



2024 ACTIVITY REPORT



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WORD OF WELCOME FROM THE PRESIDENT



@Pietro Bruni

2025 will be the year we will celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Fondation Wiener-Anspach. As we are looking ahead, I am delighted to share with you a particularly positive overview of the Foundation's work and to look forward to an ambitious future. It is also an opportunity for me to pay tribute to the Wiener-Beddington couple at the origin of our Foundation. The FWA was born in 1965 from the wish of Phyllis Agnes Beddington Wiener to honour the memory of her husband, Philippe, arrested by the Germans on April 15, 1942 and charged with aiding the enemy through the transfer of people out of occupied Europe. Philippe Wiener was deported to Esterwegen, where he died on March 26, 1944 as a result of mistreatments.

Is there any better response to barbarism than supporting education and exchanges between academic institutions? At a time when nationalism and populism are on the rise all over the world, the aim of the Foundation is more relevant than ever before.

Eighty years after the death of Philippe Wiener, the Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB) and the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford renewed their cooperation agreements on 1 October 2024 in London, at the Residence of the Belgian Ambassador to the United Kingdom. Initially signed fifteen years ago, these agreements provide the formal framework for the collaborations developed at the heart of the FWA's mission.

The fellowships and the projects supported by the Foundation bring together students, researchers and academics who work in different environments but who share the same fields of research. The Foundation allows them to compare approaches, complement each other's expertise and benefit from the experience of other education systems.

Once again, this year's Activity Report illustrates the wide variety of subjects studied by the Foundation's Fellows. For the 60th anniversary of its existence, my hope is to see the Foundation and its projects increasingly integrated into the exchange policies and programmes of our three Universities. The renewal of the agreements between the ULB and the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford is a strong signal of the importance of these collaborations. The FWA should be increasingly recognised as a key player in the development of the research policy of all three universities.

With the help of all our collaborators and, in particular, of our Alumni, we need to reinforce the visibility of the Foundation's role in the exchanges among members of the University communities of Brussels, Cambridge and Oxford. Many thanks in advance to all those who will contribute to this achievement, particularly on the occasion of our 60th anniversary!

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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The Board of Trustees wishes to express its warmest thanks to Pierre Vaesen, who stepped down in June 2024 after serving the FWA for eight years. As an Alumnus of the Foundation, he played a central role in setting up the Wiener-Anspach Alumni Network in 2017 and ensuring it thrived through its many activities over the years.

In 2024, the Fondation Wiener-Anspach was delighted to welcome to its Board of Trustees Kim Oosterlinck (Director of the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium and Professor of Finance at the Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management, ULB) and Anne Weyembergh (Professor of Law at the Institute for European Studies and at the Faculty of Law and Criminology, and Vice-Rector for External Relations and Development Cooperation, ULB).

Three new academics joined the Scientific Committee in 2024: Professors Simone Gutt, Xavier Luffin and Laurence Roudart. The Foundation would like to extend a warm welcome to all of them.

Scientific Committee

Prof. **Luc Lemaire - President**
Faculty of Sciences, ULB
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Faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences, ULB
Prof. **Simone Gutt** (since September 2024)
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Prof. **Véronique Kruys**
Faculty of Sciences, ULB
Prof. **Xavier Luffin** (since September 2024)
Faculty of Letters, Translation and Communication, ULB
Prof. **Laurence Roudart** (since September 2024)
Faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences, ULB
Prof. **Philippa Watson**
City Law School, City University, London

REAFFIRMING THE TIES BETWEEN THE ULB AND OXBRIDGE

On Tuesday, 1 October 2024, we had the pleasure of celebrating in London the renewal of the Memoranda of Understanding between the Université libre de Bruxelles and the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford, i.e. the official framework of the collaborations at the heart of our Foundation's mission. Our founder, Phyllis Agnes Beddington Wiener, would have been delighted to see how vibrant these partnerships are today, as evidenced by the dozens of students and researchers who benefit each year from the support of the Foundation.

Originally signed in 2008-2009 and renewed every five years since, these cooperation agreements were renewed once again during a ceremony held at the Residence of the Belgian Ambassador to the United Kingdom, His Excellency Bruno van der Pluijm, who welcomed for the occasion the Vice-

Chancellors of the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford, Professors Deborah Prentice and Irene Tracey, and Professor Anne Weyembergh, ULB Vice-Rector for External Relations and Development Cooperation. The signing ceremony took place in the presence of delegations from the Foundation and the three universities, as well as Motonobu Kasajima, the General Delegate of Wallonia-Brussels.

The day concluded with a reception at the Oxford and Cambridge Club, attended by a large number of Alumni from both the Fondation Wiener-Anspach and the ULB.

We would like to thank the General Delegation of Wallonia-Brussels and the Embassy of Belgium to the United Kingdom for their support in organising this successful event.



From left: Kristin Bartik (Executive Director of the FWA); Catriona Seth (Professor of French Literature at the University of Oxford); Simona Palma-Narain (Counsellor at the General Delegation Wallonia-Brussels); Didier Viviers (President of the FWA); Deborah Prentice (Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge); Bruno van der Pluijm (then Ambassador of Belgium to the United Kingdom); Irene Tracey (Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford); Anne Weyembergh (ULB Vice-Rector for External Relations and Development Cooperation); Alexander Betts (Local and Global Engagement Officer at the University of Oxford); Motonobu Kasajima (General Delegate of Wallonia-Brussels); Renata Schaeffer (Head of Public International Partnerships at the University of Cambridge).



Clockwise from top left: Wiener-Anspach Alumnae Eva Kurz and Rhiannon Tudor Williams; Wiener-Anspach Alumnus Roman Berlangier with our 2024-2025 Fellows Leonie Defonteyne and Marie-Alix Bilgischer; Wiener-Anspach Alumna Ekaterina Ostashchenko; Bruno van der Pluijm; Wiener-Anspach Alumnus Jonathan Price with Professor Martin Conway and Professor Christina Redfield, a Trustee of our Foundation; Wiener-Anspach Alumna Nibedita Mukherjee; Anne Weyembergh; Motonobu Kasajima (all pictures by Susanna Borio, General Delegation of Wallonia-Brussels).



Our Fellows



Wiener-Anspach Fellow Arthur Péquin (right) with our Alumnus Loïc Dewitte and Chloé Deligne (Faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences, ULB). Photo credit: Pietro Bruni.

