

2022 ACTIVITY REPORT





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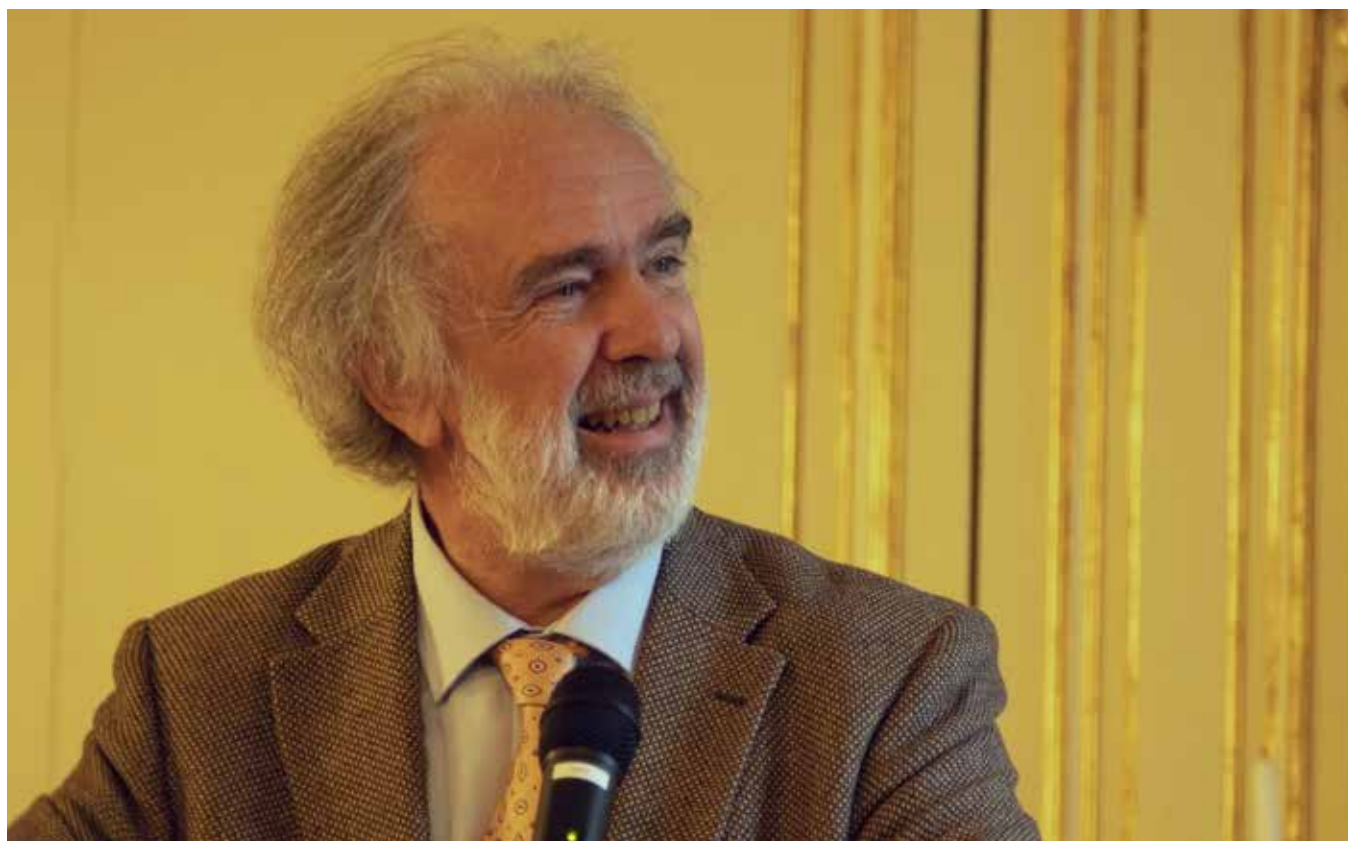
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WORD OF WELCOME FROM THE PRESIDENT



"It is the long history of humankind (and animal kind too) that those who learned to collaborate and improvise most effectively have prevailed".

Charles Darwin

Collaboration. In the more and more competitive context that characterizes the academic world, it could be useful to remind the virtues of collaboration. Learning to collaborate should be one of the most important skills developed in academia, as it is essential to join forces to further any field.

It is in this spirit that the Fondation Wiener-Anspach continues to support collaborative research projects between the Université libre de Bruxelles and the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford.

Improvisation. The term could seem unrelated to a truly professional attitude. The ability to improvise – to adapt, to react to the unexpected – is more and more important nowadays, when from crisis to crisis, our world is becoming a world of unexpected situations. To develop the capacity to adapt, nothing can replace immersion in a foreign environment. The stays of students and researchers in foreign universities are real exercises in improvisation and adaptation. Here too, our Fondation can play a major role in training a generation that will have to face a multitude of challenges, the nature of which we probably do not yet know.

You will find in this report all the talents that the Foundation actively supports in their wide range of projects. By visiting the Foundation's website, you will find out more about them and about our various calls for applications.

Once again, I would like to thank Professor Kristin Bartik, the Executive Director of the Foundation, Professor Luc Lemaire, the Chairman of the Scientific Committee, and Professor Eric De Keuleneer, who chairs the Finance Committee, for their wonderful work. They make the Foundation sustainable and the collaborations between ULB and the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford remarkably dynamic. I would also like to thank Pierre Vaesen and his team for their commitment to the Alumni Network. Last but not least, many thanks to Francesca Spinelli and Violette Cadars, on behalf of myself, the fellows of the Foundation, as well as the researchers who benefit from our support. This small administrative team is so enthusiastic and efficient, and we cannot stress enough the importance of their contribution to all our missions.

Thank you all for your collaboration and your ability to improvise!

Professor Didier Viviers
President of the Fondation Wiener-Anspach

THE FOUNDATION

The Fondation Philippe Wiener - Maurice Anspach exists thanks to the generosity of **Phyllis Agnes Beddington Wiener**. Its creation, in 1965, is intimately linked to Phyllis' love for her husband **Philippe Wiener**, who died in 1944 in a camp for political prisoners in Germany. Phyllis modified the Foundation's statutes to add the name of Philippe's close friend **Maurice Anspach** (who had taken care of his family during and after the war) upon his death in 1967. When she died in 1973, Walter Ganshof van der Meersch, then Executive Director of the Foundation, described her as "an exceptional person in whom all the gifts of intelligence and heart shone".



From top left, clockwise: Phyllis and Philippe in their home before the war; Phyllis in 1970; Maurice Anspach. All pictures courtesy of the Beddington and Anspach families.

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The Fondation Wiener-Anspach would like to express its warmest thanks to Professor Isabelle Rorive, who stepped down from the Scientific Committee in November 2022, for her dedication to its activities since 2011.

