

Writing University History in Great Britain, from the 1960s to the Present

Escribiendo Historia de la Universidad en Gran Bretaña,
desde 1960 hasta la actualidad

Robert Anderson*
University of Edinburgh

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Abstract: This article surveys the writing of university history in Great Britain since the 1960s, when its modern foundations were laid through the impact of the new social history. Specific features of the British case include the separate university histories of England and Scotland, which have conditioned the kind of history that can be written; the duopoly of Oxford and Cambridge before the nineteenth century; and the growth of a national system by the accretion of new strata, with their own distinct histories. The 1980s and 1990s were marked by large collective projects, at Oxford, Cambridge and Aberdeen. The tradition of writing histories of individual institutions (including Oxford and Cambridge colleges) has continued, though today on a more scholarly basis than in the past. Among the general themes investigated in recent years have been relations between universities and industry, the growth of state intervention and finance, universities and elites, links with the British empire, the deve-

Resumen: Este artículo examina los trabajos sobre la historia universitaria en Gran Bretaña desde la década de 1960, cuando sus fundamentos modernos fueron despedidos por el impacto de la nueva historia social. Las características específicas del caso británico incluyen las historias separadas de las universidades de Inglaterra y Escocia, que han condicionado el tipo de historia que se puede escribir; el duopolio de Oxford y Cambridge antes del siglo XIX; y el crecimiento de un sistema nacional mediante la adición de los nuevos estratos, con sus propias historias diferenciadas. Los años 1980 y 1990 se caracterizaron por grandes proyectos colectivos, Oxford, Cambridge y Aberdeen. La tradición de escribir historias de las instituciones individuales (incluyendo las universidades de Oxford y Cambridge) ha continuado, aunque hoy en día de forma más académica que en el pasado. Entre los temas generales investigados en los últimos años han sido las relaciones entre las universidades y la industria, el crecimiento de

* R.D.Anderson@ed.ac.uk

lopment of disciplines and curricula, student life, the growth of women's higher education, and university architecture. University historians have been influenced by the historiographical turn from social to cultural history. But while individual research flourishes, the history of universities has not become a formal subdiscipline in Britain, and the article considers why this is so.

Keywords: Great Britain, Scotland, universities, history of universities, social history.

la intervención del Estado y las finanzas, las universidades y las élites, los nexos con el imperio británico, el desarrollo de disciplinas y programas de estudio, la vida de los estudiantes, el crecimiento de la educación superior de las mujeres y la arquitectura de la universidad. Los historiadores de la universidad se han visto influenciados por el giro historiográfico de lo social a la historia cultural. Sin embargo, aunque la investigación individual florece, la historia de las universidades no se ha convertido en una subdisciplina formal en Gran Bretaña, y el artículo analiza por qué esto es así.

Palabras clave: Gran Bretaña, Escocia, universidades, historia de las universidades, historia social.

Introduction

The aim of this essay is not to provide a full bibliography of British university history, but to survey the development of research since the 1960s. For some themes, it seems useful to bring together fairly comprehensive references; for others, and for the work of leading scholars in the field, representative examples are given. Textbooks and introductory works, and books aimed at the general reader (often scholarly and visually attractive) have not usually been listed.

University history in Britain has features and problems in common with other countries¹. One of these is defining the subject's boundaries. Universities have connections of all kinds with the political, social, religious and cultural life of the countries in which they are situated. They are also the academic home of many branches of thought: how far is the history of academic disciplines part of university history? Universities have libraries, buildings, art collections, museums, and publishing houses, all of which attract their own historians. Here a pragmatic approach has been taken, and only historical work which is predominantly about universities themselves is generally considered.

It is typical of scholarship in this field that the "history of universities" has been separated from the "history of education", and the relationship of universities to schools and to national education systems has been

¹ Marie-Madeleine Compère, *L'Histoire de l'éducation en Europe. Essai comparatif sur la façon dont elle s'écrit* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1995).

neglected. Britain has a flourishing History of Education Society, founded in 1967, which organizes an annual conference and has published a journal, *History of Education*, since 1972. But until recently university history has been a minority interest². It has found a home instead in the journal *History of Universities*, published by Oxford University Press since 1981, but without a corresponding society³. *History of Universities* has always seen itself as an international journal, and articles on Britain have probably represented less than half of the total. The journal also had a bias in its early years to the medieval and Renaissance periods.

The other feature of university history everywhere has been the predominance of institutional histories of individual universities, often of a celebratory kind linked to anniversaries. Universities are long-lived bodies with rich archives for historians to exploit, but the result has often been inward-looking, focusing on administrative questions, the lives of celebrated professors or alumni, and the university's scientific and scholarly achievements. This began to change in the 1960s, under the impact of the "new social history", reflected in Britain in the influence of the *Annales* school and of an undogmatic marxism. University historians moved closer to the general trends in historical scholarship, and examined wider social and cultural questions.

Collective projects

The pioneer in Britain was Lawrence Stone, originally at Oxford but later at Princeton, where he directed a project whose results were published in two volumes⁴. One, on Oxford, contained Stone's own study of long-term student enrolments, which emphasized the movement of a lay clientele into the university in the sixteenth century, and the high point reached in the early seventeenth century. Other historians in the Princeton project included Nicholas Phillipson, on eighteenth-century Scotland, and Sheldon Rothblatt, whose earlier study of Victorian Cambridge was itself a pioneering work⁵.

² Roy Lowe, "The changing role of the academic journal: the coverage of higher education in *History of Education* as a case study, 1972-2011," *History of Education* 41 (2012): 103-115.

³ The two journals are referred to in the footnotes as *HE* and *HU*. UP is for University Press.

⁴ Lawrence Stone, ed., *The University in society* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1974). *Volume I: Oxford and Cambridge from the 14th to the early 19th century*; *Volume II: Europe, Scotland, and the United States from the 16th to the 20th century*.

⁵ Sheldon Rothblatt, *The revolution of the dons: Cambridge and society in Victorian England* (London: Faber, 1968).

Student enrolments and the social origins of students became for a time a speciality of the journal *Past and Present*, in which Stone was a leading figure⁶. These studies usually involved the analysis of quantitative evidence, at that time without much assistance from computers. It was an interest no doubt stimulated by what was happening in universities at the time, with the expansion of student numbers after the Second World War and the democratization of secondary schooling.

Similar concerns inspired the four-volume history of European universities launched in 1982, which appeared between 1994 and 2010⁷. This was organized on thematic lines, without chapters on individual countries, but British scholars were involved in the project, especially the fourth volume. It was valuable for putting Britain in a comparative context, something which has remained regrettably uncommon. British universities have often been seen as standing apart from European patterns of development, and while American scholars have made distinguished contributions to British university history, there has been less interest among continental ones. One important American example was Fritz Ringer, who included Britain in his *Education and Society in Modern Europe*⁸, and was a contributor along with Roy Lowe and other British historians to two collections of comparative essays oriented to social history which appeared in the 1980s⁹.

⁶ Joan Simon, "The social origins of Cambridge students, 1603-1640," *Past and Present* 26 (1963): 58-67; Lawrence Stone, "The educational revolution in England, 1560-1640," *Past and Present* 28 (1964): 41-80; W. M. Mathew, "The origins and occupations of Glasgow students, 1740-1839," *Past and Present* 33 (1966): 74-94; David Cressy, "The social composition of Caius College, Cambridge, 1580-1640," *Past and Present* 47 (1970): 113-115; Trevor Aston, "Oxford's medieval alumni," *Past and Present* 74 (1977): 3-40; Trevor Aston *et al.*, "The medieval alumni of the University of Cambridge," *Past and Present* 86 (1980): 9-86. See also Elizabeth Russell, "The influx of commoners into the University of Oxford before 1581: an optical illusion?" *English Historical Review* 92 (1977): 721-745.