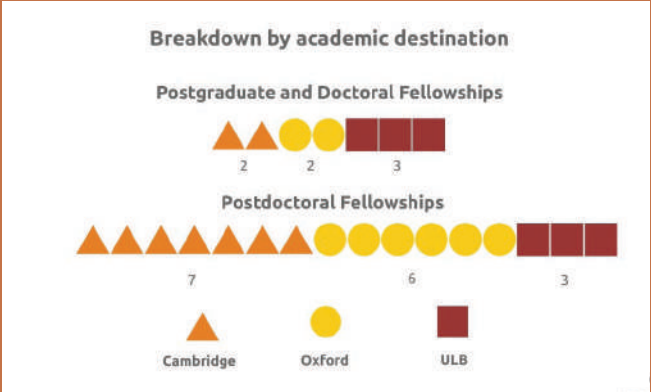
FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME



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:

- One-year postgraduate fellowships for ULB graduates to enrol at the University of Cambridge or Oxford.
- One-year doctoral fellowships for ULB doctoral students to undertake part of their research at the University of Cambridge or Oxford, and vice versa.
- Two-year 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 2024-2025 academic year, the Foundation selected 17 new Fellows, while six 2023-2024 Fellows were granted a one-year extension of their fellowship. Most of our Fellows attended the annual reception held in Brussels in September.



CAMBRIDGE

Postgraduate Fellows



Marie-Alix Bilgischer

MA in Art History
and Archaeology (ULB)

Marie-Alix has undertaken an MPhil in Heritage Studies.



Pamela Gitani

MA in Linguistics (ULB)

Pamela has undertaken an MPhil in Theoretical and Applied Linguistics.

Postdoctoral Fellows



Manon Couvignou

PhD in Psychology (ULB)

Manon is carrying out a second year of research on a 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).



Barpougouni Mardjoua

PhD in Art of Building and Urbanism
(ULB/Université d'Abomey-Calavi)

Barpougouni is carrying out a research project titled "Remote sensing and study of archaeological sites in Banikoara, Nikki and Zugu-Wangara (Northern Benin)", under the supervision of Prof. Paul Lane (Department of Archaeology).



Daniel Naegels
PhD in Theoretical Physics (ULB)

Daniel is carrying out a second year of research on a 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)

Fadia is carrying out a second year of research on a project titled "Export-oriented agricultural clusters, agribusiness development and the transformation of rural communities' land tenure and livelihood systems in Israel/Palestine", under the supervision of Prof. Emma Mawdsley and Dr Mezna Qato (Margaret Anstee Centre for Global Studies).



Arthur Péquin
PhD in Engineering Science
and Technology (ULB)

Arthur is carrying out a research project titled "Semi-supervised learning generative models for MILD combustion", under the supervision of Prof. Nedunchezian Swaminathan (Department of Engineering).



Fabio Pino
PhD in Engineering Science
and Technology (ULB)

Fabio is carrying out a research project titled "Modelling and stability analysis of liquid film in pulsating heat pipes", under the supervision of Prof. Richard Kerswell (Department of Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics).



Charlotte Vandendriessche
PhD in Cognitive Psychology
(ULB/ENS Paris)

Charlotte is carrying out a research project titled "Evolutionary perspectives on ADHD traits among BaYaka hunter-gatherers of the Republic of Congo: A fieldwork study", under the supervision of Dr Nikhil Chaudhary (Department of Archaeology).

OXFORD

Postgraduate and Doctoral Fellows



Thomas De Deyn

MSc in Biomedical Engineering (ULB)

Thomas has undertaken an MSc by Research in Psychiatry.



Vedat Semiz

PhD student in Political Science (ULB)

Supervisor: Martin Deleixhe

Vedat is carrying out a research project titled "Statecraft from national Leviathans to a transnational Behemoth: The case of the European Union", under the supervision of Prof. David Leopold (Department of Politics and International Relations).

Postdoctoral Fellows



Diane Coomans

PhD in Languages, Literature and Translation Studies (ULB)

Diane is carrying out a research project titled "Giving a voice to the voiceless: Enslaved and freed women in Oxyrhynchus from the 1st to the 3rd century AD", under the supervision of Prof. Amin Benaissa (Faculty of Classics).



Nicolas Duriau

PhD in Languages, Literature and Translation Studies (ULB)

Nicolas is carrying out a research project titled "(Un)Voicing male prostitution during the First Empire and the Bourbon Restoration: An in-depth case study at the crossroads of censorship and gendered representations in the French Novel (1800-1830)", under the supervision of Prof. Catriona Seth (Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages).



Paul Großkopf
PhD in Mathematics (ULB)

Paul is carrying out a research project titled “Tannaka-Krein duality for Hopf categories and 3-dimensional topological and homotopy quantum field theories”, under the supervision of Prof. Andre Henriques (Oxford Mathematical Institute).



Guillaume Guitang
PhD in Languages, Literature
and Translation Studies (ULB)

Guillaume is carrying out a research project titled “Temporal particles in the Masa languages (Chadic)”, under the supervision of Prof. Daniel Altshuler (Faculty of Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics).



Vaida Niksaite
PhD in History (ULB)

Vaida is carrying out a second year of research on a project titled “Uniting Poland through patriotic bonds, 1918-1921”, under the supervision of Dr Katherine Lebow (Faculty of History).



Amdemichael Zafu Tadesse
PhD in Science (ULB)

Amdemichael is carrying out a second year of research on a project titled “Volatile evolution of a silicic magmatic system in the Main Ethiopian Rift: Insights from Tullu Moya apatite crystals”, under the supervision of Prof. David Pyle and Prof. Tamsin Mather (Department of Earth Sciences).

Doctoral Fellows



Leonie Defonteyne

DPhil student in Classical Archaeology
at the University of Oxford
Supervisor: Dr Thomas Mannack

Leonie is carrying out a research project titled "The representation of women on non-Attic black-figure vases", under the supervision of Prof. Athena Tsingarida (CReA-Patrimoine).



Adrita Mitra

DPhil student in History
at the University of Oxford
Supervisor: Prof. Richard Reid

Adrita is carrying out a research project titled "Hope, horror and humanity: A transnational history of emerging networks and mobilities in the Congo Basin, 1880-1920", under the supervision of Prof. Amandine Lauro (Faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences).



Elizabeth Paradis

PhD student in Politics and
International Studies
at the University of Cambridge
Supervisor: Dr Devon Curtis

Elizabeth is carrying out a research project titled "The limitations of legal empowerment initiatives in Burundi", under the supervision of Prof. Barbara Truffin (Faculty of Law and Criminology).

Postdoctoral Fellows



Nora Baker

DPhil in French (University of Oxford)

Nora is carrying out a research project titled "Ages of innocence: Contrasting cultures of childhood in the Enlightenment", under the supervision of Prof. Valérie André (Faculty of Letters, Translation and Communication).



