



Dr ALEXIS LITVINE

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Faculty of History, University of Cambridge, West Road, Cambridge, CB3 9EF

Nationalities: Belgian/British/French/Italian

EDUCATION

- 2012 PhD, ‘The Space and Time of European Industrialisation: Belgium, Britain, France and Italy, 1850-1914’, Faculty of History, University of Cambridge, UK.
- 2008 MPhil in Modern European History (with distinction), ‘*Railway workers’ space in Belgium, France, and Great Britain, 1825-1910s*’, Faculty of History, University of Cambridge, UK.
- 2007 Master’s degree in History (with distinction), ‘*The introduction of time control in Nineteenth century France, practices and representations*’, Ecole Normale Supérieure, LSH
- 2007 Master’s in Modern and Contemporary History, ‘*Histoire et théorie du politique*’, Sciences-Po, Paris

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

- Since 2023 Temp. University Lecturer in Modern European History, University of Cambridge.
- Since 2014 Affiliated lecturer University of Cambridge, UK
- 2019 - 2021 College lecturer, Director of Studies in History, Pembroke College, Cambridge
- Since 2018 Senior Research Associate, CamPop, University of Cambridge
- 2012 – 2018 Junior Research Fellow, Trinity College Cambridge
- 2017 – 2018 Lecturer in Modern European History, Birkbeck College, University of London
- 2016 – 2017 Lecturer in the History of France, University of Cambridge
- 2015 – 2017 College lecturer, Director of Studies in History, Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge
- 2012 Temporary Lecturer in British Social and Economic History, University of East Anglia, Norwich

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

- 2016 Associate Researcher at the Institut National d’Études Démographiques, INED, Paris
- 2012 Elected Junior Research Fellowship (JRF), Trinity College, Cambridge.
- 2009 Member’s Prize for the best MPhil dissertation submitted to the Degree Committee in the Faculty of History
- 2008 Arts and Humanities Research Council, (AHRC), 3-year full doctoral funding
- 2008 University of Cambridge DRS Scholarship and recipient of the Leslie Hyam and the Lord Derby Scholarship (£72,000)
- 2007 Knox studentship, Trinity College, full MPhil funding. (£14,000)
- 2007 Bursar of the Cambridge European Trust (£5,000)
- 2005 École Normale Supérieure: “Professeur stagiaire”, civil-servant status, four-year full funding (c.€65,000) [I was admitted to the ENS, the most selective graduate school in France, on competitive examination, ranking 1st of my year out of more than 2,000 candidates]



SUPERVISION OF GRADUATE STUDENTS

Since 2016 2 PhD students (one completed, one current), External PhD examiner France (*rapporteur du jury*) and UK.
18 Masters Students (all completed), University of Cambridge, Faculty of History, UK and Birkbeck College, University of London, UK

SELECTIVE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

I have taught at the undergraduate level on a wide range of topics in modern European (1715-1945) and modern social and economic British history. I have also been teaching graduate classes on subjects ranging from the ‘consumer revolution’ in the eighteenth century, the Industrial Revolution, French fascisms, Modernisation Theory, and co-convening the core course of the MPhil in Modern European History for two years. I was also a lecturer in Modern European History and director of the MRes degree at Birkbeck, where I created a new popular MA course on the History of Time and Temporality.

I recently designed and taught a new interdisciplinary class on the history of amputation and military medicine in the First World War (with Dr. Luke Warde from the Modern Languages Department) supported by the publication of our own collective translation of a short story by the Franco-Swiss writer and amputee, Blaise Cendrars. Our translation was ranked among the seven best entries in the prestigious 2021 Dryden translation prize, and will now be published in the journal *Asymptote*.

Finally, as both a lecturer at Birkbeck and a Director of Studies at Cambridge for several years, I have acquired significant experience supporting and challenging students from all backgrounds and ages, helping them achieve their best and engage fully with their course. I have been setting and marking undergraduate examination papers, graduate coursework, and dissertations for several years.

Since 2012 Lecturer/supervisor/examiner for British Social and Economic History 1700-1880 and European History 1715-1890 (Faculty of History) and for British Economic History (Faculty of Economics).

