

# 2023

# ACTIVITY

# REPORT





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# WORD OF WELCOME FROM THE PRESIDENT



@Pietro Bruni

*"Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success".*

Henry Ford

**Encouraging.** The Fondation Wiener-Anspach has been playing a major role in organising exchanges between the Université libre de Bruxelles and the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford for nearly sixty years. This report gives us a vivid illustration of this. It is essential to stress the importance of the mobility of students and researchers that the Foundation makes possible, both to Brussels and to Cambridge and Oxford. We must encourage opportunities for collaboration and support those who are planning to establish, in one way or another, closer contacts between ULB and Oxbridge.

**Reinforcing.** The Fondation Wiener-Anspach must also find ways to help consolidate collaborations and must offer funding opportunities that are best adapted to the specific needs of our researchers. This is the reason why we have extended postdoctoral mandates to two years and will start funding in 2025 a new initiative in the form of teaching and research chairs, which will make it possible to host Oxbridge academics at ULB for a period of one or two months. It is important to maintain active relations between colleagues, and there is no substitute for direct collaboration over the medium and long term!

As every year, you will find in this report all the talents that the Foundation actively supports in their wide range of projects. Do not hesitate to explore the Foundation's website, where 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, the Chairman of the Finance Committee, for their wonderful work. They make the Foundation sustainable and it is partly thanks to them that the collaborations between ULB and Oxbridge are so dynamic. In 2023, we also welcomed Andréanne Lafrance to the team, in administrative support alongside Francesca Spinelli. She is replacing Violette Cadars, who was with us for three very busy and productive years before moving to France. This small administrative team is so enthusiastic and efficient, and I cannot stress enough the importance of their contribution to all our missions.

Thank you all for your support and may the Fondation Wiener-Anspach continue to encourage and reinforce academic collaborations between the ULB and the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford!

**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".



*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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*In 2023, the Fondation Wiener-Anspach was delighted to welcome to its Scientific Committee Olivier Corten, Professor of International Law at the Université libre de Bruxelles.*

# Fellowship programme





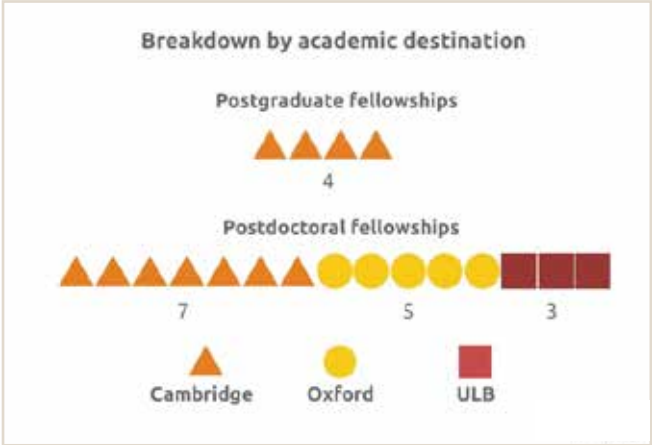
# FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME



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

For the 2023-2024 academic year, the Scientific Committee of the Foundation selected 19 Fellows, 12 of whom attended the annual Fellows' meeting held in Brussels in September.



# CAMBRIDGE



## Postgraduate Fellows

**Roman Berlanger** (MSc in Economics and Finance, ULB) is doing an MPhil in Economic Research.

**Sacha Damski** (MSc in Electrical Engineering, ULB) is doing an MPhil in Engineering for Sustainable Development.

**Jil Spoto** (MA in Archaeology, ULB) is doing an MPhil in Archaeological Science.

**Loïc Dewitte** (MSc in Electromechanical Engineering, ULB) is doing an MRes in Future Propulsion and Power.



## Postdoctoral Fellows

**Laura Alvarez** (PhD in History, Art History and Archaeology, ULB) is carrying out a second year of research on her project titled "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 Galanakis (Faculty of Classics).

**Manon Couvignou** (PhD in Psychology, ULB) is carrying out a research project titled "The dyslexic brain: Out of time but in tune? Behavioural and neurophysiological signatures of musical impairments in development dyslexia", under the supervision of Prof. Usha Goswami (Department of Psychology).





**Céline Erauw** (PhD in History, Art History and Archaeology, ULB) is carrying out a second year of research on a project titled "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 second year of research on a project titled "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).

**Elisabeth Moreau** (PhD in History, Art History and Archaeology, ULB) is carrying out a second year of research on a project titled "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).



**Daniel Naegels** (PhD in Theoretical Physics, ULB) is carrying out a research project titled "Spontaneous symmetry breaking for cosmological inflation", under the supervision of Prof. Enrico Pajer (Department of Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics).

**Fadia Panosetti** (PhD in Political and Social Sciences, ULB) is carrying out a research project titled "Export-oriented agricultural clusters, agribusiness development and the transformation of rural communities' land tenure and livelihood systems in Israel/Palestine. The case of avocado plantation in Qalqilya", under the supervision of Dr Emma Mawdsley and Dr Mezna Qato (The Margaret Anstee Centre for Global Studies).



# OXFORD



## Postdoctoral Fellows

**Katarina Matvijev** (PhD in Science, ULB) is carrying out a research project titled "Towards identifying the sexdetermining regions of the nutmeg, *Myristica fragrans* Houtt", under the supervision of Prof. Dmitry Filatov (Department of Biology).

**Vaida Nikšaitė** (PhD in History, ULB) is carrying out a research project titled "Uniting Poland through patriotic bonds, 1918-1921", under the supervision of Dr Katherine Lebow (Faculty of History).

**Anthony Piron** (PhD in Biomedical and Pharmaceutical Sciences, ULB) is carrying out a research project titled "Dissecting the tissue-specific mechanisms of genetic risk in type 1 diabetes", under the supervision of Prof. John Todd (Wellcome Centre for Human Genetics).