Fellowship programme



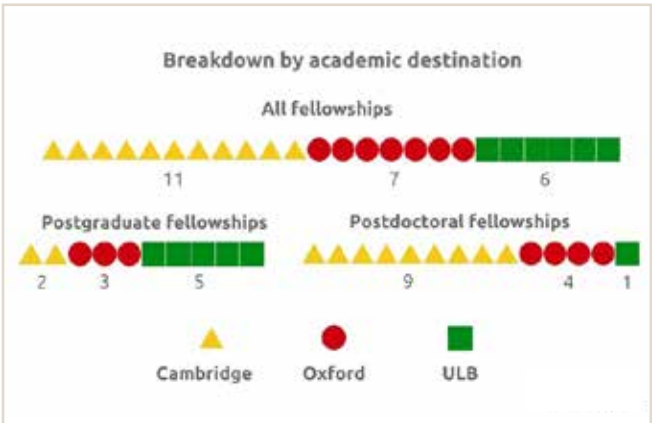
FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME



In line with its objectives, the Foundation promotes the development of academic activities between the ULB and the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford by awarding:

- Postgraduate fellowships to ULB graduates to enrol at the University of Cambridge or Oxford.
- Doctoral fellowships to ULB students to undertake part of their research at the University of Cambridge or Oxford and vice versa.
- Postdoctoral grants to researchers who have obtained their PhD from the ULB to work at the University of Cambridge or Oxford and vice versa.

For the 2022-2023 academic year, the Scientific Committee of the Foundation selected 24 Fellows, some of whom were able to attend the annual Fellows' meeting held in Brussels in September.



CAMBRIDGE



Postgraduate Fellows

Mathilde El Hadjen (Master in Art History and Archaeology, ULB) is doing an Mphil in Archaeological Research.

Véréna Stockebrand (PhD student in Medieval French Literature and Philology at ULB, under the supervision of Prof. Craig Baker) is carrying out part of her doctoral research on the critical edition of *Ystoyre et le livres des faiz et gestes du illustrissime puissent et magnanime Guerin Meschin* by Jean Rochemeur (Books I and II after the single manuscript Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, Charles Fairfax Murray 25), under the supervision of Prof. Sylvia Huot (Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages and Linguistics).



Postdoctoral Fellows

Ariadna Albajara Sáenz (PhD in Psychology and Education Sciences, ULB) is carrying out the second year of her research project entitled "The Incredible Years (IY) Teacher Classroom Management (TCM) training: Long term use and effects, and outcomes in children with probable Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)", under the supervision of Prof. Tamsin J. Ford (Department of Psychiatry).

Laura Alvarez (PhD in History, Art History and Archaeology, ULB) is carrying out a research project entitled "Peering into the Bronze Age through the mirror. A study of mirrors in Cyprus in the 13th-12th c. BC.", under the supervision of Dr Yannis Galankis (Faculty of Classics).

Céline Erauw (PhD in History, Art History and Archaeology, ULB) is carrying out a research project entitled "Interdisciplinary approaches to the role of animals at the Pachacamac site (ca AD 1000-1533)", under the supervision of Dr Elizabeth DeMarrais (Department of Archaeology).



Esperanza Jubera García (PhD in Psychology and Education Sciences, ULB) is carrying out a research project entitled "In search of a 'wandering mind': Introducing temporal experience tracing to capture changes in attention and their neural correlates", under the supervision of Dr Tristan Bekinschtein (Department of Psychology).

Thomas Legein (PhD in Political Sciences, ULB/VUB) is carrying out a research project entitled "Towards a psychological approach to the causes of party reforms", under the supervision of Dr Lee de Wit (Department of Psychology).

Elisabeth Moreau (PhD in History, Art History and Archaeology, ULB) is carrying out a research project entitled "From the alembic to the stomach: Nutrition and pharmacology in early modern medicine", under the supervision of Dr Dániel Margócsy (Department of History and Philosophy of Science).



Katleen Van Nerom (PhD in Science, ULB) is carrying out a research project entitled "Molecular mechanism of action of Hfq-mediated regulation of gene expression", under the supervision of Prof. Ben Luisi (Department of Biochemistry).

David Talukder (PhD in Political and Social Sciences, ULB) is carrying out a research project entitled "A crisis of democracy? Understanding (underrepresented and disadvantaged group of) citizens' evaluation of representative democracy across time and countries", under the supervision of Dr Roberto Foa (Department of Politics and International Studies).

Samuel Vanden Abeele (PhD in Biology, ULB) is carrying out the second year of his research project entitled "Unravelling the evolutionary history of tropical monodominant forests in Central Africa", under the supervision of Dr Samuel Brockington (Department of Plant Sciences).

OXFORD



Postgraduate Fellows

Orvil Collart (MSc in Biomedical Engineering, ULB) is carrying out the fourth and last year of the Accelerated Medicine Course.

Manuela Palagro (MA in Translation and African Studies, ULB) is doing an MSt in Comparative Literature and Critical Translation.

Elia Bescotti (PhD student in Political Sciences at ULB, under the supervision of Prof. Aude Merlin) is carrying out part of his doctoral research entitled "Contested sovereignties and ontological in-security in the post-Soviet politics of international law. Practices and narratives of (non)-recognition and secession between Georgia and Abkhazia, and Moldova and Transnistria", under the supervision of Prof. Roy Allison (Oxford School of Global and Area Studies).



Postdoctoral Fellows

Julien Decharneux (PhD in Theology and Religion, ULB) is carrying out a research project entitled "The Qur'ān and late antique Christian asceticism: An analysis of the practices and beliefs of the early Qur'ānic community in light of the East-Syrian spirituality", under the supervision of Dr David Taylor (Faculty of Oriental Studies).

Marie Linos (PhD in History, Art History and Archaeology, ULB) is carrying out a research project entitled "How significant is the Other: British couples of scholars and the making of a Transatlantic social science (1890-1940)", under the supervision of Prof. Siân Pooley (Faculty of History).

Manh Tien Nguyen (PhD in Mathematics, ULB) is carrying out a research project entitled "Minimal surfaces in hyperbolic space and applications", under the supervision of Prof. Jason Lotay (Mathematical Institute).

Virginie Arantes (PhD in Social and Political Sciences, ULB) is carrying out the second year of her research project entitled "Effective 'collaborative' governance: A comparative look at environmental NGOs roles in China and Taiwan", under the supervision of Prof. Anna Lora-Wainwright (School of Global and Area Studies).

BRUSSELS



Doctoral Fellows

Harriet McKinley-Smith (DPhil student in English at the University of Oxford) is carrying out part of her doctoral research entitled "Refugees, migrants, émigrés: Displaced French figures in the work of Mary Robinson", under the supervision of Prof. Valérie André (Faculty of Letters, Translation and Communication, ULB).

