St. Edmund's Student Conference 2020/2021
27/02/2021

Organizer: Valentina A. Grasso, CR Academic Officer.
For info: cr-academic@st-Edmunds.cam.ac.uk

PANEL 1
Mathematics, Engineering, Chemistry, Biology and Pharmacology

Chair: Gurashish Singh and Muntazir Abidi

1 Georgia Ioannou
Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics
9-9.20
"Impact Cratering Dynamics with Materials that Mimic Planetary Impact Process"
Impact cratering is the process during which a moving object strikes a surface and forms a crater. From nature (e.g. raindrops on soil) to industry (e.g. inkjet printing) the examples are innumerable. Many have tried to explain the dynamics of the relevant geological process experimentally using various materials, but there are still many aspects that remain unknown. In our experiments we use both in the pool (target) and the drop (impactor) a yield stress material, Carbopol (hair gel), that is found to be able to mimic rock behaviour in planetary processes. What is special about this material is its dual nature; it is found in a solid regime when low stresses are applied but flows when the applied stresses exceed a specific value. We will show how the air-gel and pool gel-drop gel interface morphologies are affected by the strength of the material during the evolution of the crater.

2 Sam P. Charlwood
Engineering
9.20-40
"The Influence of Buoyancy on Vehicle Exhaust Dispersion and Human Exposure"
Within cities, the close proximity of humans to vehicles, and the slow speeds at which they travel, mean buoyancy cannot be neglected when considering pollution dispersion within cities. This investigation experimentally tests the influence of buoyancy on the dispersion of pollution within the near wake of an Ahmed body. Exhausts with various buoyancies were tested being equivalent to driving speeds of 3-7 ms-1. Buoyancy was found to push the pollution profile of the wake upwards. This notably increased the predicted exposure at the height of a standing child and decreased the expected pollution being drawn into the air vents of the following vehicle. Further, the exposure at the height of a child was found to be approximately 10 times higher than that at the height of an adult.

3 Menandro Cruz
Chemistry
9.40-10
"Fibre Formation of Polyacrylamides in Ambient Conditions"
Recent reports have highlighted a range of polymeric systems that exhibit fibre formation under ambient conditions. These materials have exceptional properties with a unique combination of strength, elasticity and damping capacity, which fills a gap in the field of fibre science. Despite these materials being well-characterised, there is a lack of understanding on how to control their tensile properties based from molecular design, owing to the complexity of these multi-component systems. In order to better understand these systems, the effect of each fundamental component on the tensile properties of fibres must be investigated. Here, we report the fibre formation of different polyacrylamides under ambient conditions. The role of different parameters such as cosolvent, polymer concentration and chain length on both fibre-forming capability and their corresponding tensile properties were investigated. Elucidating these effects on fibre formation under ambient conditions can establish foundations for the development of sustainable fibre-manufacturing and tailored fibres for a wide range of applications.

4 Vichawan Sakulsupich
Chemistry
10-10.20
"Assessing the Potential Hazards of Volcanic Sulfur Species to Aviation"
Volcanic eruptions are a well-recognized risk to the aviation industry. Hazards from volcanic ash to aircraft are well-established, and Volcanic Ash Advisory Centres worldwide are responsible for monitoring and forecasting the dispersion of volcanic ash clouds. While volcanic sulfur species such as sulfur dioxide (SO_2) can also damage jet aircraft and cause discomfort to passengers and crew members, there is currently no regulation to limit aircraft exposure to volcanic sulfur species or to mitigate these hazards. The aircraft's encounter with SO_2 during their flight route is thought to correlate with the aircraft engines' susceptibility to damage. To quantify hazards to aviation, encounter metrics, including the exposure, dosage, dose rate, dose, and total exposure are used to calculate the amount of contamination experienced and accumulated by the aircraft. This work has helped produce an encounter metrics calculator for SO_2 and other sulfur species which is applied to aerosol-climate model output that includes volcanic sulfur emissions from 1979 to 2015. Our first analysis, using the 1991 Pinatubo eruption as a test case, shows the amount of SO_2 encountered by an aircraft is directly connected to the route location and the altitude of volcanic and anthropogenic SO_2. Low-altitude flights can be affected by anthropogenic emission while the higher flights are most susceptible to volcanic emissions. Using the developed encounter metrics calculator, this work now aims to quantify the potential hazard of SO_2 accumulation as well as other sulfur species and assess the contribution of both volcanic and anthropogenic emissions to the encounter metrics. In addition, it will assess the impact of past and future jet-stream variability on plume transport and positioning relative to key flight routes, in particular focusing on eruptions in the Northern Hemisphere that affect the aviation industry.