**Amdemichael Tadesse** (PhD in Science, ULB) is carrying out a research project titled "Volatile evolution of a silicic magmatic system in the Main Ethiopian Rift: Insights from Tullu Moye apatite crystals", under the supervision of Prof. David Pyle and Prof. Tamsin Mather (Department of Earth Sciences).

**Marie Linos** (PhD in History, Art History and Archaeology, ULB) is carrying out a second year of research on a project titled "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).

# BRUSSELS



## Postdoctoral Fellows

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

**Nicola Pinzani** (DPhil in Computer Science, University of Oxford) is carrying out a research project titled "Foundations and phenomenology of causal contextuality: From the verification of the indefiniteness of quantum spacetime to computational advantages", under the supervision of Prof. Ognian Oreshkov (Brussels School of Engineering).

**Rebecca Short** (DPhil in Medieval and Modern Languages, University of Oxford) is carrying out a research project titled "The feminine voice(s) of Louis-Antoine Caraccioli", under the supervision of Prof. Fabrice Preyat (Faculty of Letters, Translation and Communication).











# Ganshof van der Meersch Chair



# CHRIS BICKERTON

## University of Cambridge



In 2023, the Ganshof van der Meersch Chair was held by Professor Chris Bickerton on the recommendation of Professor Ramona Coman (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, holder of the chair of Public Law at 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 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.

**Chris Bickerton** is Professor in Modern European Politics at the University of Cambridge and Official Fellow at Queens' College, Cambridge. Educated at Oxford and in Geneva, Chris Bickerton has taught at the universities of Oxford, Amsterdam


and Sciences Po (Paris). His research has focused on multiple aspects of contemporary European politics, including European integration and transformations in the continent's democracies. His book *European Integration: From Nation States to Member States* (Oxford University Press, 2012) was awarded the Best Book Prize by the University Association of Contemporary European Studies. He has published in 2016 a best-selling book, *The European Union: A Citizen's Guide* (Penguin) and in 2021, *Technopopulism: The New Logic of Democratic Politics* (Oxford University Press), co-authored with Carlo Invernizzi Accetti. Chris Bickerton is a visiting Professor at the College of Europe in Bruges and at Paris 1-Sorbonne (in 2023). He is a regular contributor to the international print media and has written for the New York Times, Financial Times, Guardian, and the Monde diplomatique.

The general theme of Chris Bickerton's chair at ULB was "On the Brink: A History of Europe since 1989". He also gave a public lecture titled "The Long 1989" on March 30, 2023.

**CHAIRE GANSHOF VAN DER MEERSCH 2022 - 2023**  
Fondation Philippe Wiener - Maurice Anspach


**Prof. CHRIS BICKERTON**  
Professor in Modern European Politics  
University of Cambridge

**Writing a contemporary history  
of Europe in a polycrisis**



**Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023, 6.30 pm**  
Auditoire Pierre Drion (R42.5.503)  
Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management  
Avenue F.D. Roosevelt 42 – 1050 Brussels

This lecture will be followed by a reception  
All welcome but registration is required by March 27<sup>th</sup>  
at [chrisbickerton.event@ulb.be](mailto:chrisbickerton.event@ulb.be)  
Info: [fwa.relations@ulb.be](mailto:fwa.relations@ulb.be) - [fwa@ulb.be](mailto:fwa@ulb.be)



## Abstract of the public lecture

Writing contemporary history is challenging at the best of times. Doing so in the midst of a polycrisis is even more so. As European standards of living fall and as war returns to the very heart of the continent, it is inevitable that a history of Europe since 1989 will be written rather differently.

What should we make of Europe's long period of relative demilitarization when it ends so abruptly and brutally? Should we revise our understanding of Europe's economic development in the late 20th and early 21st century knowing that by the end of the 2010s Europe is marked by widespread industrial action?

The lecture looked back at Europe since 1989, identifying the main trends and themes but also reflecting on how current events are forcing a significant reassessment of Europe's political, social and economic development since the end of the Cold War.

The lecture video is available at [fwa.ulb.be/nos-videos](https://fwa.ulb.be/nos-videos).

**Clockwise, from top left:** Ramona Coman and Kristin Bartik; Chris Bickerton; Amandine Crespy, Nathalie Brack, Chris Bickerton and Ramona Coman, promoters of the ULB-Cambridge research project "Conflicts of sovereignty in a European Union in crisis", supported by the Foundation from 2018 to 2021.



