

McGill

## Mitra Sharaf on her studies at McGill and career as a legal historian

I am a legal historian of South Asia at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, where I am a Professor at the Law School. I teach contract law to first-year law students. I also teach undergraduate Legal Studies and History courses on Legal Pluralism and the History of Forensic Science. Part of my job as a research assistant was to photocopy and transcribe ten journals of an English missionary in 19th-century South Africa. The reason why I became a scholar is because of my work to decode the handwriting and transcribe the text. This provided me with a brilliant exposure of what it was like to work with primary documents obtained from an archive on the other side of the world.

Prof. Faith Wallis was also a very important mentor to me. I took all of her courses and learned a lot about medieval European medical history (especially urine analysis!). My senior thesis was on the history of the book. Every Friday, Prof. Wallis would spend an hour or two guiding me through McGill Rare Books' collection of medieval codices. It was an experience I will never forget, given the age and beauty of that collection. Now that I am a Professor, I can say that this was an astonishing investment of time and energy by Prof. Wallis! I was very lucky.



# Congratulations!

## Faculty

Professor **D. J. ...** was inducted as a Fellow to the Royal Society of Canada. Professor **J. ...** received two SSHRC grants (Insight and Connection) as co-applicant with Professor **J. ...** (Geography) for her research on “Enhancing Animated Web Maps of Historical Change through Temporal Topology and the Visualization of Uncertainty” and for a conference entitled “Enhanced Interactive Web Mapping of Chinese History for the Western Han Period.” Professor **J. ...** won a SSHRC Insight Development Grant for a project entitled “Racial Capitalism and Social Difference in Modern China.” Professor **J. ...** won the e Judith B. and Burton P. Resnick Invitational Scholar for the Study of Anti-Semitism fellowship for her research project “Antisemitism, Gender, Mobility: The Impact of the Numerus Clausus in Hungary, 1920-1948” at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum’s Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies. Professor Heidi Wendt won the Arts Distinction in Research Award at McGill for 2021.

Professor **A. ...** was awarded the 2020 J. B. Tyrell Historical Medal from the Royal Society of Canada for his outstanding work in the history of Canada, and Professor **J. ...** won the 2021 Excellence Award of the Chinese Historians of the United States (CHUS) for his 2020 book *Cold Wars: Asia, the Middle East, Europe*.

Dr. **J. ...**, currently a post-doc but incoming as professor in 2022, has received the 2021-21 Ph.D. dissertation prize of Queens University for her dissertation on “Blackness and British ‘Fair Play’: Burgeoning Black Social Activism in Ontario and Grassroots Responses to the Canadian Color Line, 1919-1939.”

Dr. **J. ...**, currently a post-doc at the IOWC, received a SSHRC Insight Development Grant for his project “Climate History and Human-Environment Interaction in Equatorial Eastern Africa, c.1780-1900.”

## Ph.D. Students

Dr. **J. ...** (Ph.D. 2020) received the McGill Arts- Insights Dissertation Award in the Humanities/Social Sciences for his dissertation “Local Patriots and Ecumenical Ottomans: The Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople in the Ottoman Conquest of Power, 1768-1828”. Dr. **J. ...** (Ph.D. 2020) won the 2020 American Society for Environmental History’s Rachel Carson Dissertation Prize for his dissertation “History and Geography of

## *"New Wine in Old Wineskins:"* Early Christianity as the History of Religion in the Roman Empire

In 2012, a papyrus fragment roughly the size of a credit card (1.6 in x 3.1 in) sparked a rife debate among ancient-historians about matters ranging from authenticity to celibacy to the shadows that personal identity casts on scholarly research. The text was introduced to the academy and broader public by Professor Karen King, the first woman appointed as Harvard Divinity School's Hollis Professor of Divinity. King had learnt of the fragment when an anonymous private owner contacted her to study the text. Allegedly, he had purchased it from another collector as part of a cache of papyri

Roman religion, the activities of self-proclaimed or “free



between the past and the present, she studies and also protects Hawaiian customary knowledge, legalities, and governance. She does so through traditional historical excavations in written records from the past and through conversation with knowledge keepers. She conveys her scholarship through traditional written modes but has taken the lead in building digital repositories of cultural knowledge that are respectful of Hawaiian sovereignty. She is a sought-after speaker, able to converse across fields of linguists, computer scientists, and historians. She is a member of the Indigenous Protocol and Artificial Intelligence Working Group.