⁷ *A history of the university in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP). *Volume I. Universities in the middle ages*, ed. Hilde de Ridder-Symoens (1992); *Volume II. Universities in early modern Europe (1500-1800)*, ed. Hilde de Ridder-Symoens (1996); *Volume III. Universities in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (1800-1945)*, ed. Walter Rüegg (2004); *Volume IV. Universities since 1945*, ed. Walter Rüegg (2010).

⁸ Fritz Ringer, *Education and society in modern Europe* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1979).

⁹ Konrad Jarausch, ed., *The transformation of higher learning, 1860-1930: expansion, diversification, social opening, and professionalization in England, Germany, Russia, and the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983); Detlef Müller *et al.*, eds, *The rise of the modern educational system: structural change and social reproduction, 1870-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987).

A specific British feature is the existence of separate university systems in England, Scotland and Ireland (though Ireland is excluded from this essay). In England itself, there were only two universities, Oxford and Cambridge, until the early nineteenth century. The system later grew through the accretion of new strata: the University of London in the early nineteenth century, the civic colleges in English cities later in that century, new universities in the 1960s, and then again in the 1990s. Each of these developments gave rise to histories of individual institutions, and sometimes to studies of the group as a whole (as for the civic universities), but attempts to examine a theme for the English system as a whole have been rare, and those which embrace both England and Scotland rarer still¹⁰.

Another peculiarity of the English situation was that as Oxford and Cambridge developed, practical training in law and medicine decayed, and these subjects came to be taught outside the universities. Their history is an important part of university history in many countries, but not in England until the nineteenth century - though this was one of the differences between England and Scotland.

Oxford and Cambridge

For centuries English university history was the history of Oxford and Cambridge, and both have organized large-scale historical projects. Oxford chose multiple authorship, with separate chapters by leading scholars. This mode of publication moves with the slowest author, and the eight-volume series, planned in the 1960s, was published between 1984 and 2000.¹¹ These massive volumes embody much scholarship, and make Oxford the best documented British university; but there is no easily accessible list of chapters and authors. In 2016 Laurence Brockliss published a comprehensive one-volume account, and since the twentieth-century volume of the

¹⁰ I may be allowed to cite Robert Anderson, *British universities past and present* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2006).

¹¹ *The history of the University of Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford UP). *I. The early Oxford schools*, ed. Jeremy Catto (1984); *II. Late medieval Oxford*, ed. Jeremy Catto and T. A. R. Evans (1992); *III. The collegiate university*, ed. James McConica (1986); *IV. Seventeenth-century Oxford*, ed. Nicholas Tyacke (1997); *V. The eighteenth century*, ed. Lucy Sutherland and Leslie Mitchell (1986); *VI. Nineteenth-century Oxford, Part 1*, ed. Michael Brock and Mark Curthoys (1997); *VII. Nineteenth-century Oxford, Part 2*, ed. Michael Brock and Mark Curthoys (2000); *VIII. The twentieth century*, ed. Brian Harrison (1994).

major history was published in 1994, his work has primary value for recent years¹². Cambridge University, with a similar project, opted for four volumes by single authors, which provided more coherence but still extended over sixteen years¹³.

Oxford and Cambridge were both collegiate universities. The colleges have their own rich archives, and have been as much a focus of emotional loyalty as the universities themselves. There is a long tradition of writing college histories. Their quality varies greatly, but even when they make important scholarly contributions, their often parochial concerns and their targeted readership among alumni limit their wider impact. There have been periodic surveys of college histories as a genre, and these articles can be consulted for fuller references¹⁴. Here we may list a sample of recent scholarly histories for Oxford, where there seems to be more current activity¹⁵, and Cambridge¹⁶. (It is symptomatic of the inward-looking nature of college histories that Oxford or Cambridge may not appear in their title: the reader is expected to know this.) College histories are today generally written or edited by historical specialists, but often as a one-off assignment rather than part of a continuing interest in university history. This is also true of the individual chapters in the Oxford history, and of institutional histories of other universities, and it has limited the evolution of the history of universities as a subdiscipline.

¹² Laurence Brockliss, *The University of Oxford: a history* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2016).

¹³ *A history of the University of Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP) *I. The University to 1546*, by Damian R. Leader (1988); *II. 1546-1750*, by Victor Morgan and Christopher Brooke (2004); *III. 1750-1870*, by Peter Searby (1997); *IV. 1870-1990*, by Christopher Brooke (1993).

¹⁴ Mordecai Feingold, "Oxford and Cambridge college histories: an outdated genre?" *HU* 1 (1981): 207-213; John Twigg, "Evolution, obstacles and aims: the writing of Oxford and Cambridge college histories," *HU* 8 (1989): 179-199; Robin Darwall-Smith, "Oxford and Cambridge college histories: an endangered genre?" *HU* 22, no. 1 (2007): 241-249; Robin Darwall-Smith, "Oxford college histories: fresh contributions," *HU* 29, no. 1 (2016): 135-143.

¹⁵ Clare Hopkins, *Trinity: 450 years of an Oxford college community* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005); Robin Darwall-Smith, *A history of University College, Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008); Laurence Brockliss, *Magdalen College Oxford: a history* (Oxford: Magdalen College, 2008); Jeremy Catto, ed., *Oriel College: a history* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2013); John Maddicott, *Founders and fellowship: the early history of Exeter College, Oxford, 1314-1592* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2014).

¹⁶ Christopher Brooke, *A history of Gonville and Caius College* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1985); John Twigg, *A history of Queens' College Cambridge, 1448-1986* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1987); Sarah Bendall et al., *A history of Emmanuel College, Cambridge* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2000); David Reynolds, ed., *Christ's: a Cambridge college over five centuries* (London: Macmillan, 2005).

Medieval and early modern England

For this period, the Oxford and Cambridge volumes contain the most important modern scholarship. Independent studies follow similar themes, and are cited sparingly here (not least because of the present author's lack of expertise in this field). On the medieval period, when the English universities followed European patterns, the focus is inevitably on relations with the church and on philosophy and theology. Independently, Alan Cobban has written on the history of the two universities together¹⁷, and there has also been work on graduation and clerical careers¹⁸, and on the early years of Cambridge¹⁹. On Oxford, there have been studies of students from particular regions²⁰.

Collegiate life developed in the late middle ages, and the permanent establishment of the colleges is a major theme for the sixteenth century, along with the rise of humanist teaching, the impact of the Reformation and the religious divisions which followed it, and the active role of the Tudor monarchy²¹. In the seventeenth century, relations with the monarchy, and the effects of the civil war and the politico-religious struggles of the period, remain central themes²². An older view that the "scientific revolution" was centred on London rather than the universities has been revised, and the strength of university scholarship and teaching is now emphasized²³. This

¹⁷ Alan Cobban, *The medieval English universities: Oxford and Cambridge to c.1500* (Aldershot: Scolar, 1988); Id., *English university life in the middle ages* (London: UCL Press, 1999).

¹⁸ Alan Cobban, "The medieval Cambridge colleges: a quantitative study of higher degrees to c. 1500," *HE* 9 (1980): 1-12; R. W. Swanson, "Universities, graduates and benefices in later medieval England," *Past and Present* 106 (1985): 28-61; Id., "Learning and livings: university study and clerical careers in later medieval England," *HU* 6 (1986-7): 81-103.

¹⁹ Patrick Zutshi, *Medieval Cambridge: essays on the pre-Reformation university* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1993).

²⁰ Nicholas Orme, "The Cornish at Oxford 1180-1540," *Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall* 2010: 43-82; Rhys Hays, "Welsh students at Oxford and Cambridge Universities in the middle ages," *Welsh History Review* 4 (1968-9): 325-361; Alexandre Delin, "Violence and disturbances in a medieval university: the Welsh students at Oxford, 1282-1485," *CIAN. Revista de Historia de las Universidades* 18 (2015): 145-158.

²¹ F. D. Logan, "The first royal visitation of the English universities, 1535," *English Historical Review* 106 (1991): 861-888; Richard Rex and C. D. C. Armstrong, "Henry VIII's ecclesiastical and collegiate foundations," *Historical Research* 75 (2002): 390-407; H. C. Porter, *Reformation and reaction in Tudor Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2015).