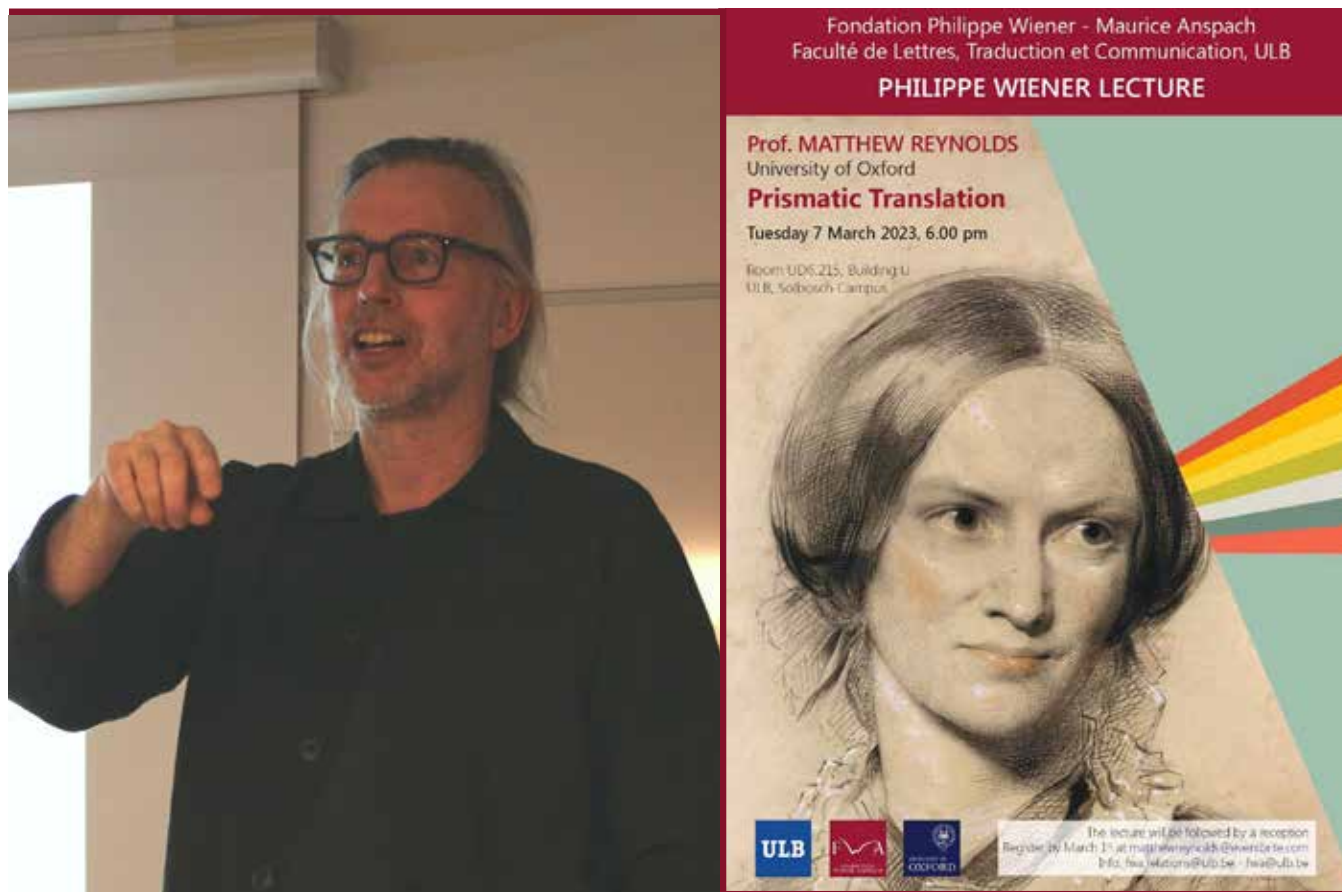




# Philippe Wiener Lecture

# MATTHEW REYNOLDS

## Prismatic Translation



On Tuesday 7 March 2023, Matthew Reynolds (Professor of English and Comparative Criticism at the University of Oxford) gave a Philippe Wiener Lecture at the ULB, where he was welcomed by Sonja Janssens (Faculty of Letters, Translation and Interpretation).

### Biographical note

Professor Matthew Reynolds chairs the Oxford Comparative Criticism and Translation Research Centre (OCCT) and leads the Prismatic Jane Eyre project. Among his books are *Prismatic Translation* (2019), *Translation: A Very Short Introduction* (2016), *The Poetry of Translation: From Chaucer & Petrarch to Homer & Logue* (2011), *Likenesses* (2013), *The Realms of Verse: English Poetry in a Time of Nation-Building* (2001), and the novels *Designs for a Happy Home* (2009) and *The World Was All Before Them* (2013).

### Abstract of the lecture

The Prismatic approach considers translation, not as the production of one translated text from one source text, but as a process that inevitably generates many translated texts (both actual and potential) which need to be considered together. In this talk, Prof. Reynolds outlined the theory, and then presented an example: the collaborative Prismatic Jane Eyre project, which studies Charlotte Brontë's novel as it co-exists in around 600 translations, into at least 68 languages. How can we set about reading this plural, global, transtemporal and multilingual text? – and why should we?

*Launched in 2007, the Philippe Wiener annual lectures are delivered at the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford by academics and researchers from the ULB, and vice versa.*





**Clockwise, from top left:** Xavier Luffin, then Dean of the ULB Faculty of Letters, Translation and Communication; Matthew Reynolds; Sonja Janssens and Matthew Reynolds; Mauricio Narváez Soto (École de Traduction et Interprétation ISTI – Cooremans) with Violette Cadars (FWA); Wiener-Anspach Alumna Justine Feyereisen with 2022-2024 Fellow Edward Lee-Six (pictures by Francesca Spinelli).

VOIX

## LET'S EAT

STEVE SWALLOW

FUSION LATIN ♩ = 136

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It begins with an introduction (INTRO) in 4/4 time, marked with a tempo of 136 beats per minute. The key signature is two flats (Bb and Eb). The score is divided into three main sections: A, B, and C. Section A (measures 17-24) features a vocal melody and piano accompaniment with chords such as Cm, D7, G7, and Cm. Section B (measures 25-32) continues the vocal melody and piano accompaniment with chords such as Cm, D7, G7, Cm, D7, G7, and Fm7. Section C (measures 33-40) features a vocal melody and piano accompaniment with chords such as Ebmaj7, Fm7, F#o7, C7, G7(sus4), and G7(b13). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and chords.



# 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. In 2023, five projects were selected for the 2024-2025 period.



## THE SEISMIC SIGNATURE OF CALDERA REINFLATION AT ASKJA VOLCANO, ICELAND

Askja is a large central volcano in the Northern Volcanic Zone (NVZ) of Iceland, which last erupted in 1961. Since the early 1970s, it has been gradually deflating, but in August 2021, it switched to reflation after ~50 years. In the nearly two years since, peak surface uplift has exceeded 60cm, which is now approaching the total subsidence measured in the preceding half century. Cambridge has a large backbone seismic array in place in the southern region of the NVZ, which has detected increased earthquake activity associated with the reflation. However, it lacks the resolution to detect very shallow changes in the magmatic plumbing system, which is why Cambridge and ULB scientists have decided to deploy a dense array of seismometers and a fiber optic cable in the Askja caldera. This will allow for greatly improved earthquake detection, shallow imaging and measurement of temporal changes in the subsurface, which are all crucial for better understanding the nature of the reflation event.