2017 – 2018 Convenor of The Modern World course, director of the MRes degree, and the MA on the History of Time and Temporality, Birkbeck College, University of London

PUBLICATIONS

- 2024 ‘A multi-criteria simulation of European coastal shipping routes in the age of sail’, with J. Lewis and A. Starzec, *Nature, Human and Social Science Communications* (DOI: 10.1057/s41599-024-02906-9)
- 2024 ‘Built-Up Areas of Nineteenth-Century Britain. An integrated methodology for Extracting High-resolution Urban Footprints from Historical Maps’, with A. Starzec, et al., *Historical Methods*, (DOI: 10.1080/01615440.2024.2324163)
- 2023 ‘Vers une reconstitution des maillages communaux et des réseaux de communication depuis la Révolution : sources et méthodes’ with Séguy, I. et al., in Mermet, E and Gherdevich, D. (eds.), *Des Sources aux SIG*, EHESS. (Accepted for publication)
- 2023 ‘Network analysis of French Inland Waterways since 1700’, *Environment and Planning B*, (DOI: 10.1177/23998083231165782)
- 2023 ‘I Have Bled’ by Blaise Cendrars with R. Murphy and L. Warde, [Asymptote](#) (accepted for publication).
- 2023 ‘New Tools for Tabular Data Extraction at Scale’ with Y. Stathopoulos, and O. Dunn, *EABH* (accepted for publication in Nov. 2022, awaiting publication).

- 2022 'Setting a standard for open and collaborative data acquisition for historical cartography: digitizing the French État-Major maps as a collaboration between the ANR COMMUNES and Open Historical Maps', *GeoHumanities 22: Proceedings of the 6th ACM SIGSPATIAL International Workshop on Geospatial Humanities*, Nov. 2022, DOI: [10.1145/3557919.3565811](https://doi.org/10.1145/3557919.3565811)
- 2022 'The Annihilation of Space: A Bad (Historical) Concept', *The Historical Journal*, DOI:10.1017/S0018246X21000601
- 2021 'French Historical Light Aids to Navigation (F-LAN) covering the period 1775-1929', *Data in Brief*, 2021, doi.org/10.1016/j.dib.2021.106980
- 2021 'Genealogy of a bad concept: the annihilation of space', *Historical Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X21000601>
- 2020 'À la recherche des maillages communaux d'antan. Présentation du projet ANR COMMUNES et de quelques résultats préliminaires,' with I. Séguay and T., *CIST2020 - Population, temps, territoires*, Collège international des sciences territoriales (CIST), Nov 2020, pp. 216-9
- 2019 'Buckwheat milling' in Avery V. and Melissa Calaresu (eds.), *Feast & Fast: The art of food in Europe, 1500-1800* (Philip Wilson: London, 2019), pp. 32-33, ISBN: 978 1 78130 102 9
- 2014 'The industrious revolution, the industriousness discourse, and the development of modern economies', *Historical Journal* (2014), pp.531-70 doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X13000526

UNPUBLISHED WORK AND WORKING PAPERS

- 2023 *Like Clockwork, Social Norms and the Industrialisation of European Societies, 1850s-1910s* (OUP: outstanding revisions, hopefully completed this summer)
- 2023 'Gaming the Industrial Re:evolution. An example of participatory design and gamification for the learning of complex historical causal models in educational settings,' with Hiriart J. and Bowman N., *International Journal of Humanities and Arts Computing* (submitted May 2023)
- 2021 "'Why wasn't France First?' The Industrial Revolution in England and France: New Data and Further Thoughts on the Question', with L. Shaw-Taylor, revise and resubmit from Past & Present. Previous version available as pre-print (40) at: campop.geog.cam.ac.uk/research/occupations/outputs
- 2018 'French occupational structure, industrialisation and economic growth in France, 1695 to the present', in *Shaw-Taylor, L. and O. Saito, Comparative history of occupational structure* (expected CUP, 2022). Available as pre-print (35) at: campop.geog.cam.ac.uk/research/occupations/outputs

This is a major contribution to France's economic history, compiling data from C18 capitation (tax) records, military records, agricultural and industrial surveys, and modern censuses to establish a series of French occupational structures covering more than two centuries. This provides an improved answer to the long-standing debate on British and French economic performance during the long C19. My revision of the relative sizes of the industrial and agricultural labour forces in the pre-industrial era confirms Crafts' intuition and shows that French productivity increased much more slowly and gradually than revisionist historians (O'Brien and Keyder, Cameron) had thought. The chapter also assesses the macroeconomic effects of labour transfer between sectors caused by patterns of by-employment (individuals with a secondary occupation in another sector).



