

I see history as a collection of windows into almost fantastical worlds of groups and individuals, managing cooperation, conflict, and innovation as we do, each shaped by their environment and past. These windows into the past, I first thought, were only written texts, but my perception of sources changed while researching my family history. I looked at two inciting objects: a grant of arms and an ornate clock embossed with the Star of David. These represent a juxtaposition between the two branches of my family. My grandparents, to whom these objects belong, experienced vastly different treatment under differing ideologies and power structures and reacted differently to repression. Stemming from two objects, the research led me to reconsider the role of primary sources, and I started looking to clothing, art, arms, and armour in my readings of history.

My consideration of objects continued with an analysis of Arrow Cross armbands in late-WWII Hungary, published in the peer-reviewed journal 'Jakobsleiter'. Through the distinct patterns among the ensigns, I could address concepts of power, authority, and responsibility. I also explored how this administration's visual propaganda affected its ideological legacy. This research was inspired by Neil MacGregor's insights into objects' significance in 'A History of the World in 100 Objects'. While deciphering the impact of the armbands, I expanded the nature of my sources to include photographs, film reels, and uniforms. My confidence in looking at these sources stemmed from my prior study experiences at the Milestone Institute, an advanced-level educational venue. In particular, a Primary Sources module allowed me to handle significant documents at the Open Society Archives. Additionally, volunteering at the Budapest History Museum's document restoration and cataloguing department familiarized me with curatorial practices and the physical properties of historical sources.

While my academic association of objects with sources came from family research and matured during the Arrow Cross project, my fascination with the material approach dates further back. I familiarised myself with the basic tenets by reading Tobias Capwell's 'Armour of The English Knight, 1400-1450'. Inspired by his exploration of arms and armour in battle and society, I investigated the significance of European arms and armour in the conquest of Mesoamerica. Developing the essay in a Historiography module, I contrasted accounts of the natives in 'The Broken Spears' and those of the Spanish conquistador Bernal Díaz. This also served as a crossroads with another interest of mine, 3D printing. I modelled and printed a functional replica of a gauntlet accessible to a conquistador to gain a physical understanding. Another project was inspired by Carlo Ginzburg's work and started as an essay for a module called Ugliness and the Exotic. In it, I explored the social phenomenon and philosophical development of the Wild Man archetype from Herodotus to Transylvanian legends. Ginzburg's approach to a similar folklore phenomenon of an imagined creature in 'The Night Battles' was particularly instigating, and I interlaced folkloric and ethnographic considerations with the archetype. I submitted these essays to the Julia Woods and Mary Renault competitions.

In 2022, I co-founded Drakon Development, a small IT group providing web development services. Working while maintaining an academic life has gotten me accustomed to heavy workloads.

My time at Milestone exposed me to the UK model of education, emphasizing smaller group settings and fostering a pluralistic community. This experience allowed me to engage with diverse viewpoints and refine my critical thinking. In summary, I anticipate finding a rigorous but rewarding educational style at university, one that encourages active engagement in discussions, independent research, and the development of professional skills.