**Cambridge Promoters:** Nicolas Rawlinson and Tom Winder (Department of Earth Sciences)

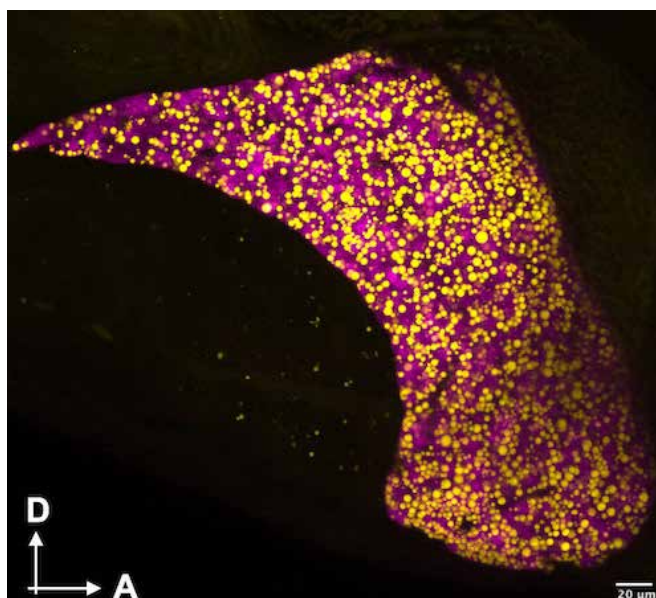
**ULB Promoter:** Corentin Caudron (Department of Geosciences, Environment and Society, Faculty of Sciences)

## THE IMPACT OF NOTATIONAL DESIGN ON MUSICAL PERFORMANCE AND PERCEPTION

This collaboration brings historical research on the representation of style in musical scores (ULB) together with experimental research exploring how visual and cognitive constraints can shape the manner in which notation may be used more effectively (University of Cambridge). These strands of research will be intertwined in a series of concerts – by the Orchestre de l'ULB, and by a violin-piano duo – presenting performances of works notated in both standard and modified versions; performers and audiences will complete specially-designed questionnaires concerning these performances providing novel information about the ways in which different notational representations might influence the ways in which music is performed and experienced. This should not only result in new scientific knowledge but could also enhance public understanding of the processes involved in musical creation.

**Cambridge Promoters:** Ian Cross and Vidar Arild Stenberg (Score Design for Music Reading Group, Faculty of Music)

**ULB Promoters:** Valérie Dufour and Marie-Alexis Colin (Musicology Laboratory, Faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences)



### SPHINGOLIPID DYNAMICS DURING STARVATION-INDUCED LIVER DAMAGE

Starvation impacts 10% of the world's population, including the death of ~ 400 individuals per year in Belgium and UK from nutritional deficiencies. During starvation, organs undergo atrophy, leading to decreased function. Protecting organs from damage would improve the outcome of nutritional deprivation. Work from a PhD student in the Singh Lab (ULB), who did her master's internship in Platt Lab (Oxford), established metabolism of hepatic lipids as the cause of liver damage during starvation. Interestingly, reducing the uptake of lipids, which increased sphingolipid metabolic pathway, was able to protect the liver from damage. In this proposal, the two groups will combine their individual expertise in stress biology and sphingolipid biology to develop the first map of sphingolipids during starvation. With this, we will identify key blockage(s) in the pathway that occur during starvation - induced organ damage, as well as lipid molecules that can slow down the damage.

**Oxford Promoter:** Frances Platt (Department of Pharmacology)

**ULB Promoter:** Sumeet Pal Singh (IRIBHM - Institute of Interdisciplinary Research in human and molecular Biology, Faculty of Medicine)

### REACHING $ZT=1$ FIGURE OF MERIT FOR ORGANIC THERMOELECTRICS ( $ZT1$ )

Organic semiconductors are carbon-based materials that have demonstrated their use in printed large area electronic at low economical and environmental costs. In the recent years, they also have been studied for use in an emerging energy harvesting application, namely, thermoelectric or waste-heat harvesting for energy generation. However the benchmark for commercial applications, i.e., a demonstration of a figure of merit ( $ZT$ ) greater than 1 that would allow heat-to-voltage conversion efficiency that approaches 10% from low-grade ( $< 300$  degrees C) heat sources, has not been demonstrated yet. This project builds on the knowledge and recent developments of both groups, bringing together the best materials, characterisation and measurement methods in an attempt to reach for the first time  $ZT=1$  in organic semiconductors. Moreover, it will also shed more light on the physics of charge and heat transport taking place in these materials, refining current state of the art transport models.

**Cambridge Promoter:** Deepak Venkateshvaran (Cavendish Laboratory, Department of Physics)

**ULB Promoter:** Guillaume Schweicher (Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Sciences)

### SOFT AS SILK. CONNECTING TALC-BASED AND WOVEN INSPIRED DECORATED CERAMICS PRODUCTION OVER TIME AND SPACE IN WEST CENTRAL AFRICA

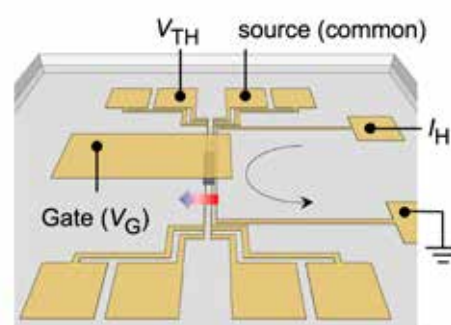
The project seeks to better understand the relation between woven inspired decorated pottery producing communities in West Central Africa between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> c. CE and their link to older pottery traditions. Using the "compared technology" method, manufacturing process will be reconstructed and compared to each other to determine whether the stylistic resemblance only reflects a general taste for fine clothes among polities and communities of the area or more close interaction, suggesting communities of practice over time and space. Moreover, the use of talc in the fabrics shows similarities with pottery productions dated to the 1<sup>st</sup> millennia BCE/CE. Identifying common technical features could contribute to better understand the transition – currently poorly known due to a lack of data – between two key periods in the history of Central Africa: the first villages and the Bantu expansion and the development of major polities in the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium CE.