PUBLISHED DATASETS

2024 PSTI-V3 Coding Scheme - Litvine, A. D., Terki-Mignot, A., Shaw-Taylor, L., Saito, O., Wrigley, E. A., & Davies, R. (2024). PSTIV3 Historical Occupational Coding system (1.0) [Data set]. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10581322>

2023 Historical sailing routes (available as shapefiles) to and from 150 ports across Europe. The repository also contains all underlying data for the simulation (wind, waves, current, gusts, and visibility cost surfaces). Litvine, A. D., Starzec, A., & Lewis, J. (2025). Historical sailing routes (0.1) [Data set]. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10530709>

2023 Historical wrecks database: a geodatabase containing the location of over 189,000 wrecks identified and geolocated. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.8014019 This dataset has a restrictive licence since it uses material under copyright from several maritime agencies.

2022 Built-up Areas of Britain 1770s-1830s, DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.5534677](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5534677)

This dataset contains vector data for built-up areas covering Britain as a whole. It also includes the code and methodology description on the associated GitHub repository. [alexislitvine/builtupextraction](https://github.com/alexislitvine/builtupextraction)

2021 *French Historical Light Aids to Navigation (F-LAN), 1775-1929*, with Oliver Dunn, UK Data Service. DOI: [10.5255/UKDA-SN-854607](https://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-854607)

This geospatial dataset documents hundreds of coastal lights that guided ships around France from medieval times until 1929. It allows us to understand where ships were able to sail and will serve as key evidence in a longstanding debate in economics regarding the private vs. public provision of public good (coastal lighting) by comparing it to the mostly private system existing in the UK before nationalisation in 1836.

2021 *British Telegraph: network and coverage, British Isles, 1830s-1983*, with Oliver Dunn

A new geospatial dataset containing the position and opening dates of all telegraphic offices in the country allows the measurement of network coverage and data flow. (Published by the National Infrastructure Commission). <https://nic.org.uk/data/all-data/historic-telecoms-datasets/>

2020 *INDEX VILLARIS: or An Alphabetical Table of all the cities, market-towns, parishes, villages, and private seats in England and Wales*, with S. Gadd., [10.5281/zenodo.4749505](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4749505)

This dataset consists of a transcription of all 24,000 placenames listed in Index Villaris, with latitude and longitude recorded by Adams, and another set of coordinates generated by the application of a thin-plate spline transformation calculated by matching 2,000 placenames to the accurately georeferenced CAMPOP Towns dataset.

UNPUBLISHED DATASETS

2020 – 2024 *French Historical GIS, 1700-2020. Administrative units, Populations, Transports, Economy* (forthcoming 2024), DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.3727274

This dataset combines all the data produced during my five-year research programme. A full description of the data is available at www.anrcommunes.fr. Our data have already been requested for reuse multiple times and are already cited in several publications.

2018 *French occupational structure 1695-2010, electronic dataset.*

This electronic dataset tracks occupational structure at the subsectoral level (e.g. food and drink sellers, textile workers, bootmakers, and transport workers). Once available online (2021 – to coincide with the publication of the book by CUP), it will become a key resource for economic historians of France.



2016 – 2018 *Municipal boundary reconstruction for two French départements (Alpes-Maritimes and Nord) since the Revolution.*

This electronic GIS dataset was the proof of concept for the COMMUNES project, which will produce boundary data for all other French Départements in the next three years. It provides annualised GIS boundary data for all the communes in these *départements*.

WORK IN PROGRESS (a selection)

