

# History Happenings

*A newsletter published by the Department of History  
The University of Memphis*

**Vol. 14, no. 2**

**September 2018**



Pictured clockwise: photograph by Dr. Andrei Znamenski; women's rights activists; panel of authors featured in "An Unseen Light" at the National Civil Rights museum; town square, Stary Sacz, photograph by Dr. Dan Unowsky, 2010; group photo from NEH's Women's Suffrage in the Americas, Carthage College, Winconsin, 2018; "State of Emergency in Galicia." Kikeriki, July 10, 1989; Dr. Guiomar Duenas-Vargas at the NEH Summer Institute; protest signs in Latin America; woodern tavern in Orawka, image from The Plunder.

**Editor:** Guiomar Duenas-Vargas



**Layout Assistant:** A.L. Savage

# Letter from the Chair

By Dr. Aram Goudsouzian

I am often struck by the diversity of tasks necessary to keep an academic department running smoothly. These jobs include the big-picture stuff, like hiring new faculty or guiding graduate students through the research and writing of dissertations. We are always trying, moreover, to enhance our high standards of teaching; we visit classrooms, sift through data, and facilitate conversations about how we teach.

But our responsibilities do not end there. We are there for that student who needs that extra bit of help. We fix up dilapidated rooms. We figure out complicated course schedules. We remind Physical Plant about that broken toilet.

I think it is possible to spend too much time down by the “trees,” where you can lose sight of the “forest.” The forest, in the case of our department, is the exceptional quality of the historical research performed by our faculty. The environment in higher education is changing, for sure, but it is crucially important to remember that the university exists to further human knowledge. Our scholars do that at a world-class level.

Take, for one example, the work of the editor of this newsletter: Guiomar Duenas-Vargas. Her most recent book, *On Love and Other Passions: Elites, Family and Politics in Bogotá, 1778-1870*, sheds new light on conceptions of love, marriage, and state formation in Colombia, and it has received rave reviews. She is well underway with her next project, an examination of how ideals of manhood and masculinity shaped the intervention, course, and conduct of military operations during Colombia’s War of a Thousand Days, from 1899-1902.

Or consider the newly christened Catherine and Charles Freeburg Professor of History, Daniel Unowsky. He just published a terrific new book, *The Plunder*, that examines the anti-Jewish riots in Western Galicia in 1898, and he is diving right into his new book about the Zywiec brewery in southwestern Poland, which offers an intriguing lens into the tumultuous history of central Europe, serving at various points as a vehicle of Polish modernity, an institution to promote Nazi hegemony, and an instrument of Communist propaganda.

You want more? Oh, we have more. Catherine Phipps, author of *Empires on the Waterfront: Japan's Ports and Power, 1858-1899*, has a new project that focuses on the city of Osaka, an economic and intellectual metropole, particularly during Japan’s rise on



the world stage in the first half of the twentieth century – she is revealing how empire shaped Osaka, and how Osaka shaped empire. The exceptionally prolific Andrei Znamenski – recent winner of the Distinguished Research Award from the College of Arts and Sciences – spent his recent research leave working on his sixth book, *Socialism: A History of a Secular Creed*, an ambitious attempt to explore the fate of the sacred in the age of modernity.

It keeps going. We will soon have the new book from Andy Daily, *After Négritude: The Cultural Politics of Place in Postcolonial France and the Caribbean*. Dennis Laumann's *Remembering the Germans in Ghana* was just published. Peter Brand is writing a biography of the great Egyptian pharaoh, Ramesses II, while Suzanne Onstine is making major headway on an important archaeological project, the University of Memphis Mission to Theban Tomb 16.

Among our American historians, Susan O'Donovan is finishing a major book about slaves, mobility, and the secession crisis. Scott Marler is researching the history of the

upper class in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Sarah Potter is writing about adultery and its role in modern American political history. Steve Stein publishes widely in military and diplomatic history across large spans of time. The venerable Charles Crawford is compiling oral histories of the Vietnam War era, while Jim Fickle maintains an active research agenda on the southern forest industry. Meanwhile, our assistant professors and instructors are hard at work on their first books, which are growing out of their dissertations.

None of this research is esoteric. It *matters*. Any good work of history helps shift our frame on the past. We can render it more complex, more authentic, more humane. And this work filters into classrooms, into textbooks, into the larger ways that we all understand the past and the present. This research is at the heart of our mission as an academic department, and it is useful to remind ourselves about that. Even if that toilet still needs to be fixed....



# A Community History: *An Unseen Light*

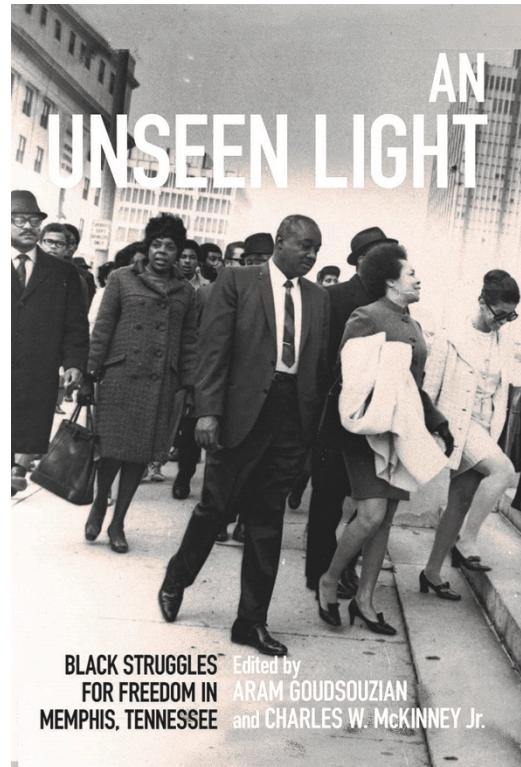
By Dr. Aram Goudsouzian

About seven years ago, I was having dinner with a friend, Charles McKinney, who teaches history at Rhodes College. We had both arrived in Memphis during the 2004-2005 academic year, and in the intervening years, we had both grown fascinated with the history of the city – particularly its African American history. Memphis boasted one of the largest black populations and some of the most vibrant cultural institutions in the region, and it possesses a particularly interesting movement for black freedom. Yet as Charles often says, it remains one of the most under-researched cities in the nation.

During that dinner, we started kicking around the idea of co-editing an essay collection about the history of Memphis. We sat on it for years, but with the looming date of April 4, 2018 – the fiftieth anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King – we knew that we wanted our book to be part of the city's historical and political conversation. Our book was published by the University of Kentucky Press this past spring, in its series "Civil Rights and the Struggle for Black Equality in the Twentieth Century." It is called *An Unseen Light: Black Struggles for Freedom in Memphis, Tennessee*.