**Cambridge Promoter:** Marcos Martín-Torres (McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research)

**ULB Promoters:** Olivier Gosselain and Nicolas Nikis (CREA-Patrimoine - Research Centre in Archaeology and Heritage, Faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences).

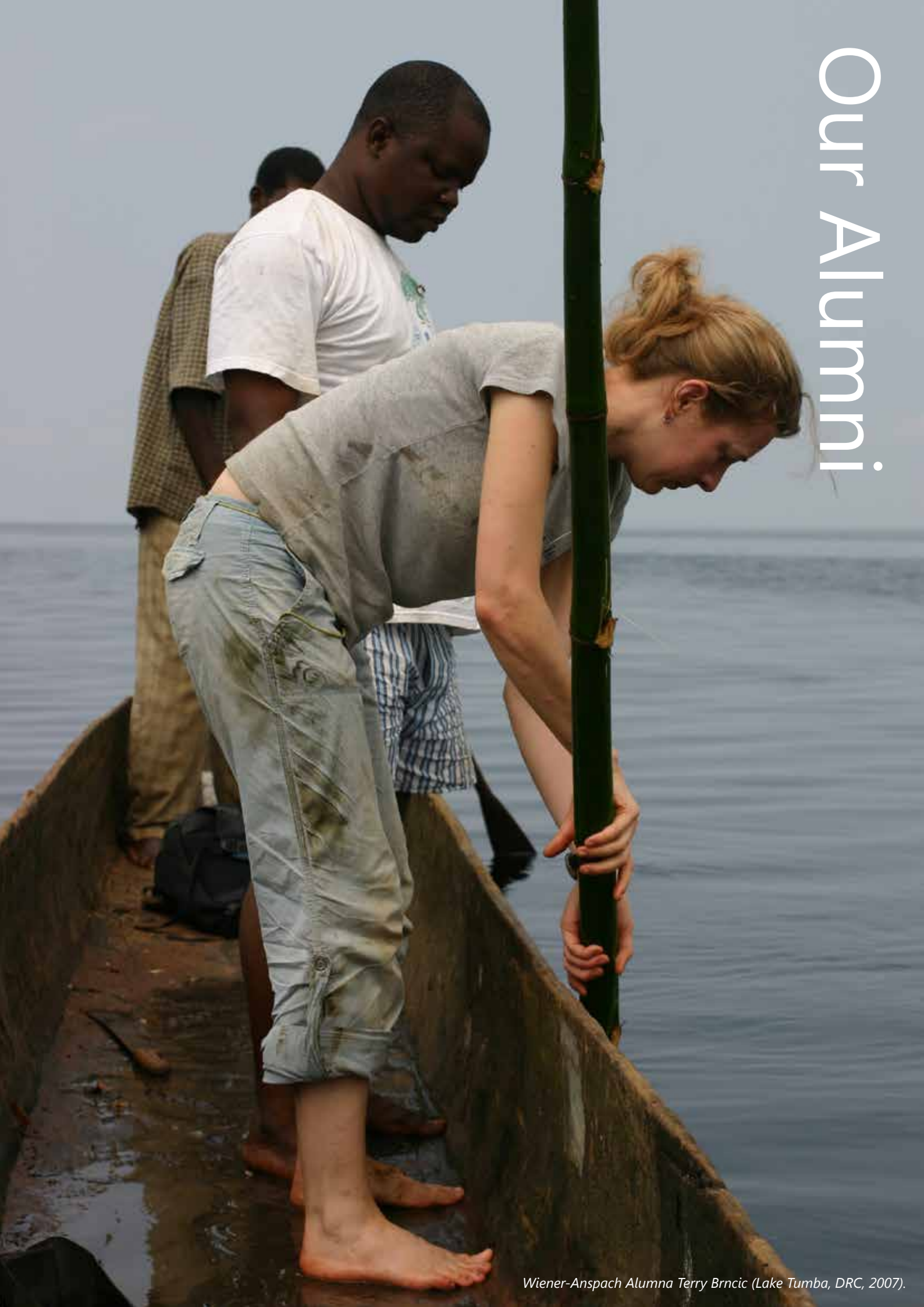


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# Our Alumni



*Wiener-Anspach Alumna Terry Brncic (Lake Tumba, DRC, 2007).*

# TERRY BRNCIC

## Pollen, carnivores, and all things ecology

In love with Africa since her adolescence, Terry Brncic was a Wiener-Anspach postdoctoral fellow in paleoecology in 2006-2007 at the Université libre de Bruxelles, where she worked with botanist Jean Lejoly. Today she is Deputy Director of the Zambian Carnivore Programme.

*Your education is in the field of plant ecology, with a focus on central African forests. What brought you, as a bachelor student of science at the University of Arizona, to deepen the study of this subject and geographical area?*

I've wanted to work in Africa since I was fourteen. I was given a book about the central Kalahari and I knew I wanted to work in Africa with large mammals. As an undergraduate at the University of Arizona, I was in the Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Department for most of my undergraduate years. I was very lucky to have a scholarship that allowed me two summer study abroad sessions. For the first one I went to India and studied Asian elephants on a short course. I really loved it, but I felt shock at seeing extreme poverty for the first time and it made it hard to justify to myself doing something related to ecology when there were more urgent, pressing human needs. I went back and I changed my major to molecular and cellular biology, thinking I would work in medicine. On my second summer study abroad I went to Kenya as a research assistant for a PhD student, and I worked on different types of birds. It was my first trip to Africa, and as soon as I landed I had this feeling of being home.