5 Julija Maldutyte
Biology
10.20-40
"SURF-ing Through the Cellular Secretory Pathway"
Cellular physiology of a healthy organism relies heavily on not only accurate production and processing of every gene product (protein), but also their deployment to the correct cellular compartment. An analogous process more familiar to the wider audience would be a factory production line: it is essential to ensure that the product being manufactured reaches each checkpoint in the line on time and ready for the next processing step. Such production line in terms of cellular biology is responsible for correct modification and folding of around 30% of all proteome and is called the Secretory Pathway. My PhD project focuses on the earliest step of this process in a cellular compartment called the Endoplasmic Reticulum (ER). I aim to characterise a protein that resides in the ER membrane called SURF4. SURF4 is responsible for picking and exporting correctly folded proteins, in this way providing an important quality control checkpoint to ensure healthy cellular physiology.

6 Jasdip Dulai
Pharmacology
10.40-11
"Implementation of Computer-aided Drug Discovery (CADD)"
The pharmaceutical world must constantly innovate to not only enable them to identify new cell targets but also new compounds, this pressure is imposed on scientists to improve not only the efficiency of developing drugs but more importantly reducing the time and cost lost on a failed drug. With the majority of drug failure stemming from the initial discovery phase, much like most innovation, the pharma world has looked towards computers to provide a predictive step towards increasing both cost and time efficiency. In my talk I will discuss what exactly is CADD and how does this help scientists and the public alike.

Q&A 11-11.20

PANEL 2
Architecture, Technology Policy, Criminology and Social Innovation

Chair: Esteban Garcia and Aastha Dahal

1 Raghav Rayasam
Architecture
11.30-50
"Islands in the City"
This paper proposes an alternative design approach towards negotiating Delhi's informal settlements with its fast-paced urbanization. It argues for dense, developing cities to retrospect and negotiate their intrinsic complexities and adopt incremental and non-disruptive spatial interventions amidst growing global transformative redevelopment narratives. It analyzes the systemic failures of the city in addressing urban complexity and layering and makes the case for participatory practices that translate into immediate material action. It moves on to discuss the stigmatic perceptions of chaos and dereliction attached to informal settlements, along with their propensity to hack formal urban frameworks. Through case studies and interviews, it identifies useful design tools for equitable, non-disruptive and sustained development. It then proposes critical steps to initiate immediate small-scale changes and test them before setting off long-term interventions. The Proposal focusses on immediate interventions in Khirki, an informal settlement in the south of Delhi. This is followed by a long-term aim to develop a method of bridging the city's persisting islands of physical fabrics and social perceptions.

2 Marek Szeles
Technology Policy
11.50-12.10
"Autonomous Driving Technology Landscape in 2020: Technical Challenges and Policy Overview"
In the recent decades, autonomous vehicle technology is being debated about as one of the leading technologies that is on the verge of revolutionising and disrupting traffic, our way of working and in essence, society at large. In my contribution, I will be exploring this phenomenon from several aspects. Firstly, the current technological landscape is examined, evaluating the current capabilities of such technology based on state-of-the-art output both by technological companies and academic research groups. Secondly, the challenges that the technology is facing at present are evaluated, from a multidisciplinary lens. Lastly, the current legislative environment is described, featuring the regulations both planned and in place. Having assessed the general state of this technology at present, the contribution concludes with a brief foresight exercise, evaluating the possible developments and applications of the technology in the near future.

3 Annalisa Battista
Criminology
12.10-30
""*This is a Man's World*". "*Unnatural Exposure*": The Unwomanly Face of the CJS. Exploring the influence of Feminist Criminologies on Crime Fiction Novels through Patricia Cornwell's Kay Scarpetta Series"

This research explores how feminist criminologies have influenced the re-gendering of Crime Fiction novels in representing women's experiences of the CJS, as victims and officials. The study explores how feminist criminologies shaped the narrative portrayal of urban anxiety and how it impacts on women's fear of crime. The study explores the practice of 'doing' and 'undoing' gender adopted within the CJS to cope with the peculiarities and ideologies of male-dominated work environment.s The study applies Fairclough's model of Critical Discourse Analysis to Patricia Cornwell's Kay Scarpetta Series. The application of CDA to 'the series' has allowed to identify particular theoretical and conceptual framework as predominant within the text, which make 'the series' share commonalities with other feminist crime fiction series. It also shows how 'the series' paves the way to current feminist crime fiction's representation of how fear and anxiety characterise women's lives in a modern, but still patriarchal, society.