In our minds, what made the book special was not only compiling the work of some extraordinary scholars, but also working with people who have made our time in Memphis so rewarding and worthwhile. We did solicit essays from some of the great historians who had published books on Memphis, including Laurie Green, Elizabeth Gitter, and Michael Honey. But we also asked for essays from our colleagues and our former students. *An Unseen Light*, then, is the direct product of our own intellectual community.

A number of the authors have connections to our department. I have worked with my colleague Beverly Bond, for instance, on countless committees and other endeavors. Along with our former department chair Janann Sherman, she co-authored *Memphis in Black and White*, the best overall history of the city. For *An Unseen Light*, she wrote a wonderful essay about L.O. Taylor, a leading Baptist minister in the 1930s. Taylor's sermons, essays, and poems served as guides for the internal spiritual lives of his congregants. Moreover, his photographs, films, and audio recordings chronicled the external lives and activities of his neighbors, his congregations, and his community.



Dr. Bond examines Taylor's personal life, community activities, and creative works as frameworks for "envisioning" segregated Memphis.



Dr. Elton Weaver, Director of the Center for African and African American Studies, LeMoyne-Owen College

When I came to Memphis, Dr. Bond was serving as the mentor for a PhD candidate named Elton Weaver. I was proud to serve on the committee for Elton, whose dissertation examined the spiritual and political life of Charles H. Mason, founder of the Church of God in Christ (COGIC). Dr. Weaver is one of our many success stories: he is now the Director of the Center for African and African American Studies at LeMoyne-Owen College. In his essay for our book, he highlighted the 1936 fire at COGIC's National Tabernacle Building. He describes how, despite public scorn, the church remained a resilient presence in the community life of black Memphis, challenging the white political establishment while freeing its congregants' souls.

Soon after I came to Memphis, we had a terrific cohort of PhD students interested in African American history, including three who pursued Memphis topics: James Conway, Shirletta Kinchen, and Darius Young. These are young historians who make us all proud. Dr. Conway, who is now an Associate Professor at Tarrant County Community College in Dallas-Fort Worth, contributed an essay that condenses the heart of his dissertation, about the "Black Monday" protests of 1969. The local NAACP incorporated aspects of Black Power while allying with a host of community groups, both winning concrete gains while also inspiring a backlash. As he writes, "The Black Monday protest demonstrated that black Memphians had more control over their community than at any other time in the city's history."

Shirletta Kinchen is now an Associate Professor in the Department of Pan-African Studies at the University of Louisville. She is also the author of the terrific book *Black Power in the Bluff City: African American Youth and Student Activism in Memphis, 1965-1975*. In her essay for *An Unseen Light*, Dr. Kinchen follows another strand in the story of Black Power activism: in 1970, Maybelline Forbes was the university's first black homecoming queen. This achievement stemmed from the activism of the Black Student Association, and it infused a black aesthetic onto the campus.



Dr. Darius Young, Associate Professor of History, Florida A&M University

Darius Young, an Associate Professor of History at Florida A&M University, did his dissertation on the black political power broker Robert Church Jr., which will soon be a book published by the University of Florida Press. For our collection, he wrote an essay about the 1917 lynching of an innocent black woodcutter named Ell Persons. As Dr. Young writes, "It is the black community's reaction to the Ell Persons lynching that makes this story important. Black Memphians refused to enlist in the military,



Dr. Shirletta Kinchen, Associate Professor, Department of Pan-African Studies, University of Louisville

mobilized the vote, and used the national platforms of civil rights organizations to voice their opposition to lynching and white intimidation. Their reactions seemingly proved Richard Wright's claim that the threat of lynching held more power over the black community when it existed only in their thoughts and imaginations. Now that it had become a reality, and black people had witnessed the worst of white vigilantism firsthand, they became more willing to mobilize and speak out against racial violence and white supremacy."

Finally, Steven Knowlton completed his M.A. in History at the University of Memphis while a faculty member in the University Libraries. He has since moved to a new position as Librarian for History and African American Studies at Princeton University Library. His contribution to *An Unseen Light* grew out of his MA thesis. Knowlton details the fight to desegregate Memphis libraries, which encompassed not only legal challenges but also a 1960 sit-in campaign that inspired direct action protests throughout the city. Although there were no fire hoses or police dogs at Cossitt Library, the tale highlights key themes of the civil rights struggle: a tradition of black activism, various forms of segregationist resistance, eventual desegregation, and continued patterns of racial inequality.

Now that I am firmly ensconced in middle age, I can reflect back on the writing of books, and I associate them with different periods in my life. But editing *An Unseen Light* was a distinct kind of experience: it reinforced a new tradition that we have been building over the past fifteen years, turning the Department of History into an important center of research on our city and its turbulent, fascinating African American history. It is my privilege to do this with such wonderful and talented people.

## Anti-Semitism in Habsburg Galicia

An interview with Dr. Daniel Unowsky



Dr. Daniel Unowsky, Catherine and Charles Freeburg Professor of History,  
University of Memphis

**Guionmar Duenas-Vargas:** Your recent book, *The Plunder: The 1898 Anti-Jewish*

*Riots in Habsburg Galicia*, examines a series of anti-Semitic riots in more than 400 communities in Northeastern Galicia. Your description of the demographic, economic and cultural differences between Catholics and Jewish in the region was very useful to grasp the sources of hostility of rural Catholics against the predominantly urban Jewish population, but also to learn the mutual benefit and friendship developed among them before anti-Jewish propaganda, local conditions and mass politics turned them in enemies. Would you want to tell us what motivated you to focus precisely in remote rural Galicia?

**Daniel Unowsky:** Most scholars who work on anti-Jewish violence are trained as Jewish historians or specifically as historians of

antisemitism. I came to this topic, however, as a Habsburg historian. My first books and publications related to the efforts of the very complicated Habsburg state--often referred to as Austria-Hungary from 1867-1918 and including part of all of today's Austria, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, Poland, Ukraine, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, Italy—to foment an overarching dynastic and state loyalty. The Habsburgs were very aware of the danger of nationalist separatism in the decades around 1900 and used dynastic celebrations, among other things, to mobilize patriotic support. While I was working on this topic, I came across references to the violence in Galicia. In 1898, even as millions of people participated in imperial festivities marking Emperor Franz Joseph's 50<sup>th</sup> year on the throne, Galicia's newspapers focused on the anti-Jewish riots as well as the months of trials of those involved that followed.