Davide Martino

PhD in History
(University of Cambridge)

Davide is carrying out a research project titled "Land of water: Constructing the hydraulic environment in colonial Suriname, c. 1650-1850", under the supervision of Prof. Chloé Deligne (Faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences).



Rebecca Short

DPhil in Medieval and Modern
Languages (University of Oxford)

Rebecca is carrying out a second year of research on a 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

CATHERINE BARNARD

Professor of EU Law and Employment
(University of Cambridge)



Banksy, *A Great British Spraycation* (2021)
Admiralty Road, Great Yarmouth
(CC BY-SA 2.0 Adrien S Pye)

In 2024, the Ganshof van der Meersch Chair was held by Professor Catherine Barnard on the recommendation of Chloé Brière, Director of the Institute for European Studies.

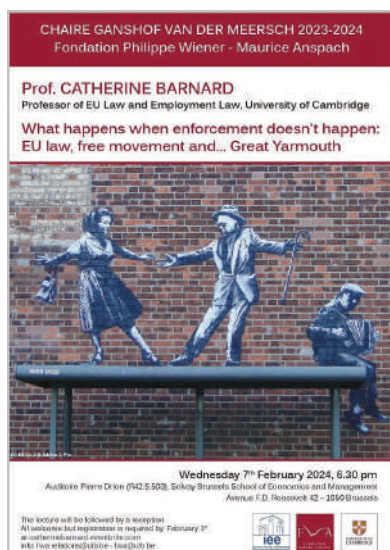
Catherine Barnard FBA, FLSW, FRSA, is Professor of EU Law and Employment Law at the University of Cambridge and Fellow of Trinity College. She is the author of *EU Employment Law* (Oxford, OUP, 2012), *The Substantive Law of the EU: The Four Freedoms* (Oxford, OUP, 2022), and (with Steve Peers) *European Union Law* (Oxford, OUP, 2023).

She is a member of the European Commission funded European Labour Law Network (ELLN). She is also a Senior Fellow of UK in a Changing Europe (UKCE), a non-partisan think-tank which does research and provides information about all aspects of Brexit to the general public.

She has appeared on the main media channels – BBC, ITV and Sky – as well as some of the more specialist programmes such as Law in Action, Question Time, Any Questions and the Briefing Room. She has also written for the Guardian and

the Telegraph. She has given evidence to numerous select committees on the legal issues connected with Brexit. She has her own podcast (2903cb), and she blogs on Brexit, mainly for UK in a Changing Europe.

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 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.



Public lecture at the Université libre de Bruxelles: "What happens when enforcement doesn't happen: EU law, free movement and... Great Yarmouth"

As part of the Ganshof van der Meersch Chair, Catherine Barnard gave a public lecture at the Université libre de Bruxelles on Wednesday, 7 February 2024.

In her talk, Professor Barnard looked at the growing emphasis on enforcement as part of upholding the rule of law, how free movement of persons provides a good case study of non-enforcement, and as a case study, the experiences of EU migrant workers in Great Yarmouth, a declining seaside resort with the fifth highest leave vote in the UK, where we see significant under-enforcement of employment rights in a legal aid desert. The question then is what do the workers do to get help, is it effective and are there lessons for labour enforcement more generally?

The video is available at fwa.ulb.be/nos-videos.



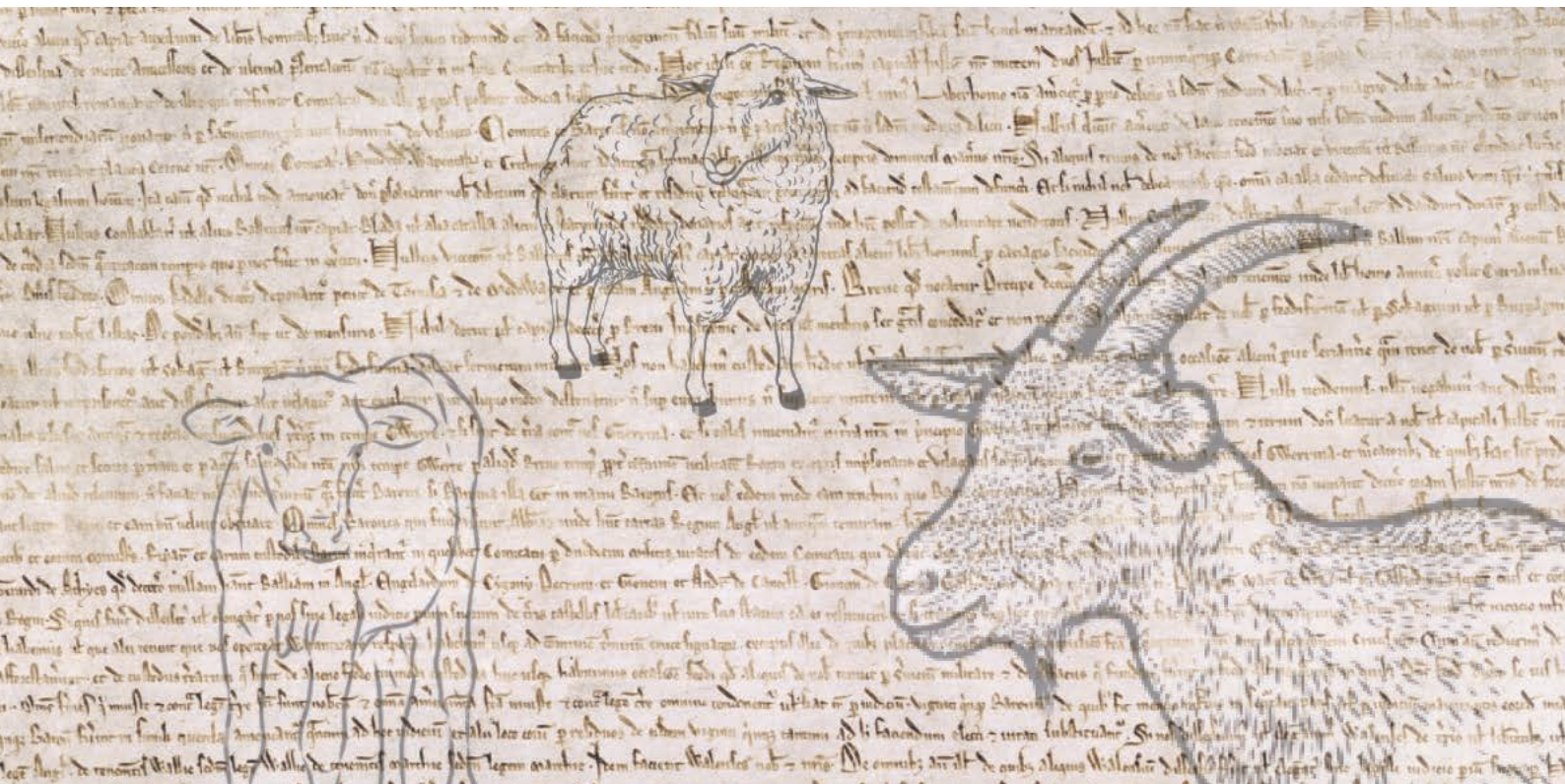
Clockwise from top left: Prof. Catherine Barnard; Prof. Chloé Brière; Gillian More (DG GROW, European Commission), Catherine Barnard, Steve Laycock (President of the Cambridge Society of Belgium) and Peter Oliver (Associate Member of the ULB Centre for European Law and a Wiener-Anspach Alumnus); Professors Chiara Armeni and Emmanuel Slautsky (Faculty of Law, ULB); Prof. Kristin Bartik (Executive Director of the FWA). All pictures by Francesca Spinelli.

