the imperial domain altogether. Black Jamaicans, Barbadians, Dominicans, and many other islanders wrote consistently to the consuls demanding support as British subjects. White British consuls were suddenly faced with a taste of equality that ignored their preconceptions as representatives of imperial

power. In claiming their subjecthood, black Caribbean migrants forced British officialdom to draw a line of distinction, which consuls and ministers did by using power hierarchies and race.

St Lucians, Grenadians, and other islanders became racially qualified subjects. They were *black* British subjects, while the consuls and other British people in Cuba were forced to make explicit their race and ethnic characteristics as *white* British subjects. As historian Catherine Hall has put it, for a different context, after the colonial

encounter, it was ‘no longer possible to believe only in “negative ethnicity” where only “the other” is visibly ethnic’ and being British was no longer ‘outside of ethnicity’.⁴ Whiteness was unveiled as a racial category.

Most diplomatic representatives blatantly ignored the claims of black British Antilleans, treated them condescendingly or did not give credibility to their complaints. Some consuls provided assistance and defended migrants abused by the Cuban authorities; but other diplomatic representatives had a conflict of interests, being both British consuls and upper-level employees in the sugar industry that employed the unfree labour that they were supposed to defend. Other ‘white members of the British Legation’ described ‘British West Indians not as British subjects but as “British objects”’, clearly marking distinctions that would later exist at the centre of the Empire.⁵ The history of these encounters clearly reminds us that ‘race is a relationship, not a thing,’ as written by Laura Tabili echoing E. P. Thompson.⁶ Racial marking (and self-awareness) took place as a process in the relation between colonial subjects and imperial representatives.

The meticulous archive researcher will find, behind the official type-written reports of Foreign Office personnel, the surviving letters of the migrants. Often in handwritten form and at times illegible print on a poorer quality paper, these letters are attached – if one is lucky – behind official type-written correspondence more friendly to the historian’s eyes. Both sources are useful in providing different ‘voices’ (some more privileged than others) and angles to a story that needs to be written.

The strategy of black British subjects is evident in their decisions about whom to write to. After being ignored by consuls operating in Santiago de Cuba or Havana, they elevated their protest to higher colonial and imperial authorities, or sometimes, knowing that they would be ignored, they wrote to their islands of origin. Many even wrote directly to London, thinking – perhaps naively in their idealisation of imperial altruism, or strategically – that their plight would be listened to by officers in the Foreign and Colonial Offices, and even by Scotland Yard and the King.

Letter from M. A. Jacobs to Honorable Representatives, [Foreign Office], 5 May 1931
(National Archives, Kew, Foreign Office Papers, 369/2191)

May it please you honorable gentlemen that we the British Leeward and Windward West Indians Subjects, residing in the above mentioned part of Cuba, have forwarded a petition with a number of five hundred fifteen signatories to the British Consul at Havana asking him for His Majesty's protection towards our deadly situation in this island of Cuba, and has failed in so doing. As a matter of fact, the General Manager of the Chaparra Sugar Company, by whom we were brought here as immigrants, influenced the consul with all false reports, went all over in the [bush] and to different sections of the estate where he has all the British Subjects bound in misery, calamities and with starvation, compelled them to sign a typewritten document that is against the petition, state that ‘the men are well treated by the Company, and are having everything to their facilities, and that they do not want to go home.’ With all these false, he compelled the Consul to dropped the matter right there. Honorable gentlemen, it is not only five hundred and fifteen British subjects that are in this place, there are thousands of us here, and the Company do not want to take us back to our homes where he had taken us because he has us using as tools. It is quite sad and pietyful to see and know that all Subjects of every nations, whether large or small, are being protected in this island, except we the British subjects. Because we will not make any complains, they treated us like dogs. The Americans, the Spaniards, the Frenchmen, the Dutchmen means are being provided for every one of them to get out, except we the British subjects. Honorable gentelment, we humbly beg to take this in consideration, as our cases are quite serious. The present condition of Cuba is known all over the world. It was a glory to the Company when they were bringing us here by the boat loads, and now they are resisting in taking us back. We didn't come her for life time, we came here to fight for a living and right now we [no]tice that there is no progress; to the contrary, starvation has taken place; and a famine is threatening the island right now. So before many of us should die through starvation and calamities we are putting our distress to the mother country, asking her for some kind of assistance by which we may be able to l[e]ave this island of Cuba. We are just like the children of Israel in the land of Egypt. Consequently we hereby appeal to your kind assistance over the matter, hoping that your friendly conscience will appl[ause] your [...] feelings, toward this important and loyal cause.

We are patiently awaiting your favorable reply ‘Salvamos Deus.’

We beg to remain, Subordinately Yours, British West Indian Subjects. M.A. Jacobs.

Letter from James Sylvester to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, UK, 17 December 1944
(National Archives, Kew, Foreign Office Papers 371/44438)

San Benito
De Songo
Oriente De Cuba
Dec: 17th 1944

To

Minister of Foreign affairs.

Dear Sir I the undersign now solicit [the] opportunity to writing you these few lines trusting that they may meet yours generous consideration.

Sir the [reason] of this my letter is that I beg to inform you that I the said undersign James Sylvestir a British born Subject of Trinidad [B.W.I][presently] residing in Cuba now for many years through The Conditions That we as foreigners must be thrown out of work and make Space for the natives.

Therefore under these Conditions we have got to be here and there seeking something for us to do so as to secure life. And under these circumstances we are expose to all taunts and insults from the Cubans. Sir there is something ocured in 1941 between my Self and a Cuban Coffee Propriter by the name of Francisco Maturell on the 26 of August in the Said Year that I was badly beaten by Both him and his son wounding me materially[?] and broked one of my hand[s] then I had to appeal then to the counsel who took little [or no] interest in the Cause of a British West Indian in this Country.

I have actually thrown in the streets of the Town Hospital of Santiago where I was Then before I see me was Said to be The Vice Counsel [w]ho got all the information from [...] what ocured. Then after the counsel General in Havana wrote me and also got full information of Same.

Then after they had received all those information. The case was tried in The High Courts in Santiago to which Judgment was given on my behalf. [Maturell] was sentence to 4 months in prison and the sum of two Hundred Diollars to be paid to me as indemnity.

That case was tried on the 19th of February 1942 and from thence I have got nothing [scratch] not hear anything about the two Hundred Dollars Indemnity. I waited and receive nothing I wrote all the Governmental department I got no reply then I appeal again to the counsels and got no reply neither.

Therefore there is no other source as for me to appeal [illegible] to His Magestis Government as to whom I believe will Interce[de] to the cause of one of her unfortunate subject in This Country without protection.

leaving These to your Hospitable Consideration I have the Honour to be

Sir Your
Obedient Servant
James Sylvester
San Benito
De Songo
Oriente de Cuba

To
Minister of Foreign
affairs
Dear Sir I the
undersign now solicit

1941 between my
Self and a Cuban
Coffee propriter by the
name of Francisco
Maturell on the 26 of
August in the Said
Year that I was badly
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Facsimile sections of the letter sent by James Sylvester

This is a history of people who did not revolt in arms against the Empire, but who challenged its assumptions with paper and ink, using the language of power and empire to their own advantage. They wrote skilfully using the rhetoric of imperial allegiance and membership. In 1921, a migrant named George Smith along with others was faced

with the lack of action of the local consul in Cuba and decided to make his demands at a higher level. He wrote to the Home Office, saying of the consul: 'He disacknowledge us as British subjects.' Smith added that the majority of the group were veteran soldiers of the British West Indies Regiment, thereby giving their case greater authority.⁷

Indeed, for those who had served during the First World War, their participation became a source of empowerment. A group of migrants wrote to the War Office in 1928: 'As a British subject I believe to myself that this is very unfair to treat a British subject in that kind of way.' 'So we would be very grateful,' they added, 'if our Mother Country could take

some more interest in us in this country [Cuba] as Britishers.' They questioned whether the consul in Cuba had reported anything on their situation, adding that as 'fair thinking Loyal subjects of His Majesty the King' they demanded 'proper investigation' of the abuses against fellow migrants, concluding that they 'should not be allowed to be abuse or kill by inferior nation of any kind that would only show the world that we as British Subjects are not protected abroad.'⁸ These appeals to higher authorities from the Cuban context to the centre of Empire jumped the chain of command, and in many cases served as a tool by which the migrants indirectly forced the consuls in Cuba (via their superiors in London) to provide the support they wanted.

During their years working in Cuba, searching for a better life, and facing Cuban xenophobia and racism, British Caribbean islanders also faced discrimination and neglect by the British authorities. They struggled in multiple ways (including the written word), challenging the Empire's racial understandings and power structure, and organising themselves as part of a Caribbean community in rural Cuba. By the 1940s, most of the migrants had taken a decision to return to their islands of origin, stay in Cuba (where some of them had effectively made a life), or search for better opportunities elsewhere. With the crisis in the colonies after the Second World War, some stayed voluntarily in Cuba, where they remain today as a community that even plays cricket. Others stayed against their wishes, partly because the British did not wish to organise a

repatriation scheme that would bring unemployed British subjects to colonies experiencing socioeconomic crisis. Others decided to venture elsewhere, including London, where they would, yet again, face racial discrimination, and yet again, overcome their circumstances in order to succeed in a foreign land.

Since his *Europe and the People without History* more than two decades ago, the late Eric Wolf always encouraged us to look for connections: those links between people, ideas and processes that are not always acknowledged by scholars.⁹ The Caribbean identities at play in Britain today have early roots (and indeed parallels) in the British identities contested in the Caribbean and Cuban plantations decades ago by black British Caribbean migrants. I uncovered that Cuban and Caribbean connection in the London archives, emerging with some answers and yet more questions. To answer these new questions, to conclude that history, understand it and make sense of its meaning, I returned to the Caribbean, to the localities where the stories took place, to the places where the migrants lived (and their descendants still live), to the context where a struggle with the past is always in motion.

Notes

- 1 C. R. Attlee to J. D. Murray, 5 July 1948, National Archives, Kew (hereafter, NA), HO 213/715).
- 2 M. E. Vibert, 'Minutes: British West Indian Relief in Cuba, S. Domingo and Haiti' (1948), NA, FO 369/3962, no. K656; 'Note of a Meeting held at Palace Chambers at 11 a.m. on Saturday the 15th July, 1944', enclosed in Whitehorn to H.A.H. Hohler, FO, 17 July 1944, NA, FO 371/38075.

3 Stuart Hall, 'Racism and Reaction', in *Five Views of Multi-Racial Britain* (London, Commission for Racial Equality, 1978), p. 25.

4 Catherine Hall, "'From Greenland's Icy Mountains... to Africa's Golden Sands': Ethnicity, Race and Nation in Mid-Nineteenth-Century England', *Gender and History*, 5:2 (Summer 1993), 215.

5 G. Ogilvie-Forbes to Anthony Eden, 16 February 1942, NA, FO 371/30461.

6 Laura Tabili, 'Race is a relationship, not a thing', *Journal of Social History*, 37:1 (2003), 125–130.

7 George Smith to Home Office, 7 December 1921, NA, FO 371/5565.

8 Charles Burt *et al.* to British War Office, London, 24 November 1928, FO 369/2022.

9 Eric R. Wolf, *Europe and the People without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982); Eric R. Wolf, *Pathways of Power: Building an Anthropology of the Modern World*, with Sydel Silverman; foreword by Aram A. Yengoyan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), p. 308.

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Endangered whales, endangered humans: Wildlife management in the Canadian Arctic

Dr Martina Tyrrell reveals the tensions that exist when conservation policies conflict with traditional ways of life on Hudson Bay.

In 2005, at the start of my British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship, I set out to conduct anthropological research into the impacts of marine mammal conservation practices on the lives and culture of Inuit in the Canadian Arctic. Over the course of the past three years, this research has taken me to the Canadian Inuit homelands of Nunavik and Nunavut for extensive periods of fieldwork. Focusing specifically on beluga whales (*delphinapterus leucas*), my work on this topic has thus far compared beluga management regimes across the Arctic, and explored the history of wildlife management in the Canadian Arctic,

internal colonialism as a framework for understanding relations between Inuit and agents of government, and the role of fledgling Inuit governance in developing wildlife conservation strategies appropriate to Inuit culture and world view. My research has also explored the material and emotional impacts of beluga whale management on Inuit communities, and it is this aspect of my work that is presented below.¹

Introduction

For many of the world's 150,000 Inuit, who live in small remote villages across the circumpolar world from eastern Siberia to Alaska, Canada and Greenland, beluga whale hunting is a socially, culturally and

economically important part of life. Belugas are small white whales, averaging 3.6 metres in length (Figure 1). Inuit value them nutritionally for their skin, blubber, meat and internal organs, as a source of subsistence food for both people and sled dogs. Beluga hunting is part of a complex set of social activities involving extended families and communities, and includes the informal training of young hunters, the manufacture and maintenance of hunting tools and equipment, and the distribution, sharing, processing and consumption of the harvest.

Like all animals, belugas are believed by Inuit to be sentient beings, and therefore appropriate relationships of respect must be



Figure 1: Beluga whale in Hudson Bay.
Photo: Martina Tyrrell.



Figure 3: *The Nunavik village of Quaqtuaq. Photo: Martina Tyrrell.*

maintained between Inuit and belugas in order to ensure the continued participation of belugas in the hunt. Expert Inuit hunters also possess a deep empirical knowledge of these animals, founded on the hunters' seasonal engagement with them in the marine environment and through the sharing of knowledge and skill within the home and wider community. This practical knowledge of belugas is inseparable from cosmological beliefs concerning the relative roles of humans and animals.²

In recent decades, beluga whales have been subject to scientific research and conservation management practices. For Inuit, the scientific management of wildlife is highly problematic, in part because research and management techniques are seen to transgress these respectful human–animal relationships, and in part because the management of wildlife is seen as an intrusion into Inuit customary laws and practices.

Perhaps the most contention surrounds the conservation management of beluga whales in the waters around the Inuit region of Nunavik, in northern Quebec, Canada (Figure 2). Over the past decade, the federal Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans has placed ever tighter restrictions on Inuit hunting practices,

dictating the number of whales that may be harvested in any given year, setting open and closed hunting seasons, and setting guidelines for appropriate hunting methods and the training of novice hunters.³

Inuit view the imposition of these management practices as having adverse economic, nutritional, social and cultural impacts. Many Inuit are distrustful of the federal government and frame the current management of beluga whales within the context of other perceived wrongs perpetrated against them by the federal government throughout the twentieth century, such as the slaughter of sled dogs by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the

residential school system, and the relocation of Nunavik Inuit to the High Arctic.