This came as a surprise. I had never read anything about the 1898 riots. Anti-Jewish violence of such a large-scale in this period is usually something we associate with the Russian Empire—the pogroms of 1881-2 and 1903-1905. It is a cliché rooted in reality to note that Jews were among the most loyal of all Habsburg subjects. Yes, there was antisemitism in Austria-Hungary. Blood libel accusations in Habsburg Bohemia and Hungary led to sensationalize trials in the 1880s and 1890s. The most successful

antisemitic politician before Adolf Hitler was Karl Lueger, mayor of Vienna from 1897-1910. But it is also true that Emperor Franz Joseph refused three times to confirm Lueger's election, the constitution guaranteed equality of Jews before the law, and many Jews in Vienna, Budapest, and elsewhere had succeeded in forging comfortable and prosperous lives in this multi-ethnic, multi-religious dynastic polity.

After my first book on imperial celebrations and Habsburg patriotism was published, for years, whenever I had the opportunity, I researched the 1898 Galician events in libraries and archives in Poland, Ukraine, and Austria. For me, as a Habsburg historian, I was most interested in understanding how such a wave of attacks could take place in this constitutional state and how the arms of state power (gendarmes, police, bureaucrats, military, courts) reacted. Keep in mind, many thousands of people were arrested, investigations opened against more than 5000, over 3000 tried, over 2300 sentenced to prison terms varying from a few days to three years. Many Jews were injured and their businesses plundered or destroyed. However, no Jews were killed. The only fatalities were approximately 20 rioters killed by the police and military in efforts to restore order.

**Guiomar Duenas-Vargas:** What triggered the violence against the Jewish population in 1898, as you discuss it in your book, were the anti-Semitic press, and the propaganda against the Jewish population through the pulpit, sermons and pamphlets in Catholic spheres. How did the Jewish's leaders confront this avalanche of negative propaganda?

**Daniel Unowsky:** Jews and Jewish leaders reacted in many different ways before, during, and after the violence. Jewish journalists, political figures, and

organizations dedicated to defense against antisemitism were very active in denouncing the violence, pushing for stronger government response, and so on. Jewish representatives to the Galician regional legislature as well as those who sat in the Vienna parliament brought the anti-Jewish publications and agitation to the attention of journalists and government officials. After attacks began, local Jewish communities telegraphed the authorities for protection. Individual Jews who lived in small Jewish settlements between villages or in small towns fled to larger towns. Jewish publicans and shopkeepers often gave threatening customers what they demanded, then escaped and appealed for police assistance. Some stood their ground and shamed those plundering their property—people they often knew. This is one of the central features I describe about the violence. Very often those attackers knew those they attacked, lived in the same towns, interacted with them regularly.

For those familiar with recent work on the Holocaust, this may sound familiar. Since around 2000, there have been a number of publications focused on the actions of Poles and others who attacked and in many cases killed Jews with more or less encouragement by the German occupiers. Jan Gross's book, *Neighbors*, a study of the murder of Jews in Jedwabne in 1941 by Polish villagers of the same town is the most well known of these books. I do not want to claim a direct line from the 1898 events I explore in my book to the World War II era. At the same time, it is true that often those beating and robbing Jews in 1898 were in fact neighbors of those they assaulted.

**Guiomar Duenas-Vargas:** As you profusely analyze in the book, politics provoked anti-Semitic sentiments that prompted the riot. Politicians penetrated the peasant

communities for the first time, and new political parties gained new votes from the previously disenfranchised, blaming the Jews for all that have been wrong among the rural Catholic peoples. Nevertheless, the political agenda of some politicians was a modern and a radical one. Would you want to expand in this last point?

**Daniel Unowsky:** No political movements or politicians called for anti-Jewish violence in 1898; however, those closest to the Catholic peasantry who sought their votes in the newly expanded electoral system, made clear their sympathy for the peasants. The Galician economy was in crisis. Very little industry existed; overpopulation leading to the parcellation of land meant many working their small patches of land could not make ends meet. In the 1890s, a series of poor harvests exacerbated the problems. Rural bankruptcies were rampant, as was alcoholism and despair. These peasant parties developed programs of self-help, credit cooperatives. They called on peasants to stop drinking, work harder, and join collective political and economic efforts to better themselves. They also pointed to the Jews as a very visible Other—a people living side by side with the peasants but distinguished in dress, religion, culture, language, and occupation profile—to blame for the sorry state of rural society.

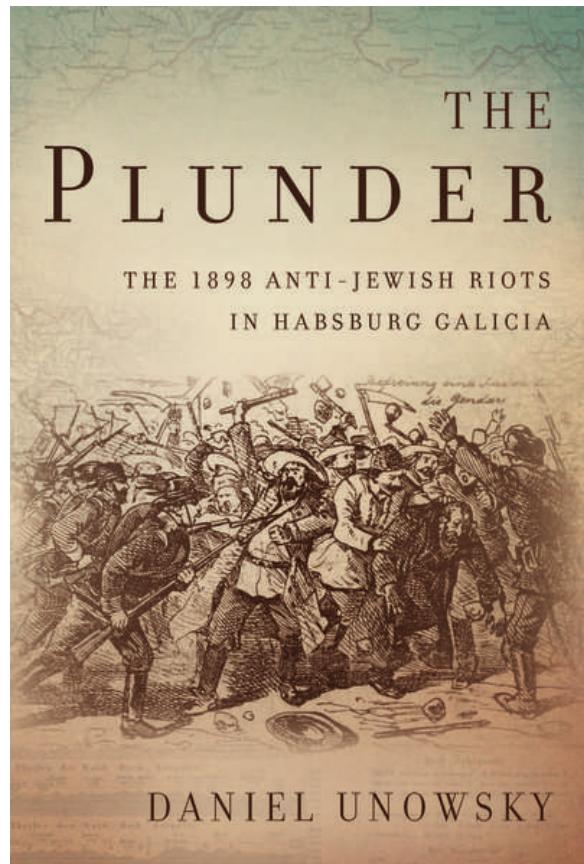
**Guiomar Duenas-Vargas:** In the detailed description of the plundering of rural Galicia three groups appear to be the main actors: promoters, looters and the ‘curious crowds’ or ‘supportive audience.’ Would want to tell us about their motivations?

**Daniel Unowsky:** I try to distinguish between the programs of systematic action to be directed toward self-help and against the Jews promoted by the new parties and the actions taken by those directly involved in the

violence. There were a wide variety of motivations at play. Many of those who tried to gather others to join in attacks, or who led break-ins and trashed property, were among the minority of literate rural dwellers and had connections to the new political parties and Catholic antisemitic movements. Others took advantage of the situation to exact revenge on someone perceived as winning while they were losing in the crisis of rural society. Others viewed the events as an opportunity for plunder, etc. Very often, people heard rumors, wanted to see if violence would in fact materialize and so gathered in the market square or in front of a Jewish-owned business. The members of this curious crowd then cheered on the promoters of violence and looters and, in many cases, joined in.