Philippe Wiener Lecture



MATTHEW COLLINS

Reading old manuscripts as a biologist and an archaeologist



On Thursday, 14 November 2024, Professor Matthew Collins (University of Cambridge) gave a Philippe Wiener Lecture at the ULB, where he was welcomed by Dr Alicia Van Ham-Meert (CReA-Patrimoine) and Professor Kristin Bartik.

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.

Biographical note

Matthew Collins is McDonald Professor in Palaeoproteomics at the Department of Archaeology of the University of Cambridge. Using a combination of approaches (including immunology and protein mass spectrometry), his research detects and interprets protein remnants in archaeological and fossil remains. With former PhD student Dr Mike Buckley, he developed ZooMS (Zooarchaeology by Mass Spectrometry), a way to rapidly identify bone and other collagen based materials using peptide mass fingerprinting.

Abstract of the lecture

The unifying principle for biologists is the theory of evolution by descent, first articulated by Charles Darwin. According to this theory, copying errors in DNA are subject to natural selection, shaping future generations. A similar approach is employed in manuscript studies, such as in the analysis of biblical texts, where copying / translation errors — like

whether Moses is depicted with horns — allow scholars to trace the dissemination of ideas across time and geography.

When writing on parchment made from animal skins, these two processes converge. The written text communicates one message, but the biological material of the parchment itself carries another—the life history of the animals whose skins were used. Through genetics, we can trace the relationships among these animals and link documents written on parchment across centuries. The proteins and lipids speak to age, health and climate. This concept underpins the emerging field of biocodicology, which studies books as material culture, focusing on the biological origins of the animals whose skins became the medium for human ideas.

In this lecture, we examined manuscripts from the perspective of a biologist, not as historians or conservators. We explored how biology can offer valuable insights into manuscript studies, but we also recognised that fully understanding the story of manuscripts and manuscript culture requires interdisciplinary collaboration. Only by working together across disciplines can we piece together a unified and comprehensive picture of these remarkable cultural artefacts.



Clockwise from top left: Matthew Collins; Kristin Bartik (Executive Director of the FWA); Catheline Périer d'Ieteren (former Vice-President of the FWA); Anais Biclôt (Science and Technology Officer at the UK Embassy in Belgium), Andréanne Lafrance (Administrative Officer at the FWA) and Marie-Alexis Colin (Faculty of Music, ULB), co-promoter of a research project currently funded by the FWA; Wiener-Anspach Alumnus Roy Lavendomme (Faculty of Sciences, ULB); Alicia Van Ham-Meert (all pictures by Francesca Spinelli).

Researchers from the ULB-Cambridge project "The seismic signature of caldera reinflation at Askja Volcano, Iceland" downloading data in August 2024 (photo credit: Isabel Siggers, PhD student / University of Cambridge).

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. Five projects are currently being funded for the 2024-2025 period.



Gaelle Silvant sampling 13th-14th talc based pottery in the collection of the Royal Museum for Central Africa (photo credit: Nicolas Nikis).

SPHINGOLIPID DYNAMICS DURING STARVATION-INDUCED LIVER DAMAGE

Our project seeks to unravel how zebrafish adapt to different nutritional states, focusing specifically on the genetic and metabolic shifts that occur during fed and fasting conditions. Leveraging single-cell RNA sequencing (scRNA-Seq), we have explored the intricate molecular landscapes within zebrafish tissues under these contrasting states. An intriguing discovery has emerged: circadian-related genes—commonly associated with the biological clock—are activated in a non-circadian manner during fasting. This phenomenon suggests a potential dual role for these genes: maintaining biological clock functions and mediating adaptive responses to metabolic stress. Building on our findings, the next phase of the project aims to elucidate the metabolic impact of circadian-related gene activation during starvation. Using mass spectrometry, we will quantify key metabolites in zebrafish tissues under fed and fasting conditions. This will provide insights into how circadian-related genes affect metabolic fluxes.

Oxford Promoter: Frances Platt (Department of Pharmacology)

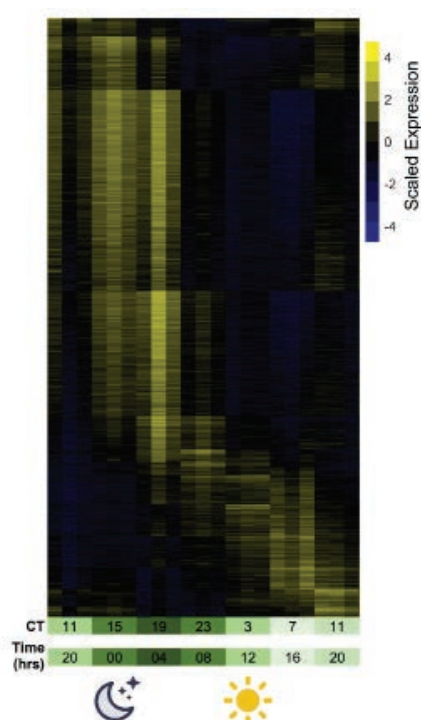
ULB Promoter: Sumeet Pal Singh (IRIBHM - Institute of Interdisciplinary Research in human and molecular Biology)

