
The Leverhulme Trust

1 Pemberton Row London EC4A 3BG

Philip Leverhulme Prize Winners 2010

The Leverhulme Trustees are pleased to announce the results of the 2010 competition for Philip Leverhulme Prizes. These Prizes, with a value of £70,000 each, are awarded to outstanding scholars who have made a substantial and recognised contribution to their particular field of study, recognised at an international level, and where the expectation is that their greatest achievement is yet to come.

The Prizes commemorate the contribution to the work of the Trust made by Philip Leverhulme, the Third Viscount Leverhulme and grandson of the Founder.

The broad fields of research covered by this year's awards were:

- **Earth, Ocean and Atmospheric Sciences**
- **History of Art**
- **Law**
- **Mathematics and Statistics**
- **Medieval, Early Modern and Modern History**

Earth, Ocean and Atmospheric Sciences

Dr Arwen Deuss

Department of Earth Sciences, University of Cambridge

Dr Arwen Deuss is already recognised as one of the international stars of her generation in the subject of seismology – the study of the structure of the Earth gleaned from its response to earthquakes and large underground explosions. As an undergraduate she was the first to determine from seismological data that shear waves (for which the direction of motion of the elastic solid is perpendicular to the motion of the wave) were transmitted through the Earth's solid inner core, of radius 1221 km, believed to consist of almost pure iron. Dr Deuss has gone on to work on the structure of the inner core, showing recently that it can be considered at four different segments, akin to a four-slice orange for example. Each segment has different iron crystal structure and anisotropy, related to the deduced strength of the Earth's magnetic field at the boundary between the liquid outer core and the solid mantle at a radius of approximately 3500 km (i.e. a depth of approximately 2900 km from the surface of the Earth). Dr Deuss has also used seismological techniques to analyse heterogeneity in the Earth's mantle, linking these with descriptions in terms of mineral physics.

<http://bullard.esc.cam.ac.uk/~deuss/>

Dr Daniel Lunt

School of Geographical Sciences, University of Bristol

Dr Dan Lunt uses high-performance computer modelling to understand the processes involved in past climate change. Collating geological data to build hypotheses, which models can be used to test, he is able to add important quantification to the results of fieldwork from numerous sources. His work has highlighted the impact vegetation has made on the development of Pliocene ice sheets and the likely influence it will have on future climates. His model results also provide crucial information on the potential risks associated with proposals to 'geoengineer' Earth's climate, i.e. deliberately manipulating the Earth's climate to counteract the effects of global warming. He has pioneered new studies in this controversial area, showing the considerable problems with some of the proposed schemes. Dr Lunt has published in the world's leading scientific literature, and his findings have made fundamental contributions across a range of different subject areas.

http://www.ggy.bris.ac.uk/staff/staff_lunt.html

Dr Tamsin Mather

Department of Earth Sciences, University of Oxford

Dr Tamsin Mather is a leading young scientist whose work is having a wide impact on the volcanological community. She studies the gases emitted by volcanoes, their chemical composition and interactions in the volcanic plume as well as wider issues such as environmental and health impacts, and the role of volcanic plume gases in the evolution of the atmosphere. She pioneered the concept of 'reaction crucibles' recognising that mixing air with volcanic gases catalyses atmospheric processes leading to the formation of unexpected chemical compounds in the plume with important chemical and environmental consequences. She is active in both public outreach and policy and has received a Dorothy Hodgkin Fellowship and the UNESCO/L'Oreal UK and Ireland Women in Science Award.

<http://www.earth.ox.ac.uk/~tamsinm>

Dr Alberto Naveira Garabato

School of Ocean and Earth Sciences, University of Southampton

Dr Alberto Naveira Garabato is a physical oceanographer who specialises in the Southern Ocean and he has made several fundamental contributions to its study. His chosen region is one of the most important and least understood parts of the ocean for the global climate: for example, it is the place where much of the deep water in the world ocean is formed, and it plays a critical role in the oceanic uptake of atmospheric carbon dioxide. Dr Naveira Garabato has used new observational techniques to show that vertical mixing is intense in regions of the Southern Ocean where there are seabed mountain ranges, to describe the circulation there, and to study its influence both on plankton and carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere. Oceanography is 'big science' that requires highly organised collaboration among scientists, and he has in recent years become a leader of the ocean science community, spearheading major international shipboard expeditions and experiments that are helping to define our understanding of this remote and fascinating ocean.