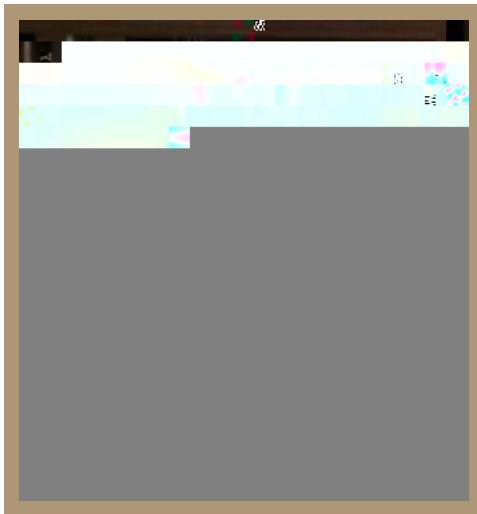
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## New Post-Docs

**Julie Babin** completed her Ph.D. in the Department of Geography at Laval University with Dr. Frédéric Lasserre. Her research interests include Arctic geopolitics, science-diplomacy, Asian Arctic policies and Japan's foreign policy. Julie Babin's doctoral work, *Stretching the Icecap: Japan's Engagement and Policy in the Arctic*, examines the strategies developed by Japan to support its interests in the Arctic region. As the Arctic ice melts, non-bordering states underlie their interests and concerns for this region, raising interesting questions about the role of emerging actors that have been perceived to have an interest in the polar regions. Japan's Arctic strategy builds on its research and innovation expertise to strengthen economic and diplomatic cooperation with the Arctic states, especially with Russia.



Starting in the Fall of 2021, Julie Babin will join the Indian Ocean World Center (IOWC), a research initiative promoting the study of the Indian Ocean world, as a Post-Doctoral fellow. Collaborating with a dynamic and multi-disciplinary group of scholars, she will be investigating the impact of climate change in the Arctic for Asian states from a socio-economic perspective, taking into account governmental and business public policies. Given the development of an Arctic Ocean caused by climate change, Asian states must address climate migration, security in maritime transport and navigation, border issues, conservation of the environment, or the promotion of international coordination and cooperation. Global warming in the Arctic region is already having an impact on the rainfall regime in Asia, the movement of winds and sandstorms, the release of gas and the salinity of marine currents.



**Natalie Nikkole Cornett** joins the Department of History and Classical Studies as a FRQSC-funded post-doctoral fellow working under the supervision of Prof. James Krapavich. Her postdoctoral project, *Rosa's World: Rosa Luxemburg, Partitioned Poland, and Socialist Internationalism (1893-1919)*, explores the world of nineteenth-century Europe and International Socialism from the perspective of one of its most complex figures, Rosa Luxemburg, or by her Polish name, Róża Luksemburg. The project will cover the period from when she first co-founded an Internationalist Socialist Party in the Russian Empire, to her death in 1919. This study will move beyond the limitations of biographical understandings of Luxemburg and use this female revolutionary as a lens through which to view larger questions of the period, such as emancipatory politics, nationalism and women's rights. Cornett recently presented her work on this project at the International Council for Central and East European Studies conference in August 2021.

