University of Birmingham

Professor Naomi Standen

Professor of Medieval History

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About

I am a medieval historian who works on China. I am particularly interested in borders, frontiers and borderlands and the people who live in and around such places.

Qualifications

- BA History (London Queen Mary)
- PhD East Asian Studies (Durham)

Biography

My BA is in early medieval European history, but I got interested in China along the way, and studied modern and classical Chinese in Taiwan in order to do my PhD.

I held a Junior Research Fellowship at St John's College, Oxford, then worked for two years at the University of Wisconsin-Superior, a small, public, liberal arts college, which gave me a crash course in teaching.

In 2000 I participated in a 6-month research group at the Institute for Advanced Study at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, before returning to the UK to take up a lectureship in Chinese history at Newcastle. There I helped to develop East Asian history within the History programme, and East Asian Studies across the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and became senior lecturer in 2007.

Teaching

Undergraduate

First year

- Medieval History 1050-1500
- Practising History (Sex and Money: Women and Men in China, 10th to 13th centuries)

Second year

- **The Silk Roads (http://www.artsweb.bham.ac.uk/NStanden/silkroads/silkroadsfpg.html)**
- Ancient and Medieval Society 2 (War and Violence)

Third year

- **The Mongols and China (http://www.artsweb.bham.ac.uk/NStanden/mongols/mongolsfpg.html)** (special subject)
- Historical Reflections (world/global history)
- Dissertations: I am happy to supervise dissertations on well founded topics within or related to my research or teaching interests, and I am willing to extend my range chronologically for topics dealing with Eastern Eurasia (including Southeast Asia).

Postgraduate

- China's Frontiers: Texts and Archaeology

Previously taught

- **Women and Men in Late Imperial China (http://www.artsweb.bham.ac.uk/NStanden/impchina/impchfpg.htm)**
- **Encounters in World History (http://www.artsweb.bham.ac.uk/NStanden/encounters/encountersfpg.htm)** (Border Encounters)
- **Rulers, Religions and Resources: Modern East and Southeast Asia (http://www.artsweb.bham.ac.uk/NStanden/modasia/modasiafpg.htm)**
- **War and Memory in Vietnam and the USA (http://www.artsweb.bham.ac.uk/NStanden/warandmem/warandmemfpg.htm)**

Postgraduate supervision

- Geoffrey HUMBLE, 'Narrative constructions of political legitimacy and statehood in the *Yuánshǐ*: the reign of Ögödei Qa'an (1229-1241)' (starting September 2012)
- SHI Binbin, 'Song border trade with their northern neighbours', China Scholarship Council visitor from Zhengzhou University (Spring term 2012)
- Robert WILLIAMS, 'Voluntary Associations on the Tang Frontier' (studies currently suspended)

Research

- Borderlands of Inner Asia and China in the Tang-Song transition period (c. 750-1050), and especially the **Liao (907-1125) (http://www.uhpress.hawaii.edu/p-4752-9780824829834.aspx)** and **Five Dynasties (907-960) (http://www.cambridge.org/gb/knowledge/isbn/item1169620/The%20Cambridge%20History%20of%20China/?site_locale=en_GB)**
- Frontiers/borders/boundaries: formation and maintenance, particularly in relation to **identity and loyalty (http://www.chineseupress.com/asp/e_Book_card.asp?BookID=2675&lang=C)**, and **military matters (http://www.brill.nl/default.aspx?partid=210&pid=22111)** including **raiding (http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780700714643/)**
- Prosopographical approaches (Leverhulme project (2007-8)): non-kin networks, **China Biographical Database (http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k16229&pageid=icb.page76535)**
- **Combining textual and archaeological approaches (http://www.oxbowbooks.com/bookinfo.cfm/ID/89465//Location/Oxbow)**: non-elites, state formation, ceramic sequences
- Representations: historiography, museums
- **Comparative frontier studies (http://www.amazon.co.uk/Frontiers-Question-Eurasian-Borderlands-700-1700/dp/0333684532)**
- AHRC project (2010-11): **Continental Asia and subtropical China, 600-1400 (http://www.ncl.ac.uk/historical/research/project/3612)**

My research starts from a fascination with frontiers, borders, boundaries and the ground-level functioning of borderlands, with a focus on eastern Eurasia in China's Middle Period (c. 600-1400).

My goal is to learn more about the everyday interactions, negotiations, conflicts and compromises of borderland regions: to understand the choices that borderlanders made, and the frameworks, motivations and imperatives that shaped those decisions. My work seeks more complex understandings of 'China', its peoples and its neighbours, which opens up these groupings and their relationships to rigorous comparative analysis.