<http://www.noc.soton.ac.uk/soes/staff/acng/>

Dr Nicholas Teanby

Department of Earth Sciences, University of Bristol

Dr Nicholas Teanby has made significant advances in three very different fields. He compiled a remarkable history of the Earth's magnetic field over the last 50,000 years from a drill hole into the lavas of a Hawaiian volcano, showing how the Earth's field oscillated before it temporarily reversed direction. He then developed an automatic method to use minute earthquakes in a subterranean oil reservoir to document the changing stresses as the oil was extracted. This method has been applied to earthquakes beneath volcanoes and below oceanic trenches. More recently he has been interpreting the results from the Cassini space mission to Saturn and its moons. He has been able to discover the detailed structure of the atmosphere of the moon Titan, and how it changes during the Titan year that lasts for 29 Earth years. He is currently involved in the development of a broadband microseismometer for application to Solar System bodies, such as Mars and the Moon, and he plans to continue to work in the area of planetary seismology and atmospheres.

<http://www.gly.bris.ac.uk/people/teanby.html>

Dr Patricia Allmer

Manchester Institute for Research and Innovation in Art and Design, Manchester Metropolitan University

Dr Patricia Allmer's research in the comparatively under-explored areas of Belgian Surrealism, the second largest national concentration of the movement, and women artists and Surrealism, is transformational. In 2009 major outcomes of her research came into the public domain; her monograph, *Rene Magritte – Beyond Painting* (MUP) focusing upon philosophical implications and other neglected and marginalised aspects of his works, redefined his artistic practice. Her curation of the exhibition *Angels of Anarchy: Women Artists and Surrealism* at Manchester Art Gallery introduced over 60,000 visitors to the work of three generations of artists from the US, UK, Mexico, France, Switzerland, Germany, Belgium and the Czech Republic. The exhibition and its accompanying edited catalogue challenged the existing canon and received widespread critical acclaim. Her current project *Lee Miller: Beyond Frontiers* questions national, gender and artistic boundaries and will focus on her war, fashion and Surrealist photography, as well as her collaborations with other women Surrealists.

<http://www.artdes.mmu.ac.uk/profile/pallmer>

Dr Celeste-Marie Bernier

School of American and Canadian Studies, University of Nottingham

Dr Celeste-Marie Bernier's outstanding work in the field of African American art is both original and transformative. Her recent publications include *African American Visual Arts: From Slavery to the Present* which traces artistic and political developments over a two hundred year period by examining daguerreotypes, photographs, paintings, ceramics, quilts, sculpture and murals. *Public Art, Memorials and Atlantic Slavery* (co-edited with Judie Newman) gathers together scholars, museum and gallery curators and public historians to address major issues regarding memorialising, representing and narrating histories of slavery in the public domain. While *Characters of Blood: Black Heroism in the Transatlantic Imagination* provides the first interdisciplinary study of nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first century mixed-media representations of black heroism. A future project will be a critical edition of Horace Pippin's war diaries and letters, and this will add considerably to our understanding of this most important American visual artist. .

<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/american/people/celeste-marie.bernier>

Dr Grace Brockington

Department of History of Art, University of Bristol

Dr Grace Brockington has an impressive record of academic achievement. She has published articles where she shed new light on the pacifism of the Bloomsbury Group and portrayed the Omega workshops as ideologically sustained by war through the determination to remain creative, despite the terrible destruction of war. In 2009 she contributed an important essay in the groundbreaking catalogue for the exhibition *Beyond Bloomsbury; Designs of the Omega Workshops 1913 - 19* at the Courtauld Institute of Art, entitled *The Omega and the End of Civilization: Pacifism, Publishing and Performance in the First World War*. She was also sole editor of a key collection of essays entitled *Internationalism and the Arts in Britain and Europe at the Fine de Siècle*, also published last year. Her monograph *Above the Battlefield: British Modernism and the Peace Movement, 1900 – 1918* was a radical revision of the relationship between modernism and the peace movement drawing upon new archival research and based upon her doctoral thesis. She is already engaged in an exciting new project reevaluating the 'experimental' work of Vanessa Bell which will result in the co-curation of an exhibition (with Barnaby Wright) at the Courtauld Gallery planned for 2014.