The repetition, dissemination, and embellishment of rumors that spread swiftly from town to village path and beyond united the rioters. Stories circulated that the emperor or the pope were permitting the peasants to rob and beat Jews for a few days, a week, a month. Among the most colorful of these: that Franz Joseph's son was alive (he had killed himself in 1889) and living in Brazil or Canada and called on his peasants to strike the Jews who somehow kept him from his throne. Another: that the barber who tended to the emperor's famous mutton chops had been bribed by Jews to slit his throat, but broke down and admitted the plot. Franz Joseph then permitted the attacks on the Jews. Rural papers reported on these and other stories. People read this in the rural press, or heard others read them. They then cited the newspapers themselves as confirmation that such imperial permission had in fact been given. Did people believe the rumors or just use them as a cover for action known to be illegal? Some certainly used them, though there is clear evidence as I show in my book that many people did in fact believe such rumors. One might at first think

these rumors a reflection of a backward society—until we consider how many people believe equally or even more outlandish rumors propagated on the internet...



*Dr. Daniel Unowsky's most recent book, published by Stanford University Press, 2018*

**Guimara Duenas-Vargas:** In explaining the rioters' motivations you distinguish between the anti-Semitic and the Asemitic ones. Would you tell us the difference?

**Daniel Unowsky:** This issue is not so much about the rioters themselves as about the anti-Jewish agitation in the countryside before and during the violence. Beginning in the early 1890s, prompted by papal decrees calling for a Catholic social program to counter godless-socialism and liberalism, Catholic intellectuals, priests, and others in Cracow and elsewhere in Galicia founded new Catholic associations and newspapers.

Many of these new publications and organizations were openly anti-Jewish. Some Catholic priests denounced antisemitism as anti-Catholic. They argued that racism would deny the cleansing power of baptism for converts. In reaction, some priests propagated what they called “asemitism”, defined as a desire for a society and economy in which there would be no place for Jews. Such “asemites” denied that their opposition to Jews had anything to do with “race.”

One of the most important publications in relation to the 1898 riots was *Jewish Secrets*, published by a Catholic priest close to the church hierarchy in Cracow. The author mixed traditional anti-Jewish charges like ritual murder (the calumny that Jews use the blood of children for ritual purposes) or supposed Talmudic permission for Jews to kill non-Jews with new charges related to alleged Jewish domination of Catholic peasants. The author denounced racist

antisemitism and claimed his pamphlet was “asemitic.” Clearly “asemitism” was just another form of antisemitism.

**Guiomar Duenas-Vargas:** I found fascinating your interpretation of the events. You don’t consider the plunder as the typical manifestation of ‘Judeophobia’ by a premodern society, which could be the case of rural Galicia in 1898, but neither you define the violence as an example of a secular anti-Semite movement. Would you please elaborate further on this?

**Daniel Unowsky:** The violence included elements we might think of as belonging to a pre-modern world: illiteracy, rumors, Ritual Murder accusations, and so on. However, the dynamic of the violence, its movement from market squares to villages, the role of the press and of politicians, and so on marks the 1898 events as all too modern.

## Madonnas and Strong Men: Female Suffrage in the Americas

By Dr. Guiomar Duenas-Vargas

*Women’s Suffrage in the Americas* was the leitmotif of a recent NEH Summer Institute at Carthage College in Wisconsin, organized by the Latin American Historians, Stephanie Mitchell from Carthage College and Patti Hams, from Brandon University in Canada. Seventeenth scholars from countries all over the Western Hemisphere came together to discuss the historical conditions that led women to achieve the right to vote. The purpose was to address the question comprehensively with the idea of constructing a hemispherical narrative that organizes national cases in categories. We agreed upon four models proposed by Stephanie and Patti: 1. The Revolutionary Model, in which a conservative dictatorship was overthrown by a popular revolution in which women, played prominent



Dr. Guiomar Duenas-Vargas,  
Professor of History,  
University of Memphis

roles, leading to the extension of suffrage after the triumph of the revolutionary movement. 2. The Populist Model, in which popular leaders using modern infrastructures, media and propaganda lured urban dwellers to their camps with the intention of enlarging their political base with women. 3. The Delayed Liberal Model, in which women's suffrage was ideologically supported by liberals, and then blocked or delayed by the same liberals, and 4. The Conservative Strategic Advantage model, in which traditional leaders, who may have been responsible for persecuting progressive feminists, enact women's suffrage when they found it to be politically beneficial. The common ground was the value granted to maternity by both the suffragist and conservative politicians.

Following the proposed methodology, I placed Colombia within the Populist Model but with some hesitation. In fact, Colombia did not have a truly populist period in the manner Brazil and Argentina, the classical examples of Latin American Populist regimes, did. The process toward populism in Colombia was aborted with the assassination of Jorge Eliecer Gaitán, a populist leader adored by multitudes. Gaitán's murder led to a period of horrific political violence from 1948-1964. Unable to pacify the country, the traditional parties consented to a "peaceful coup d'état" by General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla (1953-57) but toppled him when they—the Conservatives and Liberals—found the "right" formula to govern the country themselves, by taking turns (The system was called the National Front) without the disturbing presence of generals, or caudillos. In fact, Colombia, despite its bloody history, has kept the military outside the realm of politics, except for that brief period. But, it was under the dictatorship of Rojas Pinilla that women gained the right to vote, and Esmeralda Arboleda and Josefina Valencia, two important advocates for women rights, became members of the ANC (National Constitutional Assembly). Esmeralda, a lawyer and a public persona, who had been active in the defense of children and women for many years, was chosen by the president to write and submit to the senate the law providing for women citizenship.



*Esmeralda Arboleda, lawyer and women's rights advocate*

The plenary of the Senate approved it on August 1954. But the alliance between women and the general soon dissipated. His increasing dictatorial actions soon led women to take the streets against him. Esmeralda openly opposed his closing of the major newspapers; in response the general removed her from the ANC. Their honeymoon lasted a couple of years. In Argentina and Brazil, Populism was a lasting and more comprehensive male strategy to hold power.