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

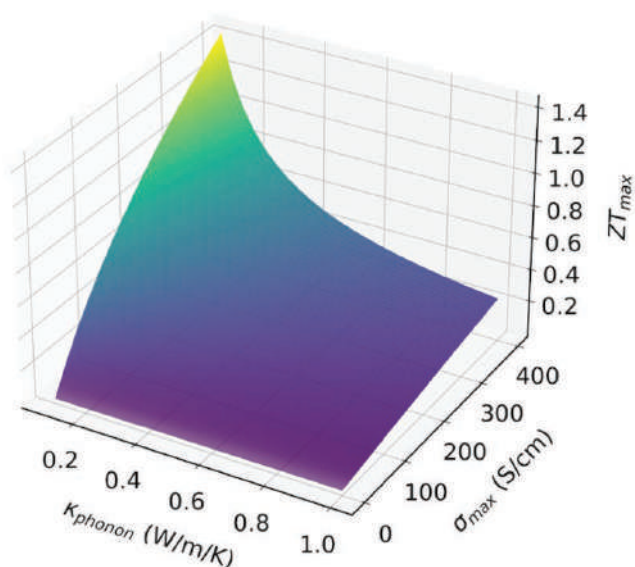
In 2024, a first batch of non-invasive analyses using portable X-ray fluorescence (pXRF) showed that talc-based ceramics were clearly distinct in terms of their chemical composition, and allowed to extent the range of pottery types displaying such inclusion. However, the results remain mainly qualitative and have confirmed the need for destructive methods, such as petrographic analyses, to conduct a proper comparative study on the different pottery groups. In 2025, some of them will be carried out as part of a Master's thesis in archaeosciences at ULB by Gaelle Silvant (co-direction Agnès Vokaer and Nicolas Nikis) who will explore the fabric variations within a 13th-14th century AD pottery group associated with copper production. In addition, ongoing fieldwork enables us to refine the archaeological context of early first millennium pottery groups, by revising their chronology and their stylistic and technical relations, and to broaden the corpus of pottery to study shaping methods.

Cambridge Promoter: Marcos Martínón-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)



Circadian gene expression in the liver: yellow indicates higher activity, and blue indicates lower activity, with clear differences between day and night.



Thermal conductivity and figure of merit ZT in polaronic conductors in the near-degenerate regime. ZT computed based on the power factor of a polaronic system with free parameters of k_{phonon} and σ_{max} .

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

Since the start of the grant, we have published a review article in the newly established journal, *Advanced Devices & Instrumentation*. The paper (tinyurl.com/2z5nyv5k) provides an overview of the field's progress over the past fifteen years and analyzes the challenges that have prevented achieving a ZT value of 1. In the article, we propose a novel model based on polaron transport, which reconciles existing experimental results and outlines potential pathways to reach the critical $ZT=1$ threshold. We are currently developing devices based on single-crystals of MT-Pyrene. This material, being the first to consistently achieve charge carrier mobilities exceeding $30 \text{ cm}^2/\text{Vs}$, holds significant potential for surpassing existing thermoelectric performance limits. This is attributed to its exceptionally low dynamic disorder (phonons). Measurements are scheduled for next year. Additionally, we are planning to organize a workshop on the topic in the UK.

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

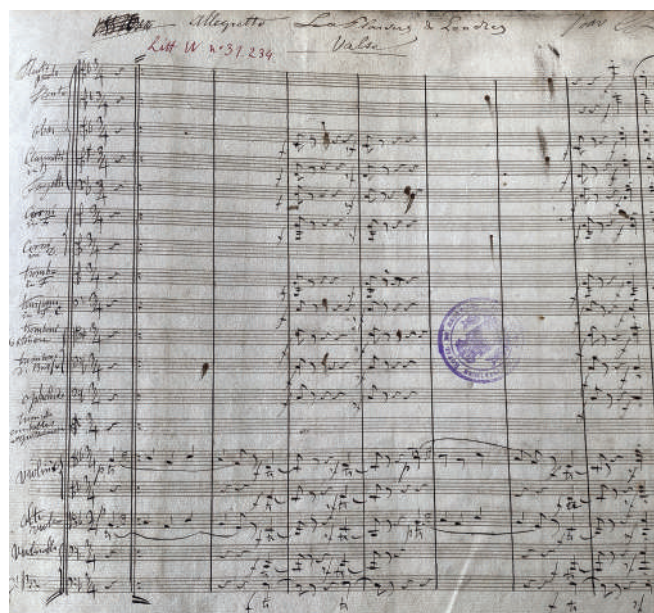
ULB Promoter: Guillaume Schweicher (Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Sciences)

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). In order to assess whether the graphic design of information presentation could indeed impact its perception and processing, we have had to find and prepare appropriate experimental materials for our measurements. We scour music repertoires looking for fragments that are stylistically cohesive, ideally by the same author, the same performative intention and forces and, crucially, of the same executorial difficulty. We have to be sure, furthermore, that our tests measure reading efforts, and not recognition, meaning that the pieces should be unknown to performers: enter the prolific yet forgotten legacy of Charles L. Hanssens (Ghent, 1802 – Brussels, 1871).

Cambridge Promoter: 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)



First page of the manuscript score of the "Valse Les Plaisirs de Londres" (1839), by Charles L. Hanssens.

THE SEISMIC SIGNATURE OF CALDERA REINFLATION AT ASKJA VOLCANO, ICELAND

During summer 2024, we tested DAS technology as a tool for monitoring the ongoing unrest at Askja, and measured ground motion every 6 m along a 10-kilometer fiber optic cable extending southeast from the outer caldera wall. This setup successfully recorded local earthquakes, demonstrating the potential of DAS to complement existing seismic networks. We will also use these recordings to constrain subsurface structure and establish a foundation for future studies (MS thesis). In addition, colleagues from Cambridge and Reykjavík (co-PIs) temporarily expanded their permanent seismometer network by deploying geophones provided by ULB's G-Time Laboratory and the Royal Observatory of Belgium. This allowed more earthquakes to be detected and accurately located, which will permit higher resolution imaging of Askja's volcanic plumbing system.

DAS and geophone data processing is ongoing. A team from ULB will attempt to install a monitoring station in Víti lake in September 2025 to detect degassing.

Cambridge Promoter: Nicolas Rawlinson (Department of Earth Sciences)

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

Wiener-Anspach Alumna Ann Vaessen (centre) in Cambridge, 1999.

Our Alumni



ANN VAESSEN

Love, explore, communicate

A media specialist at the The Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, Ann Vaessen was first pushed to go beyond her limits during her Wiener-Anspach fellowship at the University of Cambridge, where she completed an MPhil in European Literature in 1999-2000.

In 1999 you graduated in Literature at the ULB, where you had also obtained an "agrégation de l'enseignement secondaire supérieur" (teaching training certificate). How did an MPhil in European Literature at the University of Cambridge fit with your professional goals at the time?

