PRESS RELEASE
Embargoed until Wednesday 17 July, 3.30pm EDT

The George A. and Jean S. DeLong Book History Book Prize 2019

The Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing (SHARP) is delighted to announce the award of the 2019 DeLong Book History Book Prize to Brent Nongbri, Professor, MF Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society, Norway and Honorary Research Fellow, Department of Ancient History, Macquarie University, Australia for his title God's Library: The Archaeology of the Earliest Christian Manuscripts (Yale University Press)

In announcing the Prize at SHARP’s annual conference in Amherst, USA, Claire Squires, SHARP’s Director of Publications and Awards commented:

This path-breaking contribution to the field of book history urges us to reconsider beliefs and concepts that have been fundamental in the formation of religious and cultural history while captivating the reader with its exciting, Indiana Jones-esque research story. Nongbri gives a fascinating, nuanced, and revisionist interpretation of a rich array of ancient manuscripts. In so doing he throws light on the origins of the Christian codex, and warns of the dangers of reading into the past an anachronistic view of the Biblical canon. Exerting his expertise in palaeography and codicology, including attention to stitching and binding techniques, Nongbri highlights the lack of certainty about the provenance, authorship, date, and place of origin of many influential papyrus and parchment manuscripts. The judges praise Nongbri’s amalgam of thorough knowledge about techniques and materiality, his exhaustive archival research, and the analytical sharpness that he brings to bear on this important history. This is a story that involves untrustworthy antiquities dealers, private collectors spreading false information to put their rivals off the scent of discoveries, cave raiders, and the accidental discovery of papyri. God’s Library is a must-read for anyone interested in the history of beliefs, which is, of course, also a history of books.

Brent Nongbri receives $1,000 as winner of the SHARP DeLong Book History Book Prize.

Commendations were also made to David McKitterick (University of Cambridge) for The Invention of Rare Books: Private Interest and Public Memory, 1600–1840 (Cambridge University Press) and Adam Smyth (University of Oxford) for Material Texts in Early Modern England (Cambridge University Press).

July 2019 [cont]
About SHARP
SHARP was founded to create a global network for book historians working in a broad range of scholarly disciplines. Research addresses the composition, mediation, reception, survival, and transformation of written communication in material forms including marks on stone, script on parchment, printed books and periodicals, and new media. Perspectives range from the individual reader to the transnational communications network. With more than 1000 members in over twenty countries, SHARP works in concert with affiliated academic organizations around the world to support the study of book history and print culture. See http://www.sharpweb.org/

About the DeLong Prize

Contact details
SHARP/DeLong Book History Book Prize
Dr Melanie Ramdarshan Bold
Director of Awards, SHARP
UCL, UK
publications@sharpweb.org

Yale University Press
Debra Bozzi
Educational Marketing Manager
Yale University Press
debra.bozzi@yale.edu
Brent Nongbri
brent.nongbri@gmail.com

Cambridge University Press
Bethany Thomas, Hollie Hopkins and Chris Burrow
Cambridge University Press
bthomas@cambridge.org
cburrows@cambridge.org
hhopkins@cambridge.org
David McKitterick
djm1008@cam.ac.uk

Cambridge University Press
Hollie Hopkins and Chris Burrows
Cambridge University Press
cburrows@cambridge.org
hhopkins@cambridge.org
Adam Smyth
adam.smyth@ell.ox.ac.uk