The political strategy of allowing women access to the polling booth was used earlier and more successfully by populists leaders such as Getulio Vargas in Brazil and Juan Domingo Perón in Argentina. Getulio Vargas governed and controlled the political life of Brazil during the period 1930-1945. He came to power to dethrone the “Old Republic,” to realign the political forces and to produce a new civil code. Brazilian women, who had been contemptuously dismissed by the politicians who had run the country, founded an opportunity to position themselves in the New Republic. Bertha Lutz, the most visible women’s cause advocate in Brazil, who had found in 1920 the first women’s rights organization, kept in close dialogue with Vargas and convinced the framers of the new civil code of 1932 to enfranchise women.



Populism in Argentina has been associated with General Juan Domingo Perón who governed the country three times and who, even after his death in 1974, continued influencing presidential elections in Argentina. His fight for social justice, still unfulfilled, has kept him alive in the minds of the popular classes. But Eva Duarte, his wife, was the real architect of his policies in favor of the Argentinian poor. “Evita,” as she was called, was also a political power in her own right. A former radio actress from a rural village, after meeting the general and marrying him, not only shared his dreams of improving the workers’ living conditions, but made them come true by running the Labor and Health Ministries and setting up her own foundation to help the destitute. Her charisma became a legend. Eva Perón is also often associated with having achieved women’s suffrage in Argentina. Nonetheless, her contribution came primarily in the form of stimulating effective political mobilization and voting registration among poor women. The fight for female rights in Argentine came early and coincided with the process of industrialization and urbanization but particularly with the work of feminist movements, events that began in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Populist dictators contributed to the conversion of women’s demands into law because it was politically profitable, but the real battle to conquer political rights was fought by women.



*Bertha Lutz Brazilian Suffragette, representing Brazil in an International Conference, 1945*



*Pictured left: Eva Perón: Women can vote now. 1947  
Pictured above: Eva Perón addressing worker women in Buenos Aires, 1950.*



Argentina. Women pasting suffrage posters, 1947.

In Colombia, after 50 years of a retrograde conservative regime in which the education of women was confined to convents, the authority of the father reigned supreme, and the drastic separation of the domestic and public spheres had deprived women of their own voices, a change took place in 1930 with a generation of liberals. The impending Liberal republic provided the Colombian feminists the right environment to carry out their projects. Ofelia Uribe de Acosta, Georgina Fletcher and Clotilde García de Ucross begin working on concrete projects to give women tools to advance: public secondary and higher education for women and the reformation of the civil Code to guarantee married women the administration of their own economic resources. They succeed in both demands. Congress legislated in favor of women's higher education and decreed the economic independence of married women, against the fury of most congressmen, as described by Ofelia Uribe:

When the first project was delivered at the National Congress the majority of congressmen reacted negatively saying: 'it will cause the unhinging of family and the State.' 'It goes against the conjugal unity, which is the foundation of the Catholic Marriage.' Many abandoned the sessions, after voting against the proposal. Women in the balustrades scared by the avalanche of insults wanted to run away. Clotilde García then, with a small group of friends stormed inside the Capitol and things turned in favor of the demand.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> <sup>1</sup> [https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clotilde\\_Garc%C3%ADa\\_Borrero](https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clotilde_Garc%C3%ADa_Borrero)



*Ofelia Uribe de Acosta. Fotografía de Juan N. Gómez. Colección Emilia Acosta de Ospina.*

*Pictured left: Clotilde García de Ucrós, Colombian Early Suffragette; pictured right: Ofelia Uribe de Acosta: Colombian Early Suffragette*

Education, women's movements throughout the country, international women's networking, and the context of the Cold War that led the Western countries and the Catholic Church to work together against Communism, made it possible for Colombian women to obtain their full citizenship in August 1954. The bill was sanctioned by Plebiscite in December 1957, after the fall of Rojas Pinilla.



*Pictured left: NAZARIO, Diva Nolf. Voto feminino & Feminismo. Imprensa oficial. São Paulo, 1923. The cartoon entitled "Votes for women: Scenes from the future" portrays the mixture of the public and the private, a chaotic scenario in which the roles are reversed and overlap. The female vote causes the irruption of the whole order.*

# Roofing Rome: An Ecological Tale

By Dr. Benjamin Graham

All the best basilicas in Rome come with pop-off roofs. At least, that is the impression one might get reading the classical work on Roman architecture, Richard Krautheimer's "Rome: Profile of a City." Isometric reconstructions like the one pictured here bypass the roof or peel it back in order to highlight the shape and configuration of the walls and columns, the "essential" ingredients for understanding the building's referents. Roofs, as you might expect, have been a neglected feature of architectural history. Alas, one of my recent projects has focused on "raising the roof," as it were, on one of post-classical Rome's most pressing issues: keeping the rain off the city's congregation and its patron saints with a water-tight roof.

Like most of my work, Dark Age roofs interested me because of their ecological implications. Unlike virtually all other parts of an early Christian basilica, parts of the roof (the beams, rafters, and purlins) were made of an organic material, wood. As such, they were time bombs, requiring constant attention from Saint Peter's vicar. In the very best of conditions, an oak beam can hang proudly for about 200 years before gravity takes its toll. But few beams suffered the weight of terracotta shingles in perfect conditions; rain, wind, earthquakes, birds, and bugs all posed constant threats to the integrity of that wood. Precisely because all bishops could be expected to participate in the renewal of a basilica's organic top, the roof became a measure of patronage. In the mid-tenth century, Liudprand of Cremona delivered a sharp barb against Pope John XII by mentioning that his roofs let in "not just a few drops" but "downpours onto the very altars," and that his congregation lived in fear of a collapsed roof.<sup>2</sup> It goes without saying that saints expected freedom from the indignities of rain water and bird droppings in their eternal abodes.

An added pressure for the bishop of Rome was that he had to maintain exceedingly huge roofs. The buildings inherited by Dark Age popes were not built by his predecessors, but by the emperors of classical Rome. In the early fourth century, the emperor Constantine spent lavishly on the city, erecting several massive basilicas, including the Basilica of Saint John at the Lateran, the Basilica of Saint Peter at the Vatican, and the Basilica of St. Paul's fuori le mura. The central corridor of those buildings, called the nave, could span up to 25 meters, and that portion of basilica was traditionally covered by wooden trusses, including a bottom beam comprising a single, enormous shaped timber that spanned the entire distance. Constantine deliberately built on a gigantic scale in order to augment the prestige of his newly adopted religion. Because he was emperor of a vast territory, Constantine could fulfill the demands of buildings colossal churches by drawing



Dr. Benjamin Graham,  
Assistant Professor,  
University of Memphis

---

<sup>2</sup> *Historia Ottonis* 4.

resources from around the Mediterranean, including entire forests delineated and protected as imperial property.<sup>3</sup>