4 Yenny K. Yang
Social Innovation
12.30-50
"Micro Actors and Wicked Problems: The Case Study of Clarkston, Georgia"
Over the recent years, the concept of social innovation has significantly been embraced by different individuals and organizations across the globe. "The term 'social innovation' is used to describe a broad range of organizational and inter-organizational activity that is ostensibly designed to address the most deep-rooted 'problems' of society, such as poverty, inequality and environmental degradation" (Tracey and Stott, 2016). The need to address the most deep-rooted issues of society has caused a great wave worldwide (Mongell and Rullani, 2017, p.445). Communities are increasingly turning to social innovation to address social and environmental problems to improve the overall welfare of individuals. In the face of contemporary societal problems, social entrepreneurs craft social innovations that contribute to scalable solutions to these enduring societal problems. Social innovation may act as a powerful driver of inclusion, contributing to promoting equality, a sense of belonging, and access to resources for all society groups (Krlev, Einarsson, Wijkström, Heyer, and Mildenberger, 2020). This study discusses whether micro actors can make a difference in solving wicked problems from the lenses of sociological perspectives. The Clarkston case study on the bottom up approach to social innovation fills an important blind spot in the sociological theory because it serves as an important corrective in two respects; 1) overwhelmingly, studies of social innovation, especially in the U.S., concentrate on top-down and high-tech approach to solve social problems, and 2) among the rare studies that concentrate on micro actors in particular, only a small subset investigates refugee entrepreneurs and their roles as social innovators.

Q&A 12.50-1.10

PANEL 3
Social Innovation, Law, Education and Psychology

Chair: Pragya Parijat Singh and Scott Spivey Provencio

1 Cecilie Steenbuch Traberg
Psychology
1.20-40
"Birds of a Feather Persuaded Together: Investigating the Effects of Political Source Congruence on Susceptibility and Resistance to (Mis)information"
While misinformation poses one of the most pressing global threats to societal well-being, research has demonstrated that individuals can be inoculated against misinformation from fictitious sources. However, as source similarity increases likelihood of persuasion, this raises the question of whether individuals are more susceptible to misinformation from well-known, ideologically congruent sources, and if so, whether inoculation interventions are effective under such conditions. Across two experiments, we show that political congruence with news sources increases susceptibility to misinformation for both liberal and conservative participants, and that this effect is mediated by source credibility judgements (N=150). Despite this increase in susceptibility, we further demonstrate that the inoculation intervention, the Fake News Game, successfully reduces susceptibility to misinformation from politically congruent sources (N=875). These findings add to current understandings of source effects in the online news environment and provide evidence for inoculation as a strategy for reducing the influence of misinformation even from politically similar sources.

2 Ariana H. Alexander-Sefre
Social Innovation
1.40-2
"Mental Wellness and the Western World's Male Suicide Epidemic"
Men have alarmingly higher suicide rates compared with women (Blisker & White, 2011). In the United States, the UK, and Canada, for instance, men have a suicide rate 3 to 7.5 times that of women (K. Nock et al., 2008). Simultaneously, we live in a society where mind management tools such as therapy, counselling, and mindfulness are available but culturally sit just out of comfortability for millions of men. This discussion will argue that the symbols and gendering norms surrounding male identity and social roles contribute to the Western world's disproportionately high male suicide rate. How we perceive the search for mental wellness in the Western world is linked to it having become slightly easier for women than for men. The aim is to dismantle the symbolic forces surrounding the notion of 'asking for help' and examine the dangers in gendering aspects of the mind and tools for mind management.

3 Frederik Bergmann
Cognition and Brain Sciences
2-2.20
"Unwanted Thoughts and their Intrusion into Awareness"
Unwanted thoughts are a hallmark of many psychiatric disorders. While constituting a phenomenon with great clinical importance and being something almost any human has experienced, we know surprisingly little about how unwanted thoughts arise into consciousness. Why do embarrassing, painful or simply irrelevant or distracting memories pop into our mind? And how is that different from a thought that we perceive as being voluntary? In my talk I will try to address these questions and will give you a glimpse into my PhD project on magnetic resonance brain imaging of distracting thoughts, where I try to link neural processes that underlie visual attention to those that underlies the intrusion of unwanted memories.

