Globe-al St Andrews
Alumnus IN FOCUS

Dame Barbara Woodward. Britain’s First Woman Ambassador to China.

As my four years in St Andrews came to an end in 1983, I sat on the beach on the West Sands after graduation wondering what the future held. I had a history degree. In my summers at university, I had worked in France and the USA and was about to embark on an adventure on the Silk Road in the southern USSR. I had wanderedlust and a growing interest in global affairs. I had a place for a one-year postgraduate diploma to study Chinese at Ealing College, London, with a view to researching a PhD on the then relatively unknown Chinese sources on Mongol history. When funding was not forthcoming for that project, I reassessed my options, qualified as an English teacher and went to China, which was then opening up to the world, to improve the Chinese I had started to learn. A chance conversation led to a master’s degree in International Relations at Yale University and thence to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London. My history degree and St Andrews was a milestone on a road that led eventually, although not at the time predictably, to my appointment in 2015 as the first British female Ambassador to China.

History

History was an important Subject at school. It was my A level teacher, Margaret Macdonald, a St Andrews history graduate (who was featured in another section of this magazine), who brought history alive in class and through the school’s History Society and encouraged me to study it at St Andrews. She more than met the ‘three fundamental responsibilities with lifelong importance’ (as mentioned in her article in this issue) by inspiring my love of history, providing a chronological framework for historical study and teaching me the tools for evaluation.

I failed Oxbridge. But that cloud had a silver lining: after an interview in St Andrews, the University offered me a Harkness Scholarship. So, in September 1979 I moved to University Hall whose Warden, Lorna Walker, was also a Lecturer in Medievals History and embarked on undergraduate life. As I moved in to Historical history, I broadened my geographical horizons by studying the Russian Revolution, the Crusades and the Reformation – intrigued perhaps by themes of social upheaval, grand vision and intellectual fermentation. It was Professor Hugh Kennedy’s course on Genghis Khan and the Mongol Conquests, covering the extraordinary expansion of the Mongol Empire across Asia and Europe in the 13th century, which fired my imagination and kindled my interest in Asia.

China in the 1980s

With a diploma in Mandarin Chinese but with my PhD hopes dashed by lack of funding, I reassessed my options. Deng Xiaoping’s decision to open China’s economy (captured in one of his pithy aphorisms: ‘It doesn’t matter if a cat is black or white as long as it catches mice’) and introduce a ‘one-child’ policy was beginning to stimulate China’s economic growth and attract attention. Teaching English was a way to find out more and immerse myself in China’s culture. University entrance exams had been re-introduced in 1977: students who passed were keen and dedicated. They spent hours practising reading Chinese but were much less accustomed to participating in class or speaking English as a means of communicating. Their job prospects were significantly enhanced by a college degree. My history degree and St Andrews was a milestone on a road that led eventually, although not at the time predictably, to my appointment in 2015 as the first British female Ambassador to China.

Message from the Head of School, Professor Simon MacLean

Dear Friends and Alumni,

Welcome back (so to speak) to the School of History in 2019. As ever, it’s been an incredibly busy and challenging year, full of achievements by students and colleagues which are too numerous to list here. Among those activities, I thought I would take this opportunity to highlight some of the major collaborative research projects currently underway in the School.

Continuing with this international theme, we have a conference report on the St Andrews/College of William & Mary (Williamsburg, VA) joint bi-annual symposium, last, but by no means least, we focus on the research being carried out by colleagues in the Middle Eastern, Early Modern and Modern History departments.

Enjoy!

Best wishes, Chandrika

Dr Chandrika Kaul

Head of School

Middle East History

Email: ck24@st-andrews.ac.uk
In 1986, foreigners were still a novelty. When the Queen came on a State Visit to China, I spent time explaining to my colleagues and students that the Queen and Mrs. Thatcher, then Prime Minister, were different people. When we foreign teachers were out in town, trying and failing to blend in on our ‘Flying Pigeon’ brand bikes wearing our army issue padded jackets, people would nudge their kids and point out ‘there’s a foreigner’.

My China experience fed my interest in international relations. Late one night, during a candidlet evening discussion with a colleague – it was a power-saving brown out routine in Wuhan at the time, nothing more – we hatched the idea of applying for an International Relations master’s degree in the USA. It would give the opportunity to experience a global superpower’s perspective on the world and, in practical terms, offered a better chance of scholarship funding, which was essential to the whole enterprise as I was earning $30 per month in non-convertible currency. Almost a year later, I had a generous offer (covering tuition and some living costs) from Yale for a master’s Degree in International Relations. I travelled home from China on the Trans-Siberian Railway that summer exhilarated by the prospect of going back to university. History formed an important part of my Yale degree course, including Chinese history with Professor Jonathan Spence, but my programme included courses in economics, international law and politics, too. My original plan was to study the major reforms of communist societies then underway: Deng’s reform and opening in China and Gorbatchev’s glasnost and perestroika in the USSR. Events of the summer and autumn of 1989 overtook me, and I switched my attention to economic growth in the Asia Pacific, including the establishment of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), unknowingly laying foundations for my subsequent return to the region.