Cornett's post-doctoral project builds on themes explored in her dissertation, *Politics of Love: The "Enthusiasts" and Feminism in Nineteenth-Century Poland*, in which she examined the women's movement in nineteenth-century Poland, when that country was under Russian, Prussian and Austrian imperial rule. Using letters, diaries, police files, and published works from across Europe, Cornett described how a mid-century group of educated women called the 'Enthusiasts' (*Entuzjastki*) advocated for women's independence and social equality while fighting for Poland's national liberation. Cornett completed her doctoral work at Brandeis University and has received funding for the project from the Mellon Foundation, the Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies, and the Tauber Institute for the Study of European Jewry.

While at McGill, Cornett will continue researching her new post-doctoral project in addition to editing a special issue on gender and history for *Polish Review* and preparing her dissertation manuscript for publication.

# NEW BOOKS

The Travels of Robert Lyall explores his life as surgeon, botanist, voyager, and British Agent to the court of Madagascar.

Anton

[More info](#)

Kristy Ironside,  
Full-Value Ruble: The  
Promise of Prosperity in  
the Postwar Soviet Union

In spite of Karl Marx's proclamation that money would become obsolete under Communism, the ruble remained a key feature of Soviet life.

[More info](#)

Griet Vankeerberghen,  
and Hans Beck, eds.,  
Rulers and Ruled in Ancient  
Greece, Rome, and China

Situated on opposite banks of Eurasia, ancient Mediterranean and Han-Chinese societies had no grounded knowledge about one another.

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[More info](#)

Gwyn Campbell,  
Travels of Robert Lyall,  
1789–1831: Scottish  
Surgeon, Naturalist and  
British Agent to the Court  
of Madagascar



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Taha Hussein (1889–1973), one of Egypt's most iconic figures, was central to key social and political developments in Egypt during the parliamentary period between 1922 and 1952.

[More info](#)

Vlad Solomon, *State Surveillance, Political Policing and Counter-Terrorism in Britain: 1880-1914*

Based on newly declassified documents, *State Surveillance* weaves together separate narrative threads which converge to paint a complex picture of the institutional innovations and personal rivalries that produced Britain's first national political police.

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[More info](#)

Daniel Rück,



important market for this growing output and emerged as the dominant metropole of Cape Breton's Sydney coal region. Volunteers sought to apprehend men connected to the "Lingan riot" at Little Glace Bay during a nighttime raid. But

Robert Drummond returned to Cape Breton once again, this time as a leader of the newly established Provincial Workmen's Association (PWA) and the editor of its paper, the Trades Journal. PWA had developed out of a successful strike at Springhill in 1879, from which Drummond – a bank boss, fired for his public criticism of the coal company – had emerged as a leader of the miners. Within the context of an expanding coal trade, Drummond's efforts to organize mine workers into the PWA was a dramatic success. By the end of summer in 1881 the PWA had signed up nearly 1,300 Cape Breton members.

However, there were signs of trouble at Lingan before the end of the year. The mine manager there, Donald Lynk, announced in December that all workmen would be required to sign non-union pledges. A strike ensued in March 1882. The

A view of Lingan, c. 1871, from Richard Brown, *Coal Fields and Coal Trade of the Island of Cape Breton* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Low,

# Digitizing the Indian Ocean World: GIS Datasets for Historical-Environmental Analyses

The SSHRC funded, IOWC-based partnership “Appraising Risk, Past and Present: Interrogating Historical Data to Enhance Understanding of Environmental Crises in the Indian Ocean World” is exploring new ways to combine historical statistics and cartographic data in order to elucidate the historical relationship between human and environmental variables and how this can inform current climate change policy. To achieve this, we are integrating archival and online historical data into an IOWC database and digital Geographic Information System (GIS)

process allowed us to gain invaluable experience in learning to write a concise research article, interact with-feedback from anonymous reviewers, perform several rounds of edits, and work according to a publisher's timeline. The fact that the subject matter of this project, and in turn, our articles, were not directly related to our own fields of research (respectively, 18th-century trajectories of oceanic natural objects and vernacular maritime knowledge, and 16th-17th century household gardening in France and Britain) made this work all the more enriching and exciting. It also allowed us to expand our knowledge base, and gain important research and writing experience that we can apply later on in our own careers. Publishing an article is an important goal that many students hope to accomplish during their time in the PhD programme — to have our names in print in such a high-ranking journal is definitely a dream come true and still feels quite surreal!