²² John Twigg, *The University of Cambridge and the English revolution, 1625-1688* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1990); Elizabethanne Boran, "Malignancy and the reform of the University of Oxford in the mid-seventeenth century," *HU* 17 (2001-2): 19-46.

²³ Mordecai Feingold, *The mathematicians' apprenticeship: science, universities and society in England, 1560-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984).

revisionism has extended to the eighteenth century. For Oxford, contrary to the traditional picture of intellectual stagnation, it has been shown that college teaching was serious and effective. For Cambridge, scholars have stressed the early roots of the university's modern strength in mathematics and physics²⁴.

Scotland

The first Scottish universities were founded in the fifteenth century. After the Reformation they were seen as part of a national educational system in close connection with schools, and having an urban setting which distinguished them from England. This has made it easier to tell a national story. The present author tried to do this for the nineteenth century in a book influenced by the new social history²⁵, and discussion of selected themes can be found in two collections of essays²⁶. The history of individual universities has been less dominant, and when Aberdeen planned in the 1980s to commemorate its quincentenary, it did not follow the Oxford or Cambridge pattern, but commissioned a series of short specialist studies²⁷. The series eventually ran to eleven volumes, noted below in their contexts. Of the other Scottish universities, Glasgow has been the best served, though most fully for the modern period²⁸. Recent scholarly work has looked especially at the universities' foundation and early years²⁹.

²⁴ John Gascoigne, *Cambridge in the age of the Enlightenment: science, religion and politics from the Restoration to the French Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989); Id., *Science, politics and universities in Europe, 1600-1800* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998).

²⁵ Robert Anderson, *Education and opportunity in Victorian Scotland: schools and universities* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1983).

²⁶ Jennifer Carter and Donald Withrington, eds, *Scottish universities: distinctiveness and diversity* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1992); Robert Anderson et al., *The Edinburgh history of education in Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2015).

²⁷ Jennifer Carter, "Aberdeen University's Quincentennial history: a report," *HU* 7 (1988): 317-327.

²⁸ Michael Moss et al., *University, city and state: the University of Glasgow since 1870* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2000); Paul L. Robertson, "The development of an urban university: Glasgow 1860-1914," *History of Education Quarterly* 30 (1990): 47-78.

²⁹ John Durkan and James Kirk, *The University of Glasgow, 1451-1577* (Glasgow: Glasgow UP, 1977); Michael Lynch, "The origins of Edinburgh's 'toun college': a revision article," *Innes Review* 33 (1982): 3-14; John Fletcher, "The foundation of the University of Aberdeen in its European context," in *The universities of Aberdeen and Europe: the first three centuries*, ed. Paul Dukes (Aberdeen: Aberdeen UP, 1995); Leslie Macfarlane, "King's College Aberdeen: the cre-

On the Reformation period and its aftermath, Aberdeen has attracted broader study³⁰, but specialist interest has centred on the Presbyterian reformer Andrew Melville³¹. For the eighteenth century, there has been much research on the Scottish Enlightenment. This was a period of vitality for the universities, and many of the Enlightenment writers were professors, but attention has focused on their ideas, and the social and institutional history of the universities has been relatively neglected. There are important exceptions, however, which relate the Enlightenment universities to their international, political, urban, and ecclesiastical contexts³².

In Scotland the universities taught both law and medicine, the latter developing strongly from the eighteenth century. John Cairns has written prolifically on law teaching³³, and there have been studies of medical education in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen³⁴. The homogeneous nature of the Scottish universities has also made possible nation-wide studies of the professorate and its professionalization³⁵.

ation of the academic community, 1495-1532," *Aberdeen University Review* 56 (1995), 210-222; Steven Reid, "Aberdeen's 'toun college': Marischal College, 1593-1623," *Innes Review* 58 (2007): 173-195.

³⁰ David Stevenson, *King's College, Aberdeen, 1560-1641: from Protestant Reformation to Covenanting Revolution* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen UP, 1990); Shona Vance, "Poverty and the pursuit of learning: poor scholars in seventeenth-century Aberdeen," *HU* 18, no. 2 (2003): 90-146.

³¹ Ernest Holloway, *Andrew Melville and humanism in Renaissance Scotland, 1545-1622* (Leiden: Brill, 2011); Steven Reid, *Humanism and Calvinism: Andrew Melville and the universities of Scotland, 1560-1625* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011); Steven Reid and Roger Mason, eds, *Andrew Melville (1545-1622): writings, reception and reputation* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).

³² Esther Mijers, "The Netherlands, William Carstares, and the reform of Edinburgh University, 1690-1715," *HU* 25, no. 2 (2011): 111-142; Nicholas Phillipson, "Commerce and culture: Edinburgh, Edinburgh University, and the Scottish Enlightenment," in *The university and the city: from medieval origins to the present*, ed. Thomas Bender (New York: Oxford UP, 1988), 100-116; Richard Sher, *Church and university in the Scottish Enlightenment: the Moderate literati of Edinburgh* (2nd edn, Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2015); Paul Wood, *The Aberdeen Enlightenment: the arts curriculum in the eighteenth century* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen UP, 1993); Paul Wood, "Science, the universities and the public sphere in eighteenth-century Scotland," *HU* 13 (1994): 99-135.

³³ Collected in John W. Cairns, *Selected essays on the history of Scots Law. Vol. 2. Enlightenment, legal education, and critique* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2015).

³⁴ Derek Dow and Michael Moss, "The medical curriculum at Glasgow in the early nineteenth century," *HU* 7 (1988): 227-257; Carolyn Pennington, *The modernisation of medical teaching at Aberdeen in the nineteenth century* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen UP, 1994); Lisa Rosner, *Medical education in the age of improvement: Edinburgh students and apprentices, 1760-1826* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1991).

³⁵ Jack Morrell, "The University of Edinburgh in the late eighteenth century: its scientific eminence and academic structure," *Isis* 62 (1971): 158-171; Roger Emerson, *Professors, patronage*

The expansion of universities in the nineteenth century

This period saw both the foundation of new universities in England and Wales, and the reform of existing universities in England and Scotland. In many countries, the action of the state provides a core narrative for national university history. In Britain, the nineteenth century saw significant university legislation, especially between the 1850s and 1880s, accompanied by official inquiries and parliamentary debates which provide valuable historical evidence. One quirk of the system was that in Britain universities had their own members of parliament elected by graduates³⁶. But until the twentieth century, it is difficult to speak of governments having a university policy. Nevertheless, historians have recently emphasized –contrary to older views– the growing role of the state before 1914³⁷. This was most apparent in the financial aid given to Scottish universities and to the new universities in England and Wales³⁸.

Sheldon Rothblatt's work has been fundamental to the study of the nineteenth century, and some of his important essays have been republished³⁹. The multi-volume histories of Oxford and Cambridge remain essential

and politics: the Aberdeen universities in the eighteenth century (Aberdeen: Aberdeen UP, 1992); Id., *Academic patronage in the Scottish Enlightenment: Glasgow, Edinburgh and St Andrews Universities* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2008); Robert Anderson, "Scottish university professors, 1800-1939: profile of an elite," *Scottish Economic and Social History* 7 (1987): 27-54.

³⁶ Joseph Meisel, *Knowledge and power: the parliamentary representation of universities in Britain and the Empire* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011); Id., "A magnificent fungus on the political tree: the growth of university representation in the United Kingdom, 1832-1950," *HU* 23, no. 1 (2008): 109-186.

³⁷ Sheldon Rothblatt, "State and market in British university history," in *Economy, polity and society: British intellectual history, 1750-1950*, ed. Stefan Collini et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000), 224-242; Keith Vernon, "Calling the tune: British universities and the state, 1880-1914," *HE* 30 (2001): 251-271; Id., *Universities and the state in England, 1850-1939* (London: RoutledgeFalmer, 2004); I. G. C. Hutchison, *The university and the state: the case of Aberdeen, 1860-1963* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen UP, 1993).