To be honest, I think my goal was – and still is – to do something that I love. And I think I also had this urge to see how the world works, this almost unquenchable appetite and curiosity. So this is what led me to continue my studies and go abroad. I feel absolutely blessed because I benefitted from two scholarships. The first one was the Wiener-Anspach, which changed my life, not only in terms of professional development, but also in terms of the quality of my life, my intellectual life, and friendships for life. And then I got another very precious scholarship from the Belgian-American Educational Foundation, which allowed me to go to New York City to study journalism, two years later.

What do you remember most about the year you spent at the University of Cambridge?

If I look at that year from the position where I am now, it was the first time in my life that I found some real peers, people with whom I could really connect, like-minded friends who seemed to be looking for the same things that I was. What I still remember with a lot of nostalgia are the discussions that we had in the evenings, the social life... Of course the studies were amazing, I had access to some of the most fantastic researchers and fellows, but I remember this sense of finding peers, finding a community of learning, of thirst for life and knowledge.

The other aspect that I still cherish is that we had these one-on-one meetings with professors. You could sit down with someone who had done so much research, who was so good at what you were trying to do, and they really pushed you beyond your limits. I think this is something I hadn't found before. My professors were always quite happy with me, I was quite happy with myself... But in Cambridge I had this professor, David Midgley, I will always remember him because he's the first person who told me: "Ann, what you've written here... tell me truth...you've done it quickly, in between two parties, two appointments... You can do much better than that!" It was the first time in my life that I was pushed to get out of my comfort zone. I felt challenged.

What led you to redirect your studies toward EU affairs and journalism, first in Brussels and then in New York?

I remember telling the members of the BAEF jury (and of course now it sounds a bit naïve, but I still feel it, deep down):

"I love writing, I love researching, I love analyzing the world, our society, human behaviour...but I don't want to sit in a library. I really feel that I want to contribute to real life!" I didn't see myself in academia, which sometimes maybe I regret nowadays. I wanted to write about the truth, I wanted to make people think, I wanted to meet people from all walks of life and not stay in the academic bubble.

A common thread in your professional life seems to be an interest in Southeastern Europe and the Caucasus. Where does this interest originate from?

It's life and its coincidences! Honestly, I had absolutely no idea about the Southern Caucasus and the Western Balkans, apart from what I had seen in the nineties, the horrors, the genocide in Srebrenica. I was 14, 15, the time when you start understanding the news, understanding the horrors that are part of life and that human beings are capable of. It is an absolute coincidence that got me to Sarajevo in 2006. I was working for the EU and writing articles for the Europa website and newsletter, and I had to cover the open-doors day (every year, around the 9th of May, the European institutions open their doors). I remember I went with a friend, who was doing the French version of the newsletter, while I was doing the English one. We said: "Ok, let's get this done quickly, I'm going to the Council of the EU, you go to the Commission, and in two hours we're done".

I went to the Council, and there were all these missions of the – at the time – European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), missions in war-torn places, where there was turmoil, instability and conflict. I went to the information desk of the European Union Police Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and they were looking for someone with my profile. They saw me interviewing them, saw that I was doing audiovisual production, institution journalism, and a few months later I was in Sarajevo. I had this feeling that it would be gloomy and terrible, but I am actually still very nostalgic of those days... I think Sarajevo is one of those hidden gems of Europe. Bosnia-Herzegovina is just fabulous, it's one of the places where I felt free and alive, and one of my first experiences abroad as a professional.

Your following experience in the region was Georgia, where you lived from 2013 to 2016.

To me Georgia was a prolongation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. These places that have risen from their ashes, like a phoenix (Georgia is still stuck in a kind of frozen conflict), are very much alive. You feel that there is so much to do, people have exceptional stories to share, sometimes very gloomy stories.



You feel that you are closer to the essence of life, somehow. When I was back in Brussels after Bosnia, I had a three-year contract with the European Commission. I loved the job there, I loved working with the Directorate-General Enlargement. It made a lot of sense, I had been in Bosnia and Croatia, I had been working with these countries, rolling out campaigns to raise awareness about what it means to join the EU and, vice-versa, telling existing Member States about these upcoming candidates. As the contract was expiring, I saw this job offer in Georgia and I thought: "Let's do it!"

While in Georgia you launched your own communication agency, Eureka! Communications. How did that happen?

My job in Georgia was seconded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Belgium, and it also had an expiry date of two years. I knew it from the start and it wasn't a problem, but I fell in love with Georgia, and I also fell in love with my husband there, on the first day I arrived! And I thought: "There is too much to do here, it's such a fabulous place, and I am definitely not ready to leave the country". I saw all these small NGOs that were doing awesome stuff but were struggling to get visibility, I saw this school of journalism that definitely needed a bit of a revamp of their programme. I got approached by many people who were doing photo festivals and other events and who needed help to raise the profile, get fundraising, and I thought, "Wow, here's an opportunity, let's set up my own communications agency!", and I did.

Since 2016, you have been working as a communications officer and media specialist in the field of humanitarian aid and public health – first at the Core Humanitarian Standard Alliance and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and now at The Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. What have been the biggest challenges in your work so far?

When I was in humanitarian affairs, it wasn't very difficult to get media attention because we were dealing with crises every day. I was in the spokesperson's team and journalists would approach us: "You're probably the first ones in Haiti right after the earthquake, what can you tell us?" There the difficulty was to be in crisis mode all the time, which can be difficult to reconcile with family life. But now in public health, especially since I focus on AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, the

big challenge is to cut through the noise. There's so much competition out there, so many colliding crises, it's so difficult to catch journalists' attention on topics like HIV/AIDS. People will say "Oh, is it still an issue?" Yes, it still is. There are still many who get infected with HIV every day, and it still causes a lot of suffering and death. Women, especially adolescent girls and young women, are disproportionately affected.

As to tuberculosis, it is the biggest infectious killer. Who knows about it? So there you really have to be very creative, and I think my humanitarian background helps me: I build on the war in Ukraine, on the latest earthquake, on the latest flood, and I try to reach journalists through these issues, which they have to cover. I tell them: "Have you thought about how TB might thrive in this environment? About people living with HIV and if they're still getting the care they need?", or the impact of climate change.... It is crazy, because when I was working at the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, I couldn't believe journalists were looking for a COVID angle when they were covering the Haiti earthquake. I thought: "Really? Do you think people in Haiti nowadays think about COVID? It's the least of their concerns!". And now it's the opposite, I'm trying to draw media attention to health-related topics by hooking to crises.

How much did the advent of social media affect your profession?

It's a double-edged sword. It definitely helps to connect to colleagues and people who have the same aim in mind, which is, in my current job, to fight AIDS, TB and malaria and put global public health on the agenda of the G7, the G20 and all the big decision-makers. And yet it's also very difficult to tell the difference sometimes between fact and myth, between truth and lies. We live in an era where truth is in crisis, and that of course is a big challenge when you try to deal with epidemics. We have seen how problematic it can be during the Covid-19 pandemic, when myths like the antivax conspiracy theories about vaccines spread.