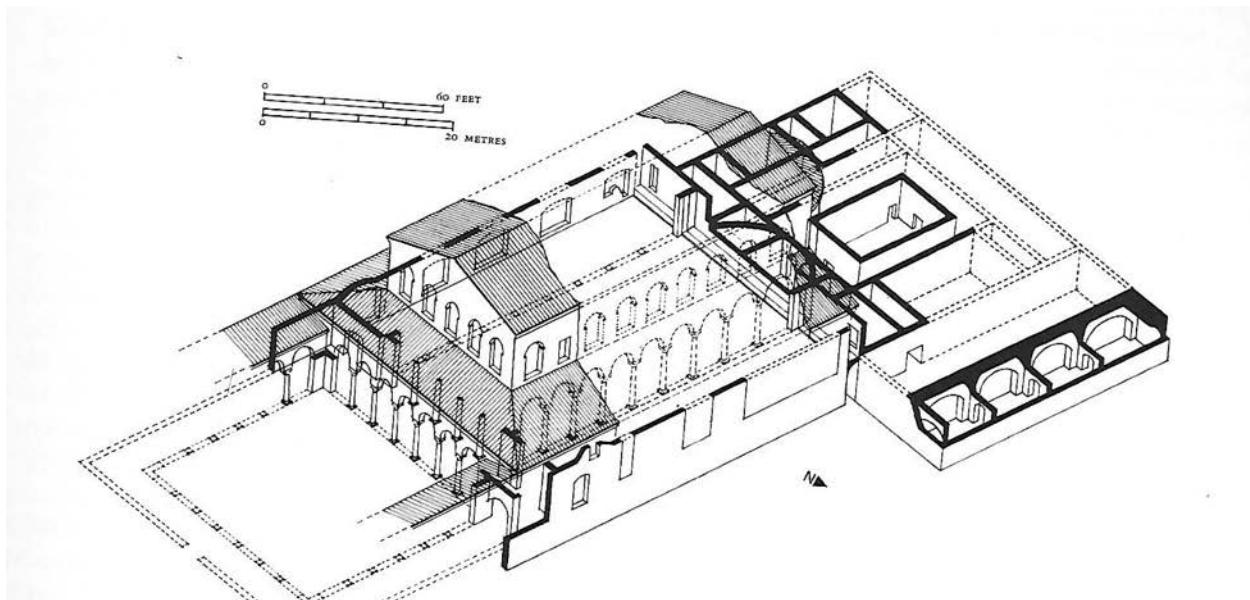
By the early Middle Ages, emperors, senators, and most other Mediterranean aristocrats had found a different address at which to dwell. Without imperial subsidization and a dearth of rich folk, Rome's population plunged to about 40,000 souls at the end of the sixth century (from the 1 million souls in the first century CE). Compared to cosmopolitan places like Constantinople and Alexandria, Rome was a backwater, provincial town. While no longer politically or economically powerful, Rome did still possess vestiges of its glorious past, like a bloated set of religious buildings that required constant roofing maintenance. But since the emperor no longer sat in Rome, the obligation to keep the city's churches dry fell upon the cash-strapped bishop of that city. And while he was considered an important religious official in the Christian world, his budget was a tiny fraction of that spent by the Rome's ancient emperors. For popes, their city's gigantic basilicas were points of pride but the prospect of replacing fragile roofs also made them a major source of heartburn. We can detect the growing sense of anxiety over roof beams in contemporary saints' lives—according to a seventh century vita, Gregory of Agrigento had to deploy his miraculous powers to get a set of massive beams up the Tiber River and onto the basilicas dedicated to Peter and Paul. In Dark Age Rome, holy men not only cured the sick and raised the dead, but also raised roof beams. For popes without miraculous powers of construction, acquiring beams of sufficient size meant activating their extensive social network in southern Italy, in the Sila forest, in order to organize the labor and find appropriate ecologies that could support the harvesting of a straight, 30 meter fir tree (the size necessary to cover a 25 meter span). By all accounts, it took immense coordination and significant capital to bring those trees across the Mediterranean, up the Tiber, and onto a very tall building.

Eventually, popes and their employees deployed roofing rhetoric to angle for independence from their Byzantine overlords in Constantinople. In a series of papal biographies written in the seventh and eighth centuries, the authors simultaneously highlight the bishops' ability to fix roofs and lament the Byzantine emperor's ability to maintain his buildings in Rome. Most famously, the biographers made a big deal of emperor Constans' 663 CE visit to Rome during which he despoiled the Pantheon by peeling off the bronze tiles from the porch of that building and sending them back to Constantinople. The act was not illegal—technically all the public buildings in Rome belonged to the Byzantine emperor in this period. But the act had rhetorical poignancy for the biographers because it contrasted so powerfully with the attention given by the biographers to the relentless roofing activities of the popes. Roofs, by the seventh century, were an established idiom of good patronage and made a fine justification for the creation of an independent republic of Saint Peter by the popes in the eighth century.

---

<sup>3</sup> In Lebanon, archaeologists have discovered boundary stones that marked the extent of the emperor's personal cedar forest.

1. S. Clemente isometric from Krautheimer, p. 32 (note the pop-off and invisible roof)



2. Central nave of S. John in Lateran, in Rome (from Wikipedia) (this is a gigantic basilica with very high ceilings)



3. An 18th century roof beam from England, at St. Mary's Church Badwell Ash (from that church's website; the horizontal, bottom portion of the truss was usually made from a single piece of timber, which required a very large, straight tree)



4. The Pantheon is one of Rome's most important buildings. The Byzantine emperor Constans II tore the bronze shingles off the porch of the structure in 663 CE, a sure-fire sign that he was a negligent patron of the city.



# Ancient Plunderers: Criminals or Soldiers?

By Dr. Aaron L. Beek

Over the past year or so, my research has taken me to re-examine figures on the margins of ancient warfare, usually figures that appear to be treated with approval in some sources, disapproval in others, and ignored in most. In particular, I have examined pirates, both as they appear in acts of piracy and also ‘pirates’ used in invective as an attack upon enemies of the speaker. Initially, I considered these two distinct phenomena, then later realized that the Romans’ accusing soldiers of another land of piracy or banditry was used to justify invasions, thus combining the two. Indeed, by the first century BCE, ‘pirate’ had much of the same emotional impact to the average Roman as the word ‘terrorist’ does to many modern Americans.

Some of this ancient opprobrium has class or ethnic roots. Soldiers who were recruited and fought for pay were deemed less loyal than those who fought for free, and this idea drove the Romans to resist paying their soldiers for centuries (beyond a small stipend to cover food and gear) after it had become common elsewhere. It was not until the late second century BCE that the Romans would institute a wage that soldiers could base a career on.

