

SHORTLIST FOR THE WOLFSON HISTORY PRIZE 2017 ANNOUNCED

The six shortlisted titles for the Wolfson History Prize 2017 have been announced today. It is the first time that the Prize has issued a shortlist in its 45 year history. Each shortlisted author will receive £4,000. The overall winner will be revealed at a reception at Claridge's on Monday 15 May 2017 and will receive a prize of £40,000.

First established in 1972, and awarded annually, Britain's foremost history prize promotes and encourages standards of excellence in the writing of readable and scholarly history suitable for a general audience. Previous winners of this prestigious award have included: Antony Beevor (for *Stalingrad*), Ian Kershaw (for *Hitler 1936-1945: Nemesis*), Antonia Fraser (for *The Weaker Vessel: Woman's Lot in Seventeenth-Century England*), Simon Schama (for *Patriots and Liberators: Revolution in the Netherlands, 1780-1813*) and Mary Beard (for *Pompeii: The Life of a Roman Town*).

The Judges for the Wolfson History Prize 2017 are: Sir David Cannadine (Chairman), Sir Richard Evans, Professor Julia Smith and Professor Diarmaid MacCulloch.

The shortlisted books for this year's award are:

Daniel Beer, THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD: SIBERIAN EXILE UNDER THE TSARS

Published by Allen Lane

Chris Given-Wilson, HENRY IV

Published by Yale University Press

Christopher de Hamel, MEETINGS WITH REMARKABLE MANUSCRIPTS

Published by Allen Lane

Sasha Handley, SLEEP IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

Published by Yale University Press

Lyndal Roper, MARTIN LUTHER: RENEGADE AND PROPHET

Published by The Bodley Head

Matthew Strickland, HENRY THE YOUNG KING, 1155-1183

Published by Yale University Press

Paul Ramsbottom, Chief Executive of the Wolfson Foundation said: "We are delighted to announce this shortlist of six remarkable books. Together they exhibit a wonderful range of period, place and type of history. But they are united by their brilliance, combining the highest scholarly standards with a lucid readability. They will be enjoyed by a wide audience, and I can imagine any of them as an ideal companion for a summer holiday.

We are also very excited to be announcing a shortlist for the first time. This reflects the sheer range and quality of history being produced in the UK today. We hope that the shortlist will shine a light on even more books, and also encourage debate about what makes brilliant, accessible history."

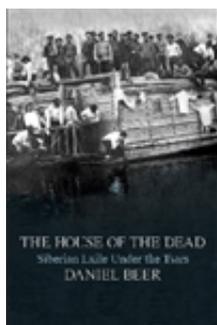
Daniel Beer

THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD: SIBERIAN EXILE UNDER THE TSARS

Published by Allen Lane

“Elegantly written and finely researched, Beer deploys an impressive array of archival sources in this highly original work.” Wolfson History Prize Judges

“A splendid example of academic scholarship for a public audience. Yet even though he is an impressively calm and sober narrator, the injustices and atrocities pile up on every page.” Dominic Sandbrook, *Sunday Times*



It was known as 'the vast prison without a roof'. From the beginning of the nineteenth century to the Russian Revolution, the tsarist regime exiled more than one million prisoners and their families beyond the Ural Mountains to Siberia. Daniel Beer's *The House of the Dead* brings to life both the brutal realities of an inhuman system and the tragic and inspiring fates of those who endured it. This is the vividly told history of common criminals and political radicals, the victims of serfdom and village politics, the wives and children who followed husbands and fathers, and of fugitives and bounty-hunters.

Dr Daniel Beer is Senior Lecturer in History at Royal Holloway, University of London.

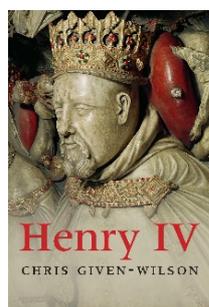
Chris Given-Wilson

HENRY IV

Published by Yale University Press

“Excellent... clear, crisp, and full of nuance, this will be the standard account of Henry IV for years to come.” Prize Judges

“A fine-grained account laced with deep scholarship and lucid historical insight... complete with greyhounds and golden robes.”
Helen Castor, *Times Literary Supplement*



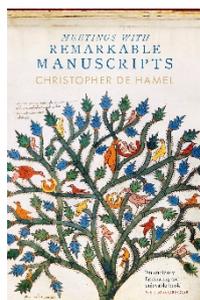
Henry IV (1399-1413), the son of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, seized the English throne at the age of thirty-two from his cousin Richard II and held it until his death, aged forty-five, when he was succeeded by his son, Henry V. This comprehensive and nuanced biography restores to his rightful place a king often overlooked in favour of his illustrious progeny. Using a wide variety of previously untapped archival materials, Chris Given-Wilson reveals a cultured, extravagant, and sceptical monarch who crushed opposition ruthlessly but never quite succeeded in satisfying the expectations of his own supporters.

Professor Chris Given-Wilson is Emeritus Professor of Medieval History, University of St Andrews.

Christopher de Hamel
MEETINGS WITH REMARKABLE MANUSCRIPTS
Published by Allen Lane

“Imaginatively conceived, beautifully written and illustrated... de Hamel offers serious new insights in every chapter.” Prize Judges

“Reading is my life, but only about once a decade do I find a book that seems to tilt the world, so afterwards it appears different.” Fiammetta Rocco, *The Economist* '1843'



This is a book about why medieval manuscripts matter. Coming face to face with an important illuminated manuscript in the original is like meeting a very famous person. Part travel book, part detective story, part conversation with the reader, *Meetings with Remarkable Manuscripts* conveys the fascination and excitement of encountering some of the greatest works of art in our culture which, in the originals, are to most people completely inaccessible. At the end, we have a different perspective on history and how we come by knowledge.