In the FCO

I finally – and not at the first attempt! – walked through the Foreign and Commonwealth Office’s (FCO’s) imposing doors in London during the heyday of the Cold War. The building itself, mostly designed by George Gilbert Scott in the late 19th century, is redolent with history, its long corridors and fine rooms adorned with statues and portraits of great men. (The first female diplomats were admitted in 1946-48, but until 1972 women had to resign on marriage so we are still catching up). At its heart were the grand and gilded Locarno Rooms, a suite which Scott designed by George Gilbert Scott in the late 19th century, is

I returned to China in 2003, a country in many respects unrecognisable from my first stay fifteen years previously. But those fifteen years, and the six years that elapsed between my departure in 2009 and my return as Ambassador in 2015, were a tiny speck in China’s five thousand years of history. In China the distant past is regularly used to illuminate the present. The periods of ruthless competition for territorial advantage that characterized the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States periods (roughly 770-476 BCE and 475-221 BCE) and the discussions of their chroniclers, of whom the best known are Confucius (551-479 BCE) and Sun Tzu (544-496 BCE), are part of contemporary debate on peace, hegemony, inter-state relations and the citizen’s relationship to the state more frequently than parts of China’s recent history. As Michael Pillsbury puts it in The Hundred-Year Marathon: ‘Like the Battles of Thermopylae, Cannae, Agincourt or Waterloo in the west, [the battle of] Red Cliff serves as a seminal moment in China’s military history and tradition’. These traditions are reinforced by language: the saying ‘Never ask the weight of the Emperor’s cauldrons’ comes from this period and is widely used today to mean don’t let the enemy know you are a rival until it is too late to stop you’. Chinese using it today will know the origins in the rivalry of the Chu and Zhou states more than 2500 years ago.

History runs particularly deep in China. It’s not just that the Great Wall provides some of the most spectacular hiking in the world or that many monuments, temples and collections of fine art, literature and porcelain survive. Marking anniversaries underlines history’s relevance to the present. This year, for example, marks, inter alia, the centenary of the May 4th Movement (when students protested the terms of the Treaty of Versailles which ended World War I and called for ‘Mr. Science’ and Mr. Democracy in China), the thirtieth anniversary of Tiananmen on 4 June and the 70th anniversary of Mao’s proclamation of the People’s Republic on 1 October. These events draw threads back to different preceding discussions of the world or that many monuments, temples and collections of fine art, literature and porcelain survive. Marking anniversaries underlines history’s relevance to the present. This year, for example, marks, inter alia, the centenary of the May 4th Movement (when students protested the terms of the Treaty of Versailles which ended World War I and called for ‘Mr. Science’ and Mr. Democracy in China), the thirtieth anniversary of Tiananmen on 4 June and the 70th anniversary of Mao’s proclamation of the People’s Republic on 1 October. These events draw threads back to different preceding discussions of the world or that many monuments, temples and collections of fine art, literature and porcelain survive. Marking anniversaries underlines history’s relevance to the present. This year, for example, marks, inter alia, the centenary of the May 4th Movement (when students protested the terms of the Treaty of Versailles which ended World War I and called for ‘Mr. Science’ and Mr. Democracy in China), the thirtieth anniversary of Tiananmen on 4 June and the 70th anniversary of Mao’s proclamation of the People’s Republic on 1 October. These events draw threads back to different preceding discussions of the world or that many monuments, temples and collections of fine art, literature and porcelain survive. Marking anniversaries underlines history’s relevance to the present. This year, for example, marks, inter alia, the centenary of the May 4th Movement (when students protested the terms of the Treaty of Versailles which ended World War I and called for ‘Mr. Science’ and Mr. Democracy in China), the thirtieth anniversary of Tiananmen on 4 June and the 70th anniversary of Mao’s proclaim
In Conversation with Professor Brad MacKay

The editor Dr Chandrika Kaul met with Professor Brad MacKay, Vice President (International Strategy and External Relations), on 26 April to discuss 'Global St Andrews', the role of alumni and much else besides.

Chandrika: Thank you Brad for meeting with me today. May I start by asking you to tell us about how you came to be at St Andrews and your own academic and personal background?

