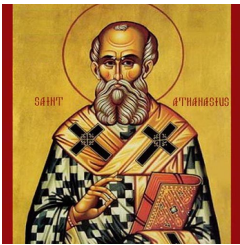




The 2018 Van Gelderen Lecture

The Fifth Annual Van Gelderen Lecture by an advanced graduate student will be given by Chris Nofziger in HSSB 4020 at 2pm on Sunday, March 11. A reception will follow. Chris is a student of Late Antique Rome, and his mentor is Beth Digeser. His title is *Ships and Saints: Mapping the World of Athanasius of Alexandria*. Highly



controversial in his own lifetime, Athanasius suffered exile five times at the hands of four emperors during his forty-four year career as Bishop of Alexandria (c. 328-373 CE). A prolific writer, his most famous work was the

Historia Arianorum (History of the Arians) in which he spun an ornate, often bitter and angry, narrative that envisioned an empire-wide conspiracy against him and his allies, headed by the Antichristian emperor Constantius II (son and heir of the famous Constantine). Although scholars have not embraced the Athanasian narrative, Nofziger argues that it can be used to expose the extent and limitations of his social network by using modern tools to map his extensive travels and create a broad portrait of the Mediterranean world and its connective tissue as seen from the shores of Alexandria. Then in turn the way that the bishop founded a coalition that became the form of Christianity practiced widely today can be better understood.

In Memoriam: Alan Vu

Alan Vu (1989-2018), the History Department's beloved undergraduate adviser, died on February 9 in an automobile accident. It was a devastating blow to our faculty, staff, and students. Alan brought sunshine and a beaming smile wherever he went. He was extraordinarily efficient and a brilliant problem solver. E-mail queries to him came back at

New Faculty Member

We are joined this year by Assistant Professor **Evelyne Laurent-Perrault**.

In 2015, she received her PhD from the world renowned African Diaspora Program in the Department of History at NYU (with an emphasis on Latin American History). Her



academic training, teaching expertise, and groundbreaking research on the experience of enslaved people in 18th and early 19th-century Venezuela, coupled with her knowledge of Spanish (her native language), Portuguese, French, Haitian Creole, and Cameroonian Pidgin English means that she will build bridges between the Latin American and African fields and add to our emerging strength in comparative slavery and European colonialisms during the age of revolutions.

Laurent-Perrault's dissertation on "Black Honor, Intellectual Marronage, and the Law in Venezuela, 1760-1809" won a Ford Foundation Dissertation Writing Fellowship. It expands our understanding of racialized and gendered oppression and resistance in late colonial Venezuela and the Atlantic world. Although the study of honor and enslaved people's litigation in courts has received attention, her focus on the uses of law and the category of honor by enslaved women in the courts, in the context of the Atlantic Revolutions, makes it path-breaking. Her remarkable discovery that a 1789 Spanish code "for the better treatment of slaves," which scholars long thought was never published, was indeed made public and used successfully in Caracas. It will have important repercussions in the field. Her findings challenge well-established assumptions concerning citizenship and the long struggle for freedom from slavery in the Spanish empire in the late colonial period.

Borderlands Move Center Stage

By Beth Digeser

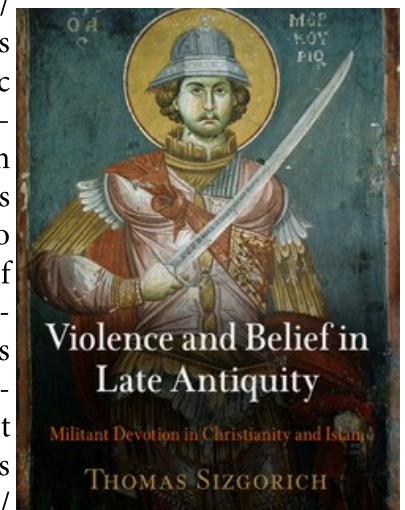
Several years ago, the faculty in the UCSB Department of History decided to transform the way we thought about our curriculum, our research, and the way we interacted with one another and our students. Like almost every other department in the country, we used to think about “coverage,” and we strove to ensure that our faculty’s expertise covered all the inhabited regions of the world and the extent of recorded time. This was a lofty, but impractical goal, given our size. At the time of this reorganization, we had three ancient historians (China, Greece, and Rome), eight medieval and early modern historians (6 of whom focused on Europe). The rest of us (more than 30) explored different regions of the modern world, especially the US.