It surprises many today that there was relatively little scorn

towards looting and plundering in Rome. Indeed, this was expected activity by soldiers, because this bonus was how the soldiers could realize a profit from their campaigns. But if the Roman people did not object to plundering on a moral level, why were they so keen to vilify pirates in particular?

The answer, I argue, comes from a strange mix of custom, economics, and pragmatism. Piracy was not particularly lucrative—ancient pirates consistently appear willing to swap the uncertainty of piracy for a steady paycheck as a soldier, even at low wages. While the professional mercenary had gradually become a standard feature of most armies of the Hellenistic World (~300-50 BCE), the Romans saw this as a weakness. Despite relatively little evidence of mercenaries selling out, the Romans remained convinced that they would. So, while the Romans refused to hire pirates or



*I: Dr. Beek presenting on attitudes towards barbarians and pirates in the Later Roman Empire, at the University of Tübingen, Germany (July 2018)*

mercenaries, their neighbors were quite willing to do so, and that made piracy a larger military concern. Secondly, the pirates were increasingly made up of the now-unemployed soldiers and sailors of defeated states. Good examples of this soldier-to-pirate trend include after the fall of Persia to Alexander in the fourth century BCE (Diodorus 17.111) and after the first Mithridatic War (Appian, *Mith* 63, 92). A brief quote from my forthcoming article in *Acta Classica* “Campaigning against Pirate Mercenaries: A Very Roman Strategy?” may stand to illustrate my argument.

“Pirates in the Mediterranean had a long history of readily accepting military service. Mithridates of Pontus hired pirates from Cilicia and Crete to swell the ranks of his navy, a navy that managed to halt Roman forces from crossing to Anatolia on several occasions. Likewise, the Macedonians hired Illyrian pirates and the Seleucids and Ptolemais hired Cretans. In several cases, however, the Romans engaged in short campaigns in Illyria, Crete, or Cilicia before embarking on a war with the larger powers of the Mediterranean. Whether intentional or not, this preemptively limited the mercenary manpower the Hellenistic kingdoms were accustomed to call upon, giving Roman commanders a military advantage.”

While perhaps most famous for their annual wars, the Romans engaged this issue of mercenaries in several ways. They engaged in economic warfare against the Gauls to reduce their supplies of currency, signed treaties with large states banning them from hiring mercenaries from certain areas and made treaties with small states that prevented them from hiring out local soldiers to Roman enemies. Through this refusal to participate normally in the mercenary economy and the competition for military manpower, the Romans changed the game.

Moreover, the Romans *timed* their wars to limit the effectiveness of mercenaries in their major wars. The Romans engaged in wars in Liguria to prevent Ligurians from seeking employment with Carthage in the Punic Wars, in wars with the Histri Illyrians to prevent them from sending ships or men to support the Insubres or Ardaioi, and in wars with the Cretans and Cilicians to prevent their potent fleets from intervening in overseas wars against Mithridates or the kings of Syria. In each case, the invasions were stated to be in retaliation for (alleged) banditry or piracy. Once or twice might be an anomaly, but the Romans consistently engage in more of these minor campaigns whenever they were at war with larger states. The timing shows that the Romans were willing to ignore the activities of these supposedly ‘piratic peoples’ in times of relative peace, but commit significant resources to pirate campaigns during major wars.



Figure 2: Dr. Beek displaying his terrible selfie skills in Pretoria, South Africa (where he presented a version of this paper at an international workshop on plundering in October 2017)

Forces that were defeated but hadn't surrendered were quickly decried as pirates, considered to remain hostile, and campaigned against, both militarily and diplomatically. Roman legates would travel around the Mediterranean warning states not to hire refugee soldiers or commanders who had fought against Rome. Some states ignored these as (most notably Ptolemaic Egypt), but they did so at their peril. Roman commanders waged war against those who accepted such runaways both states large (like the kingdoms of Bithynia and Syria, which had admitted the Carthaginian general Hannibal) and small (like the hilltop village of Pindenissum). By and large, however, these tactics are frequently effective in limiting these mercenary activities.

One particularly fascinating aspect (to me, anyway) is that these diplomatic threats work precisely because many of the mercenaries were *not* the stateless wanderers of stereotype, but rather individuals with home or family ties to another state or city, out to accumulate enough of what we might think of as start-up funds to fix up the family farm, buy a house or property. In the Greek cities, many prominent men boasted of their early years as mercenary on their tombstones. (Many were also, no doubt, unsuccessful. We learn of one young man, Patrokleas of Larisa (a city allied with Rome), who had been captured in war and sold into slavery in Sicily, later freed and repatriated—had he been one of these mercenaries?)



Figure 3: Map of the Roman Empire (in red) in 60 BCE, with some of the named places labeled. The base map is from the Ancient World Mapping Center <<http://awmc.unc.edu/awmc/applications/alacarte/>>

# Navigating Ideological Waters of Eurasia and Beyond

Interview with Dr. Andrei Znamenski



*Dr. Andrei Znamenski, Professor of History, University of Memphis*

**Guionar Duenas-Vargas:** You spent last academic year on a PDA leave. Tell us what you have been doing and about your project.

**Andrei Znamenski:** To be exact, I have been doing two projects. The first one is narrowly focused on the Altai, a mountainous area in southernmost part of Siberia on the border with Mongolia. In contrast, the second one is an ambitious attempt to write a book-length study of cultural history of Socialism.

The first project represents a book chapter on how Tibetan Buddhism, Russian Orthodox Christianity, and early Soviet Communism shaped the identity of the Altaians, a small pastoral group, in the early 20th century. By completing this chapter I finalized my

earlier research on the Siberian indigenous people under the late Russian Empire and the early Soviet Union, 1880s-1920s. Exploring in detail the history of the Altaians, I came to question such notions as “traditional” culture and “cultural appropriation.” Various authors who wrote about the Altaians sought to pin point their traditional culture, downplaying deep inroads made by Tibetan Buddhism, Christianity, and later by Soviet Communism.

I tried to show how Buddhism that the Altaians channeled themselves into their culture along with Christianity and then with Communism, which were imposed on them between the 1880s and the 1920s, were internalized and became an integral part of their cultural identity. For example, by now, both Buddhist (like prayer flags, bronze chalices and bells), Orthodox (icons, church going) and Communist (like red stars and medals, or May the first secular rituals) iconography and ceremonies became “traditional” (see fig. 1) I guess I want to stress that cultures are fluid. They constantly change and borrow from each other and do not stay frozen in time and space.