Brad: It was quite by serendipity. After I did my undergraduate degree at Dalhousie in Canada, which was in International Development Studies, I was looking at postgraduate programmes abroad. It just so happened that at that time I ran into somebody who was a friend of our families who had done part of his doctoral research in Divinity at St Andrews. He said, 'Have you ever considered St Andrews?' I hadn’t heard of St Andrews, but the thought of spending a year in Scotland at a very well-established University with a long history sounded very appealing. I applied originally for an MLitt programme in International Relations. When I arrived at St Andrews, I found they had another multi-disciplinary MLitt programme between International Relations, Economics and Management called MIEP (it changed into R eventually), and I switched onto that because it made it a bit easier for our staff and our students to be able to engage with the University’s global strategy and take an active part in managing it. In addition, it also provides a platform for staff and students to be able to really take initiatives and lead that global strategy. Equally, it is about creating a bit of a shop window for the University so that people can see what we are doing in terms of our global partnerships, and it makes it easier for partners outside the University to be able to access and engage with us. All four of these different pillars are designed to interact so they might be like silos, but each one is designed to reinforce and support the other three.

Chandrika: Just picking up on what you talked about in terms of global partnerships, are you in a position to mention any particular examples? And is it as if you have been engaging with recently or have officially brought on board as part of this initiative?

Brad: It is still taking shape, but broadly, we have different categories of partnerships, everything from the very organic academic-to-academic and right up to the institutional. At the institutional level, we are signing big institutional MOUs, for example, with other institutions and where we have what I would call St Andrews partnerships. This is not just about an exchange, for example, of staff or students, but it’s about having good research links, having potentially joint programmes, exchanges, staff and student mobility between institutions, that’s what I’m talking about when I talk about the big institutional partnership. Effectively, what we are doing is to draw up a list of criteria that we would want to see in one of these multi-point partnerships. So, things that reinforce the way we see ourselves as an institution globally, working with other institutions that reflect who we are, our values, and where we think we are positioned within the wider global HE space. We have a number of different criteria that would constitute for us what is a strategic partnership and where we want to work with a smaller number of strategic partners very closely. We have a couple of good examples of that. For instance, when we signed the multi-point agreement with the University of Bonn in Germany, and Charles University in Prague. But it is also about a number of smaller academic School-to-School relationships that we have with European institutions, and it is all about ensuring that we continue to be an international University with very close research and teaching links with our European partners.

Chandrika: My final question is about how you envisage the role of alumni, not just History alumni, in this process, given we have an internationally dispersed alumni who would probably want to be engaged or re-engaged with these initiatives?

Brad: One of the things I often say is that I’ve got a great job in the sense that St Andrews is a really great university to represent overseas, in part because our alumni are so committed and loyal to the institution, and so it speaks to the experience we’ve all had as either students or staff working here. I think there is an opportunity to work much more closely with our alumni across a whole range of different initiatives. This could be through philanthropy and supporting different initiatives or research areas or otherwise the case might be, but through the philanthropic side of things. This could also be through providing internships and career opportunities for our students, and in general being ambassadors for the University. I feel like we’ve got a relationship with St Andrews that is still very strong. So, even with the development of the global St Andrews concept, our alumni are really a critical part of that. We are developing a whole range of different types of strategic partnerships. Along with our staff and students, our most important constituency is our alumni, and the impression I get is that we have an awful lot of alumni that would like to be involved with the University and are looking for ways to be involved. So, one of the things that the global St Andrews concept will help to deliver is to make it easier for alumni to engage and be able to make contributions however they may want to.

Chandrika: That is a very positive note to end on, and I thank you very much for your time.
Where Are They Now?

In tracing the career paths of our graduates, the St Andrews Careers Centre has some interesting statistics to offer regarding higher education based on data from graduates between 2011/12 and 2016/17:

- Not continuing studies (55%)
- Full-time study (41%)
- Study with part-time work (4%)
- Not continuing studies (96%)

Destination of St Andrews’ students after graduating from a Postgraduate Taught programme in History

- Not continuing studies (62%)
- Full-time study (29%)
- Study with part-time work (65%)
- Part-time study (3%)
- Not continuing studies (98%)

Destination of St Andrews’ students after graduating from a Postgraduate Research programme in History

- Not continuing studies (55%)
- Full-time study (41%)
- Study with part-time work (4%)

We focus in this edition on Continuing Education and Life Long Education with two inspirational case studies of our alumni, Dr Peter King and Margaret MacDonald, both of whom returned to St Andrews to pursue PhD research. Peter taught History at St Andrews whilst Margaret was a student here, and what they share is an intellectual drive and enthusiasm for the discipline and for St Andrews. We hope their stories will serve in some small measure to inspire others – maybe even to take the leap and return to St Andrews for further education and to pursue research!

