

# HST



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

## HISTORY STUDENT TIMES

Issue 2 2016/17

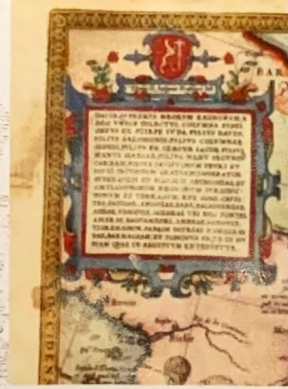
Discovery and Conquest



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## Letter From the Editor

Welcome to Issue 2!

January 26<sup>th</sup> saw the celebration of Australia Day, commemorating the arrival of the first fleet of British ships in New South Wales. However, this national holiday has been subject to mounting criticism, particularly in the form of protests promoting the alternative Invasion Day. These protests highlight the complex relationships between discovery, conquest, exploitation and forms of knowledge—themes which many of our writers have taken up in their dissection of the politically-loaded term “discovery” and its legacies across the world.

The articles in this issue explore the themes of “Discovery and Conquest” in varied, imaginative and thought-provoking ways, from the early modern discovery of coffee to the reconstruction of Iraq in the twenty-first century. Exploring topics as diverse as the Roman invasion of Britain and the British Raj, the pieces cover a range of periods and places, interpreting the themes in unique ways. I hope you enjoy reading them as much as I have!

As always, a huge thank you to all the contributors, as well as the marvellous editorial team, without whose help HST would not be possible.

Liz

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## History in the News

# Dakota Access Pipeline

*Brogan Coulson-Haggins*

**On the 24<sup>th</sup> January 2017 President Trump overturned President Obama's previous decision to reroute the infamous Dakota Access Pipeline, and gave the go ahead for its construction from North Dakota eastwards to Illinois.** A site of contention, a debate has emerged between those in favour of the pipeline as a method of efficient, cheaper oil transportation, and the protestors who place its construction within a larger timeline of white American destruction of Native American lands and cultures. So what is the significance of the land? And why has the pipeline attracted so much media attention?

According to the Dakota Access Pipeline facts webpage, the pipeline is the most efficient way to move crude oil from wells to consumers and was approved by regulators from various US states and the Army Corps of Engineers. They make it explicit that the pipeline does not enter Native American Standing Rock Sioux land and that 389 meetings were held between the Army Corps and 55 tribe representatives. Their view of the protestors is that the legitimate and resolved concerns of the Standing Rock community have been overtaken by fossil fuel demonstrators who exert violence and extreme methods to deliberately disrupt work.

Advocates for the Pipeline, therefore, strongly believe that not only is the line legal, but it is also vital for the oil industry. However, from April 2016 a grass roots protest emerged against the Dakota Access Pipeline. Their main concerns centre around potential environmental damage and the disruption and endangerment of heritage sites.

Whilst not entering Sacred Rock land, the pipeline crosses the Missouri River and the Cannonball River, named by colonisers after the spherical stones created by the meeting of these rivers, known by the local tribes as Iŋyaŋ Wakháŋagapi Othí. Although the Army Corps of Engineers in the 1950s dredged and flooded the rivers, meaning the whirlpool effect was lost, and with it the creation of new stones, protesters argue that the river is of great historical and cultural importance to the Native American community. Archaeologists have found physical remains of Native American villages and burial grounds, with communities continuing to use this area as a graveyard for their loved ones.

LaDonna Bravebull Allard, founder of the first protest camp in April 2016, sums up the significance of the area as 'the place where pipeline will cross on the Cannonball is the place where the Mandan came into the world after the great flood'. As a tribe dating back as early as the seventh century, there is over a thousand years of history along this river, as Bravebull further explains; 'there are numerous old Mandan, Cheyenne, and Arikara villages located in this area and burial sites. This is also where the sacred medicine rock [is located], which tells the future'.

This camp's significance is also part of a longer conflict between the Native American community in North Dakota and the federal government. On 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1863, the American army, led by General Alfred Sully, killed, wounded and captured around 400 Santee, Yanktonai and Lakota Sioux people, in what is now known as the Whitestone Massacre. Consequently, this protest cannot be seen in isolation, the history of the land is synonymous with the historical struggles of the Native American population that have lived there against those who 'discovered' America and took it for their own. This is why this pipeline is so important, it is seen by these communities as another example of conquest, the taking of their land and their culture by an alien party.



## Joint Honours Feature

# Beowulf: How does 11<sup>th</sup> Century Literature Reflect Viking Culture?

Stephanie Bennett

*Beowulf* is the most extensive epic poem in Old English – the language spoken in Anglo-Saxon England before the Norman Conquest in the Eleventh Century. The fire-damaged manuscript is dated from 1000 CE, but its subject matter is believed to have been told as early as 700 CE. It discloses the tale of the struggle between the young, 'Geatish' (Swedish) warrior Beowulf and the vicious monster Grendel, and the subsequent battle between Beowulf and Grendel's Mother after she seeks revenge for her son's slaughter. The transcription of the Scandinavian fable into Old English consequently offers copious intriguing insights into Viking culture from the perspective of the Anglo-Saxons. However, this also indicates that a degree of the original story has been lost or altered in the Anglo-Saxon translation.

Viking raids of the British Isles were rather sporadic until the 840s CE, but by 867 CE they dominated significant territories within Britain like Jorvic (York) and the southern part of Northumbria. They eventually conquered most of England after subduing the kingdom of Mercia and forcing the kingdom of Wes-

sex to submit in 878 CE. It is therefore conceivable that the pagan legend concerning the Norse hero was transferred and translated into Old English and composed by English poets before being solidified in print. It is interesting to note that while the poem is written in Old English, the narrative itself follows Beowulf's journeys from Geats, today's Sweden, to Lejre, Scandinavia, today's Denmark.

*Beowulf* reflects certain elements of Viking culture, specifically the warrior and raider aspect of their society, as suggested by the introductory passage below. The epic emphasises the significance of unquestionable loyalty and obedience to one's King, and the honour of fighting and dying valiantly in battle. This indisputable allegiance is so integral to Scandinavian society that it is still mirrored within the epic, despite the likelihood of the entire tale being diluted of its original core. The chief of Viking societies rewarded his supporters with lavish gifts to preserve their devotion and secure his position as chief, suggested by lines 20 to 25 of the poem: 'should war draw nigh, liegemen loyal: by lauded deeds, shall an earl have honour in every clan.' Tribal and blood feuds became frequent, ensuring that

Hwæt. We Gardena in geardagum,  
þeodcyninga, þrym gefrunon,  
hu ða æþelingas ellen fremedon.  
Oft Scyld Scefing sceaþena þreatum,  
monegum mægþum, meodosetla ofteah,  
egsode eorlas. Syððan ærest wearð  
feasceaft funden, he þæs frofre gebad,  
weox under wolcnum, weorðmyndum þah,  
oðþæt him æghwylc þara ymbsittendra  
ofer honrade hyran scolde,  
gomban gyldan. þæt wæs god cyning.

Lo, praise of the prowess of people-kings  
of spear-armed Danes, in days long sped,  
we have heard, and what honor the athelings won!  
Oft Scyld the Scefing from squadroned foes,  
from many a tribe, the mead-bench tore,  
awing the earls. Since erst he lay  
friendless, a foundling, fate repaid him:  
for he waxed under welkin, in wealth he throve,  
till before him the folk, both far and near,  
who house by the whale-path, heard his mandate,  
gave him gifts: a good king he!