This traditional structure was not ideal for effective teaching or research in the 21st century. Many of us wanted to pursue broad problems in our work – issues like the global resurgence of nationalism, the problems that resulted from the legacy of European imperialism, the way that capitalism was shaping developing countries and seemingly stable democracies. Problems such as these, however, are too big for any one person to explore. And yet it was hard for us to identify partners for collaborative teaching when we were each responsible for our own little square of turf in time. We also knew that placing our graduate students in the current job market demanded that we train fewer purely US historians and more broadly trained scholars able to see the US in relation to other regions or expert in areas where we’d had strength, if not numbers: East Asia, for example, Latin America, and the Middle East.

Our department is proudly democratic: our response to this need for change was to poll ourselves to identify each faculty member’s area of research interest, apart from place and time. The result was our discovery that seven shared research themes brought all of us together into smaller collaborative communities. These include not only Public History and Theory), but also Gender and Sexualities; Commerce, Commodities, and Material Cultures; Religion, Cultures & Society; Science, Technology and Society; Pre-Modern Cultures & Communities; and Empire, Borderlands and their Legacies.

The latter group brought together 15 faculty with expertise ranging from the ancient Mediterranean, through the Early American and Southwest US borderlands to the British and Chinese Empires. Although organized as a formal research cluster only recently, this network of scholars has been evolving within the department for well over a decade. The premise beyond our work is that – if you really want to understand how a society defines itself – you need to look, not at its center, but at its frontiers—the edges where people move out and into places and contexts where they encounter people unlike themselves are where people must reckon with their values, the culture they prize, and their identity. This insight first came from sociologist and anthropologists and then found its way into the discipline of history through the work of historian Richard White (*The Middle Ground*) and our own James Brooks’s prize-winning *Captives and Cousins*. Borderlands can include regions of shocking violence – especially when there is no overarching political power. But they can also be areas of tremendous vitality and creativity. This approach to processes and relationships at the periphery has transformed the way we understand the rise and fall of empires, as well as social and commercial networks and systems of exchange.

Here at UCSB, the first “borderlands” dissertation was that of the late Tom Sizgorich (Ph.D. 2004). A student of Hal Drake (emeritus, Roman history) and Steve Humphreys (emeritus, Early Islamic history), Tom took a US borderlands course with James Brooks. Adopting the insights and methods that Brooks had used to study Colonial New Mexico, Tom ultimately published *Violence and Belief in Late Antiquity* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009) which argued that the Byzantine/Islamic frontier was home to a “semiotic community” of men – whether Christian monks or Arab warriors – which subscribed to very similar concepts of the righteousness of religious violence. Tom’s research won the Lancaster Award for best UCSB dissertation as well as the CGS/

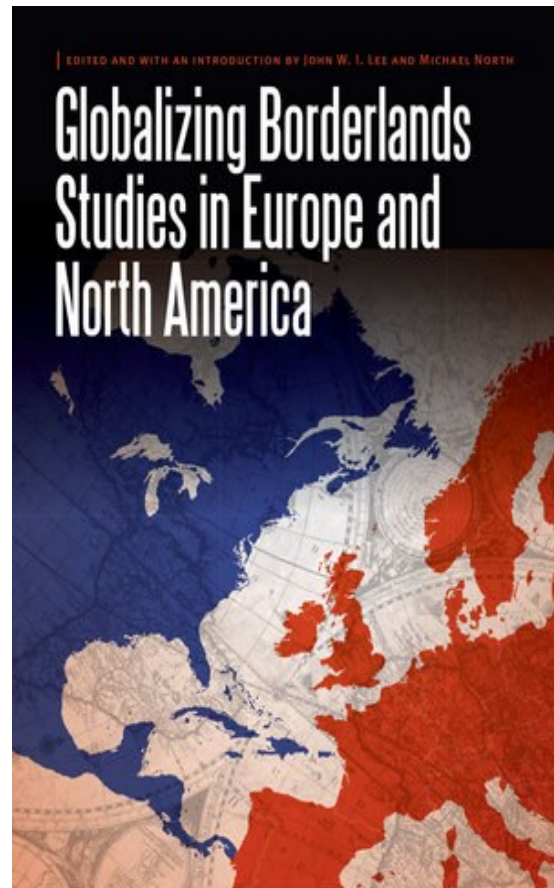


ProQuest Distinguished Dissertation Award.