Aurelia Sauerbrei (DPhil student in Population Health at the University of Oxford) is carrying out part of her doctoral research entitled "Artificial intelligence and healthcare: The ethics of the use of clinical artificial intelligence tools", under the supervision of Prof. Jean-Noël Missa (Faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences, ULB).

Claire Watt (DPhil student in English at the University of Oxford) is carrying out part of her doctoral research entitled "It's like a jungle sometimes': Allen Ginsberg, Grandmaster Flash and the Nexus Protest", under the supervision of Prof. Franca Bellarsi (Faculty of Letters, Translation and Communication).



Daphne Yovanof (DPhil student in Law at the University of Oxford) is carrying out part of her doctoral research entitled "The extraterritorial application of EU law: Judicial unilateralism in the case of EU competition and data", under the supervision of Prof. Chloé Brière (Centre for European Law, ULB).

Di Zhao (DPhil student in Architecture at the University of Cambridge) is carrying out part of her doctoral research entitled "Belgian and French Railway Buildings in China c.1895-1935: An example of cross-cultural exchange", under the supervision of Prof. Bernard Espion (École polytechnique de Bruxelles).

Postdoctoral Fellow

Edward Lee-Six (PhD in English and French Literature, University of Cambridge) is carrying out a research project entitled "Émile Verhaeren at the cross-roads of Belgian symbolism and English romanticism", under the supervision of Prof. Clément Dessy (Faculty of Letters, Translation and Communication, ULB).





Ganshof van der Meersch Chair

PAUL BETTS

University of Oxford



@Francesca Spinelli

In 2022 the Ganshof van der Meersch Chair was held by Professor Paul Betts on the recommendation of Professors Nicolas Verschuere and Ramona Coman (Director and President of the Institute for European Studies).

The **Ganshof van der Meersch Chair** was established in 1995 in memory of Walter Jean Ganshof van der Meersch, founder and first president of the Institute for European Studies at the ULB, holder of the chair of Public Law at the ULB, attorney general at the Belgian Court of Cassation and vice-president of the European Court of Human Rights. Prof. Ganshof van der Meersch, who understood from the very beginning the potential of the Fondation Wiener-Anspach, was its second President after the death of its founder, Mrs Wiener.

The chair is held at the ULB by a visiting professor from Cambridge or Oxford. The course must focus on the economic, historical, political and legal aspects of European integration or on public law.

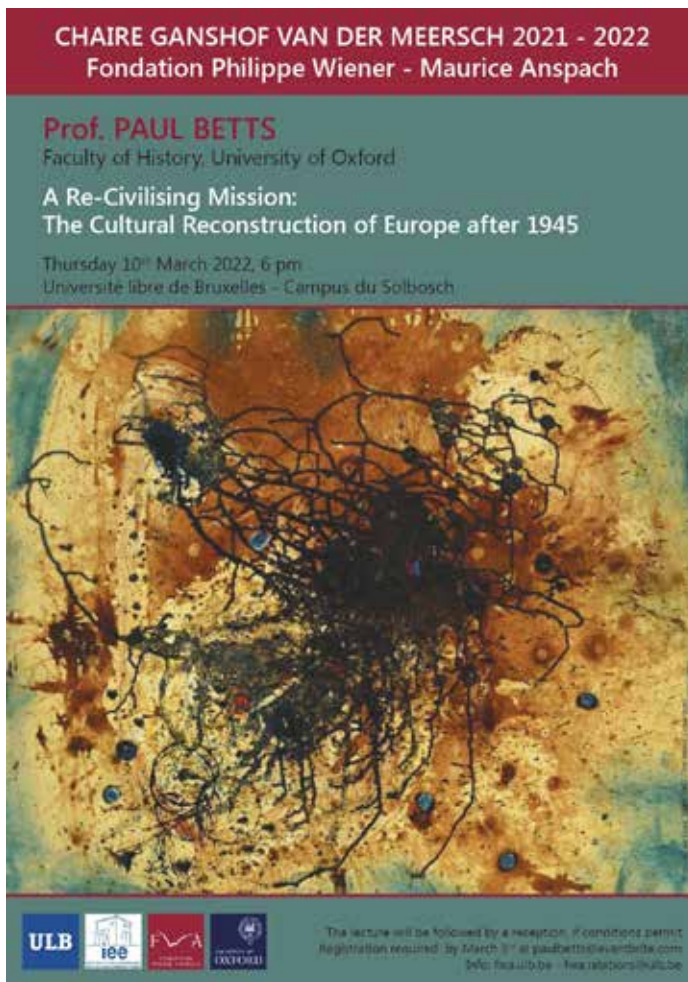
Paul Betts is Professor of Modern European History at St Antony's College (University of Oxford). His research and publications centre on Modern European Cultural History in general and 20th Century German History in particular, with a special focus on the relationship between culture and politics.

His books include *Ruin and Renewal: Civilizing Europe after World War II* (New York: Basic Books/ London: Profile Books,

2020), *Within Walls: Private Life in the German Democratic Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), and *The Authority of Everyday Objects: A Cultural History of West German Industrial Design* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

The general theme of Paul Betts' chair at ULB – "Europe in the 20th Century, 1914-2000: National, Transnational and International Histories" – explored how notions of regional, national and international history have been used to organize and interpret the history of 20th-century Europe.

Paul Betts also gave a public lecture, entitled "A Re-Civilising Mission: The Cultural Reconstruction of Europe after 1945", on March 10, 2022.



Abstract of the public lecture

Paul Betts discussed his new book on Europe after 1945, which explores how changing understandings of civilization underpinned a new politics of identity in an era of defeat and division across the Cold War divide.

It traces how this long reviled term of European superiority enjoyed a popular comeback in many circles, variously used to imagine Europe as a whole as well as to justify its political differences. The new mission to re-civilize Europe was by no means confined to conservatives, and was seized upon by a surprising array of competing causes and interest groups from across the political spectrum and Iron Curtain.