In spring 2006, funded by a British Academy Small Grant, I conducted anthropological research in the small Nunavik village of Quaqtuaq (Figure 3). This village of 400 people is situated where the northwest coast of Ungava Bay meets Hudson Strait. Prior to 2000, Quaqtarmiut (the people of Quaqtuaq) harvested an average of 33 whales per year,⁴ but since 2001 the legally permitted harvest has fallen from 35 to 8 whales. Using a combination of in-depth interviewing and participant observation techniques, I gained an understanding of Inuit perceptions of beluga whale management and its cultural, economic and emotional repercussions.

Belugas and Inuit life

It is no coincidence that the Quaqtuaq village logo is of a beluga whale arching its back out of the water. Iconography of the beluga is to be found everywhere across the village, from the town hall, to children's drawings adorning the walls of the local school, to mugs for sale at the co-operative store. Quaqtuaq identity is intimately linked with belugas.

Beluga whales migrate past Quaqtuaq twice each year – in spring they are hunted from the ice floe-edge, and in



Figure 2: *Map of Hudson Bay and Nunavik.*

autumn from the shoreline. Traditionally, the entire community participated. Women, small children and the elderly watched on as men and boys hunted whales, and then everyone participated in flensing and distributing the harvest (Figure 4). Quaqtarmiut pride themselves on their knowledge of belugas, distinguishing animals in the water by age, sex and origin.

In Quaqtaq, the entire beluga is valued as a source of food. *Maktaq*, the thick white skin and subcutaneous fat, is consumed fresh, or is fermented and frozen for use throughout the year (Figure 5). *Misiraq*, the rendered fermented fat of the whale, is used as a condiment, comparable to southern use of ketchup or mayonnaise. Beluga meat is eaten fresh, or is fermented, frozen or dried for later use, while the intestines are split, cleaned, boiled and dried. Belugas are a highly nutritious food source, rich in protein, iron, omega-3 fatty acids, and vitamin C. Despite only two short hunting seasons each year, belugas are an essential year-round food source, and participation in all aspects of the hunt – from the preparation of hunting equipment all the way to feasting on the

harvest – are seen as integral to family and community life.

The people of Quaqtaq refer to belugas as ‘neighbours’ who visit at certain times of the year, and they are accorded the same respect one shows a human neighbour. These ‘neighbours’, therefore, are more than a source of food – they are willing participants in the social and material reproduction of village life.

The conservation of belugas

From the 1750s to the 1900s, belugas were hunted intensively by commercial whalers from Britain and the USA. Marine biologists believe that belugas have never recovered from this prolonged and large-scale slaughter⁵ and that whales are in further jeopardy due to contemporary environmental concerns such as climate change, industrial contaminants in the food chain, and the effects of large-scale dam-building projects on beluga estuary habitats. Biologists are also concerned that the ongoing (albeit small-scale) subsistence hunting of belugas by Inuit is a further impediment to their recovery.

Since 1996 beluga hunting in Nunavik has been subject to wildlife management laws. The quota for how many whales may be taken changes from year to year. Some Inuit communities in Nunavik consistently reject these quotas, their hunters risking prosecution, hefty fines and imprisonment, arguing that the rules are inconsistent and do not reflect the reality of how many whales there actually are. Inuit pride themselves on their knowledge of beluga whale behaviour and demographics, gained from their long-term engagement with these animals, and argue that marine biologists spend far too little time in the field, and when they do conduct research they fail to take the advice of expert Inuit hunters as to the most opportune times and places to assess beluga numbers. As a result, Inuit argue, marine biologists have drawn up conservatively low estimates of how many belugas there are, and it is these estimates upon which wildlife management law is based.

The people of Quaqtaq have attempted to adhere to the rules of management, as the local wildlife officer believes that if Inuit can demonstrate to policy-makers that they can



Figure 5: Removing strips of maktaq.
Photo: Martina Tyrrell.

Figure 4: Flensing a beluga whale.
Photo: Martina Tyrrell.

follow the rules of management, then the policy-makers will eventually leave them alone to get on with managing their own whales. As a result, Quaqtaq has felt the brunt of these management laws.

Impacts of beluga management

Since the imposition of these hunting laws, beluga hunting no longer occurs at the traditional hunting locations along the coastline, families no longer move to their hunting cabins at these places, and women, children and the elderly are effectively excluded from participation in the hunting complex. Beluga hunting now occurs in only one location and at one time of the year – from the beach in front of the village each autumn. By hunting together in this manner hunters reduce the risk of inadvertently surpassing the quota by hunting at the same time in different locations.

In the past, beluga season might last for many weeks, with hunters taking care to choose which animal to harvest based on age, size, etc. Now the quota is often filled in one day. Hunters stand shoulder to shoulder along the beach, their rifles aimed at the water. As the quota is currently set at only 8 whales, no hunter wants to risk being absent from the hunt and missing out on a share of the small harvest for his family. However, some people have dissociated themselves from the hunt because of this:

My husband didn't get any whales last year. He's the type who wouldn't go down there when there's so many people and they try to fight over it.

The enskilment and enculturation of young people has also suffered. Before the quota, boys were involved in the hunt from a young age, and making mistakes and learning through trial and error were part of the process of growing into a competent and successful hunter. But with such a small quota, each family now relies on its most skilful and experienced hunter, and young unskilled boys are a hindrance:

One time a whale came and [my son] shot it and caught his first whale. But now you're not able to teach them when everyone's rushing down [to the beach] and trying to get their whales. You have no time to say, 'OK, shoot it now.'

The reduced availability of beluga means that Quaqtarmiut must now rely more on store-bought food. The tiny co-operative store is stocked with over-priced foods flown in from southern Canada, often of low nutritional value with high fat and food additive content. Replacement foods such as beef or chicken are prohibitively expensive for most:

If they're going to take away our food source, then they need to replace what they took away from us by providing the people with the opportunity to get nutritious food.

There are also cultural and emotional impacts, as many Quaqtarmiut express feelings of deep sadness and loss. Once the quota has been filled hunters say they have no option but to stand by and watch as thousands of belugas migrate past their shores:

After the quotas had finished last year they just had their cameras down there and everyone was like a *qallunaq* [person of Euro-American origin] taking pictures. No guns. We were just watching the whales and there was nothing in our freezer for winter. That was sad.

Conservation or cultural imperialism?

As indigenous subsistence hunters with a long tradition of beluga hunting, most Inuit believe they are being punished for exercising their right to hunt belugas in their own culturally appropriate way. They are angry at being told where, when and how to hunt, and see these rules as a direct attack on their way of life. Inuit contextualise this management of belugas within a framework of political and ideological imperialism, expressing distrust towards the government:

They talk about the whales becoming endangered, but what about Inuit? I think we will become endangered. We will be white people in Inuit bodies. I think that's what they want – that we all become vegetarians and wear synthetic clothing.

However, in December 2006 Nunavik took its first steps towards levels of political autonomy similar to its neighbouring Nunavut Territory. With the establishment of a regional government, and the emergence of forms of wildlife management that are more inclusive of Inuit culture and values, it is hoped that scientists will now be obliged to pay greater attention to the knowledge of Inuit experts and find ways to engage with Inuit for the mutual benefit of both Inuit and their beluga 'neighbours'.

Notes

- 1 This article is, in part, an extract from M. Tyrrell, 'Nunavik Inuit perspectives on beluga whale management in the Canadian Arctic', *Human Organisation*, 67:3 (2008), 322–334.
- 2 M. Tyrrell, 'Sentient beings and wildlife resources: Inuit, beluga whales and management regimes in the Canadian Arctic', *Human Ecology*, 35:5 (2007), 575–586.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 V. Lesage and D. W. Doidge, *Harvest statistics for beluga whales in Nunavik, 1974–2004* (Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada Science Advisory Secretariat, 2005).
- 5 M. O. Hammill, V. Lesage, J.-F. Gosselin, H. Bourdages, B. G. E. de March and M. C. S. Kingsley, 'Evidence for a decline in Northern Quebec (Nunavik) belugas', *Arctic*, 57:2 (2004), 183–195.

Dr Martina Tyrrell was a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow 2005–2008. She is a Lecturer in Human Geography at the University of Reading. Dr Tyrrell gave a presentation on her research at the 2008 British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship Symposium.

SHOES AND SOCIAL FABRICS: Exploring the Journeys and Life-worlds of a Pair of Flip-flops

In 2007, Professor Caroline Knowles received a British Academy Small Research Grant to explore an innovative means of compiling raw information about the world's complex interactions. Here she gives a taste of the project that took her from China to Ethiopia. The photographs are by her collaborator, Michael Tan.

This research project is an experiment in what anthropologists call an 'object biography'.¹ Object biographies take the life trajectory of a single object as a vantage-point onto the landscapes, people and processes entangled with it. What can we learn about the social world by studying shoes? The project is an experiment in the synergies between anthropology/sociology on the one hand and art on the other. Michael Tan and I visited our field sites together. We brought different questions, perspectives and ways of working. We encountered and recorded our data (digitally) in different ways: him with the lens, me with a recorder, notebooks and maps.

Shoes are only one of millions of tiny circuits composing the global world of now. Shoes take us into the world of Chinese factories where they are made from plastics; and beyond as we trace their journeys in bundles, in containers and trucks that navigate the world's road and sea routes. Later, shoes make smaller journeys on feet as people navigate their world in them. A seemingly insignificant object reveals the organisation and operation of globalisation. Shoes take us into the heart of China's phenomenal growth, into the stories of globalisation from the Chinese standpoint. How shoes are produced throws a spotlight onto the people who make them; the materials they are made from illuminate global chains passing through the world of petrochemicals and on to consumers, distributed around the world.

Moving from production to consumption, it is through our shoes that we touch the ground on which our lives are played out; through shoes we navigate space, and its tangle of social relationships. Shoes log 'the footwork of dwelling'.² The shoes available to us, the shoes we choose, how and where we wear them are significant: shoes are full of information about the social world.

Among shoes, flip-flops are uniquely significant in providing access to information about the social world. No other shoe has its ubiquity: it is the world's highest-selling, most popular, shoe. It sells uncounted billions a year, massively outselling the world's second highest-selling shoe – the trainer. Flip-flops log global demographics: when world population rises so do flip-flop sales. It is unique in its reach across the social spectrum. It is worn by the wealthy who pay as much as \$200 for a beach or bathroom accessory; and it is worn by the poor because it is also the world's cheapest shoe. It can be bought for as little as 40 cents, and for millions without other footwear options, the flip-flop is a step

up from barefoot. A billion people still walk barefoot.³ Flip-flops expose social inequalities between rich and poor countries, and between rich and poor people within the same country. They display social inequalities on a global scale.

We explored the biography of the flip-flop from its beginning, as granules of plastic made from petrochemicals cracked from crude oil. This took us to the factories where most of the world's flip-flops are made, in Fujian, in industrial villages surrounding Fuzhou, in South Eastern China, by migrant workers (Figures 1–3). Our investigations expose the human fabric animated in, and entwined with, plastics. Through a humble shoe, we unfolded stories of large-scale dislocation from country to town, and of the social upheaval of Chinese industrialisation and economic development.

Mrs L: The flip-flops we wear are given to us by the boss. But when we go outside of the factory we will wear the shoes that we buy. I have three pairs of shoes: one sandal, one flip-flop and one leather shoe.

Mr L: I have two pairs, a pair of flip-flops and a pair of leather shoes. Because I work here all the time, I hardly go out, so I wear flip-flops. I don't know which country the flip-flops I make are going to, but I do know they are for export. Some go out locally to local people. I have never thought about who wears this shoe. I can't think about that person. We just hope if the business goes well we will earn more money. We don't think about who wears them.

The L's are glad to live inside the factory because this saves money they would otherwise spend on accommodation. Plastic flip-flop production involves continuous human and machine *motion*, and flows of chemicals and hot plastics. It is noisy, plastic-fume-filled and dirty: a layer of dust settles over everything in the factory. Workers work twelve-hour shifts, production is continuous, hours and wages are regulated. Workers must be flexible, working when there are orders and finding other work when there are none. This is no simple story of Chinese exploitation. Made through its simplest technologies, the flip-flop serves as a starter in the world of factory production. Many factories began in peoples' homes. But profits are small and, if costs are not kept to a minimum, flip-flop production will move to Vietnam, or Sudan; in fact it is already moving to these places. Improvements in Chinese factory workers' conditions leave them jobless. Migrant workers from villages in Western China are an enthusiastic workforce away from the farm, and are prized by factory managers for their hard work and flexibility.

Mrs L: It takes 36 hours to get to my village. 36 hours only on a train, then I have to take land transport, a truck or a car, another four hours to the village. I go back for school holidays. There are two school



Figure 1: *The Chinese factory. Finished – a woman trimmer presents her work.*



Figure 2:
Making soles.



Figure 3:
Attaching straps.



Figure 4: *On the market in Addis Ababa.*

holidays but I only go back for one, for two months. I have a daughter who is 13 and studying in secondary school. My parents are taking care of her. I am not sure if my son will stay here or go back to my village in Sichuan. Depending on the conditions [in which they live and work] we will see where we will send him to school. ... I miss Sichuan a lot; that is why I go back every year. My parents and my daughter are there. I don't want to be outside; I want to be in the village. Every time I go back there, I don't want to come back here. I will go back for good one day. I don't know when I can do that, because when the family run out of money they ask me, and I feel bad. So I don't know when I will go back there. ... People from Sichuan work all over China because there are no jobs – it's not developed; because there is no money there and we have parents to take care of. It's obvious...

Farming doesn't bring us any money and we have parents who needed to be fed, and we have living expenses, that's why we came here to work. Sichuan is not one of the developed zones in China, so there is not any prospect there. People who farm there plant enough to sustain themselves, but that excludes living expenses such as education and other stocks such as meat, poultry, fish – things that are beyond our planting. The price increases make it hard for us, and then ageing parents, medication and the cost of living. So with our farming self-sustaining method, it doesn't sustain any more, so we have to go out and work to feed us...

My train ticket [to Fuzhou] was from my parents, through the money they earned from farming. But a friend from my village gave me a place to stay here and when I earned money I gave it back. She helped me get out of Sichuan in the nineties when Fujian was opening up ... and I found work in a strap factory.

Chinese flip-flops are shipped all over the world. Their story ends in the garbage dump, on the outskirts of a city in Africa, in South America, in Europe or in America; where bits of coloured plastic brighten the collected detritus of contemporary life. All countries, even those which successfully protect domestic flip-flop production, buy Chinese flip-flops.

We followed only one of hundreds of distribution trails that lead from Fuzhou: to Ethiopia. Ethiopia is one of the strongest emerging markets for Chinese goods. Ethiopia combines a high population – in excess of 72 million – with a low average income and relative political stability, making it an ideal target market for cheap shoes. Ethiopia's population cannot afford alternatives. It has a shoe industry, it even has a flip-flop industry; but it cannot defend it from Chinese competition. Flip-flops log the Chinese footprint in Africa. They reveal the difficulties of shipping through the Red Sea and piracy off Somalia. They reveal the difficulties of smuggling to avoid import taxes, and distribution systems that pass through Addis' biggest market, Mercato (Figure 4), and on to smaller markets and corner kiosks through a network of



Figure 5: A wearer of flip-flops on the streets of Addis Ababa.