**Guiomar Duenas-Vargas:** What about your second project?

**Andrei Znamenski:** It gradually grew out of the above-mentioned Siberian research and also out of my teaching of the Russian/Soviet history. In 2014, I had a graduate student who wanted to take my “Russia after 1917” course. Yet, being a full-time computer engineer, he could not come to my class that met during a day. So I developed an individual assignment for him. He was to listen to the audios of my lectures, make notes and process them along with other readings for each class. What he eventually came up with was a marvelous stack of 200 pages of transcribed lecture notes! I started thinking about putting them together into a medium-sized textbook on Soviet history.

Yet, eventually, I gave up on this project. It seemed to me too parochial, and adding little to existing body of literature: there were already many good textbooks on Soviet history. However, at that time, I was finishing reading *Politics as Religion* (2001) by Italian scholar Emilio Gentile, who explored such political regimes as Stalinism, Maoism, and National Socialism as secular ideologies that essentially came to fill a void created by the decline of mainstream religious creeds in modern time. His book prompted me to rethink the Soviet experience in a broader context of world history. His general approach – the secular is not always devoid of religiosity – appealed to me.



This conviction strengthened after I read *Great and Holy War* (2014) by my colleague Philip Jenkins, a historian of religions. It is a fascinating study on how bloody World War I contributed to the erosion of mainstream churches and to the rise of both alternative spirituality and to such millenarian secular prophecies as Communism. Do not forget that I am historian of religions too. All this prompted me to go further. I noted that scholars and writers tend to view Social Democracy and Communism – two factions of the same creed – as two completely separate phenomena simply because they have passionately battled each other. Of course, for the purposes of detailed analysis, one can set these two aside like we separate Shia and Sunni Islam or Protestant and Catholic Christianity. Yet, it is necessary to remember that they share the same “genetic” links or *Gestalt* as Germans would say. I also became intrigued about how and why during the last century socialist rhetoric and socialist iconography came to shape identity of millions of people.

When applied to practice, the internationalist message of Socialism frequently led to some form of nationalism. So I decided to explore that interplay between nationalism and Socialism – a second thematic line of my future book. Last but not least, I have also made another observation: many generic histories of Socialism are Eurocentric – a narrative that I will try to correct by bringing to the picture three non-Western countries that assimilated Socialist and Communist rhetoric into their ideologies. Then I met a representative of Rowman & Littlefield that offered me

to write a comprehensive text that would be available to general readers. A tentative title is *Socialism: A Story of a Secular Creed*. That was how this project was jumped stated

**Guimara Duenas-Vargas:** Let me digress a bit and ask you about something that is relevant to current affairs. For the past year, you obviously traveled a lot in Russia. Can you share with us some insights regarding the current state of that country?

**Andrei Znamenski:** Well, it will need a separate conversation. For now, let me instead share with you my impressions about the most recent event that might give you some idea about what is going in current Russia. This summer, when I visited St. Petersburg, I found myself in the middle of a nationalist frenzy – Russia was hosting World Soccer Championship. It was funny to watch how in St. Petersburg and several major cities, which held soccer games, facades of dilapidated houses and buildings were feverishly painted in nice and bright colors. Moreover, at the last moment, many abandoned buildings were draped in canvases with windows painted on them to make them look neat. So, the famous tradition of Potemkin Villages does not die. Putin authoritarian government tried to use this soccer event to kill two birds with one stone: to boost nationalist feelings and simultaneously to use the championship and all noise around it to smokescreen the draconic rise of retirement age, which people were not even allowed to publicly protest! Declining oil revenues force that corrupt regime to squeeze as much juice from people as possible. I was also stunned that the regime, cracking down on the freedom of speech, sank so low that it now gives six-month prison sentences and heavy fines to people who liked “inappropriate” sites on Facebook or uttered “offensive” remarks on social media.

The major force that is not to be offended is Russian Orthodox Church – a new ideological surrogate that, in a postmodern twist, now came to replace the secular religion of Soviet Communism. Among other “sacred cows” are Russian/Soviet experiences in World War II and the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2014. Since almost everybody works for the state, including teachers and professors, the selective targeted repressions are very effective: the rest of the people learn a “lesson” and effectively exercise self-censorship in fear to lose their jobs. Overall, these days, Russia represent a peculiar patchwork where old Russian imperial double-headed eagle coexist with portraits of Stalin, McDonald’s, KFC, and orange Orthodox St. George ribbons.



# Welcoming Dr. Catherine Arnold



I spent my childhood in Massachusetts, in a town half an hour west of Boston. Until I went to college, I was a serious ballet student and I got my first introduction to early modern culture in the ballet studio, learning steps that were first performed in the 1680s at the French court of Versailles.

Despite the fact that I loved history as a child, I didn't think seriously about becoming a historian until I got to college. At Wellesley College, I took my first class in early modern British history and started to see that studying history could help us understand our own present. I was drawn to early

modern British history because it gave me a new perspective on the political debates of the Bush presidency—how far should we curtail the liberties of our citizens' in the name of national security? Are some religions inherently violent? Should we tolerate speech that incites violence? My interest in the entwined histories of early modern religion and the liberal state kept me coming back for more early modern history classes and, eventually, led me to graduate school.

When I arrived at Yale University for my Ph.D. I thought I would write a dissertation about religious toleration and liberalism in seventeenth-century England. That changed at the end of my first year. Midway through my first summer of research, while reading eighteenth-century British diplomatic correspondence at Yale's Beinecke Library, I found a petition that launched my current project on the origins of humanitarian intervention. The petition was from a group of French prisoners who claimed that they were being tortured by their jailors and asked the British government to intervene and negotiate their release. The document surprised me. I'd never heard of a group of eighteenth-century prisoners petitioning a foreign government to intervene on their behalf. Over the next few years, I found that, far from being an anomaly, the French Protestant oarsmen were the tip of the iceberg. Prisoners and refugees from across Europe lobbied Britain to intervene on their behalf during the first half of the eighteenth century. The dissertation I eventually wrote uses cases like that of the French prisoners to explore the origins of humanitarian intervention and the secularization of international politics in Europe between 1690 and 1750.

I'm currently at work revising my dissertation into a book manuscript, tentatively entitled *Affairs of Humanity: Humanitarian Intervention between Reformation and Enlightenment*. The project has taken me to archives across Europe, from London and Paris to Vienna and Turin, allowing me to see the sights and eat some truly delicious food along the way. It's also shaped the way I teach early modern British history. In my classes, I explore the multitude of ways in which early modern Britain was connected with the rest of the world and consider how these entangled relations gave rise to key features of the modern world, including global capitalism, transnational humanitarianism, and the creation of the liberal international order.

I'm delighted to be teaching early modern British and European history here at the University of Memphis and I look forward to getting to know the university and the city better this year!