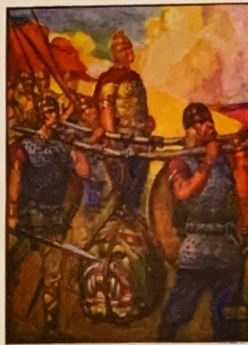
Chiefs distributed their spoils of war to prevent being dethroned by one of their own perfidious men.

*Beowulf* establishes a tradition of heroism and valour, accentuating values of family and clan loyalty through vengeance for unprovoked injury to kin. Men were bound by honour to avenge spilt blood or endure ignominy from their village. Such disputes were often resolved through payment or marriage, but predominantly through the shedding of more blood. Grendel's Mother seeking retribution for the slaying of her son embodies this cultural custom. The savagery of the Viking lifestyle is echoed through Grendel's Mother's 'blood-besprinkled' reprisal, alongside the glory many warriors sought through a respectable death in battle. This is also suggested through Beowulf's eventual death after battling a dragon towards the end of the poem, granting the hero an admirable demise.

blessed approval of God.

Embodying predominant Anglo-Saxon ideals, Beowulf is also courteous, pious and astute, befitting his elevated station. Grendel's Mother harbours a more ambivalent position within the poem. While on one level she too represents a fiendish malevolence to be vanquished by the hero, on another she is also a warrior seeking vengeance. The poet assiduously refers to Grendel's Mother as a 'ides, aglæcwif' or 'woman, monster-wife', suggesting a degree of indecision towards her true characterisation. Is she human, or a villainous beast like her son? The Scandinavian tradition of female warrior shield-maidens is perhaps marred by the prevalent Anglo-Saxon, Christian-based perception of Eve establishing sin that likely influenced the translation. From this perspective, Grendel's Mother was initially a heroic figure that personified established Viking values of ret-

Bona swylce læg,  
egeslic eorðdraca ealdre bereafod,  
bealwe gebæded. Beahhordum leng  
wurm wohbogen wealdan ne moste,  
ac hine irenna ecga fornamon,  
hearde, heaðoscearde homera lafe,  
þæt se widfloga wundum stille  
hreas on hrusan hordærne neah.  
Nalles æfter lyfte lacende hwearf  
middelnihtum, mædmæhta wlonc  
ansyn ywde, ac he eorðan gefeoll  
for ðæs hildfruman hondgeweorce.



*Beowulf with Grendel's head*

But the slayer too,  
awful earth-dragon, empty of breath,  
lay felled in fight, nor, fain of its treasure,  
could the writhing monster rule it more.  
For edges of iron had ended its days,  
hard and battle-sharp, hammers' leaving;  
and that flier-afar had fallen to ground  
hushed by its hurt, its hoard all near,  
no longer lusty aloft to whirl  
at midnight, making its merriment seen,  
proud of its prizes: prone it sank  
by the handiwork of the hero-king.

The translated epic also suggests the less desirable traits through the grotesque and almost demonic characterisation of Grendel and his Mother. Subjected to great debate in scholarly circles, on a purely allegorical level, Grendel can be read as the epitome of manifested evil as the descendent of the Biblical Cain. This is suggested by the text: 'Grendel this monster grim was called, march-riever mighty, in moorland living, in fen and fastness [...] On kin of Cain was the killing avenged by Sovran God for slaughtered Abel.' Due to his victory against such evil, Beowulf proves himself to be a worthy hero and is awarded the lofty position of King with the

tribution for kin that has since been tarnished by Anglo-Saxon belief and culture.

*Beowulf* thus offers an interesting perception of Viking culture through the lens of Anglo-Saxon literature. From pagan Scandinavia to Christian England, the tale is perhaps distorted to eclipse the original. Slivers of truth are still apparent, however, from the boastful heroics of the eponymous protagonist to the vicious brutality of the battles fought. The epic remains the most prevalent poem in Old English, and its textual reflections of Viking society are arguably unparalleled.



# A Voyage into the Mythical Renaissance

Joey Wright

The escalating capitalism of the Renaissance world of the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries meant that travel and improved technology were the catalysts for changing the European world-view permanently and evolving the notion of empire. This was the Age of Exploration; conquest by sea allowed empires to grow far larger and more extensively than land conquest ever did previously. Intertwined with these were emerging myths about the leaders of the conquests and this added to the courageous narratives that accompanied their voyages. Human curiosity sparked the improvement of ships making longer distances possible and far more attainable, fuelling the obsession with exploration by sea in this era.

There were a large number of myths that developed from the exaggerated evidence from the Age of Exploration. These heroic tales made sea captains celebrated figures and contributed to a triumphalist narrative of exploration. They were fuelled by the new modernisations of the time such as magnetic compasses and the quicker and stronger Caravel ships which accounted for the greater distance of naval travel. However, the cartographical discoveries these developments enabled were often overstated or unwittingly misleading through word of mouth. The significance of the Renaissance was that the printing press led to their validation. More maps than ever before could be created and copied, yet this meant that the inaccuracies were being distributed. The peninsula in North-West Mexico, for example, was often called California and expanded up



to ten times its actual size up the coast, appearing almost as an island parallel to North America in many sixteenth century maps.

In addition, a story emerged that the Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan circumnavigated the world for the first time in 1519-1521 under the Spanish flag. In the context of competing empires after the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494) divided the world into a Portuguese East and a Spanish West, Magellan paved the way for individual not nationalistic encouragement. While Spain controlled the land he found, the Portuguese Magellan obtained a legendary status as a Spanish and Portuguese hero. The myth of his circumnavigation arose however, because although he had already travelled the last half of his proposed journey, his death in the Philippines meant he did not technically finish the complete trip. His nationality became of further importance when the Strait of Magellan was named at the southern tip of South America where Spanish, not Portuguese, is spoken. Clearly, legendary status

By Abraham Ortelius (Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1564.) [public domain or Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons, <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b5/Prester\_John\_map.jpg>



was a key part of success in the Age of Exploration and was the primary factor in analysing what drove these explorers to the unknown.

Prester John was another historical figure who captured the minds of Renaissance westerners, drawing their attention to Asia. Referenced in Ethiopian culture as a ruler and in Mongol history as a king with Genghis Kahn, it was European Christianity that led to his status as a medieval fantasy figure. He was often depicted as learned exemplified by the famous series of stories that he wrote in the form of a letter. Reportedly written in the mid-twelfth century by Prester John as King of India and a descendent of one of the Three Magi, the letter was sent to the Byzantine King Manuel I Comnenus (1143-1180). Despite the fact that it was clearly forged, it endured into the Age of Exploration and was translated into many languages and spread throughout Europe. The letter contained many of the ancient and medieval geographical and traveller tales such as 'Sinbad the Sailor' and the 'Alexander Romance' of Alexander the Great's conquests. Another part of its popularity was the reference made in the letter to the lost kingdom of Christians in central Asia. Renaissance figures looked back at this and were inspired to travel East and the legend even trickled down into popular culture as Prester John receives a mention in Shake-



spare's play written in 1600, *Much A Do About Nothing*. In the Age of Exploration, explorers desired to know the truth behind the myths and so voyages to the mythical land in Asia prolonged the life of the legend.