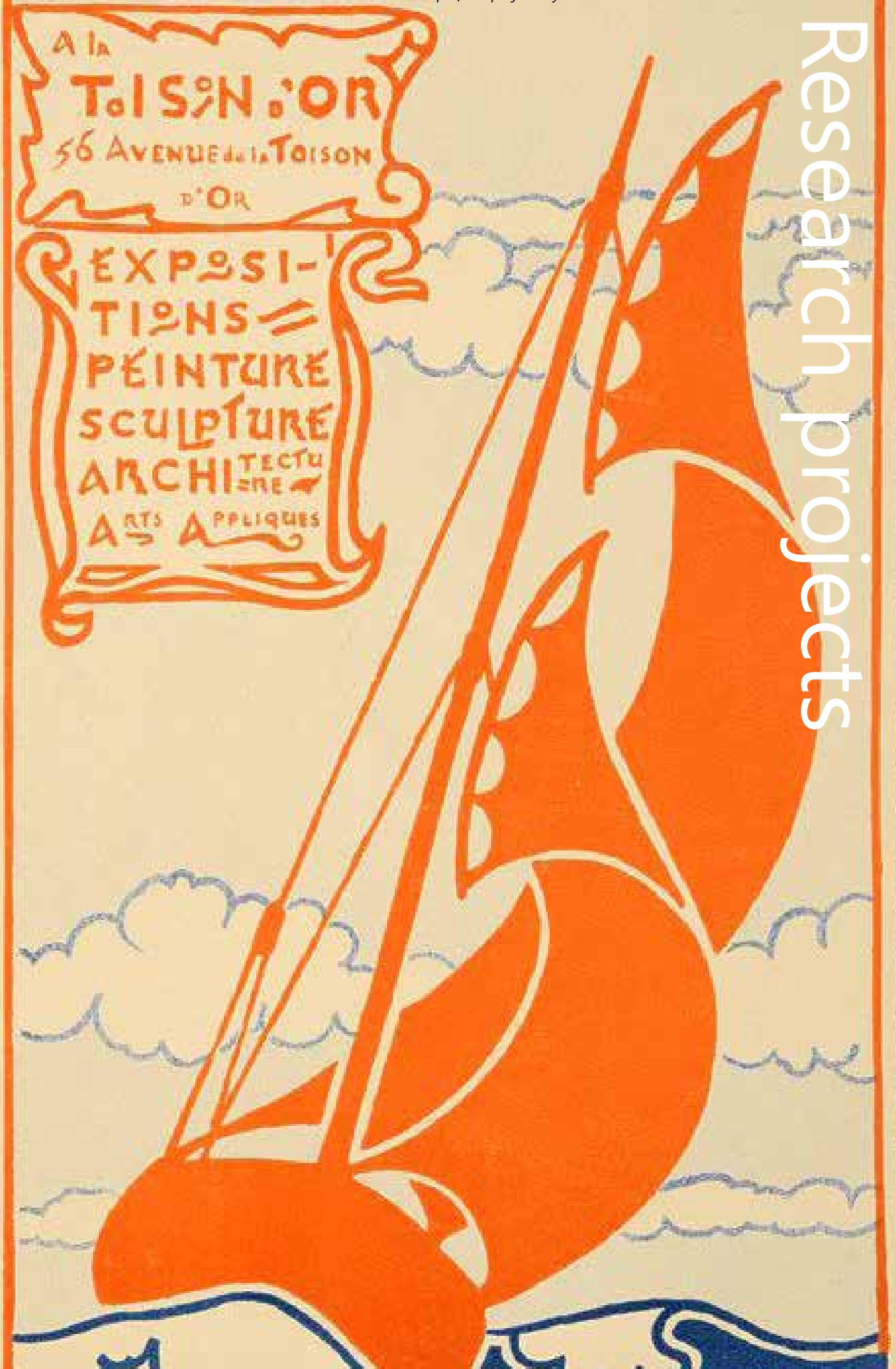
In the aftermath of war, civilization served as a favorite point of reference to grasp Europe's new postwar condition beyond the nation-state and Cold division, and to reconsider its relationship to the past, the future, and the rest of the world.

Clockwise, from top left: Nicolas Verschuere and Kristin Bartik; Paul Betts; Paul Betts and His Excellency Martin Shearman, Ambassador of the United Kingdom to Belgium.



Illustration by Gisbert Gombaz (1895), taken from the programme of the inaugural workshop of the project "Symbolism and Decadence as World Literature"

Research projects



RESEARCH PROJECTS

The Fondation Wiener-Anspach supports two-year collaborative research projects in all fields between teams from the Université libre de Bruxelles and the Universities of Cambridge or Oxford. Nine projects were selected for the 2022-2024 period.

SYMBOLISM AND DECADENCE AS WORLD LITERATURE

The end of the nineteenth century was a pivotal moment in the process of the internationalization of culture. This research project studies the worldwide diffusion of Symbolism and Decadence in order to further our understanding of the relationship between literature, the arts and the ongoing process of globalization. We aim to research the mechanisms by which Symbolism and Decadence gained international attention and spread around the globe. These ranged from the use of the media and modern communication technologies to travel and colonial expansion.

Symbolism and Decadence therefore also give us a privileged prism through which we can view the making of world literature and the shifting negotiations of national and international literary identities in the construction of global space. We are interested in how Symbolism and Decadence map onto cultural geography and geopolitics, facilitating cultural exchange between perceived centres and margins, metropolitan and colonial spaces.

Oxford Promoters: **Stefano Maria Evangelista** (Faculty of English) and **Patrick McGuinness** (Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages)

ULB Promoter: **Clément Dessy** (Faculty of Letters, Translation and Communication)

THE MAGMATIC EVOLUTION OF GEOTHERMALLY ACTIVE VOLCANOES IN ETHIOPIA

This project focuses on two large volcanic systems in the Main Ethiopian Rift, a sector of the East African Rift, that are considered highly active in terms of past eruptive frequency and are current targets for geothermal development: the Bora-Baricha-Tullu Moye (BBTM) volcanic field and Corbetti. These volcanoes represent major socio-economic resources but demand a better scientific understanding of the magmatic systems that are the ultimate energy source.

We are studying both BBTM and Corbetti in collaboration with colleagues from Addis Ababa University (AAU), with the ambition to constrain the production and eruption rates of chemically-evolved magmas along the rift, and assess the relation to its tectonic development over timescales of 100,000s of years. We obtained geochronological and geochemical data that allow us to constrain the magmatic evolution of the systems over the last few hundred thousand years, deeper into the geological record, and complementing our existing data sets.

Oxford Promoters: **Tamsin Mather** and **David Pyle** (Department of Earth Sciences)

ULB Promoter: **Karen Fontijn** (Department of Geosciences Environment and Society, Faculty of Sciences)

ROLE OF THE EPIGENETIC REGULATOR PRDM12 IN NOCICEPTION

Nociceptors are specialized sensory neurons that protect organism from dangers by eliciting pain and driving avoidance. Nociceptors can however be sensitized under pathological conditions such as inflammation or injury, leading to chronic pain. Prdm12 is a conserved epigenetic regulator that is critical for the survival of developing nociceptors. Our recent data indicate that in adulthood, Prdm12 does not control nociceptor survival anymore, but modulates their excitability. In this project, to better understand the role of Prdm12 in nociceptor sensitization, we will further study the consequences of the modulation of its expression on nociception. To approach its mechanism of action, we will try to identify its direct transcriptional targets and interacting partners. Besides, we will also test the hypothesis that alterations in Prdm12 expression may contribute to the important nociceptor loss observed in the pain insensitive naked mole rat.