4 Emraan Azad
Law
2.20-40
"The Question of Citizenship Right of the Rohingya Children Born in the Refugee Camps of Bangladesh"
In August 2020, Save the Children estimated that a total of 75,971 Rohingya children which constitutes around nine percent of the whole refugee population, were born in Cox's Bazar refugee camps in Bangladesh within the period of last three years. As the possibility of Rohingya repatriation is now clouded with much uncertainty due to unstable bilateral diplomatic relations between Myanmar and Bangladesh, the number of this stateless new generation is increasing camp-wide every day. The official position of both Bangladesh and Myanmar is non-favourable to the new-born Rohingya children who are not recognised as the citizens of either of the two countries. Under international law, however, both states share equal responsibility in this regard. The implication of depriving the new-born Rohingya children from their right to citizenship would mean a serious violation of their human rights. Their physical existence minus the right to citizenship would place them in a disadvantaged position to claim and enjoy their human rights – some of which might be subjected to lawful limitations imposed by the states. Despite such a complex situation, the international human rights legal framework such as UDHR, ICCPR, etc. and relevant treaty bodies do not remain silent on the question of their citizenship right. In this backdrop, the present research – through the prism of international human rights law jurisprudence – aims to explore, first, how laws, policies and practices of both Myanmar and Bangladesh deprive the new-born Rohingya children from their right to citizenship, and secondly, what kinds of responsibilities the two states have towards the Rohingya children on the question of their citizenship and associated human rights.

5. Will Mercer
Education
2.40-3
"How Can a Community of Enquiry Approach Expand Learners' Vocabulary"
For my master's thesis I am combining my part-time degree in Primary Education with my full-time work as a primary school teacher. I use 'Philosophy for Children', often known as P4C, in my pedagogy and I am interested to see to what extent, if any, it may support children's acquisition of vocabulary. I have decided that an action research approach will best help me do this, given its focus on transforming practice. I will research collaboratively with my class to

explore different ways to use P4C to expand their vocabulary, which I will assess with audio transcriptions, surveys and interviews. As well as examining the kinds of words used by children in philosophical discussion, I hope to establish a 'community of enquiry' in which my class will come to independently apply strategies that improve their word knowledge, giving them greater autonomy over their own learning.

6 Elizabeth H. Leung
Education
3-3.20
"Reading into Dyslexia: Dyslexic Myths and Representations in Children's Literature"
The academic struggles of children with dyslexia are highlighted in children's and young adult literature, particularly within contemporary realist novels (Altieri; Jozwik and Rice). While dyslexia is a common learning difficulty which affects reading and spelling (British Dyslexia Association; Rose), many scholars debate its definition claiming that many myths and misconceptions about dyslexics are presented as truth in popular culture (Collinson; Elliott and Grigorenko; Kamhi; Kirby). This paper analyzes how myths surrounding dyslexia pervade children's texts under the guise of accurate representation and create a cultural feedback loop of misinformation. Drawing upon interdisciplinary dyslexic and critical disability studies research, I will perform a literary close reading of the children's novel Fish in a Tree (Hunt) which epitomizes how these narratives perpetuate dyslexic myths and how these myths can be detrimental to dyslexic (and non-dyslexic) child readers (Bishop).

Q&A 3.20-40

PANEL 4
Music, Classics, Philosophy, History and Linguistics

Chair: Chris Schaefer and Silvia Ferreri

1 Ekaterina Pavlova
Music
3.50-4.10
"Auferstanden aus Ruinen: Cultural Heritage, Identity and Politics in the Post-war Rebirth of the Staatsoper Unter den Linden"
After the Second World War, Berlin, like many other cities, was left in ruins. Less than two weeks after the defeat of the Berlin garrison, the Staatsoper's reopening was mooted at a meeting by the first town mayor of the Soviets N. E. Bersarin. Four months later, in the middle of post-war hunger, unemployment and instability, the first East German opera season officially started, and by 1955, despite the German Democratic Republic's complex economic and political situation, the Staatsoper's old building reopened. Many accounts have captured these events in a descriptive manner, but the urgency with which they unfolded has received little scholarly attention. I address this aspect of the Staatsoper's rebirth and adopt an interdisciplinary approach, exploring the cultural and political significance of the Staatsoper's reconstruction (1952-1955) and reopening (4 September 1955) through the lens of Cold War politics and propaganda.