Peter King – A case of lifelong learning?

Peter King retired from teaching History at St Andrews in 1986, over three decades ago, but he did not stop working as a historian, far from it. His career had begun when he came to Britain as a refugee from Hitler’s Germany in November 1933. He studied Medieval History at the London School of Economics (not possible now), and then wrote a London MA thesis under the supervision of R.R. Darlington, completed in 1954. It was examined on a dark November night by Sir Frank Stenton, one of the most famous medievalists of the twentieth century, whose wife chafed outside, much more concerned about the weather and driving Sir Frank back to Reading than Peter’s achievement. The subject was Robert de Chesney, bishop of Lincoln 1148-1166 and afterwards Peter went on to compile the first volume of the revised Fasti Mediaeval History. Department Group, 1983. Peter King is in the front row, far right.

![Credit: Courtesy of the University of St Andrews Library, reference: Group-1981-53](Image 304x92 to 561x246)

Ecclesiæ Anglicæ: Lincoln 1300-1541. This was the beginning of a lifelong fascination with the history of the Church. From 1963 to 1966 Peter was College Lecturer in History at University College Dublin, teaching medieval economic history. When a colleague, who had been in secret communication with Ian Smith’s Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), suddenly decamped to take up a senior position in Salisbury University, he also found himself having to step in at a moment’s notice to teach 19th-century English History. Things improved when in 1966 Peter moved to St Andrews, where he was part of the Medieval History team, based in South Street, for two decades. It was during these years that he drafted and published his first major monograph, The Finances of the Cistercian Order in the Fourteenth Century (Cambridge, 1985). After retirement he catalogued the George Hay Forbes collection in St Andrews University Library and also published Western Monasticism – A History of the Monastic Movement in the Latin Church (Kalamazoo, 1999). Then in 2014 Peter opened another entirely new chapter, starting a PhD on a book he had found in the University Library, Angelo da Chivasso’s Summa Angelica de Coisibus Conscientia. This was supervised by Professor Frances Andrews, who had joined the department in 1995, nine years after he retired. Angelo published the Summa in 1486 and it had gone through twenty-two editions by 1500. It was one of the volumes Luther chose to burn in 1520, a sign of its ubiquity and influence, which only slowly faded in the following decades. The thesis was completed in 2018 and this time the viva examiners included the professor of Medieval History at the University of Cambridge, John Arnold as well as our own Professor John Hudson. Dr King graduated in December 2018 and is now working on the publication of parts of the thesis. Lifelong learning at its best!

Margaret MacDonald – Historical connections: a personal reflection.

“When I was about five years old, an adult asked me what I wanted to do when I grew up. I remember replying that I wanted to be a student. For a child brought up in St Andrews, this was an entirely reasonable career ambition. To me at that age, students were wonderful beings who wore red gowns and did exciting things. I knew that Patrick Hamilton had been burnt at the stake outside St Salvator’s Chapel and that it was bad luck to step on the PH in the cobbles. It is no surprise that when I came to apply for university I only put down one choice, St Andrews, and only one subject, History.

The History Department was going through a very exciting and innovative period in the early 1960s. Mediaeval History had recently emerged as a separate department. Most of the newly appointed staff were under thirty and even the Professor was only 36 when he was appointed. It was not possible at that stage to specialise in only Mediaeval History, and I am glad that I was required to do at least two Modern History papers in my final exams. The first year syllabus covered an outline of European history from the fall of the Roman Empire to the outbreak of the Second World War and the second year syllabus a similar outline of English history. Scottish history, imperial history and economic history were additional options and there were compulsory papers on English Constitutional documents.

In the third year there was a choice of European periods to study in more depth, and in the final year a number of special subjects and a compulsory course in Political Thought from Plato to Marx. For my optional papers I chose Europe in the 14th and 15th centuries and for my special subject 15th Century English Economy and Society. The breadth of the degree was an excellent preparation for a career in school teaching. In those days we also had to do Latin and either Moral Philosophy or Logic and Metaphysics. I am grateful to St Andrews University for making me study Latin at General level. I would not have done so had it not been compulsory, but I have found it surprisingly useful throughout my life to have some knowledge of Latin.