Europeans primarily expanded east into Asia however for material desires such as spices as well as spreading their religious beliefs. The wish for the luxury of spice inspired the success of Portuguese Vasco de Gama's navigation around the Cape of

Good Hope to India in 1497. A sea route was thus found around the Ottoman Empire which had the overland monopoly on the taxed Spice Road. While the Spice Road had been previously travelled for many centuries, the naval success around the Cape to India was part of a wider drive to conquer the unknowns, this time with de Gama expanding Europe overseas. With improved access to Indian spices, Europeans could generate wealth through trade and begin to form empires within the Indies. The wealth made the Portuguese the earliest European seaborne empire to grow from the spice trade. Through trading, Christian Europeans successfully interacted with Muslim merchants after centuries of conflict. This represents the Renaissance ambition to combat the previously untouched taboo subject of inter-faith communication and eliminate some of the contemporary myths associated with other religions. Similarly, European evangelical Christianity became increasingly known in the East during the Renaissance. Individual Jesuits, such as St Francis Xavier of Spain, travelled in the Portuguese empire as far as Goa and Japan not only evangelically spreading Christianity, but revealing the desire to

expand to the unknown and bring what had previously been mythical places, under the Christian influence.

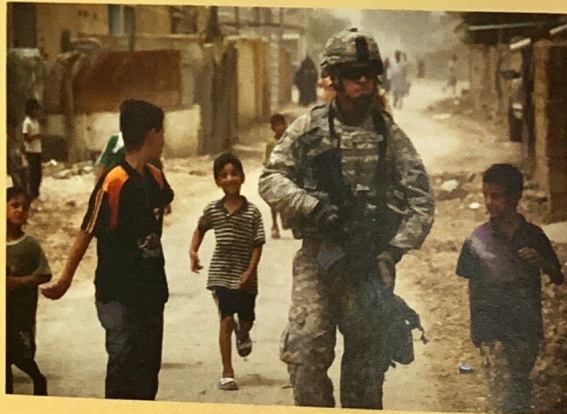
The desire for expansion led explorers into uncharted waters in pursuit of wealth and land. As Hispanic empires grew, European influence extended worldwide in the Age of Exploration. The seventeenth century saw the growth of the Dutch and English empires but none could quite reach the initial success or prosperity that Portugal and Spain had found. Aligned with the Renaissance ideals of inquisitiveness sparking exploration, the naval spread of influence created, explored and deconstructed the myths that fuelled European expansion.



# After the Conquest: ISIS and the Failure to Fix Iraq

Jack Meeson

The 20<sup>th</sup> of March will mark the fourteen year anniversary of the American-led invasion of Iraq. Over the eight year occupation it has been estimated that around 500,000 Iraqis were killed, the vast majority of those being civilians. Beyond the death toll, the quality of life for many in Iraq was greatly diminished. The entire infrastructure of the country was destroyed, leaving many without electricity, running water and other such necessities. Since President George W. Bush declared 'mission accomplished' in May 2003, billions of dollars has been spent rebuilding Iraq. Despite this the international effort was a complete failure, marked by corruption and incompetence. Today Iraq is ravaged by a bloody civil war, with Daesh (colloquially known as ISIS) committing human rights atrocities and even genocide in an attempt to create an extreme Islamist Caliphate. With figures such as former British Prime Minister Tony Blair conceding that the rise of Daesh is directly linked with the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq, we have to consider the consequences of failing to reconstruct a country after its conquest.



One of the most glaring instances of fraud was committed by a subsidiary of the multinational corporation Halliburton, the company depended on

the most by the United States to provide everything from construction materials to private security. This reliance persisted throughout the occupation despite claims that Halliburton were overcharging the US Government. In a court case brought against Halliburton by former employee Harry Barko, it was alleged that Halliburton employees were regularly accepting bribes when awarding subcontracts and then conspiring with the subcontractors to double the cost of completing the agreement. This then generated a greater profit for Halliburton as they had a contract with the US Government which awarded them 3% of the overall project cost. Halliburton has neither confirmed nor denied the claims and the progress of the case has been halted due to legal technicalities, however, it seems highly likely that at least some of the allegations are in part true.

A case representative of the widespread mis-spending of money is the attempted reconstruction of the oil pipelines which crossed the Tigris River. These pipelines had been built into a bridge that was destroyed during the invasion and re-establishing them was a priority for

the American occupiers. Initially the reconstruction of the bridge was estimated to cost \$5m in total, but because building a bridge seemed vulnerable to attack in the future, it was decided that the pipe-



line should instead be built underneath the river. Despite being warned that this would not be possible because of the constraints of building in sand, it was attempted anyway. After a three year delay and over \$100m wasted, it was decided to halt the digging effort and rebuild the bridge instead. The case of the Tigris Pipeline is symbolic of the wider construction effort. Despite advice from experts, money that could have been directed towards constructive projects was wasted on efforts that would ultimately help nobody apart from the private companies profiteering from war.

But what does any of this have to do with the rise of Daesh, perhaps the most infamous terror organization in existence? The failure of the conquerors to fix the problems that they had created has had the long term effect of further destabilizing the region. People were left without jobs and basic amenities, condemned by the incompetence of those who had been welcomed as liberators so many years prior. In recent years, research has come to show a substantial link between radicalization and a poor quality of

life. Before the civil war around 25% of Iraqi citizens lived under the poverty line - in certain areas this was greater than 40% - and it is likely to be substantially higher now. The question must then be asked, to what extent is the West responsible for providing the conditions within which extremism might spread? Of course, this should not mitigate the agency of those radicalized by Daesh or similar groups, but to ignore the role of the Anglo-American invaders in presenting radical movements the opportunity to thrive is a dangerous lesson not to learn.

Ultimately then, one lesson that should be learned from the occupation of Iraq is that the actions of the conquerors after the invasion is perhaps even more important than the initial conquest. Extremism has filled the void created by the post-invasion abandonment of Iraq, and while speculation might not be constructive, it is hard not to wonder what Iraq might look like today had the reconstruction efforts succeeded.

## Conquest and Colonialism: The Consequences

*Jake Fowler*

**The European conquest of Africa is one of the most poignant examples of how colonisation can have lasting negative effects on a region.** The process was in many ways beneficial to those in Europe: it had significant economic advantages, provided a way of demonstrating power and was often popular domestically. However, what I will demonstrate here is that it has been devastating in the long term, primarily in former colonies but also for Europeans, with the largest refugee crisis since the Second World War and the rise of terrorism being direct results of conquest followed by colonisation.

The French conquest of Algeria in 1830-1847 is a prime example of this. Cited by many as reaching almost genocidal levels, over the course of seventeen years the French Republic killed an estimated 500,000 to 1 million indigenous Algerians out of a population of only 3 million. Despite promising to harm no natives, the French plundered cities and desecrated religious sites at will, seeking to eradicate all Ottoman culture and influence. Seeing nothing but potential assets to the empire, Marshall Bertrand Clauzel envisioned cotton production on a massive scale on the Mitidja Plain and over the course of the next 10 years - along with other





*Battle of Somah, French conquest of Algeria, 1836*

French stakeholders – transformed the area into an agricultural and industrial powerhouse. By 1834, any pockets of resistance had been formally annexed, with non-developed areas declared military colonies and complete military control established by 1840.

The French conquest of Algeria was undoubtedly a brutal one, guided completely by self-interest with no regard for indigenous peoples. A French commission in 1833 even described the French as having ‘outdone the barbarity of the barbarians’. The ruthless nature of the conquest only set a precedent for an equally crippling war of independence from 1954-1962, with an estimated 1.5 million dying from war related causes. The political situation unsurprisingly turned to that of a one-party state, prompting another civil war in the 1990s. There is no doubt that the legacy of the French occupation was the idea that violence on a massive scale, particularly to achieve a political aim, was acceptable, a radicalisation of society which could only lead to a growth of terrorism.

