

## Dr David Gange PhD

Lecturer in History

### Department of History

#### Contact details

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#### About

I am a cultural and intellectual historian specialising in the history of religion, the history of archaeology (and related disciplines) and the development of historical thought.

#### Biography

From 2004-2007 I undertook a PhD at Trinity College Cambridge, supervised by Professor Peter Mandler. From 2007-2010 I was Postdoctoral Research Fellow on a Leverhulme-funded project at Cambridge University entitled 'Past versus Present: Abandoning the Past in an Age of Progress'; I was also a fellow of Wolfson College Cambridge from 2008-2010. I arrived at Birmingham in 2010 and my first monograph, *Dialogues with the Dead: Egyptology in British Culture and Religion* was published in June 2013. In 2013 I was awarded the Head of School's Award for Excellence in Teaching (History and Cultures), the Head of College's Award for Excellence in Teaching (Arts & Law) and the Aston Webb Award for Outstanding Early-Career Academic. I am now researching a monograph on the ways in which European ideas about death were changed by interaction with other traditions after 1890 (the rediscovery of ancient Mesopotamian and Egyptian ideas, as well as new awareness of Buddhist traditions, the Avesta and Sufi thought). I'll be appearing on the BBC2 show 'Bible Hunters' sometime in the next few months.

#### Teaching

##### First year

- The Making of the Contemporary World

##### Second year

- Critical Analysis: Nostalgia and Modernity in Late-Nineteenth-Century Britain
- Option: Music and Society, 1785-1914
- History in Theory and Practice (convenor)

##### Third year

- Advanced Option: Reason and Romance: The Cultural History of Nineteenth-Century Britain
- Special Subject: Science, Religion and Empire: Rediscovering the Ancient Near East

#### Postgraduate supervision

- I am happy to discuss research possibilities on any aspect of nineteenth-century culture, religion, or historical thought.
- I am convener of the [MA in the History of Christianity](#), and am especially interested in teaching projects on the cultural history of nineteenth century religion.
- I am convener of the method and theory module taken by all MA students in History, Historical Methods.

#### Research

My interests relate to the way societies use the past. My research explores questions such as how changes in knowledge about the past alter the ways in which societies understand themselves. In particular, I have focused on ways in which knowledge of the ancient world was created and used in the nineteenth century, exploring how knowledge of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia was dragged between biblical and classical modes of interpretation for centuries before either civilisation was able to gain its own identity. This involves analysing the delayed impact of decipherment, and the persistence of religion as the primary framework in which these civilisations were interpreted. I'm also interested in developments in the cultural authority of the Bible, especially as it was altered by archaeology, the nineteenth-century sciences and the formation of academic disciplines (with all the implications this had for relationships between scholarship and society). Another strand of my research explores changing notions of death in European culture, particularly as non-European ideas concerning death began to circulate increasingly widely at the end of the nineteenth century and through the twentieth.

##### Past research

The themes listed above are long-term projects, but I have also published studies of nineteenth-century interpretation (and reworking) of ancient epics, and historic preservation and heritage.

#### Other activities

- Co-organiser of the British Association of Victorian Studies conference, Birmingham, September 2011.

## Publications

- Cities of God: the Bible and Archaeology in Nineteenth-Century Britain (Cambridge University Press, collection edited with Michael Ledger-Lomas, 2013)
- Dialogues with the Dead: Egyptology in British Culture and Religion (Oxford University Press, 2013)
- I have also published a range of articles on similar themes and on other topics such as the history of epic poetry, the building of the Aswan Dam, and the preservation movement. I have published reviews for periodicals including The Times Literary Supplement.