2 Ignacio Gonzalez Guevara
Classics
4.10-30
"Διαβάσθηκαν Μελέαγρος, και Κριναγόρας, και Ριανός.": Three Poets from the Greek Anthology in Cavafy's Poetry"
Cavafy quoted in the seventh verse of his poem Νέοι τῆς Σιδῶνος (400 M.X.) (1920) three poets from the Greek Anthology: Meleager of Gadara, Crinagoras of Mytilene and Rhianus the Cretan. Firstly, the quote itself and the reasons why he might have chosen these three poets in particular will be assessed. Secondly, I will suggest some cases of possible intertextuality between Cavafy and these Alexandrian poets. Whereas the work of Rhianus seems to have left no direct trace in Cavafy's poetic oeuvre apart from his name, Crinagoras and Meleager seem to have been used as poetic models to some extent. I will argue that such recourse to tradition is a conscious choice of Cavafy in order to be identified culturally as a continuer of the Hellenistic poetic tradition.

2 Kyle P.A. Van Oosterum
Philosophy
4.30-50
"Belief in Conspiracy Theories: The Stakes Have Never Been Higher"
What's wrong with believing in a conspiracy theory? Are they generally unwarranted to believe in or should we consider the evidential merits of each conspiracy theory on a case-by-case basis? Philosophers of conspiracy theories have a difficult time answering these two questions. In response to the second question, I think that they are neither generally unwarranted, nor should we consider each one individually on its evidential merits. In response to the first

question, there is a simple way to say what will often (but not always) be wrong with believing in a conspiracy theory. There tends to be a lot at stake with belief in a conspiracy theory, and properly paying attention to what is at stake will help us to see what is problematic with these beliefs. In this talk, I hope to familiarize people with one of the many fascinating topics in the philosophy of conspiracy theories.

3 Isaac Avery
History
4.50-5.10
"A Grass Ceiling: An Examination of the History of Women's Football in England and its Relationship with the Men's Game between 1881 and 2019"
This paper examines the history of women's football in England and its relationship with the men's game between its origins in 1881 and the Women's World Cup in 2019. It aims to determine why, despite recent successes both on and off the pitch, women's football continues to be regarded by some as inferior to the men's game. It argues that the reason for this lies in the former's historical subordinance to and dependency on the latter. As part of this focus on dependency, it introduces the term 'men-tropole' – referring to those who view the men's game as the only legitimate form of football. The paper concludes that although women's football has grown in popularity since 1881 and is no longer dependent on the men-tropole, the methods used to control the women's game have evolved over time, ensuring it remains subordinate.

4 Yin Jue Chang
Linguistics
5.10-30
"Cross-Linguistic Influences in the Acquisition of Wh-questions among Bilingual Children"
There are two ways to form a wh-question: (1) wh-movement where the wh-word is fronted to the initial position of the sentence ("What did he buy (what)?"), and (2) wh-in-situ where the wh-word replaces a constituent in a declarative sentence ("He bought what?"). Languages differ in which type of wh-question it allows, some require wh-movement (English, Dutch, Italian), some require wh-in-situ (Chinese, Korean, Japanese), some allow both (French, Indonesian). It is interesting to see what will happen to a bilingual child's production of wh-questions when two different language systems interact. I provide an overview of the cross-linguistic influences found in Cantonese-English, French-Dutch, Indonesian-Italian, Japanese-English, Korean-English and Mandarin-English bilingual children, which may be caused by language internal factors such as structure overlap and complexity, or language external factors such as language dominance. I also propose a new feature that has not been considered in previous accounts to explain for the differences, namely, the role of the wh-word.

Q&A 5.30-5.50

PANEL 5
Modern South Asian Studies, Anglo Saxon Norse and Celtic, Asian and Middle Eastern Studies and Divinity

Chair: Mohammed Ahmed and Manuel Giardino

1 Paul Rodrigue
Asian and Middle Eastern Studies
6-6.20
"Jerome's Translation of the Book of Daniel in the Vulgate"
When engaging with the translation of the Book of Daniel, Jerome has at least six texts before him:
1) a Hebrew and Aramaic substrate
2) the Septuagint version
3) Theodotion
4) Aquila
5) Symmachus
6) The Vetus Latina
The Book of Daniel is not like the other books of the Bible. Indeed, while the Septuagint has been the official text of the Early Western Church, the Septuagint of Daniel, temporarily authoritative, has, by Jerome's time, been replaced by Theodotion's version.
In his Prologue to Daniel, he admits that he does not know why exactly Theodotion came to supplant the Septuagint, but asserts that "it was the right decision to repudiate [the Septuagint] as it was too much at variance with the truth". How does a Latin translator respond to a story written in three different languages?