Cambridge Promoter: **Ewan St. John Smith** (Department of Pharmacology)

ULB Promoter: **Eric Bellefroid** (Developmental Genetics Laboratory, Faculty of Sciences)

A MATHEMATICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY OF ACTIVE RODS: THEORY AND APPLICATIONS

Soft robots are highly deformable bodies that can be actuated to perform astonishing tasks. These robots often are biomimetic: engineers use modern materials that can undergo large deformations with little to no permanent damage to reproduce some of nature's tricks. However, to progress, we need a quantitative description of the underlying phenomena. Many such robots involve elongated parts that can actively change their shape and/or mechanical properties and are referred to as active rods.

We propose to derive an effective mathematical framework to describe active rods. These tools will then be used to model biological systems and to study particular soft robots. In our first year, we have developed new mathematical tools to quantify the deformation of curves by introducing a chirality tensor associated at curves and their deformation. This new object allows to quantify globally some important properties of a curve. We have also studied the problem of rod extension in details to show how different activation architectures lead to the same extension but different internal deformation. In the next year, we will continue to work at understanding the role of different architectures in actuation processes as well as continue our mathematical work to understand chirality and chirality transfer in nature.

Oxford Promoter: **Alain Goriely** (Oxford Centre for Industrial and Applied Mathematics, Mathematical Institute)

ULB Promoter: **Thomas Lessinnes** (Transfers, Interfaces & Processes Laboratory, Brussels School of Engineering)

A PHYLOGENOMIC FRAMEWORK TO EVALUATE HORIZONTAL GENE TRANSFER IN BDELLOID ROTIFERS

Bdelloid rotifers (Bdelloidea) are a group of Metazoa whose genomes contain a large number of horizontally transferred genes (HTGs) from non-metazoan species. It is currently unknown when bdelloid rotifers started to acquire these foreign genes. Here, we assembled several new genomes of bdelloid rotifers and outgroups to establish a phylogenomic framework for the major bdelloid rotifer lineages. We also performed a first phylogenomic analysis of bdelloid rotifers and their outgroups using only publicly available whole-genome data. The results show that a clade of Acanthocephala + Seisonidea is likely the sister group of bdelloid rotifers. These analyses facilitated the development of methods for analyzing a combination of new genomes and publicly available genomes to address the relationships within Bdelloidea in the next phase of the project. We also performed a preliminary analysis of HGT content from new and publicly available genomes that show a sharp increase of non-metazoan HGTs only in bdelloid rotifers in comparison to their closest relatives. This is a first indication that increased HGT content is a bdelloid specific trait.

Oxford Promoter: Timothy Giles Barraclough (Department of Zoology)

ULB Promoter: Karine Van Doninck (Research Unit in Molecular Biology and Evolution, Faculty of Sciences)

WHEN RURAL MEETS URBAN: TOWARDS A CULTURAL HISTORY OF MODERNISMS IN BOHEMIA 1895-1925

This project began from the premise that the prevailing international narrative of cultural modernism, which defines it as urban, internationalist, preoccupied with the dynamics of modernity and modernization, and dismissive of the traditional, provincial, and rural, was not adequate to the Bohemian context, where the encounter and co-existence of the urban and rural appears essential to an understanding of how Czech modernism developed. In our own research and at the workshops we have organised and conferences where we have presented alongside researchers from other modernist contexts, we further show that this meeting of the urban and rural is similarly vital and neglected there. We have identified our starting point as the place of the rural in Bohemian modernism. The rural encompasses aspects central to preceding conceptions of Czech culture and identity - including tradition, the peasant, the village, and the countryside - which prevailing narratives of modernity at the time view as vanishing anachronisms to be repudiated. By contrast, we shall examine the thesis that modernism in Bohemia and elsewhere is marked by a search for a dynamic, energizing synthesis of rural and urban.

Oxford Promoter: Rajendra Anand Chitnis (Sub-Faculty of Russian and Slavonic Studies)

ULB Promoter: Petra James (Faculty of Letters, Translation and Communication)

CRETE AND EUBOEA IN AN INTERCONNECTING WORLD (FROM THE 12TH TO 6TH CENTURY BC): THE ROLE OF COASTAL SETTLEMENTS IN SHORT AND LONG-DISTANCE NETWORKS OF EXCHANGE

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in examining connectivity in the Mediterranean Basin at multiple scales (microregional, regional and interregional). Such renewed interest derives from current approaches to investigate connectivity among cultures and societies both in the present and the past. In such framework our project focuses on mobility and the operation of networks in the Aegean and beyond during the Early Iron Age and the Archaic period (ca. 1200-500 BC), specifically in two important sites located on the two largest islands of the Aegean Sea, Crete and Euboea. In December 2022, the FNRS additionally granted its support to our collaboration (for the part of the project concerning Crete) through its PDR instrument that will allow us to undertake several research stays abroad and further develop a program of clay analysis of pottery production to trace back its distribution networks. We also co-organised a series of seminars with a range of international scholars that take place in Oxford. The seminars are also available online and they are entitled "Harbours, Maritime Networks, and Infrastructures in ancient Mediterranean from the Late Bronze Age to the Hellenistic period". The seminars run from January to March 2023 and have attracted a wide audience in presence and online. A second workshop/conference is planned for next year in Brussels.

Oxford Promoter: Irene Lemos (School of Archaeology)

ULB Promoter: Athena Tsingarida (Research Centre in Archaeology and Heritage, Faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences)

SELECTIVE AND CONTROLLABLE TRANSMEMBRANE TRANSPORTERS FOR IONS

The aim of this project is to develop synthetic compounds capable of transporting ions across cell membranes, with the longer-term perspective of medical applications. In this joint project, we combine the expertise from the Langton lab in the development of photo-responsive transporters with the expertise from the Valkenier team in the monitoring of transport processes by fluorescence spectroscopy. In 2022, a PhD student from Brussels has prepared photoswitchable receptors for phosphate during an internship in Oxford and two PhD students from Oxford have studied their photoswitchable compounds as transporters for various oxoanions (bicarbonate, sulfate, and carboxylates) and copper cations at the ULB in Brussels. These experiments have given promising first results, which form the basis for further experiments and exchanges planned for 2023.

Oxford Promoter: Matthew J. Langton (Chemistry Research Laboratory)

ULB Promoter: Hennie Valkenier-van Dijk (Engineering of Molecular NanoSystems, Brussels School of Engineering)

ELECTROCHEMICAL MODEL IDENTIFICATION INCLUDING AGING FOR A DIGITAL TWIN OF LITHIUM-ION BATTERY

Three research directions have been pursued, namely identifiability of lithium-ion battery electrolyte dynamics, aging monitoring, and health aware battery fast charging. To obtain high fidelity electrochemical models for batteries, it is fundamental to account for the electrolyte dynamics. Therefore, an analysis of the identifiability of these dynamics from impedance measurements was performed and a way to circumvent identifiability issues was proposed. Secondly, statistical methods for detection and characterization of small changes in a battery model were applied on an experimental data set and demonstrated high sensitivity, which could allow sorting batteries cells according to their quality (strong vs weak cells) at the very beginning of battery life. Finally, an effective numerical method for solving fast charging optimization problems was developed and it was shown that, for a given class of battery models, the optimal solution follows a sequence of active path constraints.