*So you actually graduated in molecular and cellular biology?*

Yes, but my heart was always in ecology. As soon as I graduated I volunteered on a gorilla habituation project in Central African Republic, and that's what got me more interested into forest ecology in that area. We were tracking gorillas and, because they weren't habituated, they were very hard to find. We ended up looking a lot at plants, saw what the gorillas were eating, and I realized there were some fascinating forest types that we knew very little about. When I started my PhD at Oxford, I wanted to look at some of these forest types and figure out why they were there and what happened to them. While taking soil samples, I found ancient pottery under the forest floor, in what was thought to have been a virgin rainforest within the national park. It made it obvious that people had been there for a long time and that they had had an impact on rainforests. So when I applied for my first postdoc in Oxford I switched to paleoecology and started looking for long-term palaeoecological records in African rainforests that would clarify the relative role of humans versus climate in long-term vegetation change in central Africa.

*In your application for a Wiener-Anspach postdoctoral fellowship at ULB, you mentioned learning about this opportunity from another FWA fellow, Ingrid Parmentier, who worked in Oxford the year before you came to Brussels.*

Yes, Ingrid and I were both in the Geography Department, and there was another Wiener-Anspach Fellow, Nicolas Barbier. They both suggested the Wiener-Anspach fellowship. I kept in touch with Ingrid. She has now moved into politics and she is doing amazing things helping make Brussels more ecologically sustainable.

*Your host promoter at ULB was now Emeritus Professor Jean Lejoly, a botanist specialising in the flora of central Africa. Did you already know his work at the time of your application?*

Jean Lejoly was very much focused on botany, which was relevant to my studies of paleoecology, so I read some of his papers trying to understand different vegetation types in central Africa. Having someone who really knew the flora of that region and could help me interpret the pollen record was very important for me. I had always wanted to go to the DRC, because that is really the heart of the Congo Basin. Ingrid put me in touch with Jean Lejoly and we discussed doing some field work. He was interested in having a more long-term history of that region where he had worked a long time. We traveled together to the DRC and collected surface pollen to try to better correlate the fossil pollen record to modern-day vegetation types.

*After studying plants, forests and pollen for more than ten years, you went back to the animal world. How did that happen?*

It's all linked. It's important to understand the environmental context of what drives animal populations, so it's been very useful for me to have that background. As an ecologist, I'm interested in anything ecology – plants, animals, paleoecology. I think in terms of academic questions, the paleoecology work was the most interesting to me, because we knew exactly what we were trying to understand. As I discovered during my postdocs, the reason why so little was known about the past history of Congo Basin rainforests is that the pollen record is very poor in central Africa. It's very hard to get good samples and interpret them because there are so many species compared to Europe or North America, where you have twenty to fifty main species and you can tell exactly what the habitat was like from a pollen record. In central Africa you have four hundred different plant species as a minimum, and they are not wind pollinated, so they don't produce a lot of pollen. And you have animals like elephants and buffalos, turning up the shallow sediment basins. Unfortunately, this makes it very difficult to understand the past vegetation history in these areas. I really wanted to contribute to that overall question of what the past rainforest was like, but the sediment that





we were able to collect only went back a maximum of 5,000 years. That is really important for tying it into modern-day vegetation and understanding the stability in the recent past and the links to ecology, but it doesn't get at those bigger questions of what happened 40,000 years ago or 500,000 years ago. And then I realized that I didn't want to stay in a lab or in academia, and that I wanted to get back to Africa. My next opportunity there was studying primates again, so I went back to my roots.

*Since March 2022, you are the Deputy Director of the Zambian Carnivore Programme ([zambiancarnivores.org](http://zambiancarnivores.org)). What are the main challenges in your job?*

I think the challenges I am facing are the ones that almost every conservation organization faces. There's the challenge of the work itself – trying to conserve animals in a place where communities are also trying to have livelihoods and develop, and the conflicts that occur when human and animal needs clash. And then there are other challenges: the climate is changing, human populations are growing, there's illegal trade in animal species, and we're trying to make sure that there's a space for animals so that they can persist in the future. Our goal is to have Zambians managing their own resources. We put a lot of our efforts into training ecologists on field techniques, science, and also leadership so that they can be doing this work more independently and making science-based resource-management decisions at national levels in the future.

*To what extent does conservation science involve an interdisciplinary approach?*

It's very interdisciplinary. Our focus is science and conservation action and leadership building, but we depend very much on other organisations that are focusing on education and schools. We work closely with them to identify potential conservation leaders and bring them on for internships. The work that these other organisations do with the students early on helps prepare them for the internships with us. For the actual conservation, we work very closely with organisations such as Conservation South Luangwa and African Parks, who are doing anti-poaching and law enforcement. We try to provide them with information about where animals are moving and where they might be at risk so that they can target their anti-poaching patrols. We work together to free animals caught in snares. And we also collaborate with research organisations for research-oriented questions. In terms of human sciences, one of our pillars is human-carnivore coexistence. We do some exchanges with people working in that space in other protected areas and other countries.

For example, representatives from another national park in Zambia visited us last year to thoroughly understand all the implications of reintroducing lions for local communities: what are the risks, what are the safeguards that you have to put in place before you bring in a large predator, as well as techniques for monitoring the population.