Figure 6: A home-made alternative to flip-flops.

traders throughout the city. They also reveal the routine lives of the urban Ethiopians who trade and wear them as they navigate Addis Ababa on foot and by bus.

Z navigates Addis Ababa in two pairs of shoes: a pair of year-old flip-flops repaired with a nail and a pair of plastic ballet slippers. She was barefoot until she was 19 years old. Before flip-flops were available, her husband made the children's shoes, recycling tyre rubber in the process (Figure 6). She gets her dark, widow's clothes, from the salvage. Now aged 60, she lives in a small house with her casually employed grown-up children and young grand-children. She sells potatoes, onions and tomatoes on a piece of cloth outside her door (Figure 5).

We follow her to the market: she moves through the crowds we struggle with like a fish, buying vegetables for her stall. We follow her back and into her neighbour's house for a coffee ceremony and to church where she prays every day. We log her routes through the city and her way of walking: all in a pair of flip-flops.

The stories of globalisation are told as invisible financial and technological flows. But globalisation is also *lived* as quotidian detail by millions of ordinary people whose lives are as networked as capital and technology, if by different processes. Investigating how people make and live with objects provides valuable information about the human fabric of what we glibly call globalisation. It is these, social, aspects that we accessed through the shoe. It revealed the concerns and circumstances of Chinese workers. It exposed a small piece of the Chinese footprint in Africa, in the lives of those who rely on the flip-flop as a fundamental technology of mobility. The global world runs on human effort expended in factories and on the streets of the cities and rural areas in the global South.

Notes

- 1 Object biography is a research technique used by Kopytoff who famously investigated the social activity surrounding a used car in Africa. It was popularised by Appadurai in his edited collection, *The Social Life of Things* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- 2 Tim Ingold, 'Culture on the Ground: The World Perceived Through Feet', *Material Culture*, 9:3 (2004), 315–340.
- 3 Edward Tenner, *Our Own Devices* (New York: Knopf, Random House, 2003), p. 53.

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The Rise of Islamic Radicalism in Tanzania

From 1998 to 2005, Dr Felicitas Becker conducted hundreds of interviews in Tanzania, both to discover why and how many people had converted to Islam and to investigate why these Muslim congregations have produced Islamic radicals. This edited extract from her book, *Becoming Muslim in Mainland Tanzania, 1890–2000*, gives an account of conflicts among Tanzania’s Muslims, in particular the role of Muslim reformists – often referred to as the *Ansar* – who were highly visible and vocal during her period of research.

INITIALLY, the *Ansar* sought to establish their dominance by attending the mosques in large numbers and marginalizing other worshippers – especially in the mosque in Lindi, founded in the 19th-century by an Arab immigrant called Saidi Mthanna. They quickly became numerous enough to contend for space with other prayer-goers, and they made their presence felt not only during prayers and funerals, but also on the streets. *Ansar* were recognisable by a style that combined elements of what, for brevity’s sake, can be called Western street fashion (running shoes, low-cut blue jeans, basketball shirts and shades) with what they considered elements of ‘Islamic’ dress (skullcaps and beards). They were rarely seen in the sandals, cloaks and gowns favoured by mainstream Muslims.¹ Their eclecticism extended to manners, which combined a street-wise swagger inspired by representations of African-American culture – widely available on videotape – with the frequent use of Arabic idioms. It was thus clear from the beginning that they continued the practice of marking social allegiance through style, while introducing new associations and meanings.

Their main demand was a revision of ritual practice. The reason for their refusal to share the mosques with other users lay with the way mainstream Muslims prayed: normally they fold their arms over their stomachs at the beginning of the prayer sequence, while the *Ansar* insist on the arms being folded over the chest, or stretched out besides the body. Even more divisive, though, was their insistence that funerals should be performed quickly and in silence, while established practice was to proceed slowly and recite the *shahada* (Islamic creed) on the way to the grave. These silent burials have earned the *Ansar* the nickname *Chimumuna* (Makonde for ‘quietly, quietly’) in Lindi.

The *Ansar*, in turn, condemned the established practices with a term much used by Muslim reformists in Africa and beyond: *bida*, ‘innovation’. By fulminating against *bida*, they presented themselves as people who sought to emulate the practice of the Prophet’s lifetime in everything. In the words of an *Ansar* spokesman in Rwangwa:

God says: you who believe, obey the Almighty God and his Prophet. And to obey the Prophet means to follow all the orders given by the Almighty God. And to obey the Prophet likewise means to follow all his ways that he followed in his lifetime. All twenty-four hours [of the day]; whatever he did.²

Setting out from this premise, the *Ansar*’s criticism of the practice of other Muslims was wide-ranging and aggressive. It included gender relations and the comportment of women among mainstream Muslims, educational institutions, relationships with authorities and all practices characteristic of the *tarika* (Sufi orders): *dhikr* (devotional acts), *ziara* (gatherings), *maulid* (public celebrations), Quranic healing and the respect in which the followers of the *tarika* held their *khalifa* (leader).

The *Ansar*’s polemic was powerful because it operated at several levels: it questioned the merits of local notables, of the ruling party, and the government; it criticized local ritual practice and also asserted the need to change the way ritual was legitimized. Nevertheless, we can group these attacks around two main foci: the political role of Muslim notables,



and the way to establish knowledge of correct Muslim practice.

The attack on Muslim notables and their relations with government

Given the ubiquitous, rhetorical and performative nature of village politics, it is clear that the *Ansar* posed a challenge in its terms. In Rwangwa, they summed up their objections to the Central Council of Tanzanian Muslims (Bakwata) and the incumbent mosque committee by referring to them as ‘Tanzania One Theatre’, the name of a popular Dar es Salaam-based dance band (Figure 1). By this, they implied that Sufi ritual



Figure 1: The mosque in the country town of Rwangwa, founded in 1947 and at the centre of a recent controversy between mainstream Muslims and Ansar reformists.

performance was no more religious than pop music. Moreover, the band was widely known to be sponsored by the government. The designation as ‘Tanzania One Theatre’ therefore also ridiculed the Sufis’ deference to government and the determination of mosque elders to translate religious authority into a right to be heard by officials.

The conjunction of political and generational conflict was evident in the *Ansar’s* attacks. While a handful of men of middle age or above provided them with financial and ideological support, the people who vocally proposed and defended their views were overwhelmingly young. As they saw it, they were taking on a Muslim establishment

corrupted by its association with the government. *Ansar* asserted that the Bakwata served to control Muslims, rather than further their interests. Bakwata functionaries were ‘bribed’ with trips to the capital and similar perks, and were motivated predominantly by concern with their own well-being. The poor state of repair of Saidi Mthanna’s mosque, they said, proved their point.³



Figure 2: Young people’s precarious economic ventures at work: selling eggs and water, and loading the ‘Ng’itu Express’, the bus that was the only form of public transport to Rwangwa.

The political stance of Rwangwa’s *Ansar*, in particular their insistent representation of themselves as a community under siege, was also bound up with their interpretation of world politics. Arguing that the Sufis could not really claim the name of Muslims, their rhetoric elided their Sufi detractors in Rwangwa with Christian aggressors against Islam the world over, epitomised by the US-led invasion of Iraq. It was sometimes hard to know which adversary they were fulminating against, their local mosque committee, the Tanzanian government, or the government of the United States.

If an enemy appears who wages war against Islam, [the believer] is ready to die for the Almighty God. ... God says, you who believe, don’t make those who are outside the Muslim religion your friends, don’t love them, because if you associate with them they will try to bite your fingers ... Those enemies, those who are not Muslims, have already started to say words [against

Muslims] in their mouth and what they have hidden in their hearts is much more than what they say, [namely] that they must kill Muslims to stop Islam from spreading.⁴

A particularly pointed form of the adoption of the notion of a worldwide struggle between 'true' Muslims and their enemies lay in the use of the term *Al Qaeda* for Rwangwa's *Ansar*, employed half-jokingly by bystanders to the conflict, and sometimes by *Ansar* themselves. The rhetoric and counter-rhetoric of 'war on terror' and 'defence against Christian aggressors' helped energize the rural radicals.

Within a regional frame of reference, moreover, the *Ansar* were further developing the long-standing theme of relations between coast and interior. They were flaunting knowledge obtained through connections abroad, bypassing both local elders and the coast. Observers in town were alert to this. Some attributed the intensification of religious debate up country directly to influence from abroad:

These differences started in Arabia. This contrariness is not ours. ... Those who go on the hajj bring these issues here. In the past, people from this region used not to go on the pilgrimage. Now they do, using the proceeds from their cashew [when cashew prices were high in the late 1990s]. Every year five to ten people from [rural] Newala and Masasi [districts] go. We here on the coast don't go like we used to, we don't have money. All we can afford is three fish!⁵

Thus Muslims in the coastal towns have become bystanders to religious debates up country. In effect, coastal urban observers feel that the *hajj* has become an act of emancipation from the coast for villagers. This is not least because of the knowledge participants bring back from the *hajj*.

Notes

- 1 The term 'mainstream Muslims' here is used to encompass both followers of the *tarika* (Sufi orders) and other Muslims who had no objections to Sufi practice and did not actively endorse *Ansar* stances.

2 Discussion at the 'godown' mosque, Rwangwa-Kilimanihewa 1 November 2003.

3 The Lindi *Ansar* recruited the heirs of Saidi Mthanna to their cause. This was probably made easier by the fact that the mosque had already in the past been the object of inheritance disputes.

4 Discussion at the 'godown' mosque, Rwangwa-Kilimanihewa 1 November 2003.

5 Interview with Mzee Athumani Musa Mfaume, Mtwara-Kiganga 5 November 2004.

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Becoming Muslim in Mainland Tanzania, 1890–2000 was published in 2008, in the *British Academy Postdoctoral Monograph* series. Details may be found at www.britac.ac.uk/pubs/

Duties to Strangers and Enemies in a World of 'Dislocated Communities'

In 2008, the British Academy published *Embedded Cosmopolitanism: Duties to Strangers and Enemies in a World of 'Dislocated Communities'*, by Dr Toni Erskine.

In this innovative book, Dr Erskine offers a challenging and original normative approach to some of the most pressing practical concerns in world politics – including the contested nature of the prohibitions against torture and the targeting of civilians in the 'war on terror'.

Dr Erskine's vision of 'embedded cosmopolitanism' responds to the charge that conventional cosmopolitanism arguments neglect the profound importance of community and culture, particularity and passion. Bringing together insights from communitarian and feminist political thought, she defends the idea that community membership is morally constitutive – while arguing that the communities that define us are not necessarily territorially bounded and that a moral perspective situated in them need not be parochial.

Dr Erskine employs this framework to explore some of the difficult moral dilemmas thrown up by contemporary warfare.

Can universal principles of restraint demanded by conventional laws of war be robustly defended from a position that also acknowledges the moral force of particular ties and loyalties? By highlighting the links that exist even between warring communities, she offers new reasons for giving a positive response – reasons that reconcile claims to local attachments and global obligations.

Embedded Cosmopolitanism provides a powerful account of where we stand in relation to 'strangers' and 'enemies' in a diverse and divided world; and provides a new theoretical framework for addressing the relationship between our moral starting point and the scope of our duties to others.

The volume is published in the *British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship Monographs* series. More information can be found via www.britac.ac.uk/pubs/



Georgia, the 'Man in the Leopard's Skin': The Past, Present and Future of Georgia's Middle Eastern Communities

In May 2008, Professor Harry Norris visited Georgia to study the current situation of non-European communities in the country. Here he provides some historical and cultural background to this politically and ethnically complex part of the world.

And down in Tiflis, in the glowing lowlands, beyond the shadows of the mountain's and the battle's periphery, there was an atmosphere of seduction, voluptuous adventures and political intrigue. Vineyards and orange groves, bazaars piled with silks and spices, Persian jewellers weighing turquoises by the pound, and Caucasian armourers working on the beautiful damascened blades for which they were celebrated throughout the world. From the Tatar mosques, the chants of the Faithful rose at evening to mingle with the singing of bearded monks in the Armenian churches. Ramshackle, fretted balconies overhung the river Koura, where, in the twilight, the sound of t̄ar and zurna accompanied the plaintive songs of Georgia. Yet this southern softness was never that 'dew-dropping south of love-whispering woods and lût resounding waves'. The land, like the people, retained a savagery behind the beauty.

Lesley Branch, *The Sabres of Paradise*

In recent times, Georgia has been viewed potentially as an outpost of the European Union and of NATO. This view is essentially political. It fails to reflect a major part of its rich and remarkably diverse Christian and non-Christian cultural and religious heritage. This Trans-Caucasian country has known centuries of conquest and occupation by Arabs, by Persians and by Turks (Figure 1).¹ Strong cultural links with the properties of the Georgian Orthodox Church in the Holy Land, and in particular with the Monastery of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem, have assured it a

continuous and close relationship with its southerly and predominantly Muslim neighbours. Saint Abo of Tbilisi, the 'Arab Perfumer of Baghdad', who was martyred by the Arab Governor of Georgia, in 786 wrote,² 'Georgia is called Mother of the Saints; some of these have been inhabitants of this land, while others came among us from time to time from foreign parts to testify to the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

Jacques de Vitry, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem in 1180, wrote, 'There is also in the East, another Christian people ... They are much dreaded by the Saracens and have often by their invasions done great damage to the Persians, Medes and Assyrians on whose borders they dwell, being entirely surrounded by infidel nations.' Yet Georgia has been a safe haven for oppressed Middle Eastern minorities as well as serving as a bulwark of Christendom. One of its greatest rulers, King David IV the 'Builder' (1089–1125), was known to have conversed on religious matters with his Muslim subjects. Through his royal office they merited his personal protection. He knew the content of the

Qur'ān, and he enquired from Muslim theologians the precise meaning of the Logos (*al-Kalīma*) in their holy book which they regarded as God's final revelation.

The influences from Persian and, later, Ottoman Art were a prominent feature in the medieval illuminated manuscripts of Georgia. These influences are also at the very heart of the contents of two major Georgian romances. In the literary masterpiece, *The Knight in the Panther's (Leopard's) Skin*, "Vepkhis Tqaosanis" (1189–1207), by Shot'ha Rust'haveli, Arabic and Iranian names are to be found, as well as references to the *Qur'ān* and to Mecca. *Amiran-Darejaniani*, ascribed to Mose Khoneli (circa 1196), an even richer work in its Oriental colour, also reveals a direct influence from masterpieces of Iranian and Arabic classical and popular literature. The adventures described therein are geographically framed within India, in the Yemen, in Balkh and in Baghdad, and the personalities who are in the key stories are sometimes patterned upon literary models from the *Siyar* of the world of Islam, the *Sīrat Hamza* in particular.