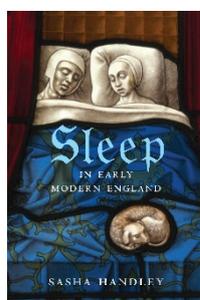
Dr Christopher de Hamel is a Fellow and former Librarian of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

Sasha Handley
SLEEP IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND
Published by Yale University Press

“A book of sheer originality and novelty... Handley tackles an almost completely neglected subject with disarming modesty.” Prize Judges

“Sasha Handley’s *Sleep in Early Modern England* is sewn together like a fine quilt. Each chapter on slumber invites another - Handley and the subject of sleep make good bedfellows.”

Emily Cockayne, author of *Hubbub: Filth, Noise and Stench in England*



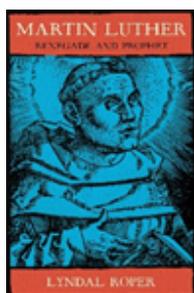
A riveting look at how the Early Modern world revolutionized sleep and its relation to body, mind, soul, and society. Drawing on diverse archival sources and material artifacts, Handley reveals that the way we sleep is as dependent on culture as it is on biological and environmental factors. After 1660 the accepted notion that sleepers lay at the mercy of natural forces and supernatural agents was challenged by new medical thinking about sleep's relationship to the nervous system. This breakthrough coincided with radical changes shaping everything from sleeping hours to bedchambers. Handley's illuminating work documents a major evolution in our conscious understanding of the unconscious.

Dr Sasha Handley is Senior Lecturer in Early Modern History at the University of Manchester.

Lyndal Roper
MARTIN LUTHER: RENEGADE AND PROPHET
Published by The Bodley Head

“Powerfully written with superb control of material, Roper’s book is highly skilled in opening up the vivid social context of Luther’s Germany.” Prize Judges

“Roper... has an extraordinary talent for making complex theological issues not just clear but entertaining.” Gerrard DeGroot, *The Times*



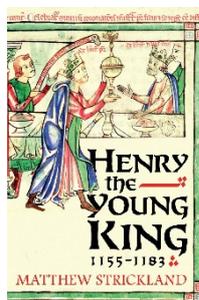
When Martin Luther nailed a sheet of paper to the church door of a small university town on 31 October 1517, he set off a process that changed the Western world for ever. Luther’s ideas spread like wildfire. In this first historical biography for many decades, distinguished historian Lyndal Roper gives us a flesh-and-blood figure, warts and all. She reveals the often contradictory psychological forces that drove Luther forward – insecurity and self-righteousness, anger and humility – and the dynamics they released which turned a small act of protest into a battle against the power of the Church.

Professor Lyndal Roper is Regius Professor of History at Oxford and an expert on Early Modern Germany.

Matthew Strickland
HENRY THE YOUNG KING, 1155-1183
Published by Yale University Press

“A joy to read... Strickland has a remarkable eye for detail and fluently opens up a huge amount of new ground in uncovering an engrossing subject.” Prize Judges

“Strickland’s deeply researched, richly textured work will be of enormous value to specialists, while general readers will also find much to enjoy in a commendably lucid and entertaining book.” Thomas Asbridge, *BBC History Magazine*



This first modern study of Henry the Young King, eldest son of Henry II but the least known Plantagenet monarch, explores the brief but eventful life of the only English ruler after the Norman Conquest to be created co-ruler in his father's lifetime. Matthew Strickland provides a richly colored portrait of an all-but-forgotten royal figure tutored by Thomas Becket, trained in arms by the great knight William Marshal, and incited to rebellion by his mother Eleanor of Aquitaine, while using his career to explore the nature of kingship, succession, dynastic politics, and rebellion in twelfth-century England and France.

Professor Matthew Strickland is Professor of Medieval History at the University of Glasgow and an expert on political culture, chivalry and medieval warfare.

Note to editors

First awarded by the Wolfson Foundation in 1972, the Wolfson History Prize remains a beacon of the best historical writing being produced in the UK, reflecting qualities of both readability and excellence in writing and research. Over £1,000,000 has been awarded to more than 90 historians in its 45-year history. You can find out more at www.wolfson.org.uk/history-prize, and connect via [#WolfsonHistoryPrize](https://twitter.com/WolfsonHistoryPrize) and facebook.com/WolfsonHistoryPrize

The Wolfson Foundation (www.wolfson.org.uk) is an independent grant-making charity that aims to promote the civic health of society by supporting excellence in the arts & humanities, education, science and health. Since 1955, over £800 million (£1.7 billion in real terms) has been awarded to more than 10,000 projects across the UK, all on the basis of expert peer review.

The Wolfson Foundation is committed to supporting history and the humanities more broadly. Since 2012, awards across the UK of more than £10.7 million have been made to 135 Postgraduate Scholarships in the Humanities at universities, and some £11 million to museums and galleries, as well as numerous awards for historic buildings.

You can connect via twitter [@wolfsonfdn](https://twitter.com/wolfsonfdn) and facebook.com/wolfsonfoundation

The shortlisted authors and Chief Executive of the Wolfson Foundation are available for interview. For further information please contact: Alex Hippisley-Cox on 07921 127077 or email her at ahipcoxpr@btconnect.com