Oxford Promoter: David Howey (Department of Engineering Science)

ULB Promoter: Michel Kinnaert (Control Engineering and System Analysis, Brussels School of Engineering)

Our Alumni



Wiener-Anspach Alumnus Paul Earlie in 2018

PAUL EARLIE

In the company of French thinkers

A Wiener-Anspach Fellow at ULB from 2014 to 2016, Paul Earlie (Senior Lecturer in French Thought at the University of Bristol) had the invaluable opportunity to work with late Belgian philosopher Michel Meyer (1950-2022), to whom he pays a vibrant homage.

What sparked your interest in French thought, your main area of research? Were you an avid reader of French thinkers and writers as a teenager?

Not particularly! As a teenager I read a lot, but mostly literary texts: novels, plays, poetry. In Ireland, you study so many different subjects at secondary school there wasn't really much time to study anything but the language in our French classes. It was only when I went to university, at Trinity College in Dublin, to study English Literature and French that I started to read more and more of the big French 'theorists', Derrida, Foucault, Kristeva, and became instantly hooked. I loved these texts that were so strange to me – so full of theoretical jargon, neologisms, puns and wordplay – and yet which also seemed so relevant to everyday life. Many of my classmates felt the same, though we didn't know that we then were in the dying days of what was called 'French Theory' (Jacques Derrida died in the same month that I started university).

Your doctoral research at the University of Oxford looked at the role of psychoanalysis in the work of Jacques Derrida, and was followed by a book, Derrida and the legacy of psychoanalysis (OUP 2021). What original aspects of this legacy did you want to highlight in your research?

When I had an online book launch last year, one of the speakers, Jean-Michel Rabaté, who is a leading psychoanalytic theorist of culture and a former student of Derrida's, chided me a little for my title, which he said ought to have been in the plural: Derrida and the Legacies of Psychoanalyses. He was right! In this book, I try to show that one of Derrida's most important arguments about Freud's legacy is that it can't really be reduced to just one thing. It's everywhere around us: in the language we speak, in the way we understand culture, human relationships, even politics. In the book, I try to show how Derrida uses this richness of Freud's legacy (or legacies!) to think through issues that were pressing for him and his contemporaries, from the relationship between language and the self to the role of emotions in modern politics. In the same spirit, in writing the book I also tried to think about what Derrida's work can contribute to debates in the humanities today, and so I set also Derrida's work in the context of more recent developments, such as the rise of the digital humanities and the recent so-called 'material turn'.

Following your doctoral thesis, you started looking into another legacy: the influence of Greek sophists on a number of French thinkers. Can you tell us more about your interest in "classical rhetoric and its modern reverberations"?

As part of my doctoral research on Derrida, I began to read

some of Plato's dialogues and was fascinated by these dark figures who are often amongst Socrates' most eloquent sparring partners. It seemed to me that the sophists' interest in the power of language to shape our world prefigured in a number of uncanny ways the conclusions of many postwar French theorists of language, so I wanted to think about these reverberations in more detail. I was also drawn to the way in which several French thinkers, in particular Derrida, were subject to the same kinds of hostility as the ancient sophists, to accusations of faulty reasoning, empty verbiage, even corruption of the youth!

From 2014 to 2016 you worked as a Wiener-Anspach Postdoctoral Fellow at the Université libre de Bruxelles. Your host promoter was the late Belgian philosopher Michel Meyer (1950-2022). Did you know him before taking up your position at ULB? And how was working with him, both from a human and a professional perspective?

I had read a little of Michel Meyer's work before I applied for a fellowship at the ULB and I was also familiar with the journal he edited, the *Revue internationale de philosophie*, though I had never met him in person. I knew very little about rhetoric at the time, but he embraced my project very warmly and enthusiastically. We often had coffee and lunch together on campus, during which he used to regale me with anecdotes about the great philosophers he'd encountered over the years, starting with Martin Heidegger, who he visited in Freiburg at the tender age of 22... I'll never forget how Michel and his wife Corinne welcomed me into their home during my years in Brussels, and indeed afterwards. Professionally, Michel taught me so much about academic life. It's fair to say he probably left me with a very healthy suspicion of the arcane rules of university administration!

Wiener-Anspach Fellows who went to study or work in Cambridge and Oxford often describe the change of academic context as both challenging and enriching. How would you describe the academic environment at the ULB, compared to the one in Oxford?

Academically, the structure is probably a bit more centralized at the ULB, with a main library and campus, so there is more a sense of a shared academic community in some respects, particularly within individual Faculties. Classes also tend to be a bit bigger, which I appreciated because it allowed me to slip unnoticed into lectures that were on topics that interested me! I also appreciated the library's specialist holdings, particularly in rhetoric, which it has a real strength in for historical reasons. The difference that's probably most striking is that the ULB sits in the heart of a culturally vibrant city so there are a great deal

of opportunities to visit museums, art galleries, theatres, etc. I was so enamoured of the culture I encountered in Brussels that I now teach a second-year course at the University of Bristol on Belgian culture, so I get to introduce students to the literature and visual culture I absorbed during my time in Brussels.

Michel Meyer is known as the father of problematology. How did his thought influence your own research, during and after your fellowship at the ULB?

Problematology is an approach that emphasizes the importance of questioning, both in our day-to-day lives and in wider society. Since Parmenides, Western thinkers have been interested in the question of being. The contribution of Michel's work is to invert this order of priority, by showing how the being of the question must come before the question of being. This insight led him to consider the fundamental role of questioning in all aspects of human enquiry, from philosophy to education, from psychoanalysis to sociology and politics. I was particularly interested in his problematological approach to rhetoric, which defines rhetoric in a very novel way as the negotiation of distance between two interlocutors on a given question. When I arrived in Brussels, Michel was finishing his book, *What Is Rhetoric?* (OUP, 2017), so these questions were very much on his mind. What has stayed with me most, I think, is problematology's integrative view of rhetoric. By viewing all diverse forms of rhetoric in terms of the negotiation of distance on a given question, Michel was able to bring together so many different aspects of human expression, literature, politics, culture, and history, in a way that's utterly new.

With Michel Meyer, you also deepened the study of the relationship between psychoanalysis and literature. Who were some of the authors you looked into?