Figure 1: Tbilisi Citadel (known as the Narikla Citadel or Shuris-tsihke) was originally built by the Persians in AD 360. It was restored by the Ottomans in the second half of the 16th century. It was severely damaged in an earthquake in the 19th century. The church towers offer stylistic evidence that the region was 'a meeting-place of Byzantine and Persian culture'. Photo: Harry Norris.



Between 10 and 24 May 2008, I undertook a research visit to Georgia. Partly this was to examine documents on the history of the Caucasus, in the library of the Georgian Academy of Sciences in Tbilisi and in other libraries. But I also wanted to study the cultural and religious traditions of several Middle Eastern communities in the country – Muslim, Assyrian and Yezidi – and to collect information on their current state by interviewing representatives. I wish to express my gratitude to the British Academy and to the Georgian Academy of Sciences for their invaluable assistance in making this research possible, despite the problems that Georgia was facing at that time.

Islam in Georgia

The Arabs conquered Georgia in the 8th century. For four hundred years Tbilisi was the capital of an Islamic Emirate.³ Even after the establishment of Georgia as a Christian kingdom that was to attain its peak in the 12th and 13th centuries through King David the Builder and Queen Tamar, the Muslim community remained significant and thrived. In 1701 there were 3,000 Muslims in Tbilisi within a population of 20,000 (Figure 2).⁴ The capital has been the central heart of the community, though Muslim tribes and emigrants later settled in certain other districts.

Once known as 'Tatars',⁵ today the predominant Muslim community is that of the Azeris (the Azerbaijanis), who are Shī'ite Muslims. Yet they are by no means the only non-Georgian Muslim community. In 1989 it was estimated that there were 303–308,000 Azeris, 96,000 Abkhaz (some of whom are Muslims), 12,000 Kists, 4,200 Avars, 4,100 Russian Tatars, around 4,100 Kazakhs, 1,300 Uzbeks and 1,200 Tajiks. There are also the Georgian-speaking Ajarians, who are now under an increasing pressure to forsake their Islamic faith and customs.⁶

Common to these minority Muslim communities is a current ignorance of Arabic, and a lack of *madrasas* where Arabic and the *Qur'ān* are taught. Mosques of importance do exist, and at a popular level there is an observance of Ramadan and the celebrations of major Muslim feasts. Some other feasts are associated with local saints and with popular and eclectic and heterodox Islamic practices.



Figure 2: *The Middle Eastern-looking building in the scene was in origin a 'bath-house' (hammām): it is the late 17th-century Orbeliani (or Chreli) baths. It has a facade of bright-blue tiles and two short 'minarets' in the style of a Persian mosque. Tbilisi's sole major mosque is situated behind this building further up the hill. (In the foreground is the author.) Photo: Giorgi Narimanvilis from the Georgian Academy of Sciences.*

In some districts, such as Pankisi, the observances of Islam display a close kinship to those observed in Chechnya, Ingushetia and in Daghestan across the border. And as in those countries, Sufi brotherhoods, though past their prime, still survive in Georgia, especially the Naqshabandiyya and the Qādiriyya brotherhoods.

Georgian Muslims, like their neighbours, are not unaffected by the so-called 'Salafi' or 'Wahhābi' influences that mark the forces of change in every corner of the Muslim World today.⁷

Generally, Azeri Islam in Georgia is most closely linked to its Caucasus neighbour

Azerbaijan, and to Iran (though in Tbilisi its one mosque is shared for prayers with other Georgian Muslims most of whom are Sunnī). Ajaria and the Ajarians cannot be severed from their principally Ottoman and Turkish roots and past; and this is also true of the exiled Meskhetian Muslims from South-West Georgia. In their faith and culture, the Kists are intimately associated with the Islamic customs and the waves of reform and resistance that over centuries have been active within the Northern Caucasus Muslim communities beyond Georgia's mountainous borders. One might also recall that the Moroccan traveller Ibn Battūta, while at Qīram (Staryj Krym, the Crimean capital in

the 14th century), wrote that he enjoyed a meeting with the jurist (*faqīh*) and teacher, 'Alā'l-Dīn al-Āssī, who was a North, or a South Ossetian in his ethnic origins.

George Sanikidze and Edward W. Walker conclude their study of *Islam and Islamic Practices in Georgia* by predicting that:

There is a tradition of religious tolerance and eclecticism in Georgia that is the result of the country's particular history and experiences. Government officials in Georgia nevertheless worry that outside influences, particularly Islamist ideology and the ongoing conflict in Chechnya, will lead to the politicisation of Islam in the country, which could in turn further destabilize Georgia politically and even precipitate new rounds of internal violence. Fortunately, the government appears to be aware that a heavy-handed approach towards Georgia's Muslim minority would be entirely counter-productive. It is accordingly trying to preserve inter-confessional amity in the country.

Georgia's Assyrian Community

The Assyrians (*Suryānī* in Arabic and Persian, *Āthōrāyā* in Syriac) are a Christian minority community, and are the descendants of the Aramaic speakers of Asia Minor who adopted Christianity during the 1st century AD. They are a part of the Nestorian or Eastern Syrian Church, and worldwide they are estimated to number 350,000. At a synod held in AD 484, this 'Assyrian (or Chaldean) Church of the East' rejected the decrees that had been approved in Ephesus in 431, and its members officially declared themselves to be Nestorians. Some Assyrians are now Uniates who are within the Catholic Church. But most of the Assyrians who found themselves within the former Soviet Union, including those in Georgia, are today to be included within Orthodoxy.

A meeting with Mr David Adamov, the President of the Assyrian International Congress of Georgia, was part of my programme during my stay in Tbilisi.⁸ He told me that Georgia's Assyrians number approximately 5,000, and they are concentrated within the Kartli region, and especially in Tbilisi. They have close contact with the Assyrians in Armenia and also with

those in the Middle East, especially in Iraq and Anatolia (Turkey). They rely heavily on financial help from Germany and from other countries in the EU. They have their own newspaper, though this is currently not being printed because of financial problems.

Unlike in Armenia, the Assyrians in Georgia are regarded and are treated as an integral part of the Georgian population. This gives them advantages, though it also brings them disadvantages. One of these is their lack of representation in Georgia's Parliament by an Assyrian representative. Mr Adamov, however, pointed out that he was able to meet President Sakashvili at any mutually convenient time. Nevertheless, this was a personal relationship, and, in his opinion, it did not allow an adequate venue for hearing the views of the Georgian Assyrian Christian Community as a whole. Another obstacle to be faced is that now up to 80% of the Assyrians are members of the Georgian Orthodox Church, hence the views of the remaining 20% who are still loyal to the 'Assyrian Church of the East' are inadequately heard.

Other problems that face the Assyrians relate to criminality, particularly drug abuse, and there are also many marital problems within their community. On the credit side is the enthusiasm of all for football amongst the Assyrians. Their teams have excelled in games played against teams in Iran and in other neighbouring countries, though their sporting efforts do not attain the success of the teams of Armenia and Azerbaijan. But, to Mr Adamov, fortunately the Assyrians do not face a choice of having to choose either nationality, or faith, as is the case between being Kurdish, or being Yezidi, within Armenia. There, a choice between ethnicity and faith is divisive to the Kurdish community as a whole.

As in Armenia, there is total freedom of worship and the celebration of feasts. The two most important of these are held on the first Wednesday in January (Nōrūz) and the second on 14 June. The feast and liturgy held in honour of the holy, Mar Zay'ayah (Mari, a foremost Nestorian saint?), is of a special importance. Many burials take place outside Georgia, particularly in Armenia, where Georgian Assyrian family interments occur



Figure 3: Georgians tend the graves of their deceased loved ones in the cemetery of the Cathedral of Sveti Tskhoveli in Mtskheta, which is the very heart of Georgia's spiritual identity. Mtskheta has been inhabited for 3000 years, and was once the centre of the pagan cult of Armazi (this Georgian deity being associated with the Zoroastrian Supreme Deity of Ahura Mazdāh the 'Wise Lord', the One True God). Photo: Harry Norris.

beside those of their Armenian relatives. Family reunions and joint celebrations are also frequently held within the Hakkāri district of extreme South-Eastern Turkey situated to the north of the towns of Zākhū and Dahūk in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Georgia's Kurds and Yezidis

These twins are separated in a religious and ethnic divide in Armenia. But this is not the case in Georgia, where Kurds and Yezidis are comparable in status to the Assyrians. During my visit, I interviewed Mr Alik Mirzoev, representative of the Yezidi National Congress, and a representative of the Kurdish community in general. He said that a fair estimate of their combined number is upwards of 8,000 – though there is one estimate of over 12,000. A large number of Kurds are nominally Muslims – especially a small floating Kurdish population from Northern Iraq, some of whom have latterly returned to their home country.

The Kurds in Georgia are exceedingly proud of their language and culture, and this was a special cause for a celebration, in Tbilisi, on 16 May 2008. A reception, attended by the new Iraqi ambassador (himself a Kurd), was held in the Caucasus Centre to launch officially the very first translation into Kurdish of Rust'haveli's, *Knight in the Panther's (Leopard's) Skin*, with its title of 'Şot'a R'ûst'avêlî, Wergirê P'ostê Piling', "Mala Qavqasiyê, T'îbilîsî, 2007". Its translator was the late Jardoe Assad, a Kurdish poet.⁹ It was a moving and colourful national occasion, in which the Kurdish community in the capital took a very active part, and they were united in displaying their loyalty to their host country.

Mr Mirzoev is of the firm belief that a majority of Kurds in Georgia are of the Yezidi faith, itself a heterogeneous belief system. Members of the Yezidi faith number 150,000 in Iraq, and over 40,000 in the former Soviet Republics, especially in Georgia and in Armenia. The most holy place for all Yezidis is Lâlîsh, in Iraqi Kurdistan, a place of pilgrimage that the Georgian Yezidis regard as the Mecca of their faith. In the opinion of Professor Philip Kreyenbroek, the core of Yezidi beliefs is a legacy that is directly descended from the Indo-Iranian religion, the beliefs of which date back to 2000 BC; it was influenced by the Zoroastrianism that supplanted it, and at a later date by Islamic Sufism associated with the medieval Sufi, Shaykh 'Adî b. Musâfir, who allegedly died in 1162.¹⁰ Professor Garnik Asatryan has argued that they are today a highly secretive, though basically monotheistic sect and community, if not a 'true religion'. To the world of Islam they are deemed to be 'Devil Worshipers', or extreme radicals (*ghulât*). Amongst Oriental Christians in Syria, if one believes William Dalrymple, they are treated with some respect by the Nestorians.

My Georgian Academy colleague, Giorgi Narimanvilis, and I put these questions to Mr Mirzoev at our meeting with him. He firmly acknowledged that, like Christians and Muslims, the Georgian Yezidis had a profound belief and conviction of the reality of human choice between Good and Evil. These two opposites determine the structure of the decisive moral choices for mankind. However, the Yezidi 'divinity', 'Malak Tawus',

was the Highest Angel amongst the Heavenly Host. He was a colourful and a heroic being, remote from the notion of 'The Prince of Darkness', as he is pictured in the West. Indeed, the Divinity himself had, in His very Essence, the nature of 'Malak Tawus', the 'Peacock Angel'. This seemed to be an almost 'Miltonian touch'; and though Milton would not concede that the villain of *Paradise Lost* was none other than God (Yazdan), at least Satan was surely 'a rebel's rebel'. In all probability, Milton would have sympathy with a Yezidi's concept of the Divine character that might be close to the statement, 'Hell within Him for within Him Hell'.

The Georgians, throughout their history, have absorbed many ideas of duality and of conflict, of joy and sorrow, from the Middle East. An example is the 'Woe-Stricken Knight in the Panther's (Leopard's) skin' when he tearfully uttered his lament in Rust'haveli's masterpiece:

God is weary of the happiness I have had hitherto, therefore he turns my pleasure into the gall of bitterness; He has wounded me unto death, none can cure me. Such by His grace, is His will and desire.¹¹

Conclusion

The history and geography of Georgia dictate that it has to face in two directions. Its ethnic, historical and cultural ties with the Middle East are crucial to the whole Georgian way of thinking. Georgians regard themselves as 'Europeans', and many of their famous musicians excel as soloists in orchestras in Europe and the United States. However, if you wish to understand Georgia's place in the world, you must understand this duality.

Notes

1 Many Georgians were taken as captives to the Middle East in the Middle Ages. According to David Japaridze, 16th-century European sources mentioned Georgian Mamluks amongst the Egyptians. The 17th-century records of European historians stated that the approximate number of prisoners annually kidnapped from Georgia ranged from three to five thousand. This meant that if credit is given to the first and smaller number, Georgia lost three thousand sons and daughters every year. Between the 16th and 18th centuries and up to the first half of the 19th century, Georgia must have lost at least one million youths, aged 13-14, including Georgians either exiled to Iran or forcibly enlisted into the Persian army.

2 See David Marshall Lang, *Lives and Legends of the Georgian Saints* (London: Ethical and Religious Classics of East and West, 1956).

3 Arabic epigraphical material has been recorded in several locations in Georgia, including the Cathedral of Sveti Tskhoveli in Mtskheta: see Tsisia Kakhiani, 'A Bilingual Epitaph of Svetitskhoveli', *Estratto (Venice)*, 36:3 (1997), 169-177.

4 Garnik Asatryan and Hayrapet Margarian, 'The Muslim Community in Tiflis (8th to 19th century)', in *Iran and the Caucasus*, Vol. 8.1 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004), pp. 29-52.

5 Ivar Lassey, *The Muharram Mysteries among the Azerbaijani Turks of Caucasia* (Helsingfors, 1926).

6 See *ISIM Newsletter*, 12 (June 2003: PO Box, 11089, 2301, EB Leiden, the Netherlands), 46-7; and George Sanikidze and Edward W. Walker, *Islam and Islamic Practices in Georgia* (University of California, Berkeley: Berkeley Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies, Year 2004), paper 2004_04'sani.

7 Islamic radicalism is present in the Caucasus as elsewhere and funding is selective and varied.

8 I am most grateful to Mrs Zina Jiorbenadze of the Georgian Academy of Sciences, and to Mr Giorgi Narimanvilis, for arranging this interview and for linguistic assistance during the course of our discussions.

9 Jardoe Assad (Arto Ozmanyany) (1929-1993) lived and carried out his activities in Tbilisi. He was known to Kurdish society as an expert on their native Kurdish language, literature, folklore and national traditions. He was a gifted poet and an outstanding translator of other people's poetry to Kurdish. He was a member of the Union of Writers of Georgia.

10 The tomb of Shaikh 'Adî, b. Musâfir in Lalish is revered by both Yezidis and Muslims.

11 Stanza 99, in 'Shot'ha Rust'haveli, *The Man in the Panther's Skin, a Close Rendering from the Georgian Attempted by Marjory Scott Wardrop*, with a Preface by Sir Oliver Wardrop (Tbilisi: "Nekeri" Publishing House, 2005), p. 31.