*What is the impact of climate change on ecosystems of large landscapes such as the ones you have been observing in the last 25 years?*

A lot of the predictions about climate change come from modelling. We are in the process of doing a study for central western Zambia looking at tree cover change and comparing that to some of the model results to see how accurate they are and what is really likely to happen in Zambia on the ground. Some models lack good inputs for this region and can't accurately predict if the climate will get wetter or drier. We are looking at tree cover in that area and showing that when it is not disturbed by humans, the forest is actually spreading, whereas some models predicted that the climate would get drier, leading to forest loss. So I would say climate change is having an impact, but it may not be the impact that we are expecting. And then there's the big question of what the impact on carnivores will be. There have been some discussions about carnivores and the energy it takes them to hunt, and how warmer temperatures might change their hunting patterns, but I think that needs more data to support it. There are much more pressing impacts on carnivores such as bushmeat poaching, which depletes the prey base for the carnivores as well as increasing the risk of snaring bycatch.

*What has been the most surprising or exciting experience with carnivores since you started this job?*

I recently travelled to a long-term Zambian Carnivore Programme site in western Zambia, the Liuwa Plain National Park, which has vast savannas, the second largest wildebeest migration in the world, and a recovering population of large carnivores. The dominant predators in this ecosystem are hyenas because lions were nearly extirpated there. I was able to participate in the collaring of an adult male lion and being able to see a lion that close is an amazing experience. Although he was sedated, he was not alone, and his unsedated brother slept about 30 meters away on the other side of the vehicle, occasionally sitting up and checking to see that his brother was nearby. Remarkably, he didn't seem to think anything was out of the ordinary and flopped over and went back to sleep. Even though he was relaxed, it's a thrill to be on foot that close to a lion in the wild.

# ALUMNI EVENT IN LONDON

## Visit to the British Museum with Amélie Deblauwe



On April 21, 2023, the Foundation's Alumni Network organised a visit to the Egyptian galleries of the British Museum. We had the pleasure to be guided by Amélie Deblauwe, a Wiener-Anspach Alumna who studied Egyptology and is now Senior Digitisation Technician at the University of Cambridge, where she photographs and digitises ancient texts.

As Amélie reminded us, 2022 marked the bicentenary of the deciphering of hieroglyphics by Jean-François Champollion. The visit offered us the opportunity to analyze several examples of their use, including the famous Rosetta Stone. "Hieroglyphic writing combined phonograms and ideograms with great flexibility, making it particularly difficult to decipher," she explained. "During a remarkable existence of more than

3500 years, this flexibility allowed hieroglyphs (called 'divine word' in Egyptian) to be used for religious, political and everyday needs. Engraved deep into stone temples, they allowed the pharaoh to assert his dominance, his legitimacy, and to associate himself intimately with the gods. Sketched in hieratic, cursive form, they provided a roadmap in papyrus scrolls for the journey into the afterlife. Texts painted on the walls of richly decorated noble tombs invited their visitors to recall the achievements of the deceased, and to pronounce his or her name in order to keep the memory alive. The ancient Egyptians believed deeply in the power and creative capacity of words. It is therefore not surprising that the last known hieroglyphic inscription was a votive graffito left by a priest in the hope that it would last 'for eternity'.





# Reception at the Belgian Ambassador's Residence

Following the visit to the British Museum, His Excellency Bruno van der Pluijm, the Belgian Ambassador to the United Kingdom, kindly hosted a reception for our UK-based Alumni and friends. Several Wiener-Anspach Fellows also joined us from Oxbridge. The evening was made all the more special by the tasting offered by our Alumnus Mark Kent, Chief Officer of the Scotch Whisky Association, and guided by his colleague Graeme Littlejohn, the Association's Director of Strategy and Communications.



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1. His Excellency Bruno van der Pluijm (left) with our Alumnus Jonathan Price.
2. Wiener-Anspach Alumna Estelle Praet with 2022-2023 Fellows Laura Alvarez, Céline Erauw and Mathilde El Hadjen.
3. Wiener-Anspach Alumni Valentina Sloane, Peter Oliver and Judith Coomber.



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4. Our 2022-2023 Fellow Katleen Van Nerom with our Alumna Ekaterina Ostashchenko.
5. Wiener-Anspach Alumni Maya Dannawi and Peter Asimov.
6. Catriona Seth (University of Oxford) with the wife of His Excellency Bruno van der Pluijm, Wiener-Anspach Alumna Laurence Totelin, and Didier Viviers.



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7. Wiener-Anspach Alumni Michael Depreter and Guillaume Delhaye.
8. Graeme Littlejohn and Mark Kent.
9. Our 2022-2023 Fellows David Talukder, Thomas Legein and Véréna Stockebrand.

# NEWS FROM OUR ALUMNI

## Permanent academic appointments



**Coraline Jortay** (PhD in Languages, Literature and Translation Studies and 2020-2021 Postdoctoral Fellow in Oxford) has been appointed CNRS Research Fellow at the THALIM (Théorie et histoire des arts et des littératures de la modernité) Joint Research Unit in Paris.

**Blagoje Oblak** (PhD in Physics and 2015-2016 Doctoral Fellow in Cambridge) has been appointed CNRS Research Fellow at the Institut Camille Jordan, Université Claude Bernard Lyon 1.

**Romain Weikmans** (PhD in Environmental Sciences and Management and 2012-2013 Doctoral Fellow in Oxford) has been appointed Associate Professor in Global Environmental Governance at ULB. In 2023, Dr Weikmans was also elected to the Collegium of the Académie royale de Belgique.

## FNRS postdoctoral mandates



**Virginie Arantes** (PhD in Social and Political Sciences and 2021-2023 Postdoctoral Fellow in Oxford) has been appointed FNRS Postdoctoral Researcher at ULB. Her research project is titled "(Re)imagining the nation in the age of the Anthropocene: A comparative study of 'green nationalism' in China, Singapore and Taiwan".

**Eric Fabri** (PhD in Political Sciences and 2019-2020 Postdoctoral Fellow in Oxford) has been appointed FNRS Postdoctoral Researcher at ULB. His research project is titled "Inheritance and distributive justice: From the justifications to the limits of the right to transfer".