In Brussels, I began to read work by the Nobel Prize-winning Belgian playwright Maurice Maeterlinck, whose plays are hugely atmospheric and full of emotional intensity and symbolic suggestion. They are less well-known today but were really quite important for later, more experimental forms of theatre. Michel invited me to edit a special issue of the *Revue internationale de philosophie* on a topic we would often discuss together: the relationship between psychoanalysis and literature. I commissioned articles on a range of new approaches to this question, from Jungian ecocriticism to neuropsychanalysis. Using the example of Maeterlinck's plays, my contribution to the issue explores the role of persuasion in the literary text. This role has often been neglected due to the prevailing view that literature is too unstable in its meaning to allow for persuasive effects. I disagree with this: I think that literature is full of arguments, theses, rationalizations. The latter may very often be in competition or contradiction with each other, but they're still there.

One of your current projects at the University of Bristol is entitled "Intellectuals and the Popular Media in France". While the link with your research on French thinkers is clear, I was wondering how you came to be interested in the media sphere? Did one author in particular inspire you?

It really arose out of my interest in the reception of French thought in the twentieth century and beyond. I am always surprised by the caricatures of many influential French thinkers

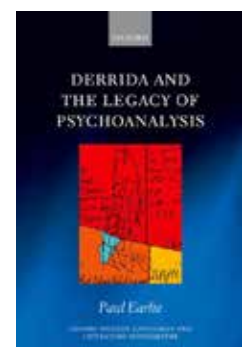
– whose works are still amongst the most cited in the humanities today – as figures who are willfully obscure, incapable of speaking in a language that's simple and clear or of reaching out to non-academic audiences. Derrida, in particular, suffered from these kinds of clichés, particularly during more controversial moments of his career, such as his award of an honorary doctorate from the University of Cambridge in 1992. These negative stereotypes pushed many thinkers, including Derrida, to engage with the mass media, with radio, television, and more recently the internet and social media. In France, intellectuals continue to occupy a uniquely central place in the media, which is not the case in other countries, such as the United Kingdom or the United States. What I'm trying to do in my new project is to challenge perceptions that the mass media are intrinsically anti-intellectual modes (of 'dumbing down', for example) by looking at how public intellectuals in France have tried to work with radio, TV, and social media. I think we can learn lots of lessons from their openness to these more popular forms, at a period when genuine debate in the public sphere seems less possible than ever.

So you have also been analyzing the specific role of social media in hosting and promoting intellectual debates?

Yes, more recently I've been turning my attention to the role of social media, which often get the blame for inflaming or impoverishing discourse in the public sphere. In fact, when you look at earlier periods of rapid media transformation, such as at the end of the nineteenth century or the popularization of television in the 1950s, you'll find strikingly similar anxieties to those expressed today: concerns over disinformation, lack of concentration, declining standards of education, and so on. I've been looking, by contrast, at how a new generation of intellectuals in France have been using social media platforms like Twitter and Instagram in innovative ways, as tools for democratization and encouraging critical debate, rather than just instruments of self-promotion or 'clickbait'.

Would you like to share a personal memory of Michel Meyer or an advice he gave you when you worked together?

Michel imparted so much advice to me over the years I would find it really hard to pick just one nugget of wisdom... In some ways, I think I learned the most from his general practice. Although his energy was legendary and he left behind him a hugely impressive body of work, he was not what we would call a 'workaholic'. He always made time for rest and relaxation, whether over a coffee at the Salle des profs at the ULB or over lunch at a restaurant. He would have hated the term 'work-life balance' but he was certainly a devotee of the concept, and his work never suffered for it. That's really a very valuable lesson, I think.



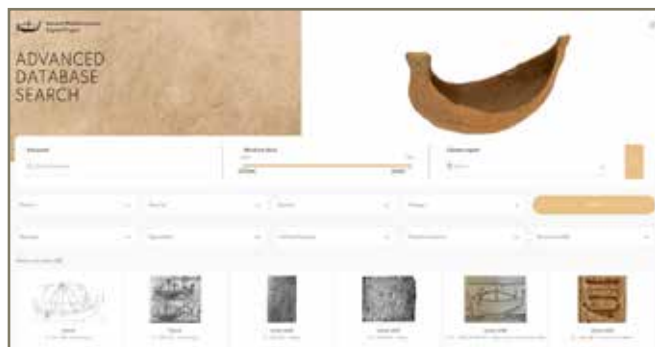
NEWS FROM OUR ALUMNI

VISIT TO THE INTERNATIONAL CARNIVAL AND MASK MUSEUM IN BINCHE

On Saturday 8 October 2022, the Wiener-Anspach Alumni Network organised a visit to the International Carnival and Mask Museum in Binche, directed by our Alumna Clémence Mathieu. A Wiener-Anspach Postdoctoral Fellow in Cambridge in 2012-2013, Clémence has been running this unique institution since 2017. She guided a tour through the permanent collection, highlighting how masks have been and are a worldwide phenomenon since time immemorial that have served a variety of societal roles. She also gave the Alumni a peek behind the scenes of this museum, showing some of the masks not on display.



ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN DIGITAL PROJECT, A NEW DATABASE DESIGNED BY TZVETA MANOLOVA



Tzveta Manolova, DPhil in Archaeology (University of Oxford), was a Wiener-Anspach Postdoctoral Fellow at ULB from 2020 to 2022. Her project – “Protohistoric Eastern Mediterranean Ships Digital Project (1500-600 B.C.)” – led to the creation of an open access database on ship representations of the Mediterranean basin broadly covering the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age periods.

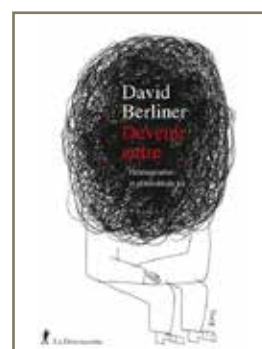
“Initially conceived as a means to publish the catalogue portion of my doctoral dissertation”, Tzveta writes, “the project has since expanded with a photogrammetry component, with further plans in order to provide a holistic view of the entire Mediterranean. Drawing inspiration from exciting advances in the digital humanities and an ever-growing need for open-access research tools and digital cultural heritage preservation, the project’s ultimate aim is to create an up-to-date virtual maritime museum that gathers material which is widely dispersed in dozens of institutions on multiple continents, a significant portion of which remains poorly documented or little known”.

Website: ancmed.ulb.be

PUBLICATIONS

Federica Infantino, PhD in Political and Social Sciences (ULB), was granted a Wiener-Anspach postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Oxford in 2015-2016 and is currently a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Research Fellow at the European University Institute. Together with Djordje Sredanovic, she edited the book *Migration Control in Practice: Before and Within the Borders of the State* (Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles 2022). Wiener-Anspach Alumni **Ahmed Hamila** and **Anissa Maâ** are among the authors of this book, which offers “a more complex and nuanced understanding of what happens on the ground” by focusing on the perspective of those implementing migration policies on a daily basis.