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Professor Norris made a research visit to Georgia under the terms of the Agreement between the British Academy and the Georgian Academy of Sciences.

Evolving Societies 2008

In November 2007, the British Academy organised the highly successful 'Evolving Societies' conference at the Barbican Centre, London. In November 2008, the British Academy hosted 'Evolving Societies 2008', a showcase for the work of its sponsored learned societies and overseas institutes in two important international research areas: 'Managing migration: policy perspectives from the Mediterranean and Middle East'; and 'Benefiting local economies and societies: case studies in cultural heritage management'.

Summing up, Baroness O'Neill, President of the British Academy, said: 'This is the second year in which we have brought together and celebrated the work of the British Academy-sponsored institutes and societies under the "Evolving Societies" banner. We have seen a powerful demonstration this afternoon of the range, relevance and importance of the research being conducted or facilitated in two highly topical subject areas, migration and cultural heritage management.'

'Both streams of presentations have shown the potential value of this research to a range of audiences and applications, in both public and private sectors. In this regard, it is relevant to mention that a recent British Academy Review, compiled by an expert working party chaired by Professor Sir Alan Wilson, concluded that Humanities and Social Science disciplines are not

contributing to public policy-making to the extent that they could and should be. I am therefore particularly encouraged by the potential for dialogue and partnership with policy-makers and other groups demonstrated here.'

Further information can be found at www.britac.ac.uk/institutes/evolsoc-08.cfm



Figure 1: The panel discussing cultural heritage management: Professor Andrew Wallace-Hadrill (Director, The British School at Rome); Professor Mike Robinson (Centre for Tourism and Cultural Change, Leeds Metropolitan University, on behalf of the Council for British Research in the Levant); Professor Todd Whitelaw (Institute of Archaeology, University College London, on behalf of The British School at Athens); Professor Mike Fulford FBA (Chairman, British Academy-Sponsored Institutes and Societies committee). Photo: David Graeme-Baker.

Giuseppe Mazzini and the Globalisation of Democratic Nationalism

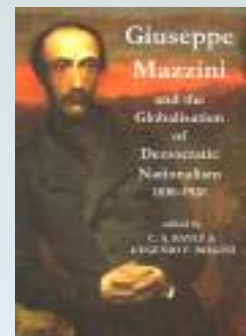
'At the beginning of the twenty-first century, "democracy" is the key slogan for politicians both of left and right. But it was in the middle of the nineteenth century that the word first attained its global significance. Giuseppe Mazzini played a crucial role in its popularisation from the 1830s to his death in 1872. Over the following three decades he remained an iconic figure, whose memory was invoked as an analogical and conjunctural symbol by democrats, nationalists, humanitarians and religious reformers from the River Plata to the River Ganges.'

So begins the Introduction to *Giuseppe Mazzini and the Globalisation of Democratic Nationalism, 1830-1920*, edited by Professor C. A. Bayly FBA and Dr Eugenio F. Biagini, which was published by the British Academy in September 2008. Mazzini – Italian patriot, humanist and republican – was one of the most celebrated and revered political activists and thinkers of the 19th century. His contribution to the Italian Risorgimento was unparalleled; he stood for a 'religion of humanity'; he argued

against tyranny, and for universal education, a democratic franchise and the liberation of women. The papers in this volume reflect the range of Mazzini's political thought, discussing his vision of international relations, his concept of the nation and the role of arts in politics.

According to the editors, 'the diffusion and appropriation of the image and thought of Giuseppe Mazzini represents a paradigmatic example of globalisation during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.' The essays in this volume detail how his writings and reputation influenced nations and leaders across Europe, the Americas and India.

The volume is published in the *Proceedings of the British Academy* series. More information can be found via www.britac.ac.uk/pubs/



Psalms for King James: Jean Servin's Music for George Buchanan's Latin Psalm Paraphrases (1579)

February 2009 marks the 400th anniversary of the death of the French composer Jean Servin. In the 1570s, Servin was a refugee from the Wars of Religion in France:

Professor James Porter describes his visit to the court of King James VI of Scotland in search of patronage.

IN THE early autumn of 1579 the French composer Jean Servin (1529–1609), then resident in Geneva, travelled to Scotland to present his elaborate settings of Latin psalm paraphrases, *Psalmi Davidis a G. Buchanano versibus expressi* (Figure 1), to the thirteen-year-old King James VI of Scotland.

The main purpose of this journey was to seek preferment at the court, probably in connection with the Chapel Royal, which at that time was based, like James, at Stirling Castle. We can deduce as much about the purpose from Servin's lengthy dedication to the king (Figure 2), which refers to his three books of chansons published in Geneva a year earlier. He also mentions the author of these paraphrases that he had newly set for four to eight voices, namely George Buchanan, the renowned humanist, poet and historian, who had been, coincidentally, King James's preceptor in his early years.

We know about Servin's visit from two principal sources. First, he carried a letter of recommendation from Théodore de Bèze, Calvin's successor in Geneva, addressed to Peter Young, who had succeeded Buchanan as the king's tutor. In this letter Bèze refers to Servin as 'having lived among us now for some years [*vixit apud nos aliquot iam annis*], practising his musical art [*exercens suam artem musicam*], in which he is well esteemed among his peers [*cuius peritus inter celebros musicos habetur*], a dutiful and God-fearing man of a blameless life [*homo sane pius et vitae innocentissimae*]'. Servin could hardly have asked for a better character reference. But Bèze was also interested, of course, as was the rest of Europe, in the future of James as a Protestant monarch who would eventually ascend the more powerful throne of England. The second intimation of Servin's visit comes from an entry in the account

books of the Lord High Treasurer for November 1579, whereby Servin was paid £200 in gold for his part-books. Later that month he received a further £20, no doubt for expenses. We will come to the source of this money later.

The five part-books that Servin brought with him had been specially bound, possibly by the Royal Binders to Henri III. Fashioned in red-brown calf, gold-tooled and richly painted, with yellow silk ties, they include the royal arms of Scotland on the covers (Figure 3). The music pages, with their diamond-head notation and woodcuts of animals to guide the singers to their part, are redlined throughout. Three of these presentation part-books have survived: two (superius, bassus) in the British Library and another (tenor) in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. The remaining two (contratenor, quinta pars) are currently untraced. We are fortunate to have these three examples, for it was the bindings in particular that attracted the interest of book collectors. The ordinary, vellum-bound print run, also produced in Geneva (with a false imprint of Lyons so that they could be sold in France), survives in two complete sets: one in Trinity College Library, Dublin, and the other in the Bavarian State Library, Munich. Single part-books are scattered in libraries throughout the United Kingdom (Edinburgh, Oxford, St Andrews, and Cambridge).

The music itself (Figure 4) is cast in the form of motets, each paraphrase being divided into sections for a varying number of voices. The work is not liturgical but meant rather as moral or spiritual entertainment suitable for a Protestant monarch. In style it resembles that of composers in the Franco-Flemish orbit such as Orlando di Lasso, Jacob Arcadelt, Clemens non Papa, and Giaches de Wert. It

also owes something to the Venetian influence of Adrian Willaert and Cipriano de Rore, musicians originally from Northern France or the Low Countries: Servin's use of techniques such as fauxbourdon, cantus firmus, and coro spezzato (divided chorus) make for contrast, in these paraphrases, with the Parisian chanson and its note-against-note declamation. Angular vocal lines within unusual modal procedures show him breaking away from the rules of strict counterpoint, and his originality extends to the free use of madrigal idioms: in Psalm 30, for example, the voices imitate the strumming of a lyre. Servin's integration of such diverse techniques welds the *Psalmi Davidis* together in a discursive unity that is entirely convincing. In this regard, while looking back to pre-Reformation models such as Josquin, he is already a skilled practitioner of the *seconda prattica* or newer, word-oriented style that anticipates Monteverdi. And this is no minor masterpiece. In a modern edition the entire work, which covers only the first forty-one psalms, amounts to almost one thousand pages.

It is clear from the dedication that Servin, if he were to receive preferment, intended to complete all one hundred and fifty psalms. He arrived, however, at a wholly inopportune time. Judging by the date of the letter from Bèze (26 August), he would probably have reached Scotland in mid-September if we allow roughly two weeks for the journey. We do not know the route he took or the date of his arrival. But he found that the glamorous figure of Esmé Stuart, Sieur d'Aubigny, James's French cousin, had arrived at the court before him (9 September) armed with a gift of 40,000 gold pieces sent by the Guise family to plot the return to the throne of Mary, Queen of Scots, James's mother, then imprisoned in England by her cousin

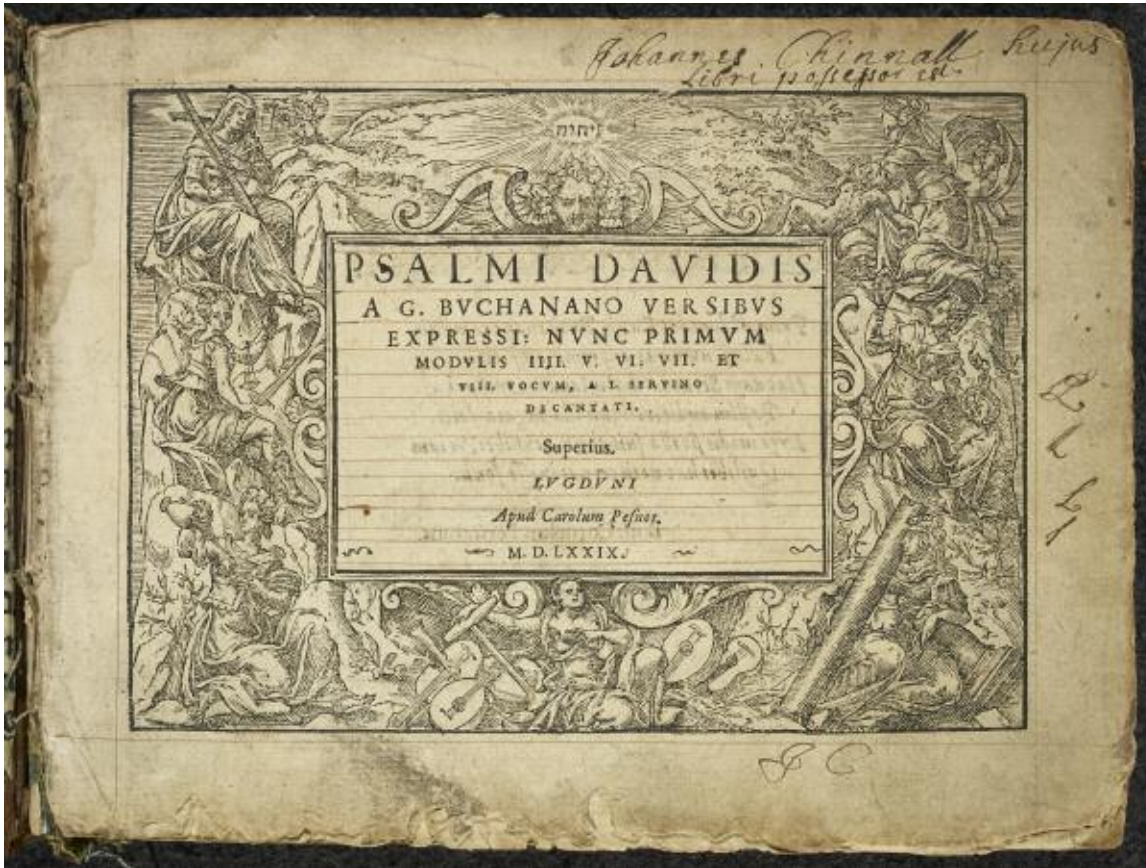


Figure 1: Title page, superius part-book. Photo: British Library.

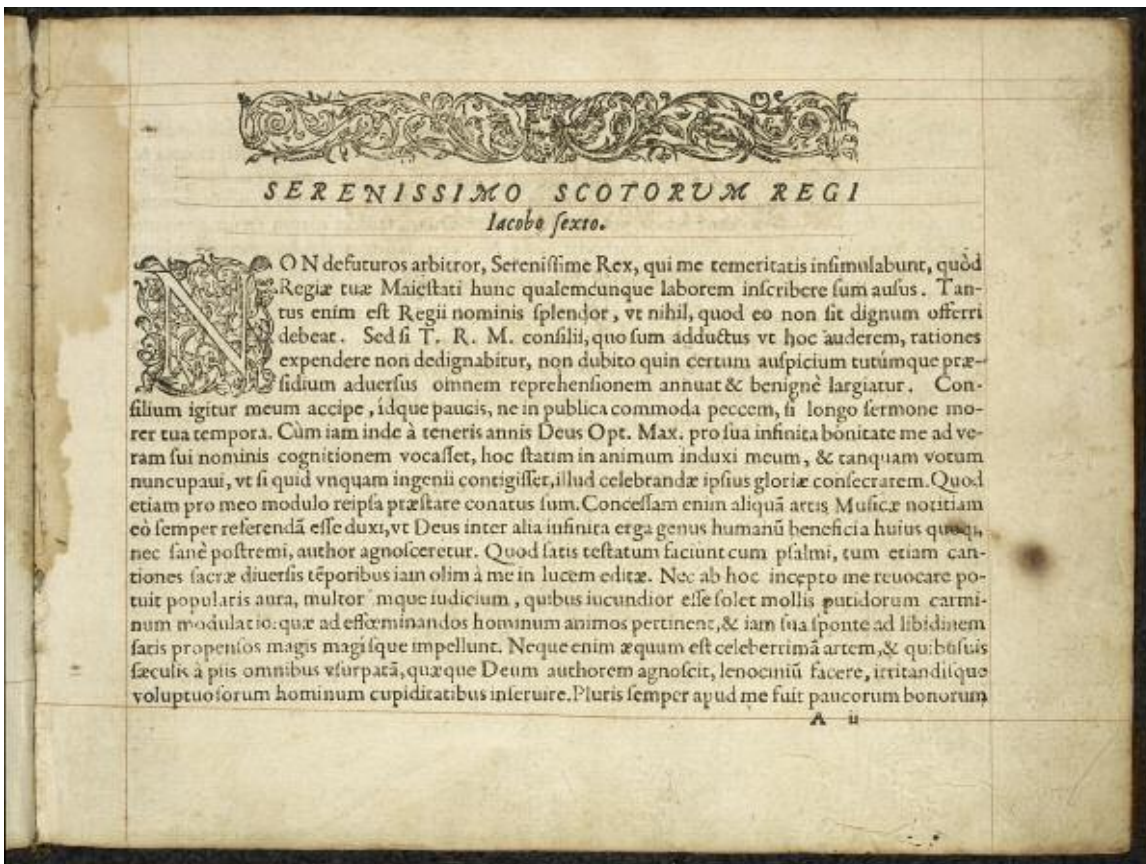


Figure 2: First page of dedication to King James, bassus part-book. Photo: British Library.