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/arhistory/staff/brockington.html>

Dr Alain George

History of Art, University of Edinburgh

Dr Alain George's publications over the past three years have offered remarkable new insights into the field of Islamic art. His discussion of the calligraphy and design of early manuscripts of the Qur'an is conducted methodically, and with an eye that is invariably alert to the slightest detail. At the same time, each of these individual studies constitutes a highly imaginative exploration of the particular material, which may be appreciated by specialists and non-specialists alike. The extension of his research into performance studies, with reference to Arabic illustrated books, is another testimony to his liveliness and originality. Results from his current work on the social and intellectual context for the building of the Great Mosque of Damascus will be eagerly awaited, not least since he intends to show how the emerging civilisation of Islam was closely intertwined with the world of late Antiquity. The breadth of his scholarship is also demonstrated by another new project on the artistic exchange between Islam and China in the 8th and 9th centuries, adding further to our understanding of how Islamic art is at the crossroads of world culture.

www.ed.ac.uk/ace/history-art/staff/alain-george

Dr Tara Hamling

Department of History, University of Birmingham

One of the most familiar stories in the history of British art has been about the disastrous impact of the Reformation, resulting in the destruction of church art in the wake of the dissolution of the monasteries. Generations of art historians, critics and more recently even television presenters have presented these long drawn-out historical changes as a disaster for the visual arts, strangling the Renaissance at birth, isolating England from continental sources of inspiration and setting back the development of refined taste. Without denying the impact of the Reformation on a number of important traditional forms of visual art, Dr Hamling's work on the post-Reformation period radically revises this traditional view by showing how the aims and purposes of religious art were transferred from the more public spaces of the church to the more private spaces of the domestic sphere. The visual arts were not solely the business of aristocratic elites but also of the middle orders of the gentry. In her analysis of the location, form and subject-matter of visual signs found in figured plaster ceilings and overmantels, woodcuts in devotional books and embroidered into samplers and other textiles, Dr Hamling has shown how spiritual questions were explored for laypeople through what she calls 'everyday objects'. Her work requires us to re-think 'the religious' and 'the secular' as categories applied to the visual arts and to re-assess the significance of large numbers of fascinating, surviving works previously condemned merely as works of 'applied' or 'decorative' art. Her work is both radical and accessible.

<http://www.shakespeare.bham.ac.uk/academic/tarahamling.shtml>

Law**Dr Sylvie Delacroix**

Faculty of Laws, University College London

Dr Sylvie Delacroix is a legal philosopher who brings her deep understanding of the French and German traditions to bear on her engagement with Anglo-Saxon analytical jurisprudence. She has made an original and illuminating contribution to our understanding of law's binding quality. It would be hard to over-estimate Dr Delacroix's achievement in spanning philosophical methods which are almost always divided in contemporary legal theory, but her achievements are by no means limited to jurisprudence. Her interest in the ethics of risk led her to take a leading role in the establishment of the new Faculty Centre for Ethics and Law at UCL: an exceptional achievement. Her conviction that legal normativity is brought about on a daily basis through social interaction in particular contexts implies a commitment to bridging the gap between theory and practice. This is reflected in her current research on the values which underlie and animate the Palestinian constitution-making project.

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/laws/academics/profiles/index.shtml?delacroix>

Mr Ben McFarlane

Faculty of Law, University of Oxford

Ben McFarlane has taken a major step towards providing a unified conception of property law, bringing together rights in land, rights in things, equitable property rights and restitution within a single, theoretical framework and explaining their inter-relationships systematically. He is unusual in being a specialist in property law who deals with all kinds of rights in property and approaches the subject in a way that brings together theory, doctrine and practice. In his justly admired book *The Structure of Property Law* he explained how property law answers fundamental questions about the use and ownership of property. In a lucid, clear and analytically rigorous manner he reassessed the relationships between different kinds of rights in and relating to property and argued that equitable property rights can best be conceived as rights to be asserted against other, legal, rights in property. He tested his model by examining the reasoning of judges when deciding cases on property law. This gives his theory explanatory as well as normative power. Coupled with his accessible style, it allows him to influence judges, legal practitioners and students as well as policy-makers, law reformers and legal philosophers. He now aims to see whether it is possible to extend his 'right against a right' theory to other European systems of property law.