³⁸ J. P. D. Dunbabin, "Trends in the financing of British universities in the 19th and 20th centuries," in *Finanzierung von Universität und Wissenschaft in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart*, ed. R. C. Schwinges (Basel: Schwabe, 2005), 247-270; Paul Robertson, "The finances of the University of Glasgow before 1914," *History of Education Quarterly* 16 (1976): 449-478; Robert Anderson, "The state and university finance in modern Scotland," *Scottish Affairs* 85 (2013): 29-41; Id., "Il finanziamento delle università britanniche in una prospettiva storica," *Memoria e Ricerca* 48 (2015): 11-33; Gordon W. Roderick and David A. Allsobrook, "Welsh society and university funding, 1860-1914," *Welsh History Review* 20 (2000): 34-61.

³⁹ Sheldon Rothblatt, *The modern university and its discontents: the fate of Newman's legacies in Britain and America* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997).

for their coverage of the major reforms of the Victorian period, and are the starting-point for other specialized studies. One aspect of the reforms, especially at Oxford, was their relation to the religious movements of the early nineteenth century⁴⁰, but laicization was to turn clerical college fellows into professional teachers and researchers⁴¹. The modernization of the curriculum, the development of a new examination system, and the opening of the universities to the upper middle classes consolidated a new national elite, a process which brought the universities into close connection with the new “public schools”⁴².

A specifically English ideal of liberal education developed as part of these reforms and later spread to other universities⁴³. The most famous exponent of this ideal was John Henry Newman, but his direct educational work was mainly in Dublin. His ideas continue to be discussed in the broader context of Victorian thought⁴⁴.

Modernizing reforms meant that the ancient universities retained their dominance in England even when there were new foundations. These began in London, with the creation of new colleges for teaching, and of the University of London in 1836 for examining and awarding degrees. There have been some useful histories for the general public, and the university’s complex administrative history, leading to its reconstitution as a teaching

⁴⁰ H. C. G. Matthew, “Noetics, Tractarians, and the reform of the University of Oxford in the nineteenth century,” *HU* 9 (1990): 195-225; P. B. Nockles, “An academic counter-revolution: Newman and Tractarian Oxford’s idea of a university,” *HU* 10 (1991): 137-197.

⁴¹ Arthur J. Engel, *From clergyman to don: the rise of the academic profession in nineteenth-century Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1983); H. S. Jones, *Intellect and character in Victorian England: Mark Pattison and the invention of the don* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007).

⁴² Heather Ellis, *Generational conflict and university reform: Oxford in the age of revolution* (Leiden: Brill, 2012); Id., “‘A manly and generous discipline’: classical studies and generational conflict in eighteenth and early nineteenth century Oxford,” *HU* 25, no. 2 (2011): 143-172; Id., “Efficiency and counter-revolution: connecting university and civil service reform in the 1850s,” *HE* 42 (2013): 23-44.

⁴³ Sheldon Rothblatt, *Tradition and change in English liberal education: an essay in history and culture* (London: Faber, 1976); M. M. Garland, *Cambridge before Darwin: the ideal of a liberal education, 1800-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1980); Michael Hofstetter, “The classical tripos and the Romantic movement at Cambridge,” *HU* 19, no. 2 (2004): 221-239; Id., *The Romantic idea of a university: England and Germany, 1770-1850* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001); Peter Slee, “The Oxford idea of a liberal education, 1800-1860: the invention of tradition and the manufacture of practice,” *HU* 7 (1988): 61-87; Lawrence Goldman, “Oxford and the idea of a university in nineteenth-century Britain,” *Oxford Review of Education* 30 (2004): 575-592.

⁴⁴ Frank M. Turner, ed., *The idea of a university: John Henry Newman* (London: Yale UP, 1996); Paul Shrimpton, *The “making of men”: the idea and reality of Newman’s university in Oxford and Dublin* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2014).

university in 1900, has been studied in some detail⁴⁵. But the history of the individual colleges has been surprisingly neglected –the standard histories of University College and King’s College both date from 1929, at the time of their centenaries– and we still know little about London students’ origins and careers, or about relations between the university, its colleges, and the urban society of the capital city. Two major institutions were founded around 1900, partly with private money⁴⁶. The London School of Economics (1895) has a history written by a previous director, valuable as a record of his experiences, and the Imperial College of Science and Technology (1907) has received a standard history⁴⁷. The University of London also became England’s main centre of medical education, with the growth of schools based on teaching hospitals, but here too there has been only limited research⁴⁸.

In England outside London, Manchester received its first university institution, Owens College, in 1851, but further developments awaited the 1870s and 1880s. The civic universities have been studied as a group⁴⁹. There are also histories of individual establishments, but coverage is patchy - Manchester is a conspicuous gap. But modern scholarly histories include those of Liverpool, Birmingham, Sheffield, and Reading⁵⁰. Recent histories

⁴⁵ F. M. G. Willson, *Our Minerva: the men and politics of the University of London, 1836-1858* (London: Athlone, 1995); Id., *The University of London, 1858-1900: the politics of Senate and Convocation* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2004).

⁴⁶ Jill Pellew, “A metropolitan university fit for empire: the role of private benefaction in the early history of the London School of Economics and Political Science and Imperial College of Science and Technology, 1895-1930,” *HU* 26, no. 1 (2012): 202-245.

⁴⁷ Ralf Dahrendorf, *LSE. A history of the London School of Economics and Political Science, 1895-1995* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995); Hannah Gay, *The history of Imperial College London, 1907-2007: higher education and research in science, technology and medicine* (London: Imperial College Press, 2007).

⁴⁸ Elsbeth Heaman, *St Mary’s: the history of a London teaching hospital* (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 2003); Keir Waddington, *Medical education at St Bartholomew’s Hospital, 1123-1995* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2003).

⁴⁹ David R. Jones, *The origins of civic universities: Manchester, Leeds and Liverpool* (London: Routledge, 1988); S. J. M. M. Alberti, “Civic cultures and civic colleges in Victorian England,” in *The organization of knowledge in Victorian Britain*, ed. Martin Daunton (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005), 337-356; J. J. Walsh, “The university movement in the North of England at the end of the nineteenth century,” *Northern History* 46 (2009): 113-131; William Whyte, *Redbrick: a social and architectural history of Britain’s civic universities* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2015).

⁵⁰ Thomas Kelly, *For advancement of learning: the University of Liverpool, 1881-1981* (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1981); Eric Ives et al., *The first civic university: Birmingham, 1880-1980. An introductory history* (Birmingham: Birmingham UP, 2000); Helen Mathers, *Steel city scholars: the centenary history of the University of Sheffield* (London: James and James, 2005); James C. Holt, *The University of Reading: the first fifty years* (Reading: Reading UP, 1977).

give more space than older ones to the university as a community – of students as well as professors – and to the urban context of the universities and their relations with local elites.

While historians of the civic universities have generally seen them as expressing a distinct non-metropolitan identity, the University of Wales (1893) and its constituent colleges were linked to a growing cultural nationalism, and became a marker of national identity, as universities had long been in Scotland⁵¹. The university has its own three-volume history⁵², and the best served of the colleges is Bangor⁵³.

In the 1960s and 1970s, debate on the relative decline of the British economy often blamed the anti-entrepreneurial attitudes supposedly instilled by education. Historians who have investigated the question have been reluctant to endorse this thesis, notably Michael Sanderson in his pioneering *Universities and British industry* of 1972, which covered all universities, new and old⁵⁴. The general picture is that the ancient universities resisted purely technical subjects, and while Cambridge became noted for its research and education in pure science, Oxford admittedly lagged behind until the twentieth century⁵⁵. The civic universities, however, and some of those in Scotland, were much more open to vocational training, research directed to local industries, and relations with the business world, though some critics have argued that in the twentieth century they allowed themselves to be diverted from this mission⁵⁶. A further distinctive activity of British universities, in-

⁵¹ Lindsay Paterson, "Universities and nations in Britain in the twentieth century," in *National identity, nationalism and constitutional change*, ed. Frank Bechhofer and David McCrone (London: Palgrave, 2009): 163-188.