The Belgian establishment of a colony in the Congo, immediately after discovery, is another example of an empire seeking to promote its position on the world stage. Indeed, Leopold II received international recognition for directly establishing his own colo-

ny in 1885. The story of the Congo however is one of huge economic exploitation. Regions were created with individual hierarchical structures and were divided according to the commodity produced. Established at the turn of the twentieth century, the Belgian Congo, more than any other colony, was a result of globalisation. Palm oil and cotton were cultivated on a plantation scale comparable to the Caribbean while copper and uranium were mined to bear the brunt of the war effort in both world wars. Only a tiny proportion of the profits made from this trickled down to the workers, many of whom were forced to work under a mandatory cultivation scheme.

The tragedy of this is that economic exploitation is still rife in the modern country of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. TNCs such as Apple and Nokia are eager to harvest the \$24 trillion of rare metals which are still untapped in the east of the country, exploiting a cheap labour force, many of whom are homeless and under constant fear of attack from more than thirty separate militia groups still engaged in conflict. The Rwandan genocide of 1994 has spilled into the country, bringing with it arms supplied by European countries and resulting in an estimated 3 million refugees. Yet despite all of this, few of us have any conception of the scale of violence and exploitation which still takes place today.

Conquest through colonialism has left a lasting impression on the world. For us, it is often easy to forget. And yet it is incredibly important to recognise that so many of the world’s problems are rooted in the actions of European powers. To those who look at the plight of millions of refugees and say that it is not our problem, one needs only look at our colonial history to realise that it is absolutely our responsibility.



# The Roman Conquest of Celtic Britain

*Stephanie Bennett*

The notion of a collective Celtic Britain is a somewhat idealistic and romanticised perception of Iron Age Britain. In truth, the 'Celts' were numerous, fractured tribes that migrated to Britain and had dominated the land by 480 BCE. Despite Emperor Julius Caesar's expeditions to Britain in 55 BCE, it wasn't until 43 CE that General Aulus Plautius initiated the Roman invasion of Britain under the rule of Emperor Claudius. Roman troops would withdraw from the North and West of Britain in 383 CE under the onslaught of Celtic resistance. This opposition to the might of Rome is both significant and remarkable.

From the four legions that Claudius directed to Britain, it was the Durotriges tribe of Dorset that first posed a real threat to Rome's accrued ubiquitous influence. The clan confronted the legion at Maiden Castle in Dorset, but were eventually defeated by the overwhelming efficiency of the troops and the superior weaponry that ruthlessly demolished their resistance. The other prongs of Roman assault progressed until Britain was recognised as a section of the Roman Empire as they conquered the south by 47 CE.

It was the chief of the Catuvellauni tribe Caractacus, one of the most prominent and powerful in the south, who first implemented guerrilla tactics against the systematic logic of Roman troop warfare. After consecutive crushing defeats along the rivers the Medway and the Thames, Caractacus and his brother Togodumnus lost the majority of the south-east. While some of the other tribes recognised the redundancy of battling the Roman forces, Caractacus continued his interminable struggle despite the slaughter of his brother and

the utter collapse of resistance in the south-east. Caractacus proceeded to establish himself with the Dubunni tribe, who occupied the far south. He united the Silures and the Ordovices, two of the three predominant tribes located in today's Wales, against Plautius' successor, Publius Ostorius Scapula. Caractacus was finally defeated in 51 AD at the battle of Caer Caradoc by Scapula, resulting in the pacification of the south.

It wasn't until 60 or 61 CE that the renowned Boudica rose in revolt with her tribe the Iceni, forging an alliance with the Trinovantes and other local clans, after her land was annexed and her daughters raped. Due to the fractured and diverse nature of the tribes, such an allegiance is a notable feat. They attacked symbols of Roman authority, initially striking at the colony of Camulodunum (Colchester), before razing Londinium (London) to the ground. After the Celts assailed Verulamium, the current Roman governor Gaius Suetonius Paulinus amassed an army of ten thousand men to clash against Boudica. Echoing earlier battles, the Celts were crushed under the intensity of Rome's adept proficiency and 80,000 Iceni had been slaughtered by the end of one day.

By 75 CE the last few resisting tribes in the north surrendered, which meant that the entirety of England and Wales was swallowed by the Roman Empire. Celt resistance against the Roman conquest of Britain was disjointed but influential, the few attempting to stand against the many. In 410 CE Rome finally relinquished their jurisdiction of Britain. While arguably futile, the Celts' resistance is a force to be admired and venerated, particularly when assessing the sheer force of Rome.



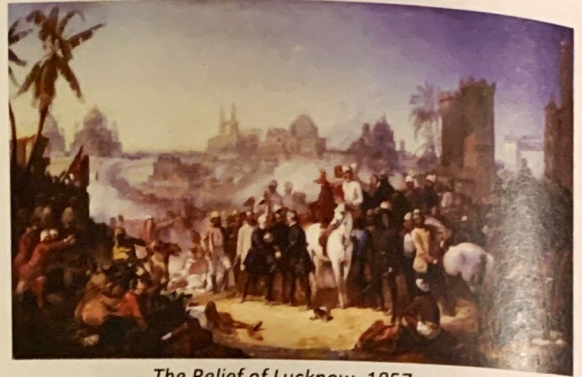
# The Cultural Distortion of Colonial India

*Justine Brooks*

When the British first gained a foothold in India, their eyes were fixed upon profit. Inadvertently, they inherited the responsibility of the cultural, social and religious well-being of millions of individuals whom they never truly intended to understand.

Following the gruelling revolt of 1857, British crown rule was established in India in 1858. Colonial officials flooded into the subcontinent, carrying with them conservative prejudices and stubborn misconceptions. They observed the complex caste system and equated it to their own class system, despite the two being completely dissimilar. The British saw caste as a convenient way to categorise an immensely diverse population. Despite this ignorance, the British worked to improve the lives of Indians at the bottom. Untouchables, low-caste and middle-class Indians saw some improvement in their lives, such as no longer receiving more prison time than a high-caste Indian for the same crime. Traditional Indian society began to break into a westernised class system, and wealth and education came to define social status.

The British held the ability to radicalise another, cruder, aspect of caste. British soldiers, rife with sexual and romantic desires, were infatuated by the mysterious dancing 'Nautch' girls who had a confident comprehension of pleasure. Free from risk of shame or scandal, bachelors flamboyantly explored sexuality in a manner of which they could only have previously dreamed. Of course, the consequence of this was mixed race children. Some Britons bestowed estates and prestigious education on their offspring, yet this never bridged the gap between the white community and the "Anglo-Indians", considered racially "impure" – if they stayed in India.



*The Relief of Lucknow, 1857*

Some Indian women were abandoned, and so witnessed the draining of the pool of available marriage prospects due to their obvious lack of virginity.

Failing to see the irony of their men sleeping with and raping many Indians, the British labelled Indian men as lustful savages, apparently lacking the ability to exercise physical restraint against dainty Englishwomen during the 1857 rebellion. Despite there being no evidence of this ever occurring, propaganda was created and promulgated. The British public became firmly acquainted with this tasteless stereotype. This was the racially dissociative environment necessary for anti-sati propaganda to continue to thrive following its partial outlaw in 1829.