Figure 3: Binding of superius part-book. Photo: British Library.



Figure 4: First page of music, superius part-book. Photo: British Library.

Elizabeth. For an upright Huguenot such as Servin, this must have been a test of will-power and patience, for everyone could see the spell Esmé had cast on the young king. James was so enamoured of his French cousin, in fact, that he made him Earl of Lennox, although a few years later the latter was forced by events to leave Scotland.

It is ironic, then, that Esmé, who would hardly have relished having a Huguenot such as Servin with his Geneva connections in a position close to the sovereign, may have suggested to James that he pay him off from the hoard he had brought with him. The young king's coffers were chronically bare, and he was receiving an annuity of £4000 from Elizabeth I. For his part James, himself already an accomplished poet, may not have enjoyed being reminded, in these neo-Latin psalm paraphrases, of the harsh tutelage he had experienced under Buchanan. Having attained his regal majority in June, he was getting ready in September to leave for Edinburgh to assume his kingly duties. Besides, the positions for musicians at the court and Chapel Royal were probably all accounted for, and some measure of protectionism may have been involved. James's advisers, nevertheless, must have been impressed with Servin's work, for in November the Parliament passed an important Act to revitalize the musical competence of the Chapel Royal and the burgh Sang Schules.

Servin himself, bitterly disappointed, had to return to Geneva, where the opportunities

for a composer of his talent were limited. His Protestant contemporaries, Paschal de L'Estocart and Claude Le Jeune, were fortunate to secure from French noblemen patronage of the kind Servin had been seeking with the dedication of his first two books of chansons (1578) to Guy-Paul de Coligny, Vicomte de Laval, and Henri de la Tour, Vicomte de Turenne, both prominent supporters of the Huguenot cause. What we know of Servin's character from his chanson texts, that is, one not easily given to flattery or dissimulation, may have told against him in his search for patronage. To judge from hints in the dedication of the first book of chansons, he possibly had temporary employment with the Coligny family. But his personality and religious convictions seem to have marked him for the life of a refugee until he finally settled in Geneva.

Servin's early life is obscure. From a minor landed family in the region of Blois, he may have studied at the University of Orléans. It was there, in Orléans, that he published his settings for three voices of all one hundred and fifty psalms in 1565. Subsequently he seems to have sought refuge at the chateau in Montargis of Renée, Duchess of Ferrara, who gave shelter to several hundred Huguenots: one of his chansons, *Petit troupeau* [Little flock], alludes to life under her protection. Leaving there in 1569 he probably moved to Lyons, where the composer Claude Goudimel and master printers by the name of Servin were active. But the terrible events of St Bartholomew's Day in late August 1572 that

claimed Goudimel's life caused Servin to flee, eventually arriving in Geneva on 23 October, and it was here that he spent the last thirty-seven years of his life. Devout, but stubborn and sometimes at odds with the powerful Compagnie des Pasteurs, he was finally persuaded to assume the post of *chantre* (precentor) at the former Cathedral of Saint-Pierre from 1600 to 1604, a position once held by the noted composer of psalm tunes, Loys Bourgeois. Servin wrote no more music that we know of, and died, aged eighty, on 27 February 1609. More than any other composer, he described vividly in his chansons the turbulence of the times. The psalm settings, too, echo the anguish and spiritual exaltation of the psalmist as he faces both God and his enemies. We may reasonably speculate that Servin, like Buchanan, conceived these psalm paraphrases with their humanist tone as helping to heal a shattered world. Written against a backdrop of civil war and sectarian persecution, this deeply felt music still has resonance today.

James Porter is Professor Emeritus, University of California, Los Angeles, and Honorary Professor, University of Aberdeen. His edition of Servin's *Psalmi Davidis* is currently in press and will be published later this year by the Centre d'Études Supérieures de la Renaissance at the University of Tours. In 2007 he was awarded a British Academy Small Research Grant to prepare an edition of Servin's chansons.

PUNCHING OUR WEIGHT: *the humanities and social sciences in public policy making*

In September 2008 the British Academy published the latest in its series of reports which seek to inform public debate on topics of current interest. The report, *Punching our Weight: the humanities and social sciences in public policy making*, addresses the question of how policy makers can maximise the untapped potential of research produced within the humanities and social science disciplines.

The launch of the report brought together public policy makers, Fellows of the British Academy and other leading researchers, the Chief Executives of the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Economic and Social Research Council, and representatives from research organisations and think tanks. Attending the launch, the then Minister for Science and Innovation, Ian Pearson, said:

The humanities and social sciences are an integral part of our vision and have much to contribute to the debate on the great issues that affect us all.

The Government is absolutely committed to ensuring academic research continues to play an integral part in forming public policy. Therefore I welcome the publication of this report and its focus on increasing the contribution of humanities and social science research.

We will consider its recommendations alongside those of the Council for Science and Technology, which my colleague, John Denham, has asked to look more broadly at ways of improving engagement. The report is also a timely contribution to our continuing public consultation on developing a new Science and Society strategy for the UK.

The report, compiled by an expert working party chaired by Professor Sir Alan Wilson FBA, is informed by extensive soundings from both policy makers and academics. It finds both sides in agreement that a greater contribution from the humanities and social sciences is needed, especially as the



Figure 1: Sir Alan Wilson, FBA and Ian Pearson, Minister for Science and Innovation, at the launch of *Punching our Weight* on 17 September 2008.

challenges faced by society – globalisation, climate change, social mobility, cultural understanding, happiness and quality of life – are growing in complexity and require the development of a more sophisticated understanding of human behaviour.

The report makes 20 recommendations designed to improve dialogue, innovation and knowledge transfer between leading academics and policy makers in Westminster, Whitehall, the devolved administrations and other public bodies.

They include: reducing the high proportion of government research budgets allocated, contrary to the Government's own guidelines, to short-term projects; strengthening government departments' peer-review mechanisms to ensure they commission the highest quality research; and improving training for PhD students to meet the future needs of policy makers.

The report also recommends that universities take more account of public policy engagement in their criteria for academic promotion; and that government departments

set and publish targets to increase two-way secondments with universities and research organisations.

The British Academy will be holding a series of meetings in 2009 to facilitate further discussion between policy makers and the academic community. Further information, the full report, and the British Academy's response to the DIUS consultation 'A Vision for Science and Society' can be found via www.britac.ac.uk/reports/



LESSONS FROM THE ABERFAN DISASTER AND ITS AFTERMATH

At the Annual General Meeting in July 2008, 49 distinguished scholars were elected to be Fellows of the British Academy; and on 22 September, a ceremony was held at the Academy to admit them to the Fellowship. Five of the new Fellows were invited to speak about their work and its particular value. Professor Iain McLean described the research project which had given him most personal satisfaction and which had demonstrated the ability of scholarship to do good.

The events of Friday 21 October 1966

If you are over 50, you know where you were and what you were doing on 21 October 1966. Tip no. 7, which was 500 feet above the village of Aberfan, near Merthyr Tydfil, started to slide at 9.15 am. It was the last day before half-term at the Pantglas schools below. The valley was in low cloud, so that nobody saw the slide. Everybody heard it but

it was coming too fast to outrun. It first hit a farm, killing everybody in it. Then it engulfed Pantglas Junior School, killing 109 children and five teachers. Only a handful of the children aged between 7 and 10 survived. The tip comprised colliery waste, liquefied by the springs underneath. The liquefied flow slide of about 100,000 tons of slurry lost energy and solidified again after hitting the school and neighbouring houses (Figure 1). They

were buried as completely as Pompeii. A total of 144 people died.

The Rt Hon. Lord Robens of Woldingham, a former trade unionist and Labour politician whom the Macmillan government had appointed Chairman of the National Coal Board, arrived 36 hours later, having first

Figure 1: *The 1966 disaster when a tip of coal waste slid onto the village of Aberfan in South Wales.*



gone to Guildford to be installed as Chancellor of Surrey University. He announced that the cause of the disaster was an unknown spring underneath the tip. This was immediately challenged by villagers who had known it all their lives. Prime Minister Harold Wilson, who had reached Aberfan 24 hours before Robens, ordered an inquiry under the Tribunals of Inquiry Act 1921, headed by a judge assisted by an engineer and a planning lawyer.

A year later

The Inquiry reported in August 1967. Its report is unsparring, passionate, and strangely poetic. The disaster was entirely the fault of the National Coal Board (NCB). Tip no. 7 had been located on top of springs which are shown on the Ordnance Survey map. The Aberfan tip complex had slid in 1944 and 1963. The physical evidence of these slides was clear to the naked eye, although the NCB spent many days at the inquiry denying that the 1963 slide had occurred. It had no tipping policy, and its engineering experts had given no guidance to local workers. The Area Civil and Mechanical Engineers were at war. Neither of them inspected the tip, although the Mechanical Engineer claimed to have done so after Merthyr Council complained about the 'Danger from Coal Slurry being tipped at the rear of the Pantglas Schools'. The disaster was a 'terrifying tale of bungling ineptitude'. Nevertheless, the top management of the NCB tried to give the impression at the Inquiry that they had 'no more blameworthy connection ... than the Gas Board'. The NCB wasted up to 76 days of inquiry time by refusing to admit the liability that they had privately accepted before the inquiry started. The Tribunal called this 'nothing short of audacious'. This may be the strongest language ever used in a Tribunal Report about a UK public body. A section of the report condemns the behaviour of Lord Robens in a fine piece of official prose:

For the National Coal Board, through its counsel, thus to invite the Tribunal to ignore the evidence given by its Chairman was, at one and the same time, both remarkable and, in the circumstances, understandable. Nevertheless, the invitation is one which we think it right to accept.



Figure 2: Rescue workers digging outside Pantglas Junior School, in which 109 children and five teachers died.

Of all tribunal reports known to me, only the 1996 Scott Report on arms to Iraq has used comparable language about senior public servants.

A few weeks later, Lord Robens offered to resign. The Minister, Richard Marsh, refused to accept his resignation. The Commons debated the disaster in October 1967. The debate was painful and inconclusive. A succession of Welsh mining Labour MPs tried and failed to come to terms with what the NCB, regarded as the jewel in Clement Attlee's crown, had done. There were only two good speeches: one by Leo Abse, the only non-miner to represent a seat in the Valleys, and one by the Conservatives' brand-new Power spokesman, Margaret Thatcher. Abse called the exchange of letters between Robens and Marsh a 'graceless pavane ... a disgraceful spectacle'. Thatcher forensically pointed out that the Tribunal Report itself stated that one of the remaining Aberfan tips stood 'at a very low factor of safety'. She asked why A. H. Kellett, the Chairman of the NCB in South Wales, had stayed at a conference in Japan when the disaster occurred. She also asked why on earth W. V. Sheppard, the Coal Board's Director of Production, had come to be promoted to the main Board after the Tribunal had severely criticised him for his

ignorance of tip stability. To her two excellent questions, there came no answer.

By 1970, the NCB had still not paid the compensation due to Merthyr Council for destroying its schools. However, it had raised its initial offer of £50 compensation to each bereaved family to £500. Bereaved families were being supported out of the Disaster Fund, which at £1.75m was the second largest in real terms ever raised in the UK. Only the Princess Diana memorial fund has ever outstripped it.

Thirty years later

The Aberfan papers at the National Archives were released on New Years Day 1997. In July 1997, I received a British Academy Research Grant to further my study of 'The Aberfan disaster and its aftermath'. After thirty years these archives retained the power to shock – and still do. Here are some extracts dealing with the evasion of responsibility by the NCB and the way that the issues of compensation and clearance of the tips were handled.

Robens's offer of resignation was bogus. He had demanded pre-publication sight of the report in his capacity as a Privy Councillor. With ten days' notice (compare the two hours that Opposition spokesman Robin Cook was

given to read the Scott report), Robens saw that the report was, as Harold Wilson wrote on his copy, 'devastating'. He immediately orchestrated a campaign of support for himself among branches of the NUM. Board and union worked together on this. Robens went on a tour of the coalfields to denounce nuclear power. No prizes for guessing who supported him most warmly on that. A month later, he determined the wording not only of his 'resignation' letter, but, unbelievably, of Marsh's reply rejecting his resignation. He demanded the removal of a sentence inserted by Marsh's private office that pointed out that the whole Coal Board, not merely Robens, were vulnerable. Although the sentence, if left in, would have given him an opportunity to spread the blame, his strategy was to move it down to the chargehand of the tipping gang, not across to his Board colleagues. Marsh duly removed the sentence from his reply to Robens. Government at all levels, from Merthyr Council to the national government, was in thrall to the NCB. Ministers thought Robens was indispensable because only he could slim down the coal industry without provoking massive strikes. He knew that they thought that: hence he was able to bend them to his will.

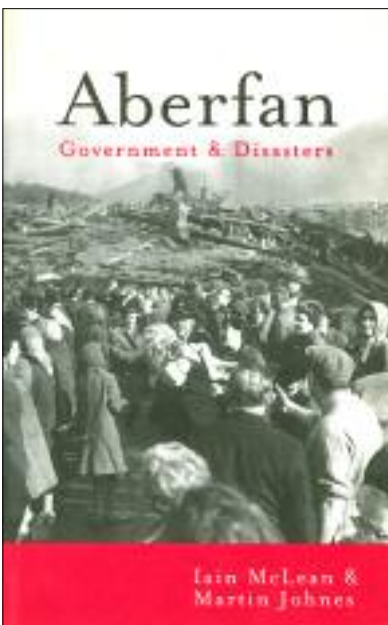


Figure 3: The book by Iain McLean and Martin Johns, published in 2000, which arose from their research into Aberfan and its aftermath. The cover shows a policeman carrying a child away from the disaster.

These documents prove that Leo Abse's phrase 'graceless pavane' was deadly accurate. The insurance staff of the NCB told Robens that £500 per dead child was a 'good' offer, and that only the 'hard core' were agitating for more. On compensation to the victims, the Charity Commission intervened when it should not have done, and failed to intervene when it should have done. It tried to prevent the Disaster Fund trustees from building the arched memorial in Aberfan cemetery, and from making flat-rate payments to bereaved families: they must first satisfy themselves that bereaved parents had been 'close' to their deceased children. The Trustees defied the Commission on both points. However, the Commission was silent in 1968 when the Wilson government raided £150,000 from the disaster fund to pay for removing the remaining Aberfan tips. Those tips belonged to the National Coal Board. They violated the Board's own criteria for tip safety. Yet the Board refused to remove them and lied about the cost. Paying for their removal is not a lawful use of charitable funds.