After four years at university my love of history was as strong as ever, and I was faced with the choice of whether to continue as a research student in mediaeval history or do a PGCE and train as a teacher. I chose the latter. I can strongly recommend school teaching as a career. You have three fundamental responsibilities which have lifelong importance for your students: to inspire them with a genuine interest in history, to give them a chronological framework to which they can attach historical facts and to provide them with the critical tools to question and evaluate what they are told. You also have considerable freedom to choose where you want to work and in what type of school. My first job was at Haberdashers’ Aske’s Girls’ School in London followed by three years abroad teaching in the newly independent Fiji Islands. On my return, after a brief time at the Wallace High School in Stirlingshire, I took up a post as Head of Department at St Felix School in Suffolk, and it was here that I taught Barbara Woodward whose article also appears in this edition. What was not possible now, and then there were a choice of European periods to study in more depth, and in the final year a number of special subjects and a compulsory course in Political Thought from Plato to Marx. For my optional papers I chose Europe in the 14th and 15th centuries and for my special subject 15th Century English Economy and Society. The breadth of the degree was an excellent preparation for a career in school teaching. In those days we also had to do Latin and either Moral Philosophy or Logic and Metaphysics. I am grateful to St Andrews University for making me study Latin at General level. I would not have
William & Mary/St Andrews Joint Symposium Report, 27-29 March 2019
by Joanna Hambly

During spring break, four members of the School of History, along with colleagues from the Schools of Classics, English and Film Studies, travelled to Williamsburg, Virginia to take part in the William & Mary / St Andrews joint symposium on the theme of Mobilities. The symposium, held every two years, is one strand of the joint degree programme between the two Universities. In her welcome address, Kate Conley, Dean of Arts and Science at William & Mary, highlighted the uniqueness of the joint degree. Founded on the commitment of both institutions to the liberal arts and in encouraging an international outlook, the programme gives students the opportunity to experience two distinct intellectual and national cultures. For members of staff in participating Schools, the faculty exchanges and biennial symposia provide an opportunity to share research, build collaborations and get to know one another.

The theme Mobilities provided plenty of scope for interpretation and allowed for an eclectic mix of presentations across the disciplines. Common themes emerging in the suitably international history session were of transcultural exchange, transnational identity and the movement of people, ideas, technology, expertise and things. In her paper Mobility in the twenty-five years has made me more aware of the Channel Islands’ unique and interesting history. My life experiences thus pointed me towards my research topic: the relationship of Guernsey with the British Empire. I have found it enormously stimulating to be back at University again, getting to grips with academic study at this level, and I am delighted, through my PhD studies, to be discovering so much that I did not hitherto know about the Island where I live. I am grateful to the University for their acceptance of students of any age. I had decided against undertaking a PhD on graduating in 1966 but fifty-two years later I feel ready for the challenge - though I still take care to avoid stepping on the PH outside College Chapel.”

Marketplace: Frontiers of Trade in Britain’s American Colonies; Emma Hart considered how the European model of fixed, easily regulated, market places in the New World was disrupted by the influence of Native Americans and Africans, who brought their own understanding of how markets should be organised. Mobile markets persisted even along existing native American trade networks and via river trade routes established by enslaved African Americans. As in medieval west Africa, paths were as important as settlements and other fixed places. Early attempts by Europeans to impose fixed markets in the colonies failed, but by the late 18th century, the construction of the first purpose-built fish market in Charleston spelled the beginning of the end of the more fluid and autonomous marketplace of the early Colonial period.

Chandraka Kaul’s paper was titled ‘Communication, Media and Mobilities in an Imperial Context: The BBC and India, 1932-45’. She argued that when examined within the parameters of its public service model and Britain’s global imperial networks, the BBC provides us with a very particular transnational experience of mobilities – of technology, people, ideas and information. Chandrika considered the complicated relationship between India and the BBC, with the broadcaster being criticized for imperial ambition as well as valued for talking openly about politically difficult issues. She explained how under creative talks producers like George Orwell (1941-43), the BBC deliberately avoided topics related propaganda and focused more on creative programming drawing material from the transnational Bloomsbury elite, including notable Indian writers such as Mulk Raj Anand. Finally, in a double bill, St Andrews archaeologists Tom Dawson and Joanna Hambly reflected on mobility in their practice and research. Joanna introduced their research projects with the public, which brings St Andrews University into relationships with communities across Scotland and further afield. She gave an example of a community-led archaeological excavation of early modern salt pans in the Highland village of Brora, East Sutherland. Prestige items amongst the artefacts resonated with notions of transcultural elites in this industrial outpost, whilst the conformity of the technology and processes are a result of the movement of people, expertise and ideas. Tom ended by pitching an idea for future interdisciplinary collaboration between William & Mary and St Andrews, Mobility and Development: Investigating the Growth of our Institutions over Time, and used St Andrews as a case study to demonstrate the potential of the physical remains and material culture of our historic institutions to tell the stories of journeys made by generations of past scholars.