Only 0.02% of widows ever committed the practice of sati, in which a widow would ceremonially burn alongside the body of her deceased husband, yet British evangelists latched onto the practice due to its controversial nature. Evangelists, including William Ward, felt it their duty to Christianise and civilise the Indian natives. Ward constructed letters for Britons in the hope that they would rally in opposition to Hinduism in order to raise money for further missionary work, and sati was used as a strategic device. He depicted Indian women as prisoners kept hostage by their brutish Indian husbands, claiming that even if the woman felt she was happily married, she was simply oblivious to her oppression. A



clear antagonist was created, attempting to inspire the men of Britain to come forward as heroes.

In 1834, *The Times* emblazoned the headline 'HORRIBLE SUTTEE' across their newspapers. While in Hindi and Sanskrit 'sati' literally translates to 'good woman', the English 'suttee' meant 'self-immolation of a widow on her husband's funeral pyre'. Their emotive language and provocative wordings pulled at the heartstrings of the nation. Authorities were conflicted; they felt it their duty to act as paternal protectors, yet could not forget their true purpose in India. Interfering with Indian tradition could cause revolts, and Britain did not want to disrupt commerce. Yet the damage had been done.

Soon, it was widely believed that the welfare of the colony depended on the enforcement of Western esotericism. Few bothered to learn that death in Western culture was perceived differently to death in Hindu culture, in which death is a transformation. Ward was quick to accuse Hindus of being slaves to superstition, rather than sentient beings with desires and spiritual objectives as valid as those of Christians'.

He claimed, 'The awful state of female society in this miserable country appears in nothing so much as in dooming the female to be burned alive with the putrid carcass of her husband.'

But did sati truly have religious justification? It's difficult to say with absolute certainty, since there is no one central Hindu text. With 4,000 years of Hindu script, there is inevitably an abundance of passages supporting or denying the legitimacy of sati, depending on interpretation. Sati is one of the names of the goddess of energy, and in Hinduism fire is perceived as the great purifier. The practice was first witnessed in 326BC, although arguably no reliable accounts exist before approximately 400AD. However, the practice itself is largely justified by a mistranslation of one key word of an ancient Vedic text, changing the passage's meaning from claiming a woman should be *in front* of the fire to *in the* fire. It wasn't until 800AD that sati be-

came a popular action, although the practice was certainly never a reality for the majority.

In Rajasthan, a sati would die as a worthy individual, driven by warriorlike heroic motivation. The act spiritually raised them to the level of a man in a culture that had otherwise denied them. Sati was a symbol of powerful Indian femininity, exclusive to the female identity. But, in Bengal, sati was used more oppressively and practically. A widow could not remarry in high caste, and must remain chaste and unemployed; sati was a drastic measure to ensure this.

But regardless of what sati meant before colonial input, the practice gained prevalence as a political symbol of defiance against unwanted British interference. Britain's callous attempt to be a colonial patriarch ungraciously acquainted Indians with nothing less than emotional brutality, and in response to this, sati was romanticised.

While sati may seem to be a faded symbol of Indian antiquity, evidence of its prevailing legacy was personified by Roop Kanwar, who cindered in 1987. Many Indian scholars and feminists were critical of her action. However, the Indian public responded to her forbidden act with an overwhelming degree of idolisation and support. Kanwar's flames reflected the suppressed cries of nineteenth century India, whilst simultaneously epitomising the ongoing consequences of Britain's manipulation of India's delicate and intricate ethos. Whether sati is legitimately spiritual or barbarically oppressive, the British interfered in a culture they wrongly regarded as inferior, then left the people of India to handle the scalding consequences.



*The Sati of Ramabai*



# Discovery or Invasion: The Importance of Recognition

Sarah Pedder

On the 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2016 news broke that the University of New South Wales (UNSW) was encouraging its students to use the term “invaded” to describe the settlement of Europeans in Australia from 1877. The recommendations were controversial, sparking allegations that the UNSW was rewriting history and that such guidelines would stifle debate. However, the decision to publish guidelines for student discussion raises important questions. Firstly, on the position of indigenous populations in Australian history and, secondly, the importance of language in discussions, particularly within universities. By encouraging students to use terms such as “invasion” and “indigenous”, academia recognises the oppression of indigenous peoples in Australia, oppression that continues to have consequences today.

Historian Peter Kilroy indicates that terminology such as “invasion” is important because it recognises the use of force and lack of negotiation in the British occupation of indigenous land. Terms such as “settlement” and “discovery” render indigenous people invisible in colonial progress narratives. Therefore, rather than present a settler narrative that disregards indigenous experiences, language can be used to delineate the myth of Australian settler colonial entitlement. These distinctions are important because they challenge the dominance of white settlers while invoking recognition of settler violence. As Kilroy argues, generations of violence and oppression followed Captain Cook’s frontier

wars; it is estimated that between 20 000 and 30 000 indigenous people were killed by white ‘pioneers’, with few perpetrators ever tried. Therefore, while historians may argue about the extent of settler violence, its existence is irrefutable.

The debate Kilroy alludes to is the Australian History Wars which spanned academia and politics in the 1990s and 2000s. Revisionist historians attempted to refocus the history of Australia onto indigenous Australians, recognising their role in history and the effects of settler colonialism. However, this was con-

tested by conservatives such as Keith Windschuttle who controversially argued that histories accounting for indigenous oppression falsified accounts and overstated the extent of white violence. As the discussion of the History Wars by politicians suggests, this debate navigated a political divide, with Windschuttle supported by the right-wing Australian press. No doubt, this debate is visible in the hysteria that surfaced in response to



Illustration from “Australia: the first hundred years”, by Andrew Garran, 1886

the UNSW’s guidelines.

Henry Reynolds identifies these two sides of debate in his 1996 book *Frontiers*. Reynolds indicates the minority position as understanding that ‘the moral responsibility for the dispossession was not the burden of any one group or even a particular period of Australian history. It has continued up to the present. The blame is shared by all generations of white Australians... Time has passed but we have not escaped from our history.’ Therefore, Reynolds interprets recognition of indigenous oppression as ac-



knowledge of the continued responsibility of modern-day Australians to challenge past wrongs. This position promotes the importance of semantics in historical debate, because language acts as an initial step in deconstructing the myth of settler righteousness.

Conversely, Windschuttle's position argues that moral responsibility is solely held by Eighteenth-Century British Government and the first settlers who seized indigenous land as their own. Put simply, this suggests that time heals all wounds. But, the notion of Australian responsibility challenges racialized presentation of the 'inevitable demise' of the indigenous population. The narrative of this as tragic but unavoidable minimises the responsibility of Australia's white population. By continuing to promote a narrative of settler conquest, the realities of Indigenous oppression are reduced to a by-product of a western progress narrative.

However, the ongoing effect on Australia's indigenous population is clear. Imposed settler notions of gender and labour hierarchies disrupted indigenous cultural structures, as did the actions of the government and missionaries to remove indigenous children from their families and raise them by western, Christian standards. Reduction of land diminished the territory begrudged to indigenous communities which further reduced the population. In 1851, 85 000 indigenous Australians were recorded, by the 1920s this had fallen to 60 000. Furthermore, while the indigenous population became British subjects

1788, they were not subject to the same privileges afforded to the white population, and additionally, were not even included in the census until the 1960s. Therefore, the indigenous population were barely even recognised as citizens. Today, the effects can be seen through the social issues faced by many indigenous communities, resulting from poverty and inadequate education and health. As Reynolds states: 'They suffered all the disadvantages of invasion and received few of the benefits of settlement.'