Motivated in part by the success of Sizgorich's project, but also looking for a common theme to cultivate a community of scholars of antiquity different from what our Classics department already offered, Christine Thomas and I formed the Ancient Borderlands research focus group in 2005, with the support of UCSB's Interdisciplinary Humanities Center. We pulled together faculty and graduate students from Anthropology, Classics, History, History of Art & Architecture, and Religious Studies. For 12 years now, we have met several times a quarter to hear from invited guests and discuss work in progress. Every other year, the graduate students organize an international conference and host their peers from around the world. Through the conference, we have attracted the attention of a number of more senior scholars, including Prof. Michael North of the University of Greifswald. UCSB now has an ongoing partnership with his research group on Baltic Borderlands.

One of the events instrumental in forming our cross-Atlantic partnership with North and Greifswald occurred during the year when this professor of Early Modern Baltic commerce and culture spent a Fulbright year here in our department. He and Prof. John Lee, our Greek historian, organized a conference around the theme of Borderlands studies that included faculty from Greifswald and UCSB, including Profs. Ann Plane (Colonial US), Verónica Castillo-Muñoz (US/Mexico borderlands), Gabriela Soto Laveaga (Mexican public health), and myself ("conceptual" borderlands in the Roman empire). This conference was important for several reasons. First, the papers contributed to the edited volume recently published by North and Lee, *Globalizing Borderlands Studies in Europe and North America* (University of Nebraska Press, 2016). Second, this meeting served as the first of what are now rotating conferences, with Greifswald hosting last spring, and UCSB hosting this coming April. Finally – and most importantly – we also collectively realized something important about theme-based research. Although we all worked on widely different topics, places, and periods, because we used very similar theoretical models, explored similar questions, and shared assumptions. We could easily have fruitful, productive, helpful conversations about our research as a community. In different ways, this is the same realization that our other

departmental research clusters have achieved – and it has made for an even more collegial, collaborative environment.



Kudos for Faculty Members

Mesa of Sorrows, by **James Brooks**, has earned a second prize — the American Society for Ethnohistory's Erminie Wheeler-Voeglin Award for the best book-length contribution to the discipline of ethnohistory (employing historical and anthropological scholarship). It also appeared this month in a French edition: *Awat'ovi: L'histoire at les Fantômes du Passé en Pays Hopi* (Éditions Anacharsis, Toulouse, France).

Tony Barbieri-Low's co-authored two-volume work, *Law, State and Society in Early Imperial China* (Brill, 2015) has been accorded Honorable Mention status in this year's Patrick D. Hanan Prize for translation from the Association for Asian Studies. The prize is awarded biennially to an outstanding English translation of a significant work in any genre, from any work from any era that was originally written in Chinese or an Inner Asian Language.

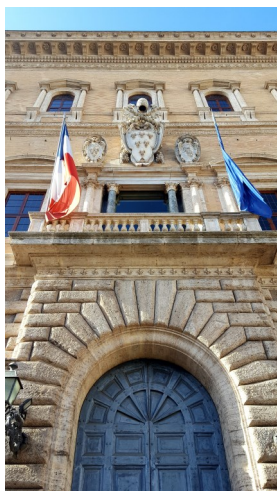
My Fulbright Year in Rome, 2016-17

By Kalina Yamboliev. Kali came to the PhD program at UCSB from the University of Nevada-Reno where she earned her BA *summa cum laude*.