## Prizes and other good news



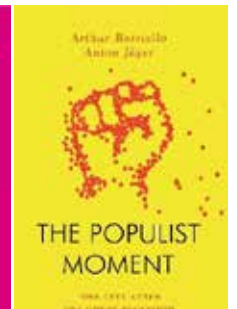
**Pierre-Emmanuel Caprace** (Professor of Mathematics at the Université catholique de Louvain and 2006-2007 Postdoctoral Fellow in Oxford) has been elected to the Classe des Sciences of the Académie royale de Belgique.

**Julien Decharneux** (Postdoctoral Researcher at the Centre de Recherches Historiques - LabEx HaStec in Paris and 2022-2023 Postdoctoral Fellow in Oxford) was awarded the 2022-2023 Kreglinger Prize for his thesis titled "Creation and contemplation : The cosmology of the Qur'an and its late antique background" (partly completed at the University of Oxford thanks to a Wiener-Anspach grant).

**Katie Johnston** (Lecturer in Law at the University of Liverpool and 2018-2019 Doctoral Fellow at ULB) was awarded the Oxford Nicolas Berggruen Prize for Best Doctoral Dissertation in Philosophy, Law & Politics for her thesis titled "The impact of the coexistence of multiple norms from different sources of international law on change to the jus ad bellum".

**Nibedita Mukherjee** (Lecturer in Global Development at Brunel University London and 2014-2016 Postdoctoral Fellow in Cambridge) was awarded the Ecological Engagement Award by the British Ecological Society.

## Publications



**Christophe Delaere**, PhD in History of Art and Archaeology, was granted a Wiener-Anspach postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Oxford from 2018 to 2020 and is currently a FNRS Research Fellow at ULB. Together with Dolores Elkin, he edited the book *Underwater and Coastal Archaeology in Latin America* (University Press of Florida, 2023), featuring a range of theoretical and methodological approaches by 82 researchers working across the region and displaying a wide chronological vision that recognizes the vast and rich precolonial heritage of these waters.

**Eric Fabri** published *Pourquoi la propriété privée* (Éditions Le bord de l'eau, 2023), an essay dissecting the arguments currently used to justify private property and laying the foundations for a new democratic theory of property, free of the spectre of proprietary absolutism. In 2023, Dr Fabri also co-edited the book *Souveraineté et néolibéralisme* (Éditions Le bord de l'eau).

Wiener-Anspach Alumni **Anton Jäger** (PhD in Philosophy) and **Daniel Zamora Vargas** (PhD in Philosophy and Social Sciences) published *Welfare for Markets. A Global History of Basic Income* (The University of Chicago Press, 2023), an essay tracing basic income from its rise in American and British policy debates following periods of economic tumult to its modern relationship with technopopulist figures in Silicon Valley. Dr Zamora Vargas, currently Assistant Professor of Sociology at ULB, was granted a Wiener-Anspach Postdoctoral Fellowship at the University of Oxford in 2016-2017. Dr Jäger, a Wiener-Anspach Postdoctoral Fellow at ULB in 2020-2021, is now Postdoctoral Researcher at KU Leuven. In 2023, he also published *Hyperpolitik* (Suhrkamp Verlag) and, together with Wiener-Anspach Alumnus **Arthur Borriello** (Professor of Political Science at the Université de Namur), *The Populist Moment: The Left After the Great Recession* (Verso).

# OTHER FUNDED INITIATIVES

## The Ganshof van der Meersch Prize



Established in 1994, the **Ganshof van der Meersch Prize** rewards a student from the ULB Faculty of Law and Criminology 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 2023 prize was awarded to **Fiona Argenta**. Fiona obtained her bachelor's degree in law from Maastricht University, an LLM from the University of Cambridge and a Master's in Gender Studies from University College London. She graduated in 2023 from the ULB *magna cum laude* where she undertook a Master's degree in public and international law. Now a member of the ULB Centre of International Law, she is carrying out a doctoral research (with a FNRS grant) in which she offers to rethink human rights in the face of climate change through a posthumanist analysis.

## Short stays and other activities

► **23 February 2023.** **Nathalie Brack**, Professor at the ULB Department of Political Science and a Wiener-Anspach Alumna, presented at the University of Cambridge her research project "Post-truth politics and political parties: To what extent and why do political parties use conspiracy discourse on social media?", for which she was awarded a FNRS Incentive Grant for Scientific Research. She was welcomed by Prof. Chris Bickerton (Department of Politics and International Studies).

► **March-May 2023.** **Isabelle Meuret**, Associate Professor in English, Cultures of the Anglophone World, and Narrative Journalism at ULB, received funding for her research stays at the Oxford Centre for Life-Writing, Wolfson College, where she was invited as a Visiting Scholar.

► **May 2023.** **Lea Katz**, PhD student in Marine biology at ULB (supervisor: Prof. Bruno Danis), undertook a research stay at the University of Cambridge, where she was welcomed by Dr Emily Mitchell (Department of Zoology).

► **September-October 2023.** **Elvira Viktória Tamus**, PhD student in History at the University of Cambridge (supervisor: Prof. Nora Berend), received funding for her stay in Brussels, where she carried out research at the ULB centre SOCIAMM (History, Arts and Cultures of Ancient, Medieval and Modern Societies) and at the Archives of the Royal Palace. She was welcomed at ULB by Dr Marie Kervyn (Department of History, Arts and Archaeology).

► **28-30 June 2023.** With the support of the Foundation, the University of Cambridge hosted the international workshop "Respecting Seeds: An Exploration into Saving Ethics and the Politics of Care in Gardens, Farms and Banks". This workshop was co-convened by **Olivia Angé**, Professor of Economic Anthropology at ULB and a Wiener-Anspach Alumna.