As this brief history shows, indigenous Australians have occupied a diminished existence in Australian history which can only be corrected by active consideration of the construction of settler narratives. Therefore, the outrage expressed in opposition to the guidelines proposed by the UNSW is regrettably misinformed if it is to be judged as rewriting history. While language such as "invasion" has been labelled as being inflammatory, its purpose is to challenge the passivity of a term like "settler". Similarly, there have been growing calls to challenge Australia Day in order to reconstruct Australia's image of its national heritage. Most importantly, the guidelines suggested by the University of NSW were just that; guidelines. History students should take note of the intellectual process suggested by these proposals, that language has the power to frame narratives with broad consequences. By continuing to use terms such as "settler" and "discovery" commentators exacerbate the reduced position of indigenous people in Australian history and modern society.

## Scientific Discoveries the Question of Race

*Gemma Bradley*

**The New Imperialism period was a time of great discovery and conquest for the West, but it was tainted with many underlying prejudices.** The people of the late nineteenth century believed that with conquering new lands,

came the need for "civilising" indigenous populations into Western ways. However, a certain type of justification was needed to convince the masses that the actions being taken were warranted, and this justification was scientific racism.

During the late nineteenth/early twentieth centu-



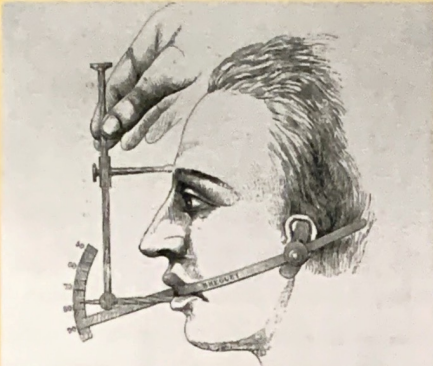


Fig. 100. — Goniomètre facial médian, destiné à prendre l'angle facial de Cuvier sur le vivant (Modification du goniomètre facial médian de Broca).

*Example of craniology methodology by Paul Topinard*

ries, many great scientific discoveries were made, for example Einstein's theory of relativity and the Big Bang Theory. But this era of discovery led to a need for conformity which ironically, movements like the Enlightenment helped to enforce. The Age of Enlightenment is technically undefined as to its beginning, but it is widely agreed by historians that it accelerated in the eighteenth century. The key figures in the movement, such as Voltaire and Descartes, are still acclaimed today for their beliefs in equality and in the application of reason, over blindly believing a hierarchal deposit of truths. However, this equality did not apply to ethnic minorities. This is shown by Voltaire's racist remark, which also highlights the white domination over religion; "Now here is a lovely image of the Divine Maker: a flat and black nose with little or hardly any intelligence." Voltaire suggests that black people had no place in religion. However, many western families implicated in slavery practised and taught their slaves Christianity in order to ensure their conformity. This misuse of Enlightenment ideas and religion was necessary to support the "scientific discoveries" being made, and, on a social level, to assuage the guilt that anyone may have felt.

Another key societal structure that supported scientific racism was therefore religion. Teachings such as 'love thy neighbour' did not condone enslaving another person, so the need to dehumanise any foreign conquered people was key. Many scientists

claimed that black people were more closely related to apes or monkeys, which created a sense of duty for white people to "train" and ultimately utilise them for personal gain. Author Anthony Pagden explained how in the book of Genesis, all the 'devils' were portrayed as black. Subsequent scientific theories such as the craniology were used to try to justify this idea of inherent immorality and inferiority that was believed to be embedded in certain races. The subject of craniology dictated that black people's skulls were smaller than white people's skulls, which consequently meant that their brains were smaller, and thus inferior. Georges Cuvier was a French naturalist and zoologist who proclaimed that black people had a "compressed cranium and a flat nose... evidently approximate to the monkey tribe". Cuvier is sometimes referred to as the 'father of palaeontology', which highlights the influence that he had over the scientific field, and offers an insight into why these theories were so widely believed.

Today, the science of racism has been discredited and disproved repeatedly, but the effects of these "discoveries" are still being felt by many today. In the US, there are many religious factions such as the Westborough Baptist Church that believe in white supremacy, and on a more social level, there are still large discrepancies between the amount of working class ethnic minorities compared to white. However, within the field of science itself, it seems clear that great efforts have been made to undo some of the

damage of its historical forbears, and hopefully even more will be done in the future.



*Georges Cuvier, holding a fish fossil*



# The Discovery of Coffee in Early Modern Europe: Addiction, Subversion and Enlightenment

Jessica Mifsud-Bonicci

The histories of health, food and consumption are burgeoning fields of inquiry for modern cultural historians. Looking at the way food is consumed and what food trends indicate about changing attitudes and fashions are central to this interest. Coffee for the modern reader can seem like an essential commodity (a product many students certainly could not survive without!). It is therefore hard to think that it was considered a curiosity or even subversive in an early modern context.

Native to Africa, coffee was adopted in Arab lands in the late middle ages where it was considered an appropriate alternative to alcohol, the consumption of which being strictly prohibited by Islamic law. Primarily, coffee was used as a devotional aid by Arab Sufi monks who drank it for its stimulant properties to keep them alert at midnight prayers. Its use in the East diversified rapidly, transforming from a religious aid to a part of everyday life, with coffee houses popping up throughout the Middle East.

Europeans first encountered coffee in the fifteenth century as a result of European expansionism with Spanish exploration of the New World, however, Fernand Braudel has traced early consumption to the Ottoman empire in the sixteenth century. In 1585, Venetian envoy to Istanbul Gianfrancesco Morosini was fascinated with the Turks' consumption of coffee, noting they 'almost continually remain seated and in conversation', with 'not only



low people but also the most prominent, a black water as hot as they can stand it, which is extracted from a seed that they call *Kahvé* to which they attribute the virtue of keeping a man awake'.

Despite this early encounter in the sixteenth century, the first recorded instance of coffee in Europe was in the Venetian Republic in 1615, quickly followed by Paris in 1643 and London in 1651. Coffee houses also sprung up throughout Europe as, what started out as a curiosity in the mid-seventeenth century very quickly became a fashionable luxury of the elite, and by the end of the eighteenth century an everyday good enjoyed by a large portion of society. By the mid-eighteenth century Venice had over two hundred coffee shops, London over five hundred and Paris over six hundred. Cultural historians have argued that this coffee revolution in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was motivated as much by as it was facilitated by social change; namely, the emergence of a bourgeoisie class and Enlightenment thinking.



Coffee culture split medical opinion in the early modern world to an almost farcical degree. In 1671 coffee was lauded in Lyon for having a number of varying qualities, from curing liver problems to being good for a head cold. Almost at the same time in Paris, others claimed that it relaxed the nerves causing paralysis and impotence as well as a number of other, equally debilitating, diseases. However, even the greatest propagators of coffee's virtue warned against its addictiveness. Indeed, the British seventeenth century self-help guide author Thomas Tyron warned 'if a man be not wary, the use of it shall enslave him'.

The notion of coffee's addictive qualities was not confined to medical literature but also played a prominent part in popular culture. Johann Sebastian Bach's Coffee Cantata (1732-5) is a comic tale about a stern father, Schlendrian, who is attempting to check his daughter's fondness for coffee. The stubborn daughter, Lieschen, sings an aria which begins 'ah how sweet coffee tastes! Lovelier than a thousand kisses' and refuses to marry any man who will not allow her access to her favourite vice, coffee.