In the fall of 2016 I was applying for a Fulbright Research Grant to Italy for my dissertation research on medieval southern Italian and Sicilian community formation, and I then first publicly stated my intention to volunteer with migrants in Rome; I had long been aware of the Mediterranean refugee crisis and knew I could not be in the center of events and justify closing my eyes. Fulbright's concern with how I might "integrate with the local community" was simply the prompting I needed to verbalize the intention. Roughly one year later, I landed in the im-



perial capital and excitedly journeyed first to the École Française de Rome, the largest library with medieval holdings in Italy, and the site at which I would spend roughly eight or nine hours a day for the following nine months. The library, with its long working tables, spiraling staircases, and soaring walls full of books on medieval history and archeology,



is a dream for any medievalist. Located in the luxurious Renaissance building of the Palazzo Farnese, which also houses the French Embassy, days of reading about Sicilian Saracens, Calabrian Italo-Greek hermits, and rapacious Lombard lords were broken up by lunchtime walks to the food and vegetable market at Campo de' Fiori, or strolls to the Pantheon, Largo

Argentina, the Tiber river, or the neighborhood of Trastevere. I had landed in one of the most charming and elegant places I could have imagined working, and there was never a day that year that I did not give thanks for the opportunity.

True to my Fulbright intention to integrate locally, however, I also began volunteering in the evenings once or twice a week with the non-profit human rights organization *Medici per i diritti umani* (MEDU, or "Doctors for Human Rights"), which has operated since 2004 in Rome and Florence to provide medical care to irregular migrants on the streets from a small and humble camper. Largely volunteer run, MEDU operates in conjunction with the Baobab Experience, founded in 2015/2016 but the core of a thousands-strong "people not borders" network which provides tents, mattresses, food, as well as psychological and legal services to migrants in Rome.

For roughly seven months, then, I worked entire days in the École Française in the breathtakingly beautiful center of Rome, and then in the evenings followed the MEDU camper into a world unseen by the passing tourist or the unwilling Roman. Stationing ourselves in peripheral corners or abandoned parking lots behind the Termini and Tiburtina train stations, I served as an *operatrice* ("operator," as I am not a medic), standing outside in three-hour shifts to collect information from the primarily sub-Saharan African (from the Horn of Africa, including Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia), and Arab (Moroccan, Tunisian, Egyptian, and Afghani) migrants on the timing of their departures, their migratory routes, their accessibility to reception centers upon arrival in Italy, and the status of their asylum requests to Fortress Europe. Spontaneous discussions extending beyond my official camper role, in which I drew upon any language I could (English, Italian, French, Arabic), often revealed more personal and painful details of their journeys. Most importantly my role, though far from pivotal, gave me the chance to look in the eyes of many people who I would normally just be reading about in fairly vague terms – those "dangerous" and "criminal" migrants "invading" or "taking over" the "previously pure" soil of our "nations" and "homelands" – and they came to



life before my eyes. I questioned what life means in a broad sense, and *my* life meant as stood before these people who were no less intelligent or capable than I,



but were less fortunate in extracting themselves from poor conditions — keeping I mind that my family is one of migrants, as well.

The dark and bright moments weave together in a chilling mosaic of human experience, beautiful and tragic at once. I saw mothers too malnourished to breastfeed their newborns. I engaged in ideological debates on the role of women in Western society. A mentally unstable young Somali man exploded at me in rage after a basic misunderstanding. Racial conflict between the lighter-skinned Arabs and dark-skinned Africans explode into fights that, at times, included up to sixty or seventy people moving in a violent whirlpool. I heard stories from teenagers who lost their friends and families before they even reached the hellhole that is Libya or tried to cross the Mediterranean.

At the same time, I saw individuals of differing nations, religions, ethnicities, and languages play soccer in a small parking lot as if the weight of their problems has magically vanished. I heard traditional Eritrean songs played on the *krar* (a five- or six-string lyre) and for a month tried to learn the language of Tigrinya. To one Moroccan migrant, I recited a tenth-century Sufi poem in Arabic that I learned at UCSB, perhaps one of my most ironic and joyful moments. One night, several Kurdish migrants showed me photos of them playing in the snow in Norway, where they had been relocated, and they were heart-melting in their joy. Smiles were exchanged below eyes that at times showed hope, and at times the trauma of betrayal and distrust locked between layers of striving, pain, and loss.