Staff Research IN FoCUS
Past and “Pasticm” in the History of Psychiatry by Professor Rab Houston

When I graduated from St Andrews and told my friends I was going to do a PhD in Cambridge they teased me about retreating into an ivory tower. At that time, they were right. Historians who were truly public intellectuals were mainly Marxists like Christopher Hill, Edward Thompson, Raphael Samuel and Eric Hobsbawm. Through the Workers Educational Association, their academic writings, public speaking and journalism, those historians used their skills to reach out and change society and its politics; they wanted to make a difference by using history to broaden and question understandings of established structures. Their work was about people and their relationship with the hard surfaces of everyday life created by wealth, status, law and power.

The topics I have researched over a career, now drawing to a close, are also people-centred, though my interest was driven more by a quest for shared humanity than any political ideology. I sought in history ways of connecting rather than separating, voices from the past with whom we can engage in order to enhance the knowledge we gain, and thus illuminating a sense of prior belonging. In the 1980s and 1990s my work on early modern literacy and education, historical demography and urbanisation all mapped onto ‘the real world’ because policy-makers and thinkers readily accepted historical perspective as a contributor to the theoretical understanding of the development of modern populations around the world. History was like any social science, the past simply, as Hobsbawm put it, ‘another country where things are done differently’ (E. J. Hobsbawm, On History (London, 1998), 263-4).

Much has changed, even since the turn of the century. All historians now, to a greater or lesser extent, do what only a few did when I was a PhD student. Today it is universal to deliberately attempt to enable people outside academia to interact with research, take it up, react or respond to it. In other words, to create impact. Recently I have again gone down the path of making a difference by seeing what is universal and what is particular, but in new ways. Building on decades of studying understandings of mental disorders both in print and through my ‘Madness’ special subject, I am currently working on a project called ‘Promoting mental health through the lessons of history’.

Historical examples are uniquely valuable in communicating the wide variety of social and cultural contexts that create understandings of mental disorders. In different ways, history mirrors the world’s multicultural, economically divided and socially stratified present. Using historical materials, I am trying to engage with contemporary concerns among diverse audiences about the experience of mental disorders, their effects on family and community, possibilities for resilience, care and recovery and wider social attitudes. I hope to enhance awareness of mental health, enable early diagnosis, destigmatize suffering, strengthen resilience and promote recovery.

Colleagues from the Schools of History and English at St Andrews and William & Mary enjoy a lunch break in spring sunshine. (Credit: Joanna Hambly)

A herald of spring outside the Blow Memorial Hall, the venue for the Mobilities Symposium. (Credit: Joanna Hambly)
very limited resources, people used a wide variety of therapies. I was struck by the similarities between a country like Malawi and Scottish doctors are helping the training as part of the Scotland Commissioned mini-series on colonial psychiatry) to train local psychiatrists. Europe has 100 psychiatrists for every million people, much as folk remedies and even witch doctors. Medicine was regarded as a first recourse. Depressant and anti-psychotic drugs, which many Westerners treat as a first recourse. The challenge for health professionals in modern sub-Saharan Africa is to persuade sufferers and their families to accept antidepressant and anti-psychotic drugs, which many Westerners regard as a first recourse. The challenge for me is to help a wide audience of educators, medical professionals, sufferers and policy makers to see recurrences as well as divergences, continuity as well as change, similarities as well differences, roots as well as routes. But my project has many rewards. Above all, I hope it shows that being an historian means making a difference. https://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/psychhist

A good dozen newspapers picked up on this story between the 9th and the 20th of June 1876 – the Schlesische Presse, the Neue Börsenzeitung, Didaskalia, the Sammler, the Ausburger Tagblatt, Sächsische Darfenzting and the Zeitung für das höhere Unterrichtswesen Deutschlands iterated and celebrated the friendship. We know that the princes served as a topic of light entertainment to the monarchy-interested press and public. However, it is interesting that so many newspapers should pick up this story of Wilhelm and his Jewish friend. Most newspapers seem to have found this story of the Prince and the Jewish Classmate quite charming. Their accounts celebrate a young, generous heir to the crown and his lavish care for a social subaltern, whose virtues and accomplishments raised him from his alleged humble background.

only one Viennese self-proclaimed independent journal, the Gemeinde-Zeitung, unabhängiges politisches Journal, mocked the story with vehemence and antisemitism. ‘Even though one half of this story is invented, and the other half untrue, it is a good one, so ‘sentimental’ and ‘dramatic’ to make a new Ghettostory’ out of a ‘kosher-meat’ conflict where the Jewish student is torn between a royal palace and a Jewish restoration, after which the Prince generously converts to Judaism,’ the publication argued. The reaction that followed was equally interesting. The palace apparently found it necessary to intervene. The Hessische Blätter insisted on June 17th that the alleged original newspaper who first featured the story recanted its veracity days after the release. The story reported in Der Reichts- und Stadtbanner ‘is invented,’ the Hessische Blätter claimed. The prince did have a Jewish friend, who was ‘indeed very distinguished at his school, and the son of a widow, but he was not poor, as his father had been a rich merchant! It was equally untrue, the paper went on to report, that ‘S.’ refused, for ritual reasons, to eat at the royal table. ‘S.’ was at home during Easter. He further followed reformed Jewish foodlaws, as he has already participated at festive meals when he was invited to the prince’s table, and also ate at it on several occasions, such as the Presence of the Crown Princess, Birthday of the Prince, etc.

