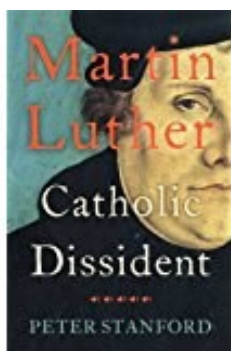


HISTORY BULLETIN

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Peter Stanford—Martin Luther: Catholic Dissident

As predicted, books on the anniversary of the 95 Theses are beginning to emerge. This new biography of Luther will be in the library very soon.

Meanwhile Eamon Duffy has written a series of essays about the reformation in England: *Reformation Divided: Catholics, Protestants and the Conversion of England*. Duffy is a Catholic historian and revises views about the state of the church in England before the Reformation.

Both are recommended if you are following the Early Modern A' level course.

ELECTIONS: INTRODUCING BRITISH POLITICS

Historians cannot avoid studying elections—the reasons for calling them, their outcomes and their long term significance. Some elections, such as Labour's landslide victory in 1945—appear 'historic' immediately. The significance of others takes time to emerge. Who would have thought at the time that the election in December 1910 would mark the last Liberal majority government in Britain? Elections are fertile ground for historians whether we are studying specific leaders or trying to identify underlying social and economic trends.

To understand elections, you need to start by understanding British politics.

Peter Hennessy has written extensively on politics and power after 1945. His books

are accessible but well-researched. In *Distilling the Frenzy* Hennessy addresses the problems of writing the history of one's own times. He examines the networks which underpin policy making and looks at Prime Ministers from Attlee to Cameron. *Reflections* gives a series of interviews with members of the political elite, based on candid programmes made for Radio 4. *The Prime Minister: The Office and its holders since 1945* and *Muddling Through* deal with late C20th politics.

There are numerous books on basic British politics. Tony Wright has written *A Short Introduction* which focuses on how our political system actually works, including the constitution and accountability as well as

investigating what makes British democracy distinctive. For something very up to date, reporter Martin Williams published *Parliament LTD: A journey in to the dark heart of British politics*, which was well-reviewed but might not encourage you to go out and vote for a murky system.

Books by politicians are possibly even more numerous—especially those who have recently left office. Nick Clegg and Ed Balls both produced books after 2015—the latter now has an updated chapter on his 'Strictly' journey. To understand the real life of an MP, Chris Mullins' diaries from 1994 to 2010 are pretty unbeatable.

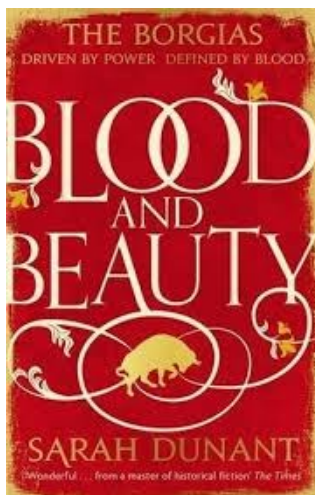


Historical Fiction

One of the most complicated periods of history I have ever had the misfortune to teach revolves around the 'Italian Wars' of the early C16th. I don't think anyone enjoyed it—including me.

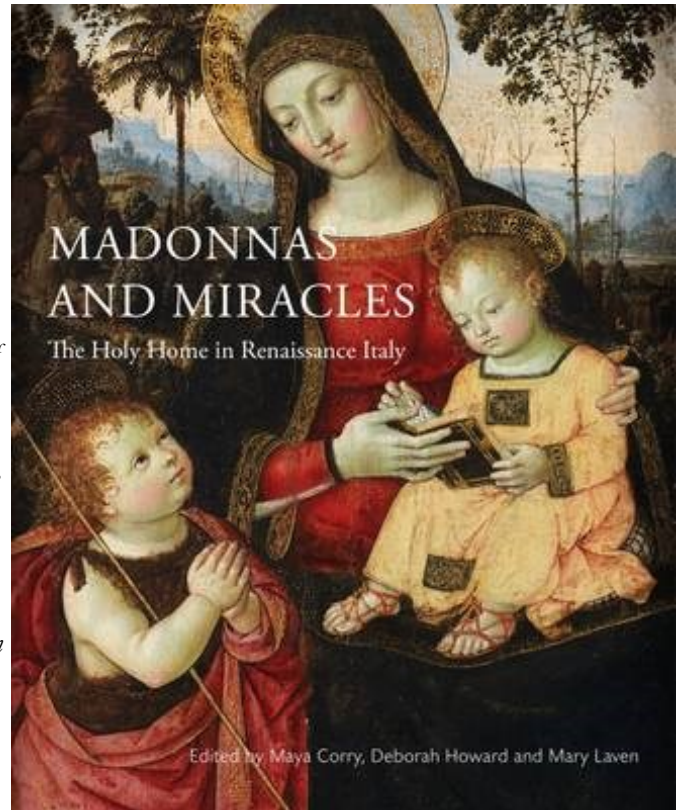
Sarah Dunant manages to make the events intelligible and memorable through historical fiction. She is a trained historian and the books are carefully researched, bringing comparisons with Hillary Mantel's novels. She has also been compared to Mantel because her work goes some way to rehabilitating the Borgia family in the same way that Mantel resurrected Thomas Cromwell. There's a limit to how far this rehabilitation can go however, as the family's responsibility for poisonings and stabbings is fairly well-documented.

Blood and Beauty gives a good insight into papal politics and so useful for understanding the Reformation. The sequel *In the Name of the Family* continues the story from the perspective of Machiavelli.



The *Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge* has a major exhibition on pre-Reformation religion. A wealth of objects including jewellery, books, ceramics, paintings and sculptures show how religion permeated domestic life. The exhibition is the result of four years of European-funded cross-disciplinary work. It brings together research from Cambridge University's departments of History, Architecture and History of Art. The result is a new perspective on a period which is often seen as secular and worldly.

On until 4th June.



POLITICAL CARTOONS

Apologies for more on politics—but a word about political cartoons. You will have seen them on your exam papers but don't let that put you off. Believe me, they are an endless source of pleasure. They also give historians real insight into the mood of a time. Cartoonists not only react to public opinion, they help to shape it. Quite frequently cartoonists are the most prescient commentators in the press.

David Low, a New Zealander worked for the London Evening Standard from 1927 to 1950, producing some of the most famous cartoons on appeasement in the '30s. Complaints from Goebbels in 1937 suggested that Low's cartoons were damaging Anglo-German relations and he was forced to tone down some of his work. Many in Britain accused him of 'war mongering whilst after the war Low's name was found on a list of people the Ger-

man's intended to arrest once the war was won. The cartoon here is not one of his most famous but is interesting because it could so easily be adapted for today. It dates from the early part of the Second World War.

Political cartoons obviously

reflect the political view points of the publications employing the cartoonist. Watch **Steve Bell** in The Guardian, **Peter Brookes** in The Times and **Matt** in The Telegraph. We will lose a great resource if on-line news brings the end of the political cartoonist.