⁵² *A history of the University of Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press). I. J. Gwynn Williams, *The university movement in Wales* (1993); II. J. Gwynn Williams, *The University of Wales, 1893-1939* (1997); III. Prys Morgan, *The University of Wales, 1939-1993* (1997).

⁵³ J. Gwynn Williams, *The University College of North Wales: foundations, 1884-1927* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1985).

⁵⁴ Michael Sanderson, *The universities and British industry, 1850-1970* (London: Routledge, 1972); Id., "The English civic universities and the 'industrial spirit', 1870-1914," *Historical Research* 61 (1988): 90-104; Id., "The University of London and industrial progress, 1880-1914," *Journal of Contemporary History* 7 (1962): 243-262.

⁵⁵ Gordon W. Roderick and Michael D. Stephens, "Scientific studies at Oxford and Cambridge, 1850-1914," *British Journal of Educational Studies* 24 (1976): 49-65; Janet Howarth, "Science education in late-Victorian Oxford: a curious case of failure?" *English Historical Review* 102 (1987): 334-371; Jack Morrell, *Science at Oxford 1914-1939: transforming an arts university* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1997).

⁵⁶ Elizabeth J. Morse, "English civic universities and the myth of decline," *HU* 11 (1992): 177-204; Paul L. Robertson, "Scottish universities and Scottish industry, 1860-1914," *Scottish*

cluding Oxford and Cambridge, was the provision of “extension” lectures to outside audiences, both middle and working class⁵⁷.

Women and universities

One development associated with the growth of new universities was the admission of women to higher education, for which the key decade was the 1870s, being part of the wider nineteenth-century movement for women’s emancipation⁵⁸. A new interest in the subject reflected the establishment of women’s history itself, and contemporary challenges to male dominance of the academic world. One aim of research has been to trace the growth of institutions and numbers⁵⁹. At Oxford and Cambridge, separate women’s colleges were founded, which gave rise to college histories typical of the genre, as did the women’s colleges which became part of the University of London⁶⁰.

Two innovatory lines of research have also developed. One is to study the daily experience of women students, whether in residential colleges which sought to recreate a domestic setting, or within male-dominated student communities⁶¹. A second, possible because women graduates had a nar-

Economic and Social History 4 (1984): 39-54; Sarah V. Barnes, “England’s civic universities and the triumph of the Oxbridge ideal,” *History of Education Quarterly* 36 (1996): 271-305.

⁵⁷ Lawrence Goldman, *Dons and workers: Oxford and adult education since 1850* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995); Stuart Marriott, *Extramural empires: service and self-interest in English university adult education, 1873-1983* (Nottingham: University of Nottingham, 1984).

⁵⁸ Gillian Sutherland, “The movement for the higher education of women: its social and intellectual context in England, c. 1840-80,” in *Politics and social change in modern Britain: essays presented to A. F. Thompson*, ed. P. J. Waller (Brighton: Harvester, 1987), 91-116; Deirdre Raftery, “The opening of higher education to women in nineteenth century England: ‘unexpected revolution’ or inevitable change?” *Higher Education Quarterly* 56 (2002): 331-346.

⁵⁹ Carol Dyhouse, *No distinction of sex? Women in British universities, 1870-1939* (London: UCL Press, 1995); Id., *Students: a gendered history* (London: Routledge, 2006); Janet Howarth and Mark Curthoys, “The political economy of women’s higher education in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Britain,” *Historical Research* 60 (1987): 208-231.

⁶⁰ Joyce S. Pedersen, “The ‘history of the history’ of women’s higher education in England: the women’s colleges,” *HU* 27, no. 1 (2013): 97-127; Pauline Adams, *Somerville for women: an Oxford college, 1879-1993* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996); Laura Schwartz, *A serious endeavour: gender, education and community at St Hugh’s [Oxford], 1886-2011* (London: Profile, 2011); Caroline Bingham, *The history of Royal Holloway College, 1886-1986* (London: Constable, 1987); Janet Sondheimer, *Castle Adamant in Hampstead: a history of Westfield College, 1882-1982* (London: Westfield College, 1983).

⁶¹ Rita McWilliams Tullberg, *Women at Cambridge* (2nd edn, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998); Joyce S. Pedersen, “Enchanting modernity: the invention of tradition at two women’s

rower range of opportunities than men, is investigation of career patterns, especially in medicine, for which Glasgow has provided case studies⁶². Oral history has provided evidence for some work on this subject⁶³. Women also entered the academic profession, and here one may include the biographies of two women who had an important role in shaping their disciplines⁶⁴.

Curricula and disciplines

How far does university history include the history of individual disciplines? The nineteenth century was marked by the professionalization of science and scholarship, and the widening of university curricula as subjects were brought within the academic fold⁶⁵. Much history of disciplines is of an “internalist” kind emphasizing intellectual development and discovery, and neglecting (or taking for granted) institutional contexts. Some branches, like the history of science and history of medicine, have become subdisciplines with their own traditions and methodologies. Biographical approaches are also common, and scientists and scholars were increasingly university professors, committed to teaching as well as research. To make the subject manageable, this survey generally omits biographical work, and selects research which relates a discipline directly to its teaching. Certain subjects, notably

colleges in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Cambridge,” *HU* 17 (2001-2): 162-191; Jane Hamlett, “‘Nicely feminine, yet learned’: student rooms at Royal Holloway and the Oxford and Cambridge colleges in late nineteenth-century Britain,” *Women’s History Review* 15 (2006): 137-161; Julie S. Gibert, “Women students and student life at England’s civic universities before the First World War,” *HE* 23 (1994): 405-422; Lindy Moore, *Bajanellas and Semilinas: Aberdeen University and the education of women, 1860-1920* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen UP, 1991).

⁶² Wendy Alexander, *First ladies of medicine: the origins, education and destination of early women medical graduates of Glasgow University* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow, 1987); Catherine M. Kendall, “Higher education and the emergence of the professional woman in Glasgow, c. 1890-1914,” *HU* 10 (1991): 199-223; Johanna Geyer-Kordesch and Rona Ferguson, *Blue stockings, black gowns, white coats: a brief history of women entering higher education and the medical profession in Scotland* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow, 1995). See also Ruth Watts, “Universities, medical education and women: Birmingham in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,” *HE* 42 (2013): 306-319.

⁶³ Sarah Aiston, “A good job for a girl? The career biographies of women graduates of the University of Liverpool post-1945,” *20th Century British History* 15 (2004): 361-387.

⁶⁴ Fernanda Perrone, “Women academics in England, 1870-1930,” *HU* 12 (1993): 339-367; Maxine Berg, *A woman in history. Eileen Power, 1889-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996); Mary Beard, *The invention of Jane Harrison* (London: Harvard UP, 2000).

⁶⁵ T. W. Heyck, *The transformation of intellectual life in Victorian England* (London: Croom Helm, 1982).

classics, mathematics, and history were seen as central to the universities' mission of forming a national elite.

The study of classical teaching has been renewed by Christopher Stray⁶⁶, and of history by Reba Soffer. Soffer, whose work has mainly been on Oxford, has particularly stressed the political role of the subject as a training for the political class⁶⁷. It is perhaps natural that historians of universities have a special interest in their own subject, and there have been other studies of the teaching of history in both England⁶⁸ and Scotland⁶⁹.

At Cambridge mathematics was long at the heart of liberal education. Much history of mathematics is of a specialized kind⁷⁰, but the work of Andrew Warwick on mathematics and mathematical physics in nineteenth-century Cambridge is notable in showing how the development of the subject interacted with teaching and examining practices⁷¹.