Readers in Vienna may indeed have been offended at the Prince’s alleged self-abasement and over-accommodation of a subaltern’s refusal to dine with his sovereign, as the Viennese Gemeinde-Zeitung asserted. Irrespective, the story continued to circulate as originally released until the end of the month of June 1876 and even then did not go away. Dr. M. Maass, author of The Social Standing of Jews in Germany and the Civil-Marriage Law, used the story in his work to illustrate condescension at the ‘highest levels’ of German society and to argue that Jews could hold offices in all areas of public life.

The Prince and the Jewish Classmate
by Dr Claudia Krekla
A saccharine story circulated in German language newspapers all over Europe in the summer of 1876: the highest-ranking pupil in the German Empire had befriended one of his Jewish peers. The student in question was the future Wilhelm II, to be the last Emperor of Germany.

The story went: ‘The sons of the Prussian Crown Prince, who... attend[s] a Kasseler Gymnasium’ has befriended ‘a Jewish comrade from an impoverished background... the son of a Jewish teacher’s widow’ who is also ‘the most excellent and gifted student of the school.’ The crown prince thus decided, in order to reward his son’s wise choice of company... to invite their friend to Berlin during the holiday time (Feierzeit!). The young friend ‘S.’ however refused the invitation in an attempt to not abuse the young prince’s exuberant generosity in spite of their difference in status – a fear the prince entirely lifted. He refused a second time in fear of not being able to eat a kosher diet in the palace, ‘as he had promised his mother.’ The young prince therefore turned to his parents with his dilemma, who immediately assured that they would provide the necessary hosting of their son’s guest, after which ‘S.’ finally did spend the Easter holidays at the palace in Berlin and eating his lunches in a Jewish restaurant in the royal city.

Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany. Head and shoulders portrait of the Kaiser by Court Photographer T.H. Voigt of Frankfurt, 1902.
(Credit: Imperial War Museum, photograph RE 48047)

Wilhelm as a student in Bonn, 1877.
(Credit: Wilhelm Klemm)


In my ongoing research, I explore the making of the German middle class through food in the nineteenth century. I have found that during this period, food was a powerful tool in asserting and maintaining social status. The study of such topics, particularly in the context of the Crusades, is central to the text’s purpose. The description of the East is the context for the Crusade treatise, and the plan proposed involved the crusaders allying with the Mongols against the Mamluk Sultans of Syria and Egypt. The Flor presents material obtained by another visitor to the Mongol empire: Het’um i, king of the Armenians, who travelled to the court of the Great Khan Mongke (1254-55) in order to demonstrate his acceptance of Mongol overlordship and gain protection for his kingdom. On his return, King Het’um left an account of his travels with the Armenian historian Kirakos Ganjakets’i. The Flor presents this material to a Latin audience.

The age saw the production of several such accounts of the East by those with some experience of it. Early in the thirteenth century, James of Vitry’s Historia orientals presents an Orient peopled with strange monsters. It was based on earlier Latin authorities, such as the work of Isidore of Seville or Flainy the Elder, rather than on first- or second-hand experience. This changed as Western Europeans came to travel in Asia more widely in the 13th and 14th centuries. The most famous of such travellers was, of course, Marco Polo. The veracity of his narrative is often challenged, but however one views his complicated text, as a Latin visitor to China he would have been far from unique in this period. Some travel authors were merchants like the Polos – such as, presumably, the Katarina Wilioni who died in Yangzhou in 1342 and whose tombstone was discovered in 1951. Others were clerics and missionaries, often Franciscan friars. The first great Franciscan voyager in Asia was the Italian John of Plano Carpini, who travelled across the steppes to the court of the Mongol Great Khan Guyuk (1245-47). Carpini’s account of his travels grew from a thematic report intended for Pope Innocent IV, his sponsor, into a long survey of his adventures, in order to respond to the demand for information among his audience. Texts such as these were often collected together with manuscripts of the Flor, and together they influenced what was perhaps the most significant of the accounts of the Orient from this period, the later 14th century Travels of Sir John Mandeville.

