**Ralph Gibson Busary: Judges summaries 2020**

In normal circumstances the Society for the Study of French History only awards one Ralph Gibson bursary each year, and so the choice made by the judges is necessarily a comparative one, with the bursary effectively becoming a prize. Many excellent research projects have not received such bursaries in previous years because they were in competition with other excellent research projects. However, because the Society recognizes that the current pandemic is placing graduate students in extraordinarily difficult circumstances, it has, on this occasion, decided to award as many bursaries as it can. In 2020 four Ralph Gibson bursaries will be made to the four candidates listed below. They are not ranked: all four students presented compelling projects which the Society is delighted to support. All likewise demonstrated how the bursary will benefit them as they approach the end of their doctoral degrees.

**Clift: ‘Anticommunism in French Politics and Society, 1945-1953’**

While ‘anticommunism’ was evidently a strong theme in postwar French political, social and cultural life, the student argues it has not been studied in and of itself. This project follows the logics, actions and personnel of anticommunism through a wide variety of contexts – youth organisations, the Catholic Church, peasant, bourgeois and family associations. The project is full and well researched, the writing sample, on the case of the boy scouts, was fascinating in itself and effective at illustrating the reach of anti-communist discourse.

**Lundberg: .The Cult(ure) of Dionysius the Areopagite: Patristic Scholarship and Religion in Paris 1490–1540’**

A lucid examination of the scholia of Ps. Dionysius, as seen through the eyes not of theologians but the humanists associated with the University of Paris. The research combines social, intellectual and cultural methods, with a particular sensitivity towards print and manuscript history, and what this might mean for thinking about the boundary of the medieval and early modern. The writing sample demonstrates meticulous research, and some really excellent forensic work around the woodcut illustrations and their significance.

**Plaquevent: ‘Inventing a Sexual Revolution in France, 1945-1970’**

A nuanced and sophisticated exploration of how the private became political in postwar France, with emphasis on radical sexual politics, using a wide range of sources. The student makes a strong case for the necessity of this study of the ways in which sex itself was understood as revolutionary, or could be used to advance a revolutionary cause. The writing sample was polished and professional, and demonstrated mastery of the wide-ranging source material including graffiti, posters and other ephemera.

**Rasmussen: ‘Sensory Experience and ‘Modern Women’ in Paris and St Petersburg, 1900-1913’**

This is an ambitious and original project which aims to gender the material and sensory turns; it is interdisciplinary and transnational in its scope. The submitted work on the Boulanger sisters and their experience of the Paris Conservatoire demonstrated a breadth of vision, a scholarly imagination allied to sensitive research, all expressed with admirable clarity. The judges were particularly impressed by the integration of spatial and musical analysis. They expect the finished doctorate to make a significant contribution to urban and gender history.

2020 judges: Sara Barker, David Hopkin, Kevin Passmore  
on behalf of the Society for the Study of French History