⁶⁶ Christopher Stray, *Classics transformed: schools, universities, and society in England, 1830-1960* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998); Id., "Curriculum and style in the collegiate university: classics in nineteenth-century Oxbridge," *HU* 16, no. 2 (2000): 183-218; Christopher Stray, ed., *Oxford classics: teaching and learning, 1800-2000* (London: Duckworth, 2007); Christopher Stray, ed., *Classics in nineteenth and twentieth century Cambridge: curriculum, culture and community* (Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society, 1999).

⁶⁷ Reba N. Soffer, *Discipline and power: the university, history, and the making of an English elite, 1870-1930* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1994); Id., "The modern university and national values, 1850-1930," *Historical Research* 60 (1987): 166-187; Id., "Nation, duty, character and confidence: history at Oxford, 1850-1914," *Historical Journal* 30 (1987): 77-104; Id., "The development of disciplines in the modern English university," *Historical Journal* 31 (1988): 933-946.

⁶⁸ Peter Slee, *Learning and a liberal education: the study of modern history in the universities of Oxford, Cambridge and Manchester, 1800-1914* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1986); G. Kitson Clark, "A hundred years of the teaching of history at Cambridge, 1873-1973," *Historical Journal* 16 (1973): 535-553; A. J. Taylor, "History at Leeds 1877-1974: the evolution of a discipline," *North-eastern History* 10 (1975): 141-164; Gianna Pomata, "Rejoinder to Pygmalion: the origin of women's history at the London School of Economics," *Storia della Storiografia* 46 (2004): 79-104.

⁶⁹ Bruce Lenman, "The teaching of Scottish history in the Scottish universities," *Scottish Historical Review* 52 (1973): 165-190; Doreen J. Milne, *A century of history: the establishment and first century of the Department of History in the University of Aberdeen* (Aberdeen: Centre for Scottish Studies, 1998); Robert Anderson, "University history teaching and the Humboldtian model in Scotland, 1858-1914," *HU* 25, no. 1 (2010): 138-184; Id., "University history teaching, national identity and unionism in Scotland, 1862-1914," *Scottish Historical Review* 91 (2012): 1-41; Id., "The development of history teaching in the Scottish universities, 1894-1939," *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies* 32 (2012): 50-73.

⁷⁰ Raymond Flood et al., eds, *Mathematics in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2011); Alex D. D. Craik and Alonso D. Roberts, "Mathematics teaching, teachers and students at St Andrews University, 1765-1858," *HU* 24 (2009): 206-279.

⁷¹ Andrew Warwick, *Masters of theory: Cambridge and the rise of mathematical physics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003). See also P. M. Harman, *Wranglers and physi-*

Philosophy was central to education at Oxford (more than at Cambridge) but little seems to have been written about its teaching. In Scotland, the work of George Davie, which tied a general history of university development to the fate of philosophy teaching, has influenced Scottish culture and politics, but has not won a following among historians⁷².

The teaching of social sciences grew out of philosophy and history, and was expressed in early forms of economics and political science⁷³. Intellectual historians have done much work on social and political thought, and the role of university-educated intellectuals, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but without a direct focus on universities. We lack a general account of the growth of the social sciences in British universities, especially under American influence after 1945, though there is work on Oxford⁷⁴. Some other subjects, including English literature and modern languages, also seem neglected. Apart from the study of individual disciplines, there have been a few collections of essays which bring such studies together, and address more general questions of higher education pedagogy⁷⁵. The history of examinations and their relation with teaching has attracted specific attention; examining universities on the London model have been a distinctive British phenomenon⁷⁶.

cists: studies on Cambridge mathematical physics in the nineteenth century (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1985); Robert Fox and Graeme Gooday, *Physics in Oxford, 1839-1939: laboratories, learning and college life* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005).

⁷² G. E. Davie, *The democratic intellect: Scotland and her universities in the nineteenth century* (2nd edn, Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1964); Id., *The crisis of the democratic intellect: the problem of generalism and specialisation in twentieth-century Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1986).

⁷³ Alon Kadish and Keith Tribe, eds, *The market for political economy: the advent of economics in British university culture 1850-1905* (London: Routledge, 1993); Arthur J. Engel, "Political education in Oxford, 1823-1914," *History of Education Quarterly* 20 (1980): 257-280.

⁷⁴ Norman Chester, *Economics, politics and social studies in Oxford, 1900-85* (London: Macmillan, 1986); Christopher Hood et al., *Forging a discipline: a critical assessment of Oxford's development of the study of politics and international relations in comparative perspective* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2014).

⁷⁵ F. M. L. Thompson, ed., *The University of London and the world of learning, 1836-1986* (London: Hambledon, 1990); Jonathan Smith and Christopher Stray, eds, *Teaching and learning in nineteenth-century Cambridge* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2001).

⁷⁶ Roy MacLeod, ed., *Days of judgement: science, examinations and the organization of knowledge in late Victorian England* (Driffield: Nafferton, 1982); Robert Bell and Malcolm Tight, *Open universities: a British tradition?* (Buckingham: Society for Research into Higher Education, 1993); Christopher Stray, "From oral to written examinations: Cambridge, Oxford and Dublin 1700-1914," *HU* 20, no. 2 (2005): 76-130; Robert Anderson, "Examinations and university models in nineteenth century Britain," *Annali di Storia delle Università Italiane* 1

It is a traditional view that the development of British universities in the nineteenth century was increasingly influenced by the German or Humboldtian model of the research university. Research now shows that the reception of this model was late and partial⁷⁷. One example was the belated introduction of the PhD degree⁷⁸. Nevertheless, Germany provided the only significant outside influence down to 1914, and there have been several studies looking at influences and parallels between the two countries⁷⁹. In the twentieth century the United States became the main model, but this interaction has not yet been studied in the same way.

Selected themes

This section looks at some of the other themes which have interested university historians recently, mostly for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. One is student life. At Oxford and Cambridge, this was centred on the colleges, but in the non-residential universities it was more closely connected with the patterns of urban middle-class society⁸⁰. The same applies to an important aspect of British student life, sport. At Oxford and Cambridge, the cult of athleticism was used to reinforce the college system, but also reflected the influence of the English public schools from which they drew most

(2015): 105-125; Id., "Professors and examinations: ideas of the university in nineteenth-century Scotland," *HE* 46 (2017): 21-38.

⁷⁷ Marc Schalenberg, *Humboldt auf Reisen? Die Rezeption des 'deutschen Universitätsmodells' in den französischen und britischen Reformdiskursen (1810-1870)* (Basel: Schwabe, 2002); Id., "Die Rezeption des deutschen Universitätsmodells in Oxford, 1850-1914," in *Aneignung und Abwehr. Interkultureller Transfer zwischen Deutschland und Grossbritannien im 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Rudolf Muhs et al. (Bodenheim: Philo, 1998), 198-226.

⁷⁸ Renate Simpson, *How the PhD came to Britain: a century of struggle for postgraduate education* (Guildford: Society for Research into Higher Education, 1983).

⁷⁹ Stuart Wallace, "The university and national identity: Scottish academics and German universities," in *Scholarship in Victorian Britain*, ed. Martin Hewitt (Leeds: Centre for Victorian Studies, 1998), 14-26; Benedikt Stuchtey and Peter Wende, eds, *British and German historiography, 1750-1950: traditions, perceptions, and transfers* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000); Heather Ellis and Ulrike Kirchberger, eds, *Anglo-German scholarly networks in the long nineteenth century* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

⁸⁰ H. S. Jones, "Student life and sociability, 1860-1930: comparative reflections," *HU* 14 (1995-6): 225-246; Colin A. McLaren, *Aberdeen students, 1600-1860* (Aberdeen: University of Aberdeen, 2005); Robert Anderson, *The student community at Aberdeen, 1860-1939* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen UP, 1988); Catriona M. M. Macdonald, " 'To form citizens': Scottish students, governance and politics, 1884-1948," *HE* 38 (2009): 383-402.

of their students, and has been linked with the values of masculinity, militarism, and imperial leadership⁸¹. The creation of masculinity, as an aspect of gender history, has been emphasized in recent work on students⁸².