The journeys that are preserved in these accounts were possible because of the major political development of the period: the irruption of the Mongols and the creation of their empire, which stretched at its peak from China to Hungary. This facilitated travel and trade across the whole of Inner Eurasia and also meant that the peoples the Mongols encountered were forced to engage with them. Those not yet under their thrall sought to gain as much information as they could on this strange new power. The Flor des estoires fits into this context; it contains within it much information on the origins of the Mongols and the history of their conquests. This historical material is central to the text’s purpose. The description of the East is the context for the Crusade treatise, and the plan proposed involved the crusaders allying with the Mongols against the Mamluk Sultans of Syria and Egypt. The Flor presents material obtained by another visitor to the Mongol empire: Het’um i, king of the Armenians, who travelled to the court of the Great Khan Mongke (1254-55) in order to demonstrate his acceptance of Mongol overlordship and gain protection for his kingdom. On his return, King Het’um left an account of his travels with the Armenian historian Kirakos Ganjakets’i. The Flor presents this material to a Latin audience.

The author of the Flor des estoires had arrived in Poitiers on a diplomatic mission from Cyprus, where since 1305 he had been residing as a Pafosmonstratensian canon regular at the monastery of Santa Maria de Escopiso. He was, however, also an Armenian prince called Het’um, the nephew of King Het’um I, and the erewhile lord of Korykos (modern Kukalesi, Turkey). He is known in Europe as Hayton, the name attached to his work. His career demonstrates how the Armenian ruling elite could move between a great variety of cultural or political zones: Byzantine or Seljuk (Turkish) Anatolia; the Mamluk Sultanate; the Mongol empire or its ilkhanid subdivision in Persia; the Latin East or the Latin West. Hayton was as comfortable at the court of the Muslim illkhan as at the curia of the Pope. Hayton was primarily an Armenian Christian, but he could live as a Catholic. He was Armenian, but because his historical material is connected with the Frankish nobility of the Holy Land and of Cyprus. His wife, Isabel, was a Cypriot Frank but was herself the granddaughter of King Het’um I. Hayton dictated the Flor in French and may have been able to communicate in Persian or Turkish, as well. When he required refuge from family politics, Cyprus was an easy place for him to re-establish himself.

The Flor des estoires is the work of someone with great familiarity with the world described. It was, of course, a very political and tendentious text. Hayton sought to promote the role of the Armenians of Cilicia as defenders of Christendom and, perhaps more prosaically, as intermediaries between the Latins and the Mongols of Persia. The plan for crusade he promoted would restore not only Latin control of the Holy Land, but also the fortunes of the Armenian kingdom itself and perhaps position within it. Hayton shows the Middle East and Central Asia as he wanted it. His Latin audience to understand it. As a guide to politics it is necessarily distorted. Nevertheless, it reveals a great deal not just about the region but about how it was experienced by a clever well-connected observer. Furthermore, it helped to shape Western European expectations of the Orient and continued to be influential for some centuries.

The standard edition of the Flor des estoires, published in 1906 in French and Latin, was made as part of the Recueil des historiens des croisades project. This was based on only some of the surviving manuscripts, and many questions about the text remain. A new thoroughly compiled edition is certainly a desideratum but would represent an enormous task. I hope that I have demonstrated here some of the ways in which this text is worthy of attention, and some of the reasons why it has attracted my interest. A French text, composed by an Armenian prince, whose family was intermarried with Byzantine emperors, Seljuk sultans and Mongol khans, and whose deals with the history of the Mongol empire and one the Mamluk Sultanate, reflects some of the complexity and diversity of the Middle East in this period and hints at its cultural richness.

The Flor des estoires de la terre d'Orient: the Armenians, the Mongols and Western Europe

by Dr Angus Stewart

In August 1307 a volume was presented to Pope Clement V at his court in Poitiers. This was the Flor des estoires de la terre d'Orient, an account of the history and geography of the lands of the Orient. It was also, and this explains its presentation to the pope, a crusade treatise. The fourth and final book presents a plan for the recovery of the Holy Land. It was immediately translated into Latin, and Latin and French copies were made through the fourteenth century and beyond – 31 of the former and 15 of the latter survive. With the development of printing in Europe it was disseminated again and in new languages, including English, German, Italian, Dutch and Spanish, as well as three early-sixteenth century versions in French and several editions in Latin.

The Flor was successful in its time and continued to be valued for centuries. Part of the explanation for this popularity must be that it was effectively the representative of two popular contemporary genres – accounts of the Orient and Crusade treatises (and though the crusade plan was soon out-of-date, the description of the East remained in the public interest).

The battle of Wadi’l-Khazindar (1299), as depicted in an early fourteenth century illustrated manuscript of the Flor des estoires.

(Credit: BNF NA9 986, fol. 7r; from Wikimedia Commons)
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