David Berliner, PhD in Social and Cultural Anthropology (ULB), was granted a Wiener-Anspach doctoral fellowship at the University of Oxford in 2001-2002 and has been teaching anthropology at ULB since 2006. In 2022 he published *Devenir Autre. Hétérogénéité et plasticité du soi* (Éditions La Découverte), an essay “at the intersection of ethnography, psychology, interactionism, and feminist theory, inviting readers to take a closer look at the complex gymnastics of self woven from these sundry accounts of identification”.



PERMANENT ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS AND OTHER GOOD NEWS

In June 2022, we were delighted to learn that several Wiener-Anspach Alumni had been appointed to new academic positions, including four permanent positions.

Sophie Bauduin (PhD in Chemistry and 2016-2017 Postdoctoral Fellow in Oxford) has been appointed Lecturer at the ULB Faculty of Sciences ("chaire non-profilée").

Ahmed Hamila (PhD in Political Sciences, 2016-2017 Doctoral Fellow in Oxford and 2020-2021 Postdoctoral Fellow in Cambridge) has been appointed Assistant Professor in Sociology of Migrations at the Université de Montréal.

Wels Jacques (PhD in Political and Social Sciences and 2017-2018 Postdoctoral Fellow in Cambridge) has been appointed FNRS Research Associate at ULB with a project entitled "The impact of transitions to retirement on the health and quality of life of older workers: A comparative and longitudinal approach".

Nicolas Ruytenbeek (PhD in Languages, Literature and Translation and 2013-2014 Doctoral Fellow in Cambridge) has been appointed Assistant Professor in Digital and Multilingual Communication at the KULeuven Faculty of Arts.



Five Alumni obtained a FNRS Postdoctoral Researcher Fellowship to work at the Université libre de Bruxelles:

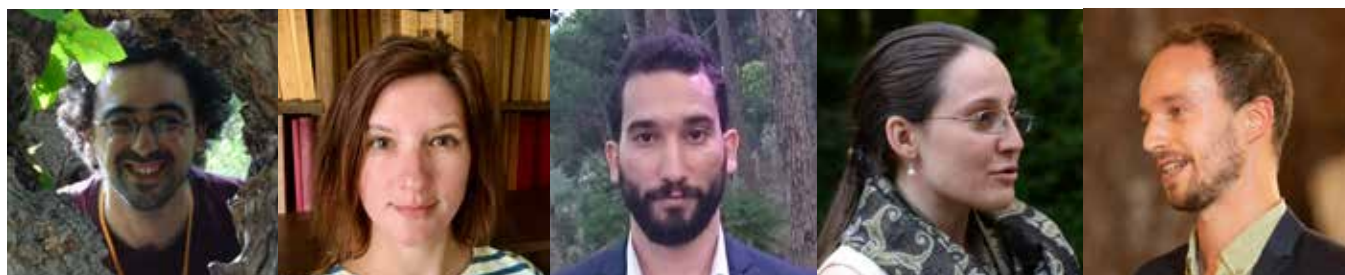
David Bauman (PhD in Biology and 2018-2020 Postdoctoral Fellow in Oxford), with a project entitled "Tropical tree growth sensitivity to climate and neighbourhood effects across the tropics: A functional and phylogenetic approach".

Julie Dainville (PhD in Languages, Literature and Translation Studies and 2021-2022 Postdoctoral Fellow in Oxford), with a project entitled "In the Rhetor's classroom: Rhetorical teaching in Greco-Roman Egypt".

Michael Jabbour (PhD in Engineering Science and Technology and 2018-2020 Postdoctoral Fellow in Cambridge), with a project entitled "Entropic inequalities and information capacities of optical quantum channels".

Alicia Van Ham-Meert (PhD in Sciences and 2014-2015 Postgraduate Fellow in Oxford), with a project entitled "Stained glass windows from Stavelot – provenance, production and environmental impact".

Simon Watteyne (PhD in History and 2021-2022 Postdoctoral Fellow in Oxford), with a project entitled "The emergence of Belgian, Dutch and Luxemburgish tax havens (1890-1940)".



OTHER FUNDED INITIATIVES

The Ganshof van der Meersch Prize



Established in 1994, the **Ganshof van der Meersch Prize** rewards a student from the Faculty of Law and Criminology of the ULB who achieved academic excellence in the study of public law and who obtained a Master's degree in this field with at least a "Grande Distinction" (*magna cum laude*).

The 2022 prize was awarded to **Zoé Lejeune**. Zoé obtained her Master's degree in law, with a focus on public and international law, *magna cum laude*. During her Master's studies, she participated in the Refugee Law Clinic and the Inter-university Moot Court on Constitutional Law. She also took part in an Erasmus exchange at the University Carlos III in Madrid. Today, she is pursuing her studies with an advanced LLM programme in European and International Public Law at KU Leuven. She will graduate in June.

Short stays and other activities

► **14-15 March 2022.** With the support of the Foundation, **Olivia Angé** (Professor of Economic Anthropology at the Université libre de Bruxelles and 2010-2012 Wiener-Anspach Alumna) traveled to Cambridge on the occasion of the workshop "Tuberous Collectivities", which she convened with David Nally (Senior Lecturer and Historical Geographer in the Department of Geography, University of Cambridge). The event – "an interdisciplinary exploration into human-tuber companionship across histories" – gathered several scholars, including keynote speakers Rebecca Earle (University of Warwick), James Scott (Yale University) and Marilyn Strathern (University of Cambridge).

► **January-June 2022.** **Dr Julien Decharneux** (2022-2023 Wiener-Anspach Fellow) received funding for two short stays at the University of Oxford, where he deepened his study of the origins of the Quran and of its relation to Christian asceticism. He was welcomed by Professor Phil Booth (Faculty of Theology and Religion).



The conference delegates at the Château de Seneffe.

► **19-20 September 2022.** With the support of the Foundation, Wiener-Anspach Alumna **Abigail Green** (Professor of Modern European History at the University of Oxford) co-organised the conference "Jewish Business Dynasties 1850-1950: Family, Power, Vulnerability" at the Château de Seneffe. The Foundation covered the travel and accommodation expenses for two researchers from the University of Oxford, **Cynthia Ruth Cheloff** and **Silvia Davoli**. The conference, emerging from a collaboration between two Oxford-based projects, Jewish Country Houses and the Global History of Capitalism, brought together "business historians and Jewish historians to consider the economic, social, cultural and political role of the great international Jewish business dynasties, and the critical part they played in the making of modern capitalism in an age of rising antisemitism that culminated in genocide".

► **October-November 2022.** FNRS Research Associate **Quentin Hiernaux** received funding for a research stay at the University of Cambridge, where he worked with Professor Helen Ann Curry (Department of History and Philosophy of Science) in the framework of her project "From Collection to Cultivation: Historical Perspectives on Crop Diversity and Food Security".