<http://www.law.ox.ac.uk/profile/mcfarlaneb>

Professor Vanessa Munro

School of Law, University of Nottingham

In the last ten years Professor Vanessa Munro has produced an impressive portfolio of publications which combine high quality scholarship with hard-hitting practical and policy impact. Her academic excellence is evidenced in an outstanding academic record, extraordinary success in securing external research funding, and a rich and prolific assortment of publications, including a monograph, three edited collections and a number of high impact journal articles. Professor Munro's work is distinctive in that it deploys such a wide range of different research methods so effectively. She is as at home with qualitative empirical work as she is with legal doctrine and analysis and all of her work is strongly informed by socio-legal theoretical approaches. The substantive content of her scholarship – broadly in the field of criminal justice - also ranges to encompass rape law, the regulation of prostitution and human trafficking in which context her scholarship rightly transcends jurisdictional boundaries to embrace international perspectives and debates. Perhaps most widely acknowledged is the work she carried out examining jurors' deliberative processes by means of mock jury techniques. Professor Munro is also one of a handful of scholars exploring the theoretical possibilities of a rehabilitated liberalism for feminist legal studies in the monograph, *Law and Politics at the Perimeter: Re-Evaluating Key Debates in Feminist Legal Theory*.

<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/Law/Staff-Lookup/vanessa.munro>

Professor Mathias Siems

The Law School, University of East Anglia

Professor Mathias Siems works mainly in the fields of comparative company and related commercial law and in law and economics. He has made an impressive and innovatory contribution to scholarship in these areas. His work has both advanced the theoretical understanding of comparative company law and played a pivotal role in developing systematic quantitative methodologies by which to measure the impact of the rules in different jurisdictions regarding aspects of corporate governance. His output is therefore at the cutting-edge of both theoretical and empirical research, and the work he does is of great value to scholars and policy-makers internationally in an area of global significance. In addition to this he has published original ideas on the methodology of legal research and the concept of 'originality' in such research, thereby contributing significantly to an increasingly urgent question for the academic legal community.

<http://www.uea.ac.uk/law/msiems>

Dr Ralph Wilde

Faculty of Laws, University College London

Dr Ralph Wilde is one of the leading younger scholars in international law in the UK today working in two key areas: the administration of territory by international organisations, and extraterritorial application of human rights law. His book entitled *International Territorial Administration: How Trusteeship and the Civilizing Mission Never Went Away*, published by OUP has received widespread acclaim, winning, for example, the Certificate of Merit of the American Society of International Law in 2009. This prestigious prize has only rarely been awarded to a British scholar. Dr Wilde has also embarked upon a monograph on the extraterritorial application of human rights law and has published some leading articles in this area, most notably in the *Michigan Journal of International Law*. In addition, he is working with Dame Rosalyn Higgins and others towards a monograph on the law of the UN for OUP. He is also playing an increasing important role in international law life in the UK and elsewhere, being appointed a member of the Executive Councils of both the American Society of International Law and the International Law Association.

www.ucl.ac.uk/laws/wilde

Mathematics and Statistics

Dr Caucher Birkar

Department of Pure Mathematics and Mathematical Statistics, University of Cambridge

Dr Caucher Birkar is awarded a Philip Leverhulme Prize for his outstanding contributions to fundamental research in algebraic geometry. His work on the Termination of Flips conjecture and the Log Minimal Model Programme has had great impact on the field. His best known work to date is published in a joint paper with Cascini, Hacon and McKernan which, in part, grew out of his independent investigations. It has attracted wide attention and admiration. It proves the main conjectures of the Minimal Model Programme in all dimensions and essentially implies a complete classification of algebraic varieties up to bi-rational equivalence. Results of such power had been regarded, for some time, as virtually out of reach. Their new-found accessibility has spawned a revival of interest in this classical area. While undoubtedly a breakthrough, this joint paper is only one step in a programme that Dr Birkar continues to pursue. In earlier work, he reduced the general Termination of Flips Conjecture to an apparently more accessible conjecture of Shokurov, so providing a way further forward into this subject. On the basis of these achievements, Dr Birkar already ranks with the world's leaders in the field.

<http://www.dpmms.cam.ac.uk/~cb496/>

Dr Timothy Browning

School of Mathematics, University of Bristol

Dr Timothy Browning works at the interface of analytic number theory and arithmetic geometry; his primary focus is the distribution of rational points on varieties, a topic of central importance in mathematics. One famous open problem is Manin's conjecture, which predicts the density of rational points on algebraic varieties in terms of the geometry of the varieties in a deep and beautiful way. Dr Browning has introduced novel and powerful marriages of techniques from analytic number theory and arithmetic geometry; and in work both alone and jointly he has resolved Manin's conjecture for several families of varieties. He is already a leader internationally in the area which applies analytical methods to the investigation of rational points on higher dimensional values. His work takes known analytic methods beyond the boundary of what was previously possible, and opens uncharted territory.