Perhaps most haunting of all was the underground war being waged against these people by local author-

ities, of which it took me time to become fully aware. Evictions did not begin until the spring, but then, six times in a two-month period, I saw the boys and men I worked with dislodged from the parking lot in which they slept, with their tents, documents, clothing, and other personal items thrown into large dumpsters. Without losing a stride, volunteers from Baobab and MEDU would appear to stand in protest before the Italian police or *carabinieri*, and would then bring new tents, mattresses, clothing, and food to replace what had just been thrown out. Each eviction renewed their conviction in the cause. And yet, in an age of “global responsibility” and the widespread profession of a commitment to human rights, the disregard for the protections offered by international law to those fleeing danger was mind-blowing. These episodes were accompanied by nationalistic propaganda televised broadly to describe the dangerous invasion of migrants, their criminal



inclinations, and the threat to the meaning of “the Italian.” Unquestionably, racialized politics played its role; in Italy, if you are light-skinned and can pass for Italian, you may have the opportunity to try.

In many ways, then, Italians are facing similar concerns as those in America: the rise of the Right, an increase in violent and discriminatory rhetoric, heightened racial tensions, and insecurities over a changing demographic and the threat it poses to notions of “pure” nationhood. These matters are only being exacerbated by the elections in Italy that were held on March 4th, in which the topic of migration is paramount. Many are holding their breath, fearing that a swing to the Right is nigh but aware that regressing into reactionary policies risks destroying thousands of real human lives. But the alternative, completely open borders, seems equally unfeasible in one of the poorest – or, perhaps, poorly governed – nations of the E.U. The myopia of those in Right-wing and Neofascist resurgent parties who speak of

boomerang speed. He always made the extra effort for students and faculty alike. As Chair Sharon Farmer put it in her sad message on Feb. 10, “if there is any consolation in this terrible loss, it is in learning how many of us shared a deep affection for Alan.” A celebration of Alan’s life was held in the conference room on February 28, at which time a “Valentine Tree” of messages of condolence was presented to his partner, Thomas Franke.

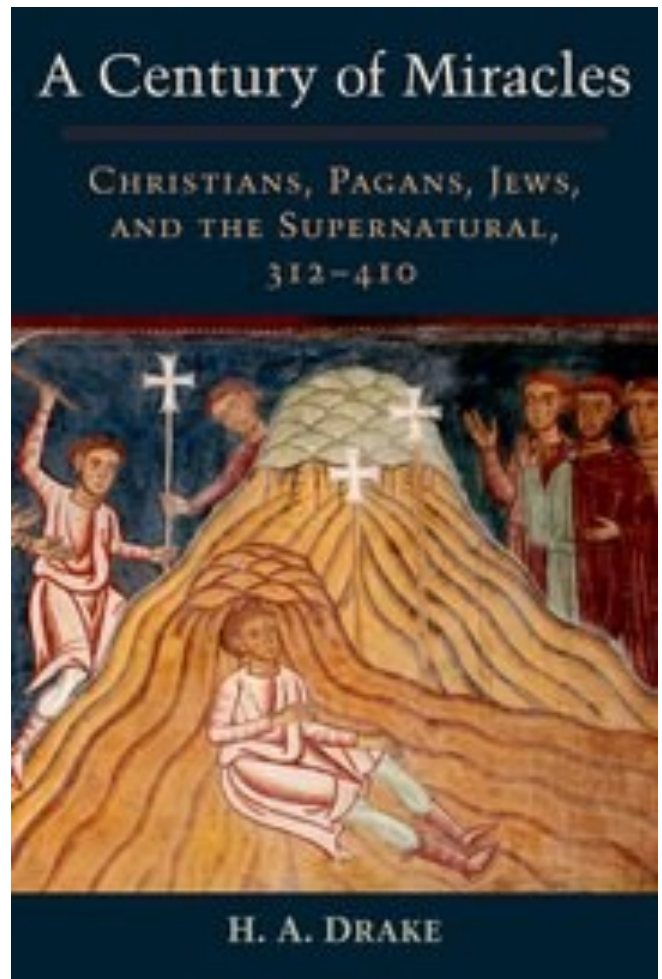
A New Undergraduate Award

The Parker-Tiampo Family Scholars Fund is an endowment established to honor the strong relationship between Noah Parker ’16 and his family and UC Santa Barbara, especially the Department of History. Senior Honors Thesis student Zingha Foma has been chosen as the first Parker-Tiampo Family Scholar. The scholarship will support Foma’s research on her senior honors thesis, “The Origin of Dutch African Prints: An Investigation into the History of the Dutch-owned African Textile Company, Vlisco.” This project emerged from her discovery that today Vlisco, a European company, is the number one producer of what are known as African textiles. She is investigating how Vlisco originated in West Africa, how they design textiles for the African market, and how they succeeded in becoming the leading producer of African prints.