Green eld, Emilienne. 2021. "The practice of note-taking in Taylor White's natural history collection". *Notes Rec.* <http://doi.org/10.1098/rsnr.2020.0067>.

Stantina, Céline M. 2021. "Taylor White's 'paper museum' (1725-

# Congratulations to our new Ph.D.s!

This academic year was an unprecedented one for the community of History students at McGill University. But even in spite of the challenges it brought about, the McGill History Students' Association could not be more proud of what our community was able to accomplish. In a time when undergraduates were missing in-person connections with their fellow students more than ever, the Association was overjoyed to facilitate new innovative events, initiatives, and more.

From the very onset, after being handed the ropes by the 2019-20 HSA executive team, the incoming membership of the HSA for 2020-21 remained committed to adapting many of the HSA's yearly offerings to new, COVID-friendly formats that reflected the online nature of McGill life during the pandemic. For example, we adapted our previously in-person Trivia Nights to a new online format, hosted through Zoom, and welcomed dozens of participants. The HSA worked diligently with the Classics Students' Association (CSA) to host our much-anticipated Halloween and Valentine's Day lecture series. Our "Love in the Time of" event in February was one of the best attended events, second only to "Haunted Histories" the semester prior, reflecting how eager students were to hear from professors

# Classics Students' Association

By Taryn Power, President 2020-21

This year was certainly a strange one for the Classics Students' Association (CSA). Despite all the ups, downs and restrictions of this virtual year, I could not be more proud of the work that the CSA has put in. We kickstarted the year with the annual Haunted Histories Lecture series which is our collaborative event with the History Students' Association. This series featured some great talks from two of our Classics professors: Dr. Brahm Kleinman spoke on "Scary Specters and Haunted Houses in the Roman Empire," while Dr. Martin Sirois gave his talk on "The Bride's Empty Tomb: Paradoxography and the Origins of the Novel."

Sticking to our spooky theme, in October we also started a reading group to discuss Donna Tartt's *The Secret History* which brought students together to bond over the amusing similarities and major differences between that fictional Classics department and our own — the troubles of falling behind on Greek homework rang true, the real-life Bacchanals did not.

In November, we held an online edition of our famous "Wine and Cheese", making use of the breakout-room function to shuffle students around so that we could all chat and get to know one another within our department. In a way we were all missing, but we tried to make the most of it.

## Audrey Charlton Cameron Scholarship



Audrey Charlton Cameron

We are delighted to announce that a new undergraduate scholarship has been established, thanks to a generous donation from the family of Audrey Charlton Cameron. The scholarship, which will carry her name, is to be awarded annually to an outstanding undergraduate student enrolled in an honours or joint honours programme in the Department of History and Classical Studies. The scholarship will be formally awarded by the Faculty of Arts Scholarship Committee, upon receiving a recommendation from our Department. Audrey Charlton Cameron was born in 1926, and passed away on December 25, 2019. She graduated from the Montreal General Hospital School of Nursing (1890-1972) in 1951. A lover of travel, genealogy, and history, she had a deep affinity for McGill University and Montreal. We are grateful that her family has chosen to honour their mother, grandmother and great-grandmother by supporting historical studies at McGill. It is a fitting tribute to her intellectual curiosity and life-long commitment to the communities she lived in. The first recipient of the Audrey Charlton Cameron Scholarship will be Hana Bobrow-Strain, who will be entering her third year at McGill, as a joint honours student in History and Anthropology. Congratulations, Hana!

### Three Years as Directeur d'études at the French School at Athens, 2016-2020

By Anastassios (Tassos) Anastassiadis

Founded in 1846, the Ecole française d'Athènes (EFA) is the oldest French research institution abroad and the first international research institution established in Greece. Along with five other