Is there a message you would like to share with our fellows?

I'd like to refer to the quote which has been attributed to Mark Twain: "I have never let my schooling interfere with my education." This is what I would say to any student who gets the same amazing opportunity that I got. I can't be more thankful! Sometimes I still think about it and pinch myself: "I got the opportunity to go to Cambridge and experience all this, meet all these people..." Learning is of course about academia and the professors whom you meet, the papers that you write... But it's also about all the activities that you do outside work: the rowing club (which I didn't do because I'm not a morning person!), the theatre, the parties, the balls at the end of the year, the many parties... The friends that you'll make for life, and maybe also the paper that you will mess up, and the first time you get really pushed into your limits. The arrival in a town you don't know, a culture you don't know... I remember my first impression in Cambridge, with its Harry Potter décor: I was scared, I thought "I don't fit here!" And then you overcome that first impression, and you start meeting people...

That's what I would like to say to new fellows: take your scholarship seriously in terms of academia, but also really enjoy everything else that's offered.

This interview was made in November 2024.

ALUMNI ACTIVITIES

First edition of the Wiener-Anspach Alumni Talks



On **Tuesday, 27 February 2024**, the FWA launched a new initiative to honour its former fellows, the Wiener-Anspach Alumni Talks. In this first edition, titled “Le climat qui cache la biodiversité”, Anne Teller and Marius Gilbert provided a fascinating exchange of views on forty years of public policy in the environmental field, focusing on the prioritisation of climate change and its consequences. The video recording is available at fwa.ulb.be/nos-videos/

Until February 2025, **Anne Teller** worked as a senior expert in the Natural Capital and Ecosystem Health Unit of the Directorate-General Environment of the European Commission (she is now enjoying retirement). She has a degree in Agricultural Engineering from the ULB and an MA in Forestry and its Relation to Land Management from the University Oxford. Her main area of interest is improving the knowledge and evidence base for EU biodiversity policy. She coordinated the first EU wide ecosystem assessment (2020), and took part in the development of a European knowledge

governance aimed at structuring and formalising the dialogue between science and policy. She was the EU’s lead negotiator on scientific and technical matters at the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity.

Marius Gilbert graduated in Agricultural Sciences at the ULB in 1995. Following a two-year doctoral fellowship at the University of Oxford, in 2001 he obtained a PhD from the ULB on the spatial epidemiology of a forest insect pest. In 2006, he was awarded a permanent academic position with the Belgian FNRS and in 2016, he founded the Spatial Epidemiology Lab (SpELL) at the ULB. During the COVID pandemic, he joined the Expert Group on the Exit Strategy (GEES) to advise the government on the lockdown exit strategy. His research focuses on the spatial epidemiology of animal diseases and invasive species. An overarching theme is the attempt to better understand how changes in agriculture and ecosystems have affected the conditions of emergence, spread and persistence of pathogens, including those with pandemic potential.



From left: Corentin Caudron (Wiener-Anspach Alumni Network); the Somville Room at the ULB; Anne Teller and Marius Gilbert.

Visit to the Belgian Constitutional Court



On **Friday, 11 October 2024**, the Wiener-Anspach Alumni Network had the opportunity to visit the Belgian Constitutional Court as part of a guided tour led by three distinguished hosts, including two former Fellows of the Foundation. The participants were welcomed by Jean Spreutels, Honorary President of the Court, Emmanuelle Bribosia, one of its six French-speaking judges, and the French-speaking référendaire Mathilde Rousseau. They presented the history and functions of the institution while guiding the group through three of its key rooms: the courtroom, the deliberation room, and the reception room.

In 1975-1976, **Jean Spreutels** was one of the first FWA Fellows to obtain a Diploma in Legal Studies at the University of Cambridge. An Honorary Professor of Law at the ULB, he is also a Trustee of our Foundation. **Mathilde Rousseau** completed an LLM in Law at the University of Cambridge in 2010-2011 and has been working at the Court since 2023. In 1994, **Emmanuelle Bribosia** was the first laureate of the Ganshof van der Meersch Prize, awarded by the FWA to a ULB student with an exemplary academic record who has completed a Master's degree in Law, specializing in public and international law.

Clockwise from top left: Jean Spreutels; the courtroom; Emmanuelle Bribosia; drinks after the visit; Mathilde Rousseau; the deliberation room (all pictures by Francesca Spinelli).



NEWS FROM OUR ALUMNI

Permanent academic appointments in 2024



Marie Fierens (PhD in Information and Communication, ULB, and 2014-2015 Postdoctoral Fellow in Oxford) has been appointed FNRS Research Associate at the ULB, where she is a member of the ReSIC (Research Center in Information and Communication). She is currently working on a research project titled "Dynamics and constraints of international media aid in sub-Saharan Africa".

Kamila Kociąłkowska (PhD in History of Art, University of Cambridge, and 2021-2022 Postdoctoral Fellow at the ULB) has been appointed Assistant Professor of Modern European Art at the University of Warwick. Specializing in modernism in Eastern Europe, she explores how cultures of censorship and surveillance impacted artistic production, with a particular interest in the Soviet Empire and its peripheral regions.

Salvatore Iavarone (PhD in Engineering Science, ULB, and 2019-2020 Postdoctoral Fellow in Cambridge) has been appointed Junior Professor at CentraleSupélec in Paris. His current research focuses on data-driven, physics-based, reduced-order modeling of combustion in sustainable and decarbonized technologies.

Michael G. Jabbour (PhD in Engineering Sciences and Technology, ULB, and 2018-2020 Postdoctoral Fellow in Cambridge) has been appointed Associate Professor in Quantum Communication at Télécom SudParis, Institut Polytechnique de Paris. His current research focuses on mathematical aspects of quantum information theory, as well as quantum optics.