Miracles, Miracles, Miracles!

Hal Drake, emeritus professor of Roman history, has published *A Century of Miracles: Christians, Pagans, Jews and the Supernatural, 312-410* (Oxford University Press, 2017), and he will be drawing upon his findings in the History Associates talk he will give on Saturday April 14. One of the most important and fateful miracles of Christian history came when in 312, the Roman emperor Constantine saw a “vision of the Cross” as a result of which he converted to Christianity and overcame his last rival for the emperorship. More miracles occurred as the fourth century wore on. What Drake argues is that whereas historians have often characterized the era as one of bitter conflict between Christians and pagans, what he calls “the darker turn that Christianity took in succeeding centuries are better understood if we look carefully and analytically at

the miracle stories that emerged and supported the Christians belief that their god intended for the Roman Empire to be Christian. The miracles also became central to the way that Christians, pagans, and Jews thought about themselves and each other.



“In this masterly book,” writes Princeton’s Peter Brown, Drake takes us on a roller-coaster ride through the last century of the Roman empire. From Constantine’s conversion onwards, a series of breathtaking military victories and similar stunning events seemed to prove that the empire was directly favored by the Christian God. Then the ride ended with a spectacular jolt. In 410 the Goths sacked Rome. Only Augustine’s *City of God* could make sense of the end of an age of public euphoria. For those who wish to capture the feel of Rome in its last days — and especially the poignant hopes of those who believed that Christianity might make Rome great again — this book is a must.” According to Paula Fredriksen (Boston University and Hebrew University), “with keen insight and indomitable good humor, Drake investigates the tumultuous period between Constantine . . . and Theodosius. . . . A pleasure to think with and a joy to read.”

Sarah Cline was elected to a two-year term on the General Committee of the Conference on Latin American History, the organization of Latin American historians affiliated with the American Historical Association. CLAH meets during the AHA convention, so winter is in her future in Chicago (2019) and New York (2020).

Juan Cobo Betancourt has won a \$15,000 grant from the UC Humanities Research Institute (UCHRI) to support his work on a digital archive of texts from Colonial Latin America. Prof. Cobo has co-founded a non-profit foundation devoted to digitizing the holdings of endangered archives and libraries in Colombia, making the results available and accessible online for free, and promoting the digital humanities.

Manuel Covo has been awarded a nine-month research fellowship at the Huntington Library for the 2018-2019 academic year. During the tenure of the fellowship he will be finishing his first monograph, *The Entrepôt of Atlantic Revolutions: Saint Domingue, Commercial Republicanism and the Remaking of the French Empire*. This work will place the American, French, and Haitian Revolutions within a global context and situate the age of Atlantic Revolutions in the longer history of political economy and imperialism. It will also cast a new light on the crisis resulting from the growing traffic of goods, capital, ideas, and people across imperial borders and the attempts made by reforming states to control this mobility. He argues that the massive trade of sugar, coffee, and flour between the wealthiest slave colony in the world and the first independent republic in the Americas was foundational in the making of a modern French republican empire.

A Thirst for Empire, **Erika Rappaport's** recent book about how tea shaped the British Empire, has won a Gourmand World Cookbook Award for the Best Book on Tea in the United States and the World. The Gourmand Awards were founded in 1995 by Edouard Cointreau and are the only international competition that features food writing. Every year, they honor the best books on food and wine. According to a review in the Wall Street Journal (9/22/ 2017), the book shows how "one product's flow across borders was knitting the world together long before the word 'globalization' was coined."