The broader links between imperialism and universities have also been explored by several researchers. Universities both attracted students from the empire (and other overseas countries), and sent many of their graduates to work there⁸³. The Rhodes scholarships at Oxford were a well-known institution⁸⁴. More generally, the British model was the basis of university development in imperial and colonial territories, and university links held together the English-speaking world⁸⁵. New research on this reflects global and transnational approaches to history. Apart from imperial links, several studies cluster around the crisis of the First World War, which made the traditional admiration of German universities problematic, and disrupted existing educational relations⁸⁶.

Sociological studies of the student body of the type popular in the 1970s have become less common. Today they rely on the digitization of student records, which demands collective effort and significant resources⁸⁷.

⁸¹ Mark Curthoys and H. S. Jones, "Oxford athleticism, 1850-1914: a reappraisal," *HE* 24 (1995): 305-317; Robert Anderson, "Sport in the Scottish universities, 1860-1939," *International Journal of the History of Sport* 4 (1987): 177-188.

⁸² Paul R. Deslandes, *Oxbridge men: British masculinity and the undergraduate experience, 1850-1920* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2005); Id., "Competitive examinations and the culture of masculinity in Oxbridge undergraduate life, 1850-1920," *History of Education Quarterly* 42 (2002): 544-578; Sonja Levens, "Constructing national identities: university students, military masculinity and the consequences of the Great War in Britain and Germany," *Past and Present* 198 (2008): 147-183; Id., *Elite, Männlichkeit und Krieg. Tübinger und Cambridger Studenten, 1900-1929* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2006).

⁸³ Hilary Perraton, *A history of foreign students in Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Richard Symonds, *Oxford and Empire: the last lost cause?* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986); John D. Hargreaves, *Academe and Empire: some overseas connections of Aberdeen University, 1860-1970* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen UP, 1994).

⁸⁴ Anthony Kenny, ed., *The history of the Rhodes Trust, 1902-99* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001); Philip Ziegler, *Legacy: Cecil Rhodes, the Rhodes Trust, and Rhodes scholarships* (London: Yale UP, 2008).

⁸⁵ Tamson Pietsch, *Empire of scholars: universities, networks and the British academic world, 1850-1939* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2013).

⁸⁶ Stuart Wallace, *War and the image of Germany: British academics, 1914-1918* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1988); Tomás Irish, *The university at war, 1914-25: Britain, France, and the United States* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Thomas Weber, *Our friend "The enemy": elite education in Britain and Germany before World War I* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2008).

⁸⁷ Alison Gaukroger and Leonard Schwarz, "A university and its region: student recruitment to Birmingham 1945-1995," *Oxford Review of Education* 23 (1997): 185-202.

The construction of prosopographical databases, taken up by university historians in several European countries, has hardly got off the ground in Britain. Attention has also switched from the origins of students to their destinations - the relation between universities and national elites and professions⁸⁸. Most of these studies emphasize the dominance of Oxford and Cambridge, a matter of continuing contemporary concern, but W. D. Rubinstein's research has questioned the standard view of this⁸⁹.

Recent writing reflects the historiographical turn from social to cultural approaches, and some themes may loosely be grouped as cultural. These include the rituals, ceremonies and dramatic performances which were characteristic of early modern Oxford and Cambridge⁹⁰, the award of honorary degrees⁹¹, and university jubilee celebrations, a Scottish speciality⁹². University architecture has also proved a fruitful subject, as the spatial expression of changing needs and values; there has been a special interest in the large building programmes of the nineteenth century⁹³.

⁸⁸ Robert Anderson, "Universities and elites in modern Britain," *HU* 10 (1991): 225-250; Id., *Universities and elites in Britain since 1800* (2nd edn, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995); H. W. Becher, "The social origins and post-graduate careers of a Cambridge intellectual elite, 1830-1860," *Victorian Studies* 28 (1984-5): 97-127; A. G. L. Haig, "The Church, the universities and learning in later Victorian England," *Historical Journal* 29 (1986): 187-201; W. C. Lubenow, "Making words flesh: changing roles of university learning and the professions in 19th century England," *Minerva* 40 (2002): 217-234; Leonard Schwarz, "Professions, elites and universities in England, 1870-1970," *Historical Journal* 47 (2004): 941-962.

⁸⁹ W. D. Rubinstein, "Education and the social origins of British elites, 1880-1970," *Past and Present* 112 (1986): 163-207; Id., "The social origins and career patterns of Oxford and Cambridge matriculants, 1840-1900," *Historical Research* 82 (2009): 715-730.

⁹⁰ Kristine Haugen, "Imagined universities: public insult and the *terrae filius* in early modern Oxford," *HU* 16, no. 2 (2000): 1-31; Siobhan Keenan, "Spectator and spectacle: royal entertainments at the universities in the 1560s," in *The progresses, pageants and entertainments of Queen Elizabeth I*, ed. J. E. Archer et al. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007), 86-103; Christopher Marlow, *Performing masculinity in English university drama, 1598-1636* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013).

⁹¹ Michael Heffernan and Heike Jöns, "Degrees of influence: the politics of honorary degrees in the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, 1900-2000," *Minerva* 45 (2007): 389-416.

⁹² Robert Anderson, "Ceremony in context: the Edinburgh University Tercentenary, 1884," *Scottish Historical Review* 87 (2008): 121-145; Id., "University centenary ceremonies in Scotland, 1884-1911," in *National, Nordic or European? Nineteenth-century university jubilees and Nordic cooperation*, ed. Pieter Dhondt (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 241-264.

⁹³ William Whyte, *Oxford Jackson: architecture, education, status and style, 1835-1924* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006); Id., "Redbrick's unlovely quadrangles': reinterpreting the architecture of the civic universities," *HU* 21, no. 1 (2006): 151-177; Sophie Forgan, "The architecture of science and the idea of a university," *Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science* 20 (1989): 405-434; Margaret B. Vickery, *Buildings for bluestockings: the architecture and social*

The twentieth century and after

For the twentieth century, it becomes possible to write university history from records other than those of the universities themselves. These include state archives, but also those of bodies like the Association of University Teachers⁹⁴, the National Union of Students, or the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals⁹⁵ - all these are at the Modern Records Centre of the University of Warwick⁹⁶.

There were few new foundations in the 1920s and 1930s, but state grants were increased and centralized under the University Grants Committee, whose foundation and early years have been examined⁹⁷. The period also saw the opening of higher education to broader social strata through state financial assistance, and the inclusion of universities in social welfare policies⁹⁸.

The Second World War led to more far-reaching expansion and political action. The 1960s were a key period, and some episodes have been studied in detail⁹⁹, though many others, such as the student movements of the period, remain under-researched¹⁰⁰. Treatment of government policy between then and the present day has attracted significant work within social

history of women's colleges in late Victorian England (London: Delaware UP, 1999); Andrew G. Fraser, *The building of Old College: Adam, Playfair and the University of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1989); Nick Haynes, *Building knowledge: an architectural history of the University of Glasgow* (Edinburgh: Historic Scotland, 2013).

⁹⁴ Harold Perkin, *Key profession: the history of the Association of University Teachers* (London: Routledge, 1969).

⁹⁵ Keith Vernon, " 'We alone are passive': the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals and the organization of British universities, c.1918-1939," *HE* 43 (2014): 187-207.

⁹⁶ www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/mrc/

⁹⁷ Eric Hutchinson, "The origins of the University Grants Committee," *Minerva* 13 (1975): 583-620; Christine H. Shinn, "The beginnings of the University Grants Committee," *HE* 9 (1980): 233-243; Id., *Paying the piper: the development of the University Grants Committee, 1919-46* (Lewes: Falmer, 1986).