My current project is a radical rethink of eastern Eurasian geography in the Middle Period that aims to offer new ways of viewing China's place within Eurasia.

Other activities

- Member of Council, British Association for Chinese Studies.

Publications

Monographs

- accepted: 'Continental Asia and subtropical China', *New world history* (series ed. Jürgen Osterhammel and Akira Iriye), Vol. 2: 600-1400, ed. Cemal Kafadar (C.H. Beck and Harvard University Press, under contract).
- 2009: *'The Five Dynasties', Cambridge history of China, Volume 5, The Sung dynasty and its precursors, 907-1279*, Part 1, ed. Denis Twitchett and Paul Jakov Smith (Cambridge University Press), pp. 38-132.
- 2007: *Unbounded loyalty: frontier crossings in Liao China* (University of Hawai'i).

Edited volumes

- 2012: *Demystifying China: new understandings of Chinese history*, editor (Rowman and Littlefield, in press).
- 1999: *Frontiers in question: Eurasian borderlands, 700-1700*, ed. D.J. Power and Naomi Standen (Macmillan), including Introduction, pp. 13-31.

Selected articles and book chapters

- submitted: with Gwen Bennett, 'Difficult histories: changes in the presentation of the Liao in PRC regional museums over three decades', *Modern Asian Studies*.
- 2011: 'The attraction of opposites: Owen Lattimore and studies of the Inner Asian frontiers of China', *Proceedings of the XXIst International* Limes *(Roman frontiers) Congress* (British Archaeological Reports International Series, forthcoming).
- 2011: 'Integration and separation: the framing of the Liao dynasty (907-1125) in Chinese sources', *Asia Major*, 3rd ser., 24:2, pp. 147-198.
- 2011: 'Who wants to be an emperor? Zhao Dejun, Youzhou and the Liao', *The Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms*, ed. Peter Lorge (Chinese University of Hong Kong), pp. 15-46.
- 2011: with Gwen Bennett, 'Historical and archaeological views of the Liao (10th to 12th centuries) borderlands in northeast China', *Places in between: the archaeology of social, cultural and geographical borders and borderlands*, ed. David Mullin (Oxbow), pp. 80-98.
- 2008: 'Networks and institutions in the CBDB: adding the non-kin network of Liu Zhiyuan of the Five Dynasties', summary pp. 192-196, published as part of Anne Gerritsen, 'Prosopography and its potential for Middle Period research', *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 38, 161-201.
- 2007: with Francis Jones, 'Revealing alternatives: online comparative translations of interlinked Chinese historical texts', in *Creating and digitizing language corpora: Vol. 2, Diachronic databases*, ed. J.C. Beal, K.P. Corrigan and H. Moisl (Palgrave), pp. 172-95.
- 2005: 'What nomads want: raids, invasions, and the Liao conquest of 947', in *Mongols, Turks and others: Eurasian nomads and the outside world*, ed. Michal Biran and Reuven Amitai (Brill), pp. 129-74.
- 2003: 'Raiding and frontier society in the Five Dynasties', in *Political frontiers, ethnic boundaries, and human geographies in Chinese history*, ed. Nicola di Cosmo and Don Wyatt (CurzonRoutledge), pp. 160-91.
- 1999: '(Re)constructing the frontiers of tenth-century north China', in *Frontiers in question*, pp. 55-79.
- 1997: 'Alien regimes and mental states: review article, *Cambridge history of China, Volume 6: Alien regimes and border states, 907-1368', Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 40:1 (1997), 73-89.

Other

- **'Lishixue er fei hanxue – erzhan hou Yingguo de Zhongguo shi yanjiu yange' 历史学而非汉学：二战后英国的中国史研究沿革 [History not Sinology: postwar developments in the study of China's history in the UK] (http://www.csstoday.net/Item/6586.aspx)**, *Zhongguo shehui kexue bao* 中国社会科学报 [*Chinese Social Sciences Today*], 25 August, 13.

Expertise

China and Inner Asia in the premodern period, particularly including border, frontier and boundary issues; nomad-sedentary interactions; the nature of sources of information including historical texts and material-culture, archaeological evidence, everyday life, museums, and present-day uses of premodern history; border-crossers in

the Liao dynasty (907-1125); the Five Dynasties period in Chinese history (907-960) and China in a wider Eurasian context (c. 600-1400); loyalty, networks, political structures and historiography; the Silk Roads, the Mongols and the Liao; archaeological and other fieldwork in NE China; co-PI of an AHRC-funded scholarly network called "Defining the Global Middle Ages", which brings together premodernists specialising in Europe, the Byzantine world, West, South and East Asia, Africa and the Americas.

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