2 Lara Estupinan-Caceres
Anglo Saxon Norse and Celtic
6.20-40
"Thistle, Mistletoe, Casket: Plants of Death, Rebirth and Magic in Scandinavian Runic Inscriptions"
My presentation will focus on the pan-Scandinavian thistle-mistletoe runic formula, one of the most mystic inscriptions in the runic corpus that has puzzled scholars for over a century. Written in riddle-form (qmk iiissstttiiillll), once deciphered, the charm reads þistil mistil kistil ('thistle mistletoe casket'). It appears on inscriptions as early as the sixth-century Gørlev runestone in Denmark and as late as the fifteenth-century Bósa saga in Icelandic manuscripts, but its importance has been overlooked in scholarship. This paper looks at the uses and meaning of the thistle-mistletoe formula to argue that it was a magic charm to aid women in the process of giving birth. It begins by introducing the extant inscriptions that bear this magic formula and the historical and cultural context behind them before turning to two contemporary Anglo-Saxon poems which provide evidence for the formula's use for childbirth.

3 Vince Beiler
Asian and Middle Eastern Studies
6.40-7
"Data Driven Approaches in Manuscript Stemmatics: Masoretic Hebrew Bibles (c. 10th century CE) as a Case Study"
The present paper examines stemmatic (aka genealogical) relationships among the earliest Masoretic codices of the Bible through the use of a database. The use of databases within Jewish manuscript studies is far from novel, but, to the best of my knowledge, the database I am assembling far surpasses its predecessors in both size and scope. The upshot is that it is now possible to query the data in ways that have never previously been attempted. After introducing my methodology and explaining the process used, I show that the codices I am researching appear to subdivide into several manuscript branches, an observation which has never before been noted. The manuscript branches are given regional designations, the one centre being Egypt/Palestine, and the other being Babylonia.

4 Bhadrajee S. Hewage
Modern South Asian Studies
7-7.20
"Whose Buddha? The Ceylonese (Re)imagining of India as the Buddhist Holy Land During the Nineteenth Century"
Before his death, the Ceylonese Buddhist revivalist Anagarika Dharmapala (1864-1933) reflected of Bodh Gaya in his diaries: "[t]he idea of restoring the Buddhist Jerusalem into Buddhist hands originated with Sir Edwin Arnold after having visited the sacred spot in 1886." Yet, in one of the first works in the English language exploring Buddhist customs and practices in Ceylon, Captain Mahony made no mention of the significance of Indian Buddhist sites in his detailed work of 1803. This paper will track changes in Ceylonese attitudes towards India as the puṇyabhūmi or Buddhist sacred land during the nineteenth century from the introduction of Westerners to Ceylonese Buddhist texts in the Pali language in the early nineteenth century to Anagarika Dharmapala's arrival at Bodh Gaya in 1890 to reclaim the alleged site of the Buddha's enlightenment for global Buddhism. Whereas existing literature has explored Buddhist sodalities between Ceylon and Southeast Asia during the same timeframe, there has been a marked absence of scholarship exploring Buddhist connectivity between Ceylon and India. By analyzing archaeological survey reports, Orientalist journal entries, missionary reports, travel writing and religious text translations, this paper will argue that while Western scholars had connected references in Ceylonese texts to Indian locations by the late 1830s and 1840s, it was the discovery of supposed relics of the Buddha during the 1880s that served to decisively arouse the interest of Ceylonese Buddhists in India as a Buddhist holy land.

5 Valentina A. Grasso
Divinity
7.20-7.40
"Christianity in North-Eastern Arabia at the Dawn of Islam"
In the fourth century CE, the Iranians tied an alliance with the north-eastern Arabian dynasty of the Nasrids. This group fought for the Sasanians for three centuries and lost its prominent role in Arabia at the dawn of Islam. Before this dynasty fell out of favour with the Iranians, the last Nasrid ruler, al-Nuʿmān, converted to Christianity. Although Christianity represented a signifier of bona fides among Roman allies, Zoroastrianism played no role in the shaping of Iran's partnerships. Nonetheless, the Nasrids disappear from our sources shortly after al-

Nuʿmān's conversion. Whereas the spread of Christianity in North-West Arabia due to extensive research in Syria and Jordan is well documented, archaeology in Mesopotamia and the Persian Gulf is still in its infancy. This paper sheds light on the relationship between Iran and north-eastern Arabia, offering an overview of the Nasrids' involvement in the political map of the region and its system of beliefs at the dawn of Islam.

Q&A 7.40-8

Final Remarks (8-8.15)