<http://www.maths.bris.ac.uk/~matdb/>

Dr Tom Coates

Department of Mathematics, Imperial College London

Dr Tom Coates has made outstanding contributions to enumerative algebraic geometry. His work lies in an area called Gromov-Witten theory (the science of counting holomorphic curves on algebraic and symplectic manifolds) that is an important and widely studied field on the boundary of mathematics and theoretical physics. On the one hand ideas from string theory are used to solve problems in geometry and topology while on the other hand the computations serve as tests for the physical theory by verifying the mathematical predictions in string theory. Dr Coates has changed the field of Gromov-Witten theory with the introduction of the Langrangian cone formalism (with Givental) and with his work on the Crepant Resolution Conjecture (in parts with others). The former has lead to a greater understanding of the mathematical physical theory of mirror symmetry while the latter greatly clarified the relationship between Gromov-Witten theory and the more classical theory of birational geometry. In addition to these far-reaching ideas, he has also provided some of the best and most difficult explicit computations in the field.

<http://coates.ma.ic.ac.uk/>

Dr Radek Erban

Mathematical Institute, University of Oxford

Dr Radek Erban is awarded a Philip Leverhulme Prize for his work in Mathematical Biology. With his work on bacterial chemotaxis, Dr Erban has made major contributions towards the understanding of how cell-level decision making translates into population-level behaviour. He has understood how to incorporate cell-level behaviour in a function that characterises the macroscopic response and provided a set of techniques for tackling more general problems. In addition, with I. Kevrekidis, Dr Erban has developed computer-assisted methods for analysing stochastic models of gene regulatory networks, and has applied general multiscale equation-free methodology to them. Most recently, Radek's papers have significantly clarified some fundamental issues concerning the stochastic analysis of reaction-diffusion systems. This work is having a large impact on the use of stochastic methods for modelling kinetics in biological applications. His future research will continue to focus on real world problems which offer mathematical challenges.

<http://people.maths.ox.ac.uk/erban/>

Dr Nicolai Meinshausen

Department of Statistics, University of Oxford

Dr Nicolai Meinshausen has a growing international reputation as one of the leading mathematical statisticians of his generation. He is an outstanding scientist both in statistics and in climate research, highly original and with an impressive record of contributions. Over recent years, there has been an explosive growth in the amount of data now available in many scientific disciplines. The challenge is to determine the conditions under which it is possible to identify interesting information hidden in such data, and then to find statistical algorithms to do so. Dr Meinshausen's research combines important theoretical results and computational implementation for high-dimensional situations. His work on variable selection with the Lasso has been particularly important. In other influential work he has shown the benefit of using resampling techniques in assessing the relevance of variables when the number of variables greatly exceeds the sample size, and addressed the problem of multiple testing when the number of hypotheses is vast (the original work was in an astronomical context but has been extended to other settings).

<http://www.stats.ox.ac.uk/~meinshau/>

Dr Angus Gowland

Department of History, University College London

Dr Angus Gowland is the author of *The Worlds of Renaissance Melancholy: Robert Burton in context* (2006), a brilliant and highly original first book. Its subject, Burton's famous *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) had previously been studied as a classic of English literature, while historians had neglected it. Dr Gowland's achievement is, as the book's sub-title implies, to replace Burton in his historical context or more exactly, contexts in the plural: not only seventeenth-century medicine, in which 'melancholy' was a technical term, but contemporary debates on religion and politics as well. Angus Gowland does not ignore the literary aspect of the *Anatomy* indeed, he has much of interest to say about its rhetoric. Trained as a historian, he shows a remarkable ability to acquire, internalise and use with great effectiveness a battery of techniques normally associated with literature. Since publishing this book, the author has begun to work on dream interpretation in the Renaissance: another area with rich interaction between philosophical, religious, medical and literary currents.