Grad Students Rock

Will Thompson (Tutino, Bernstein) has received a one-month fellowship at the Huntington Library for research on his dissertation on iconoclasm, iconophilia and religious change in Tudor East Anglia (1530-1553). He is seeking "to uncover the lived experience of parish communities through their actions toward material objects" and governmental orders in their parishes.

Sergey Salushev (Edgar) has won a 2018-19 fellowship from the American Councils Title VIII Research Scholar program which is funded by the US Department of State. Sergey's dissertation is titled "Reluctant Abolitionists: Captivity, Slavery, and the Slave Trade in the 19th Century Caucasus," and he will be spending the year working in archives in Tbilisi, Georgia and St. Petersburg, Russia.

Good News from Alumni

Public History alum Dr. **Julia K. Brock** (University of West Georgia) has been elected to the Nominating Committee of the National Council on Public History.

Laurent Cases, a former UCSB History undergrad has been awarded a European Research Council Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Department of Jurisprudence in the University of Pavia in Italy. He was an early participant in the Ancient Borderlands Research Focus Group.

Roger Eardley-Prior (Ph.D., 2014- McCray) has accepted a position at UC-Berkeley's Bancroft Library, where he will be helping run their oral history program and contributing to the library's research mission.

Veronica Ehrenreich (Ph.D. 2016, Miescher) has one article out and another in press: "The Bantu Authorities System: Removals in Mthunzini District during Apartheid" in the *Journal of Southern African Studies* 44.1 (Feb 2018) and "Congolese Animator Jean Michel Kibushi: Subverting the Western Gaze" in the *African Studies Review* (in press, April 2018).

of migrants as animals who escaped from their cages for no other reasons than to rebel, is mirrored by that of those who indiscriminately praise open borders without considering what that means for countries that lack the infrastructure and funds to take in hundreds of thousands of people. It is difficult to remain optimistic when this is the reality.

The truth is that we live in a world of contradictions, and too many institutions are making money on warfare in foreign countries and the trafficking of human lives. And the circulation of capital fed by the peddling of brown bodies between smuggling networks, the hands of the Italian mafias, and the State itself make this a matter where even those with the best intentions feel like the most they can offer is to show those whose paths they cross along the migratory routes that they are, indeed, being seen as human, worthy, and unique.

And so, after basking in the comfort of my daily work as a medievalist in the center of Rome, I embarked with my collaborators to show those voiceless and forgotten that they are being seen, well aware the entire time of the contradiction of my own role. At the end of my shift, I returned to my warm house in my warm bed and left these people “about whom I cared so much” sleeping outdoors on cold concrete. Innocent people keep suffering as a consequence of the actions of their ancestors and of our own ancestors, a perpetuation of unspeakable trauma for teens and young adults who have already suffered more than I or any of you likely will in our whole lives. Maybe we need to go back to step one: a human is a human is a human . . . life deserves to be protected.

Cont. from p. 7 — Alumni

Former undergraduate **Mattias Fibiger** graduated in 2011. His senior honors seminar paper (mentored by Salim Yaqub and Tsuyoshi Hasegawa) entitled “Redeeming the Ship of State: the *Mayaguez* Incident of 1975,” won the History Associates Board Prize for the best in that seminar (taught by Sears McGee). He went on to Cornell to work on his Ph.D. under the direction of former UCSB history department member Fred Logevall (now at Harvard). Matt has been appointed to a tenure-track assistant professorship in the Business, Government, and International Economy Unit at the Harvard Business School.

Jeff Stine (Ph.D., 1984, Pursell) is the curator for environmental history at the Smithsonian Institution and the co-editor of *Living in the Anthropocene: Earth in the Age of Humans* (Smithsonian Books, 2017). The essays it contains examine “paleontological, historical, and contemporary views of various human effects on Earth.” Stine’s award-winning earlier books are *Mixing the Waters: Environment, Politics, and the Building of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway* (University of Akron Press, 1993) and *America’s Forested Wetlands: From Wasteland to Valued Resource* (Forest History Society, 2008).

LET US HEAR FROM YOU: Send letters to: Editor, *Historia*, Dept. of History, UCSB, Santa Barbara, CA 93106-9410 (or e-mail to: jsmcgee@history.ucsb.edu).

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