Coffee also split opinion on its effect on society. Some believed that coffee was positive, encouraging rationality, soberness and productivity, whilst



others saw the development of coffee culture as subversive and socially dangerous. Brian Cowan has argued in his book *The Social Life of Coffee: The Emergence of the British Coffee House* that coffee became so widely drunk because it had all the attractions of the exotic, but facilitated the move in society towards 'respectable' behaviour which was especially important to the elite and middling classes.

This changing attitude toward coffee was fuelled by this emphasis on sobriety and civility in conduct. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries awareness of alcoholism meant that public consumption of alcohol was becoming less acceptable. There was no fear of intoxication with coffee, making it an appropriate new social drink which could be drunk in a public setting without the negative connotation of alcohol. Coffee drinking and coffee culture was linked with the rationalistic culture of the eighteenth century. The stimulating nature of it went hand in hand with the Enlightenment's idealised search for lucidity, clarity and freedom of thought. Consequently, the coffee shop became a hub of enlightened culture which, unlike taverns and inns, offered luxury ingredients, respectable clientele and the pursuit of learning. The German sociologist Jürgen Habermas has argued that in the salons and coffee shops throughout Europe, but especially in France, there developed a 'public sphere': an arena of society which was independent of government imposition and at the same time distinct from the private world of the family. The freedom of thought and speech in these cafés, according to Habermas, allowed for the development of the Enlightenment.

At the same time, the coffee shop was deemed to be a subversive place being a hotbed of sexual deviance, radical thinking and oriental influence. For instance, in 1750 the Venetian Republic ordered the closing of two coffee houses in the Piazza San Marco for being 'scandalous places' frequented by prostitutes, Ottomans and Jews, all of whom were deemed socially deviant characters. The Republic's concern regarding the space of the coffee house led



# Africa is not Europe's Property to "Explore"

*Rosie Plummer*

Nigeria has been inhabited since 11,000 BC, and yet as far as the British were concerned, it was "discovered" in the nineteenth century when Lagos was captured by British forces in 1851. Kenya meanwhile was also "explored" by Europeans in the nineteenth century, and subsequently ruled by Britain from 1895. Since then Britain has been obsessed with "civilising" the Africans who live in these countries, which is reflected in the fact that both Nigeria and Kenya receive huge amounts of UK aid today. However, it is time to end the legacy of our colonial ancestors "exploration" and start reshaping our interactions with the continent.

Both of these countries were exploited by Britain,

under the pretence of "civilising missions". Indeed the majority of Africa suffered a similar fate at the hands of Europeans, after being "discovered". Missionaries throughout the nineteenth century; who promoted Christianity in exchange for education, are an excellent example of how Europeans sought to impose their societal norms upon Africa. Adverts, literature and art from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries further reinforce the idea that the 'white man's burden' was to educate and civilise 'the dark continent'.

Today we think that we are long past this colonial outlook of Britain and other Europeans as "saviours" however perhaps we need to reevaluate.

Africa is continuously presented to us as an

them to legislate against women's presence there in the 1760s. Whilst this legislation was impossible to enforce, it does reflect the manner in which coffee houses were deemed by governmental institutions as spaces which undermined social morality. Coffee's oriental origins also caused concerns for some in the early modern period. Similarly, in Germany, the drinking of coffee in the home did not emerge until the latter part of the eighteenth century largely due to general distrust of anything deemed 'un-German' and a preference for local beer.

The discovery of coffee not only impacted Europeans' actions within the continent, but also accompanied their conquest and expansion into the New World and the empire-building project. The Dutch planted coffee in their colony in Java, the French in the Caribbean and the Spanish and Portuguese in Central and South America. Coffee was grouped

together with chocolate and tea as 'colonial beverages' due to their association with empire building and overseas trade. Therefore, coffee can therefore be seen as stimulating more than its drinker. The coffee revolution in the early modern period can be linked to the development in European intellectualism in the Enlightenment as well as colonial expansionism.



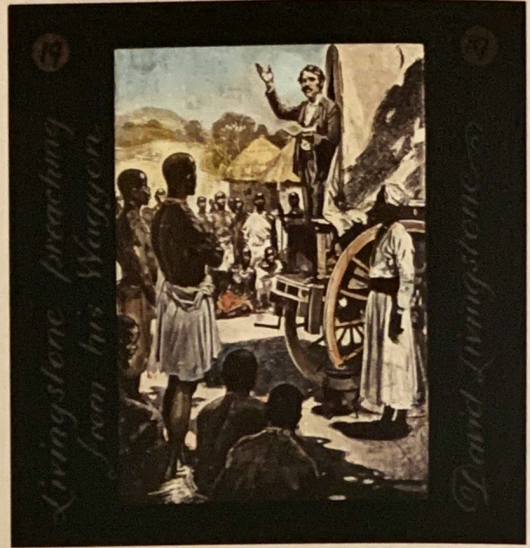


“uncivilised” continent. This can partially be blamed on modernisation theorist Walt Rostow, whose development model of the 1950’s labelled Africa as a failure, for not being in a state of mass consumption. By holding Africa to these Eurocentric standards of modernity, it is easy to accept the myth that the continent is a ‘failure’ and needs European guidance.

We have tried to ‘assist’ Africa in many different ways; continuously imposing Western ideas about what is best for the diverse continent that we discovered. This imposition of Western standards allows Europeans to continue to view themselves as saviours. Bob Geldof’s 1984 single ‘Do they know it’s Christmas time’, is an excellent example. While Band Aid did provide short term relief for the Ethiopian famine, in the long term it re-established the idea that white Europeans are guardians of Africa. Geldof’s single completely disregarded the enormous religious diversity within the African continent, alongside the fact that for decades Africa has been referred to as a ‘bread basket’ of Europe. Africa is a highly fertile continent, and exports food to Europe, both now and in the past, which is to blame for the shortages that some areas of Africa face.

Europeans also view themselves as saviours in their distribution of aid to Africa. By labelling giving money as ‘aid’, European countries reassert a hierarchy of development, defined on their terms, and thus reinforce their status. In presenting this money as a gift, Europe appears as a benevolent benefactor and manages to overlook the reality that the West’s resources and wealth have historically come at the detriment of Africa. Should the money we give to Africa really be labelled condescendingly as aid, when compensation is yet to be made for slavery?

The majority of aid which the UK government gives is tied, meaning that those who receive it are instructed as to what they are allowed to spend it on.



David Livingstone, the Scottish missionary, preaching to African villagers from the back of an ox-wagon. His motto, inscribed on his statue at Victoria Falls, was ‘Christianity, Commerce and Civilization’.

This often results in the money being returned to UK corporations, contributing to the destruction of indigenous industries. The growing trend of “voluntourism” is also starting to endanger local businesses, as European youths flood to do their bit to “improve” Africa, by taking local jobs, often in manual labour under the misguided impression that they are helping communities rather than destroying them.

European perceptions of Africa need to change. Africa is not merely Geldof’s song, it is not a charity case, not Joseph Conrad’s ‘heart of darkness’, nor is it a safari park to be explored. Africa is an entire continent, made up of fifty-four individual countries, with hugely prosperous cities. The countries within Africa which are in conflict, are not so because they are ‘less civilised’ than Europe, but rather because their borders were arbitrarily drawn by Europeans at the Berlin Conference.

Africa existed and thrived long before Europeans “discovered” it and needs to be given the opportunity to do so again, without being exploited or presented as a charity case.