The Ministry of Power sponsored and protected the NCB. A contractor claimed that he could remove the tips for a fifth of what the NCB said it would cost, providing that he was allowed to sell the coal they contained. The Minister was advised to reject his offer for two reasons. Firstly, in the words of the briefing, 'the sale of the coal is a problem' because it would undercut the NCB's price. Secondly, the contractor had a reputation for leaving tips 'in a shambles'. NB, NCB will confirm this'. The main author of the Ministerial briefing, who went on to a long and very eminent Civil Service career, apparently did not check the dictionary meaning of 'shambles': a place of slaughter.

Lessons from Aberfan

Some of the causes of Aberfan were specific to the now-disappeared South Wales coalfield, and others were remedied by legislation. Only in South Wales were colliery tips dumped on slopes; all have now gone or been stabilised. The legislation under which Aberfan was not a notifiable accident (because no colliery workers were killed) was amended. A new framework for health and safety legislation was drawn up in 1972 by the Robens (yes, really!) Committee, and has remained in place ever since under the Health

and Safety at Work Act 1974. The 1974 Act has generally been reckoned a success, but Robens's appointment to chair the committee that introduced it is beyond satire.

Other lessons remain. Here are ten of them; there are others:

- *Freedom of information matters.* It should not have taken thirty years for some of the above facts to be revealed. However, the Tribunals of Inquiry Act 1921 proved its value. Robens found, like politicians in the Scott inquiry thirty years later, that bluster and evasion may work in politics, but it does not work at a tribunal. The 1921 Act has now been superseded by the Inquiries Act 2005. I share the anxiety that the Public Administration Select Committee expressed in February 2005 that the new Act gives the commissioning Minister more powers to suppress inconvenient evidence than did the 1921 Act.
- *Don't let politicians run quangos.* Robens was a politician to his fingertips. Except when cornered by cross-examination at the Tribunal, he did what politicians do: he spun his way out of trouble.
- *Governments should protect consumers, not producers.* The corporatist climate of the 1960s, in which the NCB was virtually a government department, blinded civil servants to the enormity of its behaviour and blunted attempts to hold it responsible.
- *Voters in safe seats are marginalised.* Aberfan was rock-solid Labour: therefore Labour governments had an incentive to ignore it, and Conservatives had no incentive to pay special attention to it.
- *Don't have local authorities that are too small.* In 1966 Merthyr Tydfil was the smallest unitary local authority in Wales (and the fifth-smallest in England or Wales). Against the 'state within a state' that was the NCB in South Wales it was powerless. It is a bit worrying that the present-day unitary Merthyr Council is smaller than it was in 1966.
- *Impose serious penalties on negligent corporations.* The legal framework for corporate manslaughter already existed in 1966. Why was the possibility of prosecuting the NCB not considered?



Figure 4: Newly elected Fellows of the British Academy are welcomed to the Academy, September 2008.

Partly because the idea was too mind-stretching; partly because it is always difficult, in a large organisation, to prove that a directing mind (*mens rea*) was behind a piece of criminal negligence. Not until the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007 – a forty-year-late response to Aberfan and other disasters – has that gap been filled.

- *Regulators must neither share the culture of the regulated...* Inspectors, like the technical staff of the pits themselves, were in 1966 mostly men who had risen from the ranks. They therefore shared the culture of those they regulated. The model for independent inspection should be the Railway Inspectorate, which since the 1840s has always recruited its staff from non-railway engineers (mostly retired military engineers).
- *... nor exist in a private world of their own.* The Charity Commission not merely failed to help, but actively obstructed, the largest disaster fund in British history. Reading their archives gives the impression that charity law was a private game for charity lawyers.
- *Policy-makers should be consistent about risk, even though ordinary citizens are not.* Human brains seem poorly equipped to make consistent evaluations of relative risk. People overrate the probability of unlikely but catastrophic events such as nuclear explosions and underrate the probability of everyday events such as road and, formerly, mining accidents. The

proper question is: what form of power generation is the least dangerous? Coal killed 144 people at Aberfan, and has killed thousands of miners over the years. Oil killed 167 people at Piper Alpha in 1988. Nobody can be shown to have died as a result of a UK nuclear accident, although the Windscale fire of 1957 may have caused some premature deaths. Yet the impression persists that there is something uniquely dangerous about one of the many ways of generating power. What matters is not so much what the industry is as whether it is properly regulated and whether safety legislation is enforced. The safety regulation of the oil and coal industries is now as rigorous as the safety regulation of the nuclear industry – but that did not happen until after the Cullen Report on the Piper Alpha disaster.

- *Give them the rest of their money back.* The Aberfan Disaster Fund has finally received back the rest of the money that the then government improperly took from it in 1968, with the connivance of the Charity Commission. In July 1997, Ron Davies, the first Secretary of State for Wales under Tony Blair, returned £150,000 to the Aberfan memorial funds to compensate for the Wilson's government raid on them for removing the tips. He acknowledged my research as one of the motivating factors, but he did not need my prompting. As he has recently said, it was a very easy decision: he had long thought that the money had been stolen. His action was widely welcomed, but some asked why he

had not returned the £1.5 million that more accurately represents £150,000 of 1966 money plus interest forgone. In January 2007, the National Assembly for Wales finally did the right thing, as I and others had been urging since 1997. The £1.5 million it then gave the Aberfan Memorial Charity will at last give the memorials a secure endowment.¹

Note

1. This article is largely drawn from Iain McLean, 'Aberfan: no end of a lesson', on the History & Policy website (www.historyandpolicy.org). For more detail, see Iain McLean and Martin Johnes, *Aberfan: Government and Disasters* (Cardiff: Welsh Academic Press, 2000). See also their project website at: www.nuffield.ox.ac.uk/politics/aberfan/home.htm

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In July 2008 there were the following elections to the Fellowship of the British Academy: 38 new Ordinary Fellows (Fellows ordinarily resident in the UK); 10 new Corresponding Fellows (Fellows resident outside the UK); and one new Honorary Fellow. The full list may be found at:

www.britac.ac.uk/fellowship/elections/2008/

Leopold Schweich and his Family

Though established by Royal Charter in 1902, the fledgling British Academy had no financial resources beyond the subscriptions of its first Fellows: a bid to the Treasury for 'assistance from public funds' was rebuffed in 1904. To remedy the situation, the Secretary of the Academy, Israel Gollancz, turned to a close circle of friends and persuaded them to endow lectures to be given under the auspices of the Academy – thereby increasing its funds and providing it with a valuable opportunity to raise its public profile. In November 2008, Professor Graham Davies FBA gave a lecture to mark the centenary of the first of these lecture series, the Schweich Lectures on Biblical Archaeology. Here Professor Davies explores the origins of this donation.

HITHERTO little has been known about the source of the benefaction which established the Schweich Lectures of the British Academy. The lectures were named in memory of Leopold Schweich and were to be 'for the furtherance of research in the archaeology, art, history, languages and literature of Ancient Civilisation, with special reference to Biblical Study'. The Academy's records from the time indicate that Leopold Schweich 'of Paris' had recently died in 1906, and Israel Gollancz, the first Secretary of the Academy, described the donor, his daughter Miss Constance Schweich, as 'my friend'. One could also infer from the size of the gift – £10,000, which in today's money would be equivalent to fifty or more times that amount – that she was a woman of considerable means, probably as a result of her father's bequest to her.

Searches of the Internet (by Google™) have, however, produced leads to a variety of source material, which makes it possible to place the Schweich family in their social and historical context, or rather contexts. There remain many gaps, but the basic outline is now clear.

Leopold Schweich must have been born about 1840 and probably came from a Jewish family in Kassel, Germany, like the better known Mond family, with whom he and his children had a variety of connections. He is described as a 'Kaufmann' (merchant) and in February 1862 he married Philippina Mond (1840–73), the sister of Ludwig Mond, who was to become a great chemist and industrialist in England, being the founder or joint founder of the companies which eventually became ICI. J. M. Cohen, the biographer of Ludwig Mond, had access to a vast archive of the latter's correspondence, which included, it seems, a good deal of information about the Schweichs.¹ From his incidental references to Leopold it is possible to fill out what is known of him from other sources, though detailed information about his parents, birth and home is still lacking. There may be more in the archive that Mond's biographer saw no reason



Figure 1: *At the Löwenthals' in 1861. Back row, left to right: Leopold Schweich, Frida Löwenthal, Ludwig Mond. Front row: Frida's mother and father. Photo from Cohen, The Life of Ludwig Mond (opposite p. 41).*

to include. A photograph from 1861 shows Leopold with Ludwig Mond, Ludwig's future wife and her parents (Figure 1). Leopold was in Cologne before his marriage and planned to make it the family home. The wedding took place in the Mond home at Kassel with a rabbi present and the honeymoon was in Paris. He was a successful businessman in the international jewellery trade, and achieved some wealth, but he was regarded by the Mond family as unreliable. He had a reputation as a *bon viveur* and seems to have needed good entertainment from the more withdrawn Ludwig on a visit to Utrecht in 1863. The family were still in Cologne in 1865 and Leopold attended Ludwig Mond's wedding in October 1866.

Leopold and Philippina had two children before her early death in 1873, Emile (b. 1865) and Constance (b. 1869). Possibly by the time of Constance's birth the Schweichs were already in Paris. In the 1870s Ludwig, who had by this time settled in the north of England, lost faith in Leopold and increasingly took his children under his wing:

Leopold's absences on business trips abroad (even to Russia), as well as the death of Philippina, seem to have played a part in this. They remained in contact and two letters from

Leopold to Ludwig (and in the first case also his wife Frida) Mond, dated April and September 1884, survive in the ICI (Brunner, Mond) archives in Chester.² These provide us with his address in Paris at the time, 8 Rue Martel, near the Gare du Nord and Gare de l'Est, and from the printed letterhead of one we also learn that this was the base for 'Schweich Frères', presumably his family business (Figure 2). The same archive contains two letters (dated August and September 1884) from a Louis Schweich to Ludwig Mond, one of which carries the address '119 (altered from '107') Boulevard de Magenta', which was nearby: he is presumably Leopold's brother, or one of them. There is also a letter, dated June 1884, from Emile Schweich to Ludwig Mond, written from Zurich, where he was a student. The letters are handwritten and when/if they are fully deciphered they will provide interesting

further insights on the Schweichs' family life and their relations with the Mond family. Already it is possible to pick out a reference to 'meine geliebte Constance' in one of Leopold's letters. The last we

merchant. This was also the family of the Violet who became the wife of Alfred Mond, Ludwig's younger son. Emile's wife Angela (with whom he had five children) is likely to be the Angela Mond who founded the British Academy's Italian lectures in 1916. Frida Mond (née Löwenthal), Ludwig's wife, was another benefactor of the Academy, endowing the Warton and Shakespeare lectures in 1910 (in memory of Ludwig, who died in the previous year?) and the Gollancz Lecture, which was first given in 1924, the sixtieth year of Israel (now Sir Israel) Gollancz, whom she greatly admired. Frida Mond died in 1923, and the endowment was a bequest in her will. Her friend Henriette Hertz had made a benefaction to the Academy in her will: the Henriette Hertz Fund supports the 'Master Mind', Philosophical and Aspect of Art lectures.

Constance Schweich

Constance did not marry until 1907, when she was 38. It is possible that she had taken over Henriette Hertz's lifelong abhorrence of marriage, but if so her father's death seems to have changed matters. She married Sigismund Goetze, a well known painter who had long (since 1891) been known to the Monds (he is also in the 1898 photo, not far from Constance). He was later commissioned to paint murals at the Foreign Office during the First World War.

At the time of their marriage Goetze bought the lease of Grove House, a mansion at the north-west corner of Regent's Park, opposite St John's (Wood) Church and a short distance from the Mond residence in Avenue Road. Papers about the house are preserved in the City of Westminster archives, and include a photograph of a painting of Constance in Florentine dress by her husband (1911; Figure 4), a wartime photograph of her, and photographs of a garden party at the house in July 1939 at which the Queen (i.e. the Queen Mother of more recent times) was present. The house, to judge from later sales and bequests (see below), was evidently full of valuable antiques and paintings.³ Constance had a reputation as a gifted pianist: she gave concerts at Grove House and accompanied Segovia on several occasions. But their company was not universally appreciated, it seems: the writer Arthur Symons (1865–1945) wrote to his wife in 1912 that it had been good to get away from 'the Gu-ts', which seems to have been a nickname for them.

In the 1940s, after her husband's death in 1939, Constance disposed of a number of items: a 15th-century manuscript of Pseudo-Augustine, now in the Henry Davis Collection at the British Library (the catalogue also mentions her as the former owner of manuscripts now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge); a wooden statue of St Christopher c. 1500, another of a female saint, four female saints c. 1480–1500, a 17th-century St John, a 19th-century St Helen, a 15th-century angel, a 19th-century Assumption of the Virgin and a 16th-century *Christus lapsus*, all now in the Fitzwilliam Museum. In 1944, perhaps from the proceeds of the sale of (some of) these items, Constance set up a fund, named after her, to improve public parks by the erection of works of ornamental sculpture. It is referred to in Hansard for 23 July 1957, in connection with a decision to install an ornamental fountain in Hyde Park ('Joy of Life' by T. B. Huxley-Jones), which was to be paid for by the Constance Fund. Much more information about the Fund and the



Figure 4: Photograph of a painting of Constance in Florentine dress by her husband, Sigismund Goetze (1911). Courtesy of City of Westminster Archives Centre.

family is given in a booklet by M. Holman about the sculpture of Richard Rome that was inspired by his 'Millennium Fountain' in Cannizaro Park, Wimbledon, which was also paid for by the Fund.⁴ The original idea for the Fund had come from Sigismund Goetze, and Constance later recalled the circumstances where it was first conceived:

We were touring in Italy and stopped at Bologna to see [Giambologna's] famous Neptune Fountain which is erected in the midst of the picturesque flower market. The day was a perfect one, and the bronze seemed alive under the sprinkling water, bathed in sunshine, against a dazzling background of exquisite flowers. We were spellbound by the loveliness of the scene, to which a busy crowd added a peculiar charm. And it set my husband wondering why our sculptors in England are so rarely given the opportunity of displaying their works in open spaces, in parks and recreation

grounds, where the man in the street can enjoy them and, may be, gain love and understanding for works of lasting value and real artistic merit.

In addition to those already mentioned, the Fund paid for fountains in Regent's Park ('Triton'; Figure 5), Victoria Park in Bethnal Green ('Little Tom') and Green Park ('Diana of the Treetops'), as well as elsewhere in the UK.

Constance had moved out of Grove House following bomb damage in 1941, and at the end of the war the lease was reassigned and she lived at 40 Avenue Road. In her will (proved 4 April 1951) Constance left money to the Royal Academy of Music to assist promising performers on the piano or a stringed instrument to acquire an instrument for use in their first recital in a London concert hall. She also bequeathed a number of further items to the Fitzwilliam Museum: a bronze cast of Perseus by Alfred Gilbert, an 18th-century *Pieta* and a Book of Hours

(Ms. 9.1951). These were delivered to the museum by a Mrs May Cippico, who is described (in relation to the *Pieta*) as Constance Goetze's niece, most likely a (married) daughter of her brother Emile. It seems that the Goetzes had no children of their own.