- ‘Lighthouse redivivus: a comparative assessment of private vs. public provision of coastal lighting in France and Britain’ with Bogart, D. Dunn, O., Shaw-Taylor L. We wish to submit this manuscript to a top-five economics journal by June 2024.
- ‘Let there be light. Lighthouses and safety on British seas, 1747-1911’, with Bogart, D. Dunn, O., Shaw-Taylor L. This study examines the effects of lighting on reducing the likelihood of wrecks along the British coast and the impact of increased safety on shipping industry productivity. We build a regression model estimating the impact of lighthouses on the shipping industry. This adds to the extensive literature on shipping productivity from North (1968) to Kelly, O’Grada, and Solar (2020). We aim to submit a paper to CWP in Economics before the end of the year.
- ‘Subsectoral occupational data’ with Hinton, S. This chapter, looking at economic change across twenty countries over two centuries using disaggregated occupational data, will be published in the INCHOS volume published by Shaw-Taylor and Saito. The first draft will be completed in early July, 2023.
- ‘NACHOS: a new interface to compare and analyse occupational data’ with Hinton S. This chapter describes the new interface developed to visualise the INCHOS data, which will be included on the website accompanying the book publication. The first draft of this chapter was completed.
- ‘The French Population before the Revolution’ with Hare D., Séguy I., Frondizi A. et al. This article will be submitted to *Annales* in the Autumn; it reconstructs boundaries and population at the parish level for the whole of France in 1785-7. This will be the first major output from my French project in print.
- ‘1790: un nouveau regard empirique sur la création des communes’, with Séguy I, and Frondizi A. This article describes the work we did using newly found archival records detailing the very early communes after the Revolutionary *bing-bang*. The article changes our understanding of the processes that led to the creation of the communes. Will be submitted to *Histoire et Mesure* before December 2023.
- ‘Revealing unidentified mortality crises, France 1600-1900’ with Chambru C. Using a dataset of over 2 billion observations from genealogical societies, we developed a method to identify unknown episodes of overmortality at the micro level. This work was started two years ago and will continue for several more years, given the amount and wealth of the data.
- ‘The Miller, the clockmaker and the State: la Tassa Sull’ Maccinato in post-unification Italy.’ This project began during my PhD and will lead to an article or perhaps a short monograph. It is a micro economic history of the Italian State’s attempt to impose a tax on milling through mechanical devices installed on the shaft of mills, which led to both violent episodes of unrest in the countryside and an arm race between inventors, legislators, and millers.

RESEARCH FUNDING

2024 ESRC (£1M) to develop multilingual occupational descriptors for historical data.

2024 CHRG (£20,000) to publish communes boundary data for France



- 2024 ARC-SHAPE (Accelerator funding) - £63,000 to develop a gamification agency model.
- 2023 Large Bid Support fund (£10,000) – to support an application to the ESRC (successful)
- 2023 Keynes Fund (£99,000), with Prof Leigh Shaw-Taylor, *Overcoming market failure in river navigation in England and Wales 1600-1830. Towpaths, pound locks, weirs, flash-locks, and mills.*
- 2023 CDH and Ellen MacArthur grants to fund the digitisation of road data (£3,000)
- 2022 Arts and Humanities and ESRC Impact Funds (£16+20K) plus CDH bid development award (£4K) to develop a pilot of educational video game on the Industrial Revolution with Juan Hiriart and a network of five participating secondary schools.
- 2021 Keynes Fund (£90K) with Prof Leigh Shaw-Taylor, *Lighthouse redivivus* project to analyse safety at sea based on a series of new data (wrecks, routing, historical lighthouses) created for this project.
- 2021 JCI- Université de La Rochelle, with Mickaël Coustaty, experimental protocol to develop a Machine Learning framework for layer-based differential compression from historical maps. This project will allow us to develop a methodology to extract toponyms at scale much more efficiently, €7,000.
- 2020 Cambridge Digital Humanities - £2,000. Small bid fund to collect digitised *Etat-Civil* records from public record offices across France.
- 2020 ANR-COMMUNES, Agence Nationale de la Recherche, €490k, 2020-2023 with Isabelle Séguy and Thomas Thévenin. This project is creating the H-GIS infrastructure for France (municipal boundaries) that will enable the data infrastructure used in this project.
- 2020 ESRC – IAA grant and AVIVA Plc.– £220k, for the development and commercialisation of THOTH and the creation of a new partnership with Aviva to digitise and analyse all extant fire insurance records from Hand-in-Hand for London (1701-1835). This includes the secondment of an Aviva data engineer to our team.
- 2020 THOTH, Cambridge Humanities Research Grant, £19k, 2020, with Anne Alexander. This project funded the development of the THOTH tool library and its use for data extraction from 25,000 pages of French military records (1827-1834).
- 2020/1 ESRC- small impact grant x2- £6k for the purchase of new GPUs for Machine Learning with O. Buxton-Dunn.