http://www.ucl.ac.uk/history/about_us/academic_staff/dr_angus

Dr Julia Lovell

Department of History, Classics and Archaeology, Birkbeck, University of London

Dr Julia Lovell has conducted research in China in affiliation with both the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the History Department of Beijing University. The author of *The Politics of Cultural Capital: China's Quest for a Nobel Prize in Literature* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2006) and *The Great Wall: China against the World 1000 BC-AD 2000* (Grove Atlantic, 2006), Dr Lovell will be publishing a new study in 2011 of the Sino-British Opium War (1840-42), examining the conflict from both the Chinese and British sides. This will also consider the impact of the war on the subsequent 170 years of China's relations with the West and uses a range of Chinese language sources little used in previous Western books. Dr Lovell is also a translator of distinction, whose work has attracted considerable attention. She is also a frequent contributor to the academic blog *The China Beat* (<http://www.thechinabeat.org/>), and also writes for the *Guardian*, *Times*, *New Statesman*, *Prospect* and *Economist*. Her next project focuses on the West's enthusiasm for Maoism between the 1930s and 1970s, another facet of China's relationship with the rest of the world.

<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/history/our-staff/full-time-academic-staff/dr-julia-lovell>

Dr Giorgio Riello

Department of History, University of Warwick

Dr Giorgio Riello has published widely (in English, French, Italian and Russian) on topics that include cultural, economic and global history. He is a scholar of great distinction and breadth, whose key contributions have been in the field of the history of fashion and global history, particularly the history of commodities. His first academic monograph, *A Foot in the Past: Consumers, Producers and Footwear in the Long Eighteenth Century* (OUP, 2006) was complemented by *Shoes: A History from Sandals to Sneakers*, co-authored with Peter McNeil. More recently, Dr Riello's research has focused on the global history of textile production and trade. In addition to a succession of articles on this topic in peer-reviewed journals, he has co-edited *The Spinning World: A Global History of Cotton Textiles, 1200-1850* (OUP, 2009) and *How India Clothed the World: The World of South Asian Textiles, 1500-1850* (Brill, 2009). His new project promises to place fashion, textiles and material culture within the framework of global history.

http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/history/people/staff_index/griello/

Dr Alice Rio

Department of History, King's College London

Dr Alice Rio's work makes a fundamental contribution to the understanding of early medieval society as well as to the practice of historical study of the early middle ages. She is outstandingly skilled in the analysis of difficult and ambiguous sources with subtle attention to fine detail and an ability to link that precision to larger problems in political, economic, and social history as well as the technical history of law and legal practice. Her monograph, *Legal Practice and the Written Word in the Early Middle Ages* (CUP, 2009) focuses on Merovingian and Carolingian legal formula collections and the light they throw on the lives of ordinary people. This won the Royal Historical Society's Gladstone Prize in 2010 for the best first book in any field apart from British history. This book also established the historical importance of these hitherto overlooked sources. She followed up this work with a splendid translation of the most important of these Latin formulary collections. Her current work on freedom and unfreedom has important implications for historians in many periods and parts of the world. It breaks new ground in the study of social practice and builds effectively on her familiarity with the legal sources. Alice Rio's quick, deep and subtle historical intelligence promises to transform larger debates about the transition from Roman to medieval European society as well as the medieval origins of political ideas and institutions of liberty and slavery.

<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/schools/humanities/depts/history/staff/academic/rio.html>

Dr Alan Strathern

Faculty of History, University of Cambridge

Dr Alan Strathern's oeuvre is centred on an investigation of the space between religion and politics in the early modern world. In *Kingship and Conversion in Sixteenth-Century Sri Lanka* (CUP, 2007) and in a range of influential essays, he examines both how power sought to make itself sacred and how religious change, and in particular conversion, shape and were shaped by power, in particular by Portuguese maritime imperialism. He combines deep and profound work in Southeast Asia, anchored to its west on Sri Lanka, with broad interests which embrace three continents and four major religious traditions, and bring him into particular engagement with the histories of Hawaii, the kingdom of the Kongo, Japan and China. His work exemplifies at the highest level the empirical curiosity of the historian about the precise processes of change in each context, mustering significant linguistic, paleographical, and cultural skills. It is also powerfully comparative and interdisciplinary drawing, as in his exploration of the 'stranger-king' formation, on a range of literatures in anthropology, sociology, political science, political economy, and comparative religion. Dr Strathern is now engaged in completing a major study of how the idea of sacred kingship shaped the expansion of monotheism around the world in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

http://www.hist.cam.ac.uk/academic_staff/further_details/strathern.html