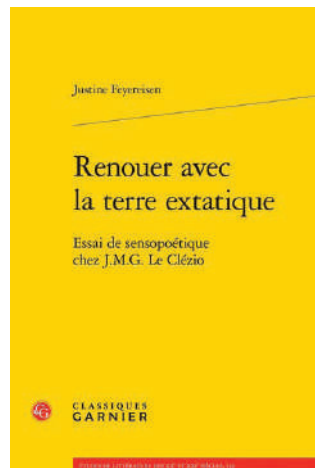
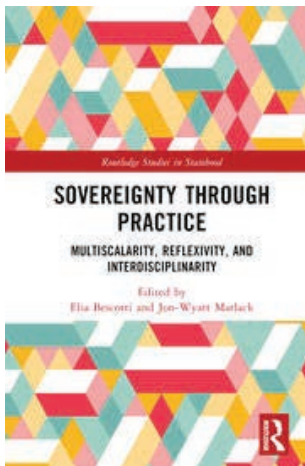
FNRS postdoctoral mandates in 2024



Hannah De Corte (PhD in Art and Arts Sciences, ULB, and 2021-2022 Postdoctoral Fellow in Oxford) has been appointed FNRS Postdoctoral Researcher at the Université de Namur. Her research project is titled "The painting in front of itself. A subaltern history of modernisms through the archaeology of 'projective' spaces in painting".

Amdemichael Zafu Tadesse (PhD in Science, ULB, and currently carrying out a second year of research in Oxford as a Wiener-Anspach Fellow) has been appointed FNRS Postdoctoral Researcher at the ULB. His research project is titled "Comprehensive investigation of magmatic processes in off-rift volcanism: A case study of the Debre Zeyit volcanic field in Ethiopia".

Publications

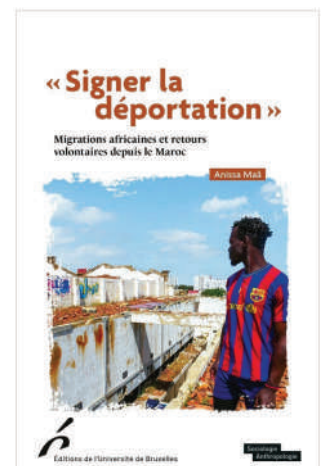


Elia Bescotti (PhD in Political Science, ULB) has edited, together with Jon-Wyatt Matlack, the book *Sovereignty through Practice. Multiscalarity, Reflexivity, and Interdisciplinarity* (Routledge, 2024), exploring how actors practise sovereignty as a force in a multiscalar context. A Wiener-Anspach Doctoral Fellow at the University of Oxford in 2022-2023, Dr Bescotti is currently working at Assicurazioni Generali in Brescia, Italy.

Justine Feyereisen (PhD in Letters, Translation and Communication, ULB, and in French and Francophone Literature, University of Grenoble) is the author of *Renouer avec la terre extatique. Essai de sensopoétique chez J.M.G. Le Clézio* (Classiques Garnier, 2024), an essay that aims to establish a new critical field at the nexus of text linguistics and philosophy, reviving the incantatory power of literature through a poetics of the senses – a sensopoetics – in the intermedial work of J.M.G. Le Clézio. A Wiener-Anspach Postdoctoral Fellow in Oxford from 2019 until 2021, Dr Feyereisen is currently LECTRICE en Langues et Lettres françaises et romanes at the ULB.

Sophie Heine (PhD in Political Science, ULB) published the essay *Défense européenne pour les citoyens* (Éditions Couleur Livre, 2024), in which she analyzes European policies in the field of security and defense, and presents alternative proposals to foster critical and citizen-oriented reflection on these issues. A Wiener-Anspach Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Oxford in 2008-2009, Dr Heine is a writer and consultant on EU affairs and gender issues.

Anissa Maâ (PhD in Political and Social Sciences, ULB) published *Signer la déportation. Migrations africaines et retours volontaires depuis le Maroc* (Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 2024). Based on her doctoral dissertation, the book analyzes voluntary return programmes run by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) through the lens of sociology and anthropology. A Wiener-Anspach Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Oxford in 2022-2023, Dr Maâ is F.R.S.-FNRS Research Fellow at the ULB.



Nathalie Stalmans (PhD in History, ULB), a novelist whose work is strongly influenced by her studies in history, published her eighth book, *Terre d'asile*, a short story collection offering a mosaic portrait of Belgium. The book is part of the series "Belgiques", launched by the publisher Ker. In 1993-1994, Nathalie Stalmans was granted a Wiener-Anspach Fellowship to complete an MPhil in Celtic Studies at the University of Oxford.

Ârash Aminian Tabrizi (PhD candidate in Comparative Literature at New York University) published under the title *Sexpositions* (les presses du reel, 2024, illustrations by visual artist Léa Falguère) his conversations with late French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy (1940-2021), relating to questions of gender, sexual difference and sexualities. Ârash Aminian Tabrizi was granted a Wiener-Anspach fellowship in 2013 to complete an MSt in Modern Languages at the University of Oxford.

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 2024 prize was awarded to **Rebecca Mirzabekiantz**. Rebecca obtained her bachelor's degree in Law from the ULB before completing a dual master's degree in Public and International Law and Public Economic Law at the ULB and the Université Grenoble Alpes in 2024. That same year, she was admitted to the Brussels Bar and joined the law firm deprevetnet, where she specializes in Public and European law.

Short stays and other activities

► **February-June 2024.** **Glenn Magerman**, Associate Professor of Economics (tenured) at ECARES, Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management (ULB), was a Visiting Fellow at the Oxford Martin School. The FWA supported his visit by funding part of his stay. The goal of the visit was to advance the research agenda on gathering and using supply chain data to better understand economic resilience, supply chain security, the impact of climate disasters, and the impact of the net-zero transition. During his stay, Prof. Magerman participated in numerous academic activities. He presented his broad research agenda and the importance of firm-to-firm network data during a public lecture at the Oxford Martin School. He was welcomed by Doyné Farmer, Professor of Mathematics and Director of the Complexity Economics programme.



► **18 September 2024.** On the occasion of the opening of the academic year, **Véronique Mottier** (Fellow and Director of Studies in Social and Political Sciences at Jesus College, Cambridge and Professor of Sociology at the University of Lausanne) gave a lecture at the Institut de Sociologie (ULB) titled "De la reconnaissance à la justice réparatrice : l'expérience de l'investigation des héritages de l'esclavage et de la colonisation à Jesus College, Cambridge (2019-2023)". She was welcomed at the ULB by Wiener-Anspach Alumnus David Paternotte, Maité Maskens and Marie Goransson (Institut de Sociologie).

► **25-27 November 2024.** The ULB hosted the international conference "Alala Yellali. Women, musical genre and gender identities in chaabi music, from Morocco to the diasporas". The FWA supported this event by funding the participation of Dr Vanessa Paloma Elbaz (Research Associate at the University of Cambridge and a Marie Curie Skłodowska Fellow at INALCO, Paris). Dr Elbaz gave a keynote titled "Judeo-Arabic Sha'bi divas: Musical gendered discourses on modernity and tradition". She was welcomed at the ULB by Hélène Secheyne (FNRS Postdoctoral Researcher and Professor in Ethnomusicology at the Conservatoire Royal de Bruxelles).