POLICY AND IMPACT ACTIVITIES

- 2024 Centre for Science and Policy (CSaP) programme for Policy Fellows.
- 2023 Industrial Re:Evolution: educational video game made for secondary schools. The game and description of the project is available here: <https://ireevolution.com>
- 2021 First English translation of a short story by Blaise Cendrars, ‘J’ai saigné’ with Dr. Luke Warde and Ms. Ruth Murphy (both Cambridge). Awarded a special mention at the Dryden Translation Prize.
- 2021 Creation of [Osiris-Ai](#), with O. Buxton-Dunn (Cambridge Digital Humanities) and [Y. Stathopoulos](#) (Computer Science).

Osiris is a data service company for historical enrichment and academic research using computer vision to treat historical records. Clients so far include Aviva, the French National Archives, the University of Portsmouth, the National Infrastructure Commission, and the University of Osaka.

2018 [THOTH](#) (*Transcribing Historical Objects with Tabulated Handwriting*), with O. Buxton-Dunn and Y. Stathopoulos

Until now existing HTR technology was not able to process large volumes of tabulated documents. We have created a new User Interface (UI) specifically designed for the extraction of such data, THOTH, allowing to use convolutional neural network algorithms for the segmentation of tabulated text and transcription. It uses recent advances in HTR/OCR/KWS technologies with custom-built segmentation tools to produce large volumes of data immediately useful for social scientists with drastically reduced costs. I am one of the three co-owners of THOTH's IP.

2017 – Litvine, A. and Généanet. *Collaborative Transcription of historical data*. To this day more than 265GB of data processed.

This partnership with Généanet has allowed me to design specific data acquisition tools with their IT team, including online forms and transcription methods, ensuring a very high rate of compliance and accuracy in the production of historical data useful for my research from their 3M-strong active membership in France. So far, we have been extracting occupational data from conscription records and BMS records. Some preliminary results and geospatial visualisation tools can be seen at: <https://www.geneanet.org/metiers/>

ORGANISATION OF SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS

- 2022 Co-organiser of two panels for the International Geographical Union in Paris with Prof I Séguy, Prof T. Thévenin and Dr C. Mimeur on the state of the art in the reconstruction of historical transport networks.
- 2022 Co-organiser of panel for the European Society of Historical Demography in Madrid with Dr R. Stapel (IISH Amsterdam) on eighteenth-century population data at parish levels.
- 2022 Co-organiser of two panels for the World Economic History Conference, WEHC in Paris. With Prof A. Erickson, 'Digital Techniques for Occupational Structure', and with Dr Sebastian Keibek, 'Disaggregating Development: Regional Variation in Occupational Structure'
- 2020 Co-organiser of two double sessions (4 panels) for the European Social Science History Conference, [the most important interdisciplinary meeting in Europe in the field].
- 2019 Co-organiser with Assoc. Prof. Erdem Kabadayi, Dr Shaw-Taylor: *European Network for the Comparative History of Occupational Structure III*, Turkey, c.35 participants.
- 2015-22 Coordinator of the *European Network for the Comparative History of Occupational Structure* (ENCHOS) with Dr L. Shaw-Taylor (CAM). We organised 7 international meetings (Paris, Milan, Istanbul, Cambridge, Barcelona, Linz, and Paris).
- 2012 Co-organiser of an international conference on the new English translation of Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, Cambridge, c.75 participants.

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES & MEMBERSHIPS OF SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES

- 2012 – Various Faculty, College and university committees, Co-director INCAM (INED-Cambridge partnership), convener of the [ExPLOT](#) network, co-convener of the [ENCHOS network](#).
- 2010 – *Economic History Society*, UK, *Economic History Association*, US, *Société Européenne de Culture*, Venice, Italy.



USEFUL IT SKILLS

Python, SQL, R, Spatial Analysis, GIS (ArcGis/QGIS), Morpheo/Modacces (accessibility, network analysis), Terrset (remote sensing), HTR, OpenRefine, basic JS.

LANGUAGES

Native: French and Spanish; Fluent: English, Italian; Academic: German; Learning: Polish

CAREER BREAKS

1/10/12 – 31/03/13: 6-month paternity leave (1st child)

01/07/16 – 31/12/16: 5-month paternity leave (2nd child)

01/06/19 – 01/10/19: 4-month career break for health reasons