⁹⁸ Carol Dyhouse, "Going to university in England between the wars: access and funding," *HE* 31 (2002): 1-14; Id., "Family patterns of social mobility through higher education in England in the 1930s," *Journal of Social History* 34 (2000-1): 817-841; Keith Vernon, "The health and welfare of university students in Britain, 1920-1939," *HE* 37 (2008): 227-52.

⁹⁹ C. D. Godwin, "The origin of the binary system," *HE* 27 (1998): 171-191.

¹⁰⁰ Nick Thomas, "Challenging myths of the 1960s: the case of student protest in Britain," *20th Century British History* 13 (2002): 277-297; Caroline M. Hoefferle, *British student activism in the long Sixties* (London: Routledge, 2013); Malcolm Tight, "Student accommodation in higher education in the United Kingdom: changing post-war attitudes," *Oxford Review of Education* 37 (2011): 109-122.

science traditions, in sociology and political science¹⁰¹, as well as polemical treatments (often powerful) which relate current policies to the past¹⁰². Historians have also begun to construct source-based general accounts of these years¹⁰³. But general interpretations integrating university history with the history of post-war social change and with broader intellectual and cultural developments, with their implications for the nature of the university itself, as yet hardly exist¹⁰⁴.

The 1960s saw two new types of foundation. There were entirely new campus universities, which have been seen as an expression of “utopianist” ideals of urban and community planning¹⁰⁵. Though they attracted much attention at the time, only one of these universities, East Anglia, has a full-scale history¹⁰⁶. The second group consisted of new technological universities based on existing technical colleges, and less glamorous than the campus universities; these mostly still await their historians – as does the general relationship between universities, technology and industry in the twentieth century¹⁰⁷. Another important innovation of this period was the distance-learning Open University¹⁰⁸. In the 1990s, there was a further wave

¹⁰¹ For example A. H. Halsey, *Decline of donnish dominion: the British academic professions in the twentieth century* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992); Brian Salter and Ted Tapper, *The state and higher education* (Ilford: Woburn Press, 1994).

¹⁰² For example Robert Stevens, *University to uni: the politics of higher education in England since 1944* (2nd edn, London: Politico's, 2005); Stefan Collini, *What are universities for?* (London: Penguin, 2012).

¹⁰³ W. A. C. Stewart, *Higher education in postwar Britain* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989); Malcolm Tight, *The development of higher education in the United Kingdom since 1945* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2009); Michael Shattock, *The UGC and the management of British universities* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1994); Id., *Making policy in British higher education, 1945-2011* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2012).

¹⁰⁴ A beginning is Peter Mandler, “Educating the nation: II. Universities,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 25 (2015): 1-26.

¹⁰⁵ Stefan Muthesius, *The postwar university: utopianist campus and college* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2000); David Smith, “Eric James and the ‘utopianist’ campus: biography, policy and the building of a new university [York] during the 1960s,” *HE* 37 (2008): 23-42; Harold Perkin, “Dream, myth and reality: new universities in England, 1960-1990,” *Higher Education Quarterly* 45 (1991): 294-310.

¹⁰⁶ Michael Sanderson, *The history of the University of East Anglia, Norwich* (London: Hambledon, 2002). See also Fred Gray, ed., *Making the future: a history of the University of Sussex* (Brighton: University of Sussex, 2011).

¹⁰⁷ But see John Butt, *John Anderson's legacy: the University of Strathclyde and its antecedents, 1796-1996* (East Linton: Tuckwell, 1996).

¹⁰⁸ Pete Dorey, “‘Well, Harold insists on having it!': the political struggle to establish the Open University, 1965-67,” *Contemporary British History* 29 (2015): 241-72.

of promotions of existing technical and vocational colleges to university status, and many of these published short histories which asserted their older historical roots¹⁰⁹. But proper examination of university policy in the 1990s awaits the opening of the relevant archives.

One type of study which has been significant since the 1980s is of the impact of social change and government policies (especially financial cuts) on existing universities. Books of this kind exist for Oxford, Liverpool, Manchester, and Aberdeen¹¹⁰.

Conclusion: writing university history today

About 290 books and articles are cited in this survey. Of these 8% were published in the 1970s or earlier, 21% in the 1980s, 26% in the 1990s, and 45% since 2000. University history therefore appears to be flourishing, though there is no current equivalent of the large collective enterprises of earlier years, and university history has not become an institutionalized subdiscipline. The journals *History of Education* and *History of Universities* continue to be the main outlet for research, but Britain has no national centre or institute for university history, nor are there regular conferences or postgraduate programmes. The universities themselves have not shown any collective commitment to their own history, though individual universities may sponsor an institutional history to commemorate an anniversary, or because it seems useful for publicity or fund-raising. This has its own drawbacks: public relations considerations may make histories blander as they approach the present, and there is at least one case of a history being censored by a university administration to eliminate critical or controversial material¹¹¹.

¹⁰⁹ For example Rex Pope and Ken Phillips, *University of Central Lancashire: a history of the development of the institution since 1828* (Preston: University of Central Lancashire, 1995); Joan Allen and Richard Buswell, *Rutherford's ladder: the making of Northumbria University, 1871-1996* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Northumbria UP, 2005).

¹¹⁰ Joseph A. Soares, *The decline of privilege: the modernization of Oxford University* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1999); Sylvia Harrop, *Decade of change: the University of Liverpool, 1981-1991* (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1994); Brian Pullan and Michele Abendstern, *A history of the University of Manchester, 1951-73* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2000); Id., *A history of the University of Manchester, 1973-90* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2004); John D. Hargreaves and Angela Forbes, eds, *Aberdeen University, 1945-1981: regional roles and national needs* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen UP, 1989).

¹¹¹ Robin Darwall-Smith, "Oxford and Cambridge college histories: an endangered genre?" *HU* 22, no. 1 (2007): 248.

The direction of academic research is influenced by the general development of the discipline, intellectual fashion, and the priorities of funding bodies. The latter tend to favour collaborative or interdisciplinary projects, and these require a critical mass of interested scholars. University history in Britain is producing distinguished work, but it is guided by the interests and enthusiasms of the individual scholars whose main contributions have been listed in this essay. They see their field as part of general history rather than a narrow specialism, and in this they are faithful to the pioneers of the 1960s and 1970s.

Surveys have been published from time to time of the current state of scholarship, including a special number in 1997 of the *Oxford Review of Education*¹¹². *History of Universities* formerly included regular lists of new publications, though these have not appeared recently, and for Britain do not go beyond 2011. The best guides to current work are the annual "List of publications on the economic and social history of Great Britain and Ireland" in the *Economic History Review*, and the online "Bibliography of British and Irish History", which may be searched by theme and author¹¹³.

It was only in the 1960s that university history went much beyond the history of individual institutions, and became part of the broader social history of Great Britain, though with distinct approaches in England and Scotland. Since then scholarship has followed the general evolution of historical science, with a growing emphasis on cultural themes, and with greater awareness of transnational comparisons. Institutional histories have continued to be written, though with greater sophistication than in the past. The 1980s and 1990s were marked by large collective projects, at Oxford, Cambridge and Aberdeen. These have not been repeated, and the history of universities has not become a formal subdiscipline in Britain, or one which attracts research funding on a large scale. In this respect, Britain may contrast with other countries, but the work which is done by individual scholars, reflected in publication in flourishing specialized journals, is of high quality.

¹¹² Including Sheldon Rothblatt, "The writing of university history at the end of another century," *Oxford Review of Education* 23 (1997): 151-67, and Daniel Greenstein, "University history: recent contributions from Scotland": 223-7. Other surveys are Michael S. Moss, "University history: navel gazing or a fruitful course of enquiry?" *Scottish Economic and Social History* 14 (1994): 93-99; W. D. Lubenow, "University history and the history of universities in the nineteenth century," *Journal of British Studies*, 39 (2000): 247-262; Harold Silver, " 'Things change but names remain the same': higher education historiography, 1975-2000," *HE* 35 (2006): 121-140.

¹¹³ <http://www.history.ac.uk/projects/bbih> (accessible on subscription).