The Schweich Lectures

With her close connections to the Monds it is not at all surprising that Constance Schweich made a benefaction to the Academy, only perhaps that she was the first. It remains unclear why exactly she wanted to support research into antiquity for the sake of Biblical study. Her Jewish origins may have played a part, but her relatives generally gave their support to the study of modern European culture. An interesting and perhaps significant exception is her cousin Robert (later Sir Robert) Mond, Ludwig's elder son. Although primarily an industrial chemist like his father, he had a profound interest in Near Eastern archaeology, especially after being forced for health reasons to spend several winters in Egypt from 1902. He both participated in excavations and supported them financially and he was the major financial supporter of the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem in the 1920s, including Dorothy Garrod's work at the Mount Carmel Caves. The offer of Constance's benefaction came with detailed provisions for its use, including the support of excavations and the distribution of any objects found, and this would be a lot more intelligible if she were being guided by someone with the interests of Robert Mond. Although the key letter offering the gift is missing from the Council of the Academy's minute-book, some private correspondence between her and Gollancz from early in 1907 is preserved in the Gollancz archive at Princeton University and it shows that both of them were close to him. In a letter dated 10 January 1907 Constance wrote:

I was so glad that you went to Paris with my darling auntie [Mrs Frida Mond] and poor Robert. My thoughts were permanently with them during the sad days, which ought to be days of joy for all! I am sure your sympathy and friendship was a great help and that the little ones were more than happy with you. Irene is a great favourite of mine...⁵

Robert Mond's wife had died tragically late in 1905, leaving him with two young daughters. The likelihood of his interest in the Schweich project is increased by his involvement in the



Figure 5: 'Triton' by William McMillan, in Queen Mary's Garden, Regent's Park, London, commissioned by the Constance Fund. Inaugurated 25 April 1950. Photo: Graham Davies.

publication in 1906 of the first substantial volume of *Aramaic Papyri Discovered at Assuan* (the texts better known as the Elephantine papyri). According to his own introductory Note, Robert Mond was telephoned about a discovery of papyri during his own excavations at Thebes in the spring of 1904 and he immediately travelled to Aswan and ‘acquired them with the intention of presenting them to the British Museum’. When the Egyptian authorities virtually insisted that he present them to the Cairo Museum, he made it a condition that he should have the right of publication. The Oxford scholar A. H. Sayce had seen them at Thebes and agreed to edit them, subsequently with the help of A. E. Cowley. Mond actually financed the elaborate publication of the texts and seems to have been behind the inclusion of two scholarly appendices. Although the documents included were only contracts, and not the even more interesting letters and offering-lists discovered later, Sayce found plenty of biblical interest to write about in his introduction and, rather prematurely, concluded that this new evidence supported the existence of monotheistic belief at Elephantine. In other words, at the very time when the Schweich bequest was being made, Mond was in direct

contact with Sayce about a discovery which was already perceived to be of considerable biblical interest (and which was to be the subject of the Schweich Lectures in 1914). Mond presented a copy of the volume to the Society of Biblical Archaeology, of which Sayce had been the President since 1898, and became a member in November 1907. One might indeed wonder whether the requirement in the Schweich Trust Deed, which followed closely the terms proposed by the donor, that ‘all scholars of whatsoever School of thought’ should be eligible for appointment, was originally intended to ensure that, in this highly controversial field, conservatives like Sayce should be chosen to lecture as well as mainstream Old Testament scholars like S. R. Driver. If so, it was only successful in a small way: Sayce never gave the Schweich Lectures and the only real conservative to do so in the early years was E. Naville in 1915.

Notes

- 1 *The Life of Ludwig Mond* (London: Methuen, 1956).
- 2 Brunner, Mond and Co. Ltd Archives, in the Cheshire and Chester Archives, DIC/BM/7/5, cited with permission.

3 See also P. Hunting, *A Short History of Nuffield Lodge, Regent's Park* (King's Lynn, 1974), pp. 25–31.

4 *Embodying the Abstract: The Sculpture of Richard Rome* (London: 2007), also available at www.richardrome.co.uk/essay.html

5 The original letter is in the Sir Israel Gollancz Correspondence, Manuscripts Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, and is cited with permission.

The inaugural Schweich Lectures were given in 1908 by Canon S. R. Driver on ‘Modern Research as illustrating the Bible’. The Schweich Lectures remain a highly regarded forum on the Bible and ancient civilisation. Each lecturer delivers three lectures, which are then published together in book form. More information can be found via www.britac.ac.uk/pubs/

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From the Archive

JOHN MILTON, 1608 to 2008 (via 1908)

'John Milton: A Symposium to Commemorate the Quatercentenary of his Birth' was held at the British Academy on 6 December 2008. Milton's standing is unparalleled in English culture – as the greatest English poet after Shakespeare; as an important political, moral, and theological contributor to the intellectual debates of the Civil War and Commonwealth; and as a far-reaching influence on the poetry and political thought of subsequent generations. The symposium, convened by Professor Paul Hammond FBA and Professor Blair Worden FBA to appeal to a broad audience, featured eight papers on various aspects of Milton's rich and diverse legacy. The occasion concluded with a memorable poetry reading by Geoffrey Hill.

Figure 1: At the John Milton Quatercentenary symposium, held at the British Academy on 6 December 2008, the poet and emeritus professor Geoffrey Hill read selections from Milton's work and from his own poetry.



THE BRITISH ACADEMY also played a prominent role in marking the 300th anniversary of Milton's birth. As described in the previous article (page 53), in its early

years the Academy needed to establish its identity. Sir Frederic Kenyon would later write that Israel Gollancz, the Academy's first Secretary, 'seized any opportunity that

presented itself for bringing the Academy into the public eye. A notable early example of this was the celebration of the Milton Tercentenary in 1908. ... [A]s no society then existed with better claims to take the lead, Gollancz seized the opportunity to procure from influential quarters an invitation to the Academy to discharge this national duty.'¹ The undertaking 'greatly increased the prestige of the Academy'.

The letter inviting the British Academy to initiate arrangements was signed by the Lord Mayor of London; the Chairman of the London County Council; the Vice-Chancellors of the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge and London; the Master of Christ's College, Cambridge (where Milton had been a student); the High Master of St Paul's School (where Milton had been a pupil); and the Trustees of Milton's Cottage at Chalfont St Giles. In January 1908, the *New York Times* reported excitedly that 'proposals of a definite nature' were to be laid before 'British Academy officials': 'such early discussion of the plans seems to indicate that the event will be celebrated on a grand scale.' A committee was set up to consider the proposal that 'the British Academy should initiate a movement for the Commemoration of the Tercentenary'; in February, it reported the further coup that celebrations planned by Christ's College, Cambridge, were to be brought forward (to July 1908), 'so as not to clash with the Academy's proposed celebration in London'.

The opening meeting of the celebrations, on 8 December 1908 (the eve of the actual Tercentenary date), was held in the Theatre, Burlington Gardens, 'attended by a large representative gathering' (Figure 2). The *New York Times* reported that 'Those who assembled at the celebration included men most prominent in art, science, and literature

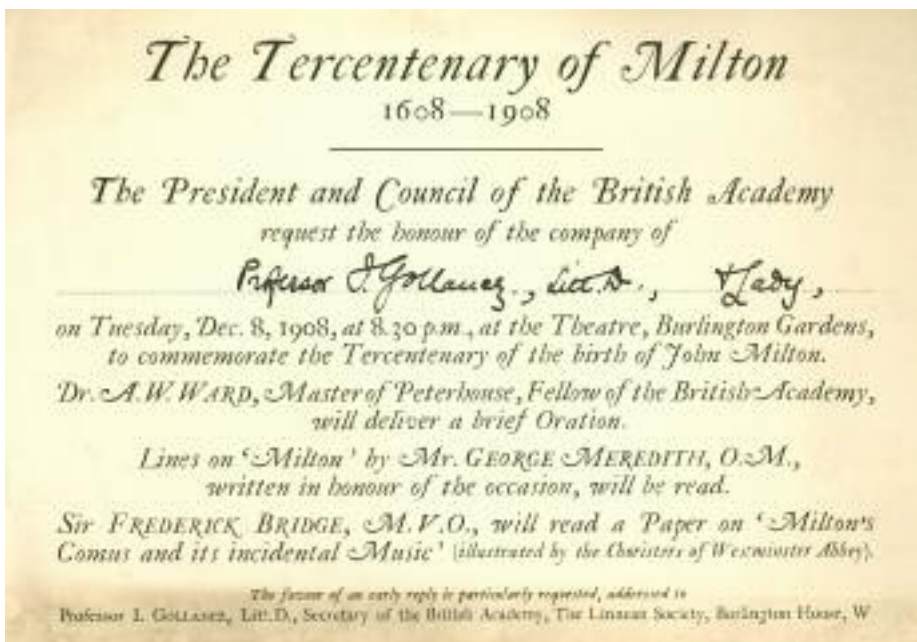


Figure 2: Invitation to the opening Tercentenary event on 8 December 1908, addressed (in his own handwriting) to Israel Gollancz, the Secretary of the British Academy, '& Lady'.

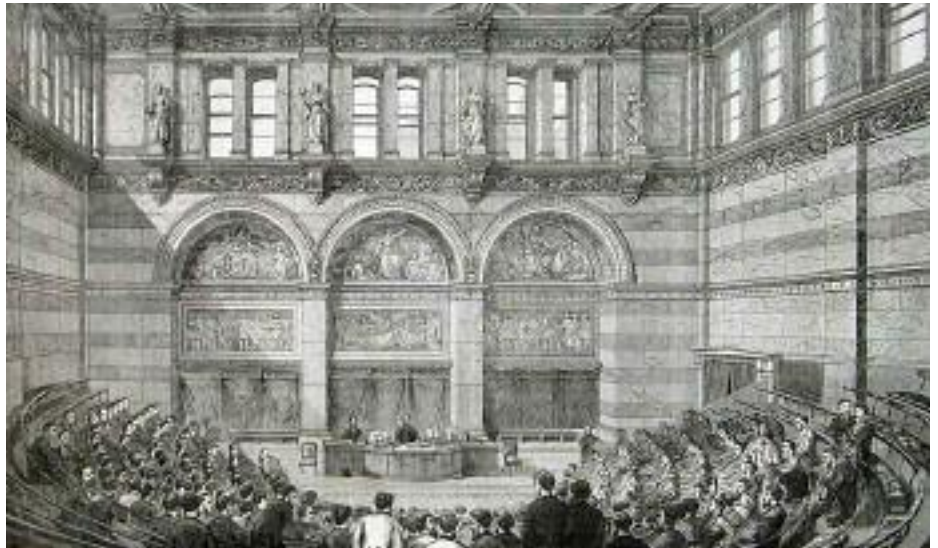
Figure 3: *The Lecture Theatre at No. 6 Burlington Gardens, when it was home to the University of London – this 1871 image is from the Illustrated London News. In 1902 the building was taken over by the Civil Service Commission, which continued to hire out the lecture theatre for lectures and theatrical performances. Later the theatre space would be divided up into rooms on two storeys; and in 1928 the British Academy moved into the lower part, finally securing for itself a permanent home which it would occupy for the next 40 years.*

and the learned professions. Whitelaw Reid, the American Ambassador, and the Ambassadors of the other powers, also attended. The British and American flags were entwined over the platform.'

Dr A. W. Ward, Master of Peterhouse and Fellow of the Academy, delivered 'a fitting oration' on Milton and his 'soaring genius': 'the English people and the English-speaking world to whom the inheritance of these works has descended are at one in cherishing them with grateful reverence.' The organist, composer and conductor, Sir Frederick Bridge, read a paper on 'Milton and Music', with vocal illustrations by the choristers of Westminster Abbey (instrumental music supplied by the Grimston Quartet).

At this meeting, too, were read lines composed for the occasion by the novelist and poet, George Meredith, OM – 'A voice that down three centuries onward rolls; Onward will roll while lives our English tongue ...' The President of the British Academy later noted, 'A certain pathos attaches to these lines when we remember that they were almost the last contribution to literature from the pen of that great writer' (Meredith died in May 1909).

The programme of commemorative events also owed much 'to the kind offices of the Lord Mayor', who on the Tercentenary date itself (9 December), in the Mansion House, 'most graciously gave a banquet in honour of the occasion for the Fellows of the British Academy and others.' Music was provided by students of the Guildhall School of Music.



On 10 December 1908, five scholarly papers on different aspects of Milton were delivered at a meeting of the British Academy in Burlington House. There was also 'a remarkable musical service' at Bow Church, Milton's parish church, at which the Bishop of Ripon preached the sermon. Back at the Theatre, Burlington Gardens, on 15 December a performance of *Samson Agonistes*, directed by the actor and theatrical manager William Poel, brought the Tercentenary programme to a close.

All the addresses and papers presented during the celebration were subsequently published in the *Proceedings of the British Academy*.²

In his address to the 1909 Annual General Meeting, the Academy's President reported on the Tercentenary celebration, and declared that

the British Academy may be congratulated upon the success which attended it.

I venture to think that nothing could have been carried out in better taste. There was a general feeling that the ceremony should not be allowed to lapse into anything that might be considered an

extravagant demonstration; and all who were engaged in the celebration were influenced by the consciousness of discharging a pious duty in memory of one of the greatest and most revered names in English literature.³

Notes

1 F. G. Kenyon, 'Sir Israel Gollancz, 1863–1930', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 16 (1930), 424–438 at 431.

2 *Proceedings of the British Academy*, [3] (1907–1908), 213–355.

3 Sir E. Maunde Thompson, 'Seventh Annual General Meeting, July 1, 1909: Address by the President', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, [4] (1909–1910), 1–7 at 4–5.

The 2008 symposium was one of the first to be hosted at the British Academy under the Academy's new Conference Support scheme. It is hoped that the event will lead to a publication. A recording of Geoffrey Hill's poetry readings may be found via www.britac.ac.uk/events/index

The British Academy

The British Academy, established by Royal Charter in 1902, is the United Kingdom's national academy for the promotion of the humanities and social sciences. It is funded by a Government grant-in-aid, through the Office of Science and Innovation.

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The Academy has identified four strategic priorities central to achieving these aims over the next five years:

- Advancing the humanities and social sciences by supporting research and scholarship at all levels
- Promoting these disciplines on international platforms, building collaboration and creating opportunities for UK researchers overseas
- Increasing the scope and impact of communications and policy activity, and creating events and publications that communicate new research and encourage public debate
- Strengthening opportunities for Fellows to contribute their expertise to the intellectual life of the Academy and the country.

Further information about the work of the Academy can be found on its website at www.britac.ac.uk, or by contacting the Academy at 10 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AH, telephone 020 7969 5200, email chiefexec@britac.ac.uk



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