# The Descendants of Ham: Biblical Racism and the Conquest of Africa

Jack Meeson

As the European powers conquered and subjugated Africa, they needed to develop a system through which they could manage such vast swathes of land with as few colonists as possible. From this need emerged the 'Hamitic Hypothesis'; a conflation of their Christian religion and the contemporary pseudo-scientific belief in 'Social Darwinism', the Hamitic Hypothesis categorised African natives into Nilotic peoples and Hamitic peoples. Western Imperialists then governed through this division, promoting those who they deemed racially superior into the highest parts of society. Nilotic peoples were granted leadership positions in puppet governments, religious organizations and centres of education. These divisions would have a lasting impact on certain African societies and would ultimately have visible effects to this very day, including contributing significantly to the Rwandan Genocide.

Proponents of the Hamitic Hypothesis claimed that there were two 'categories' of African people, those who had descended from Caucasians and those who had not. The Northern African Nilotic people, those from around the river Nile, were believed to be these descendants. Social Darwinism held that so called 'Caucasian races' were superior intellectually and therefore more suited to governing, acting as a justification for colonial rulers to give certain groups of people preferential treatment. The term 'Hamitic' comes from the religious element of this persecution. Colonisers declared that Hamitic peoples were the descendants of Ham, a son of Noah who had been cursed by god. This Biblical connection was exploited to legitimize the brutal oppression of certain people by Christian colonizers, dehumanizing Africans and absolving Europeans from committing acts otherwise condemned as barbaric and 'un-Christian'

had they been committed against Europeans. The practical motivation for the adoption of the Hamitic thesis was the need to maintain control of conquered territories with limited manpower. Declaring certain native people fit to govern meant that colonizers could govern indirectly, committing fewer people.

Nowhere was the Hamitic Hypothesis employed more than in the Belgian colonization of Rwanda. Rwandan society had already been divided into 'Tutsi' and 'Hutu' before colonial rule, but this had not been an ethnic division but rather one of class. Tutsi were those who owned cattle, whereas Hutu farmed the land. Not only were there no racial connotations, these designations were entirely fluid. A Hutu who had gained cattle could become a Tutsi and vice versa for a Tutsi who lost their cattle. Upon acquiring Rwanda from the Germans following the First World War, Belgium needed to rapidly consolidate their control of the country. To do this they solidified the class system and declared that the Tutsi were Nilotic and therefore making them appropriate leaders, when directed by the Belgians.

Of course, the Hamitic Hypothesis was nothing but a brutal lie propagated to facilitate the mass oppression of a continent. There is little evidence to suggest that those who spread the Hamitic Hypothesis even believed it, as evidenced in the Belgian decision to later switch their preferred leaders to the Hutu when the Tutsi began to protest their oppression. Despite being fictitious, this division of society would have a lasting effect. Hutus began to resent Tutsi's because of the preferential treatment they had received and, believing the racist lie that they had been indoctrinated with through one hundred years of oppression, slaughtered over 1 million Tutsis in 1994.



# My History Hero

## POCAHONTAS

*Ella Green*

Most people are familiar with the name Pocahontas – it brings back memories of singing along to ‘Colours of the Wind’, and hoping that, when you finally discover what actually is around the river bend, you’ll be just as brave as her. But who was the real Pocahontas? When you look beyond Disney’s magical musical numbers, was she still the same fearsome heroine, bringing Native Americans and Europeans together? Or was she just another victim of the horrific crimes committed by European settlers in their search for gold and land?

The story wildly differs depending on who you believe. The Anglo-American legend tells of a young Powhatan girl who stepped in to prevent her father from killing a white man named John Smith in 1608. A few years later she warned settlers in Jamestown of an oncoming attack by the Powhatan, again saving English lives. Gradually, she was integrated into their way of life, becoming the first Native American to be baptised. She then married one of the settlers, John Rolfe, and was subsequently known as Rebecca Rolfe. In 1615, they had a child named Thomas. A year later, the family travelled to England for a visit, where ‘Rebecca’ was an instant success in London high society, before she died on the way back to Virginia at the age of 21. This version of events depicts a heroine; brave enough to defy her family in order to protect near strangers, and charming enough to enchant the English elites.

Native Americans, however, tell a vastly different tale. Although they agree that Pocahontas and John Smith met, it was while he was a guest in her



home. This stay featured no animosity nor lifesaving between the Powhatan and the settlers. It has been said that Smith invented the story of his rescue as propaganda against the natives, portraying them as savages while Pocahontas was a rare ‘good Indian’. She also did not go to the settlers at Jamestown to warn them of danger, instead she was kidnapped and taken hostage, marrying John Rolfe and renaming herself Rebecca as a condition of her release. When Rolfe, Pocahontas and their son went to England in 1616, it was again as part of a propaganda campaign to demonstrate how Native Americans could be ‘civilised’. They were set to return to America in 1617, but Pocahontas died shortly after their departure, a prisoner in a foreign land. From this angle, the only thing that can possibly be construed as heroism was her perseverance in the face of captivity.

These two contrasting accounts exemplify the difference between the perspectives of colonisers and natives, and how difficult it can be to identify the truth, especially when the little evidence we have is fraught with bias. Native Americans wished to incriminate settlers while the settlers wanted to understate the violence and inhumanity they used to colonise the New World. As usual in these cases, the conquering voice wins out. Disney chose to immortalise the happy, heroic version of events in song, while the tragic tale of a young woman torn from her home and family fades into the background.

No child wants a martyr as their hero.



# History Society Letter



Happy New Year from the History Society!

As I write this, exams are in full swing, the Special Subject essays have been handed in and, chances are, some History students may have had the (somewhat) lucky draw of an early exam and are already celebrating!

Whilst I work my way through the seventh month of my placement year, I find myself in daily awe at the juggling techniques of the rest of the committee who, this January, have regularly switched between revising, essay writing and somehow organising our list of term two events at the same time! However, our Facebook group conversation (#1 committee method of communication in busy pre-term days when we're dotted around the country) was recently filled with messages of sadness and half-shock when our General Secretary requested that we all start thinking about writing our handovers for the next HistSoc committee.

It really does feel like we've just started running HistSoc, yet in just a few short weeks, we will be holding our Prospective Committee Meeting. This is a chance for anyone who would like the incredible experience of being on the committee of one of the largest societies at the university to find out what each role entails and how they can run. From running our social media accounts and negotiating sponsorship contracts with national companies to coaching our sports teams and keeping the entire committee in check with sheer organisation skill (Charlotte Allen, I'm looking at you), there are plenty of roles to suit many interests- and we'd love you to get involved! A couple of years ago, the 2014-15 President Lauren said to me that being on committee made her third year the best year of her entire degree and I've got to say I completely agree- so don't miss out on the chance, come along to the meeting (whether you're a first, second or third year student thinking of doing a Masters at Leeds) and see what role takes your fancy. We'll be publicising the time and date of the meeting on our social media channels, and on the History Student Times blog, so keep an eye out!

And what final events from the outgoing committee should you be looking out for? Well, from a featured event at the World Unite Festival, a potential collaboration with the Medics, a fabulous Deadline Day social in week eight and, of course, the trip to Berlin in March, there is plenty to look forward to.

If you have any questions about the society, or how to run for committee, get in touch at [hy14emp@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:hy14emp@leeds.ac.uk).



HistSoc 2016/17 Committee at the Christmas Ball

From Elli, HistSoc President





**HISTORY  
STUDENT  
TIMES**

ISSUE 1

