

Janus-headed intaglio

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Intaglio
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Abstract

The traditional use of research methods is to provide a framework for constructing a project to address particular questions or interests. The idea behind this is that, by utilising these frameworks, research will be assessable by other researchers who are then able to judge any given research output through a common framework, while still allowing each project to stand (or fall) on its own merits. At risk of getting lost, or silenced, in this process is any attention to how the individual researcher understands their own project. This article explores the potential for developing a self-reflective research method. How does the researcher engage with, and understand, their own work? How does this provide a new pathway for disseminating research to others within the academic community? How does an object-centred approach to this self-reflection aid in engaging both the researcher and the audience in a shared experience?

Keywords: Janus; 1688 Bill of Rights; methodology; self-reflection.

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† www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=430585&partId=1&searchText=janus&page=1



Figure 1: 'Bespoke' model recreating two sides of the intaglio

Introduction

This article explores how sustained conceptual engagement with a Janus-headed intaglio, displayed in the British Museum, opened a new point of access for re-imagining my current project into the English 1688 Bill of Rights. Therefore, this piece manifests as a personal narrative of intellectual exploration as much as an object commentary. A journey, which began with an application to the inaugural Legal Object Workshop arranged by Kent Law School's Legal Treasure Project, progressed through the workshop itself, also included an appearance in the Pop-Up Museum of Legal Objects at the 2017 Socio-Legal Studies Association (SLSA) conference, before culminating in this publication. Part of the reason for this author-focused narrative is that I have, thus far, failed to personally view or physically handle my chosen object. My engagement has come about through the online collection of the British Museum and a personal re-creation (Figure 1). The excuse is that this intaglio is very small and part of a collection of similar (small) intaglios; this has made it impossible to identify my object on trips to the British Museum. It is perhaps this lack of physical engagement that has facilitated pursuit of one of the most productive lines of conceptual exploration of my chosen object, especially when considered alongside the nature and role of glass in daily life, and museums, addressed below. The nature of this article is not one of clean conclusion, but rather it is of creative critique; opening as opposed to closure.

Following a familiar format, proposed by Jules Prown, my commentary disassembles into two primary focuses of attention: 1) *description* of the object, its appearance, materiality and content; 2) *deduction*, focusing on my perception of the object and the relationship that formed from this. A third topic of consideration will be the future of my research. However, in deviation from Prown's formula, this will not be the '*Programme of research*' I will pursue regarding the Janus-headed intaglio. Rather it will be the impact upon my own research resulting from my engagement with the intaglio.¹ That research

1 Jules David Prown, 'Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method' (1982) 17(1) Winterthur Portfolio 1–19, 7–10.

explores how the Bill of Rights might be understood to manifest influences, especially those exerted by thinking stemming from the Protestant Reformation, upon perceptions of the legitimacy of the document itself as a constitutional settlement and as a site of constitutional transition from monarchic to parliamentary models, among the wider citizenry outside the pre-existing political class.

1 Object: round black glass-paste intaglio – Janus-headed

This first section ‘examines’ my chosen object, to the extent allowed through a necessarily distanced engagement with the online collection of the British Museum. The main themes explored include the substantive analysis of the object itself and the subject content of the intaglio – the Roman God Janus. The item I selected from the collection of the British Museum was a (small) Janus intaglio. The reasoning behind my selection is addressed in part three, but, first, a little about the object itself. The term intaglio – in this context – refers to a particular form of decoration, usually but not exclusively used in the preparation of semi-precious stones. Traditionally, intaglio is a method of engraving or cutting a design into a material. However, when concerning the decorative properties of ‘seals and gems’,² it can also refer to an image ‘cut in reverse in order to produce a positive impression for use as a stamp or seal’.³

The intaglio measures slightly less than a centimetre in all directions; a small stack of five-penny pieces might give an indication of size. The material used to produce this object is glass, more precisely a ‘black glass paste’.⁴ The use of glass and the conceptions and preconceptions that this raises are addressed in section two. Here, the focus is the image depicted in the glass paste intaglio: the Roman deity Janus. Janus was usually depicted with two faces in profile looking in opposing directions. As with most sculpture and engraving of classical Mediterranean antiquity, the male faces are depicted with curly hair and beards.⁵ In this image it is the beard(s) and hair that provide the seamless transition between faces.

The item was acquired by the British Museum from the collection of Charles Townley, through his heir.⁶ Townley’s willingness to publicly display his extensive collection, even after his death, makes for an interesting character study. Born in 1737 into a Catholic family, he was French educated, at the English College in Douai and in Paris. After his education and formal entry into society he began a Grand Tour in 1767, focusing on Italy. He returned to Italy on two further occasions 1771–1774 and 1777. During these visits the seeds of his character as a collector and of the character of his collection were sown. Despite this strong continental connection and his disbarment from public office due to his Catholic faith, Townley bequeathed his collection to the people of the UK, as opposed to Catholic societies on the continent (or in Ireland).⁷

2 British Museum, ‘Intaglio scope note’ <www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/term_details.aspx?scopeType=technique&scopeId=17340>.

3 British Museum ‘Intaglio scope note’ <http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/term_details.aspx?scopeType=object&scopeId=22074>.

4 British Museum ‘Collection online intaglio’ <http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=430585&partId=1&searchText=JANUS+INTAGLIO&page=1>.

5 Norbert Haas, Françoise Toppe and Beate Henz, ‘Hairstyles in the Arts of Greek and Roman Antiquity’ (2008) 10(3) *Journal of Investigative Dermatology* (Symposium Proceedings) 298.

6 British Museum (n 4).

7 *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ‘Charles Townley’ <www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27601>.

CONTENT: THE ROMAN GOD JANUS

This subsection focuses upon the subject of the depicted image: Janus. As the God of beginnings, endings, gateways and doorways, Janus was believed to oversee a varied portfolio of responsibilities. Evidence suggests Janus could be invoked in circumstances surrounding fertility and the inception of life, playing a role in the worship of impregnation and also at times of harvest.⁸ Within the specific remit of Janus came patronage of the month of January, this being the beginning of the new year looking forward and the end of the old year looking backward. Janus is cited by the poet Ovid as claiming that the winter solstice was the first day of the new sun and the last day of the old.⁹ Janus also held a central role in the relationship between Rome (republic and empire) and the state of war. Upon the official declaration of war by the governing authority(s) of Rome the “temple” of Janus was opened, although strictly speaking it was not actually a temple, rather, a passage (the real meaning of the word *janus*) . . . When peace returned, the Janus was closed.¹⁰

It is useful to consider the position of Janus within the pantheon of classical Roman gods. An interesting place to start is the nature of the pantheon itself. As with many aspects of Roman culture, the gods of the city and its people correspond to the gods of other classical Mediterranean cultures. This is partly due to interwoven cultural influences, particularly the Greek colonies established in the formative years of the Roman state on the islands of the ‘Italian’ coastline, but also an aspect of cultural colonisation and imperialist subjugation. It was once suggested ‘that if a territory contains several human groups, each with their own distinctive culture . . . given enough time, there will only be a single homogeneous culture in the territory’. However, research in cultural spatiality has since established that, although ‘there is . . . a process of progressive cultural homogenization’ that ‘process never reaches completion’. Modelling techniques and empirical surveys hypothesise that ‘a small number of different cultural regions continue to exist and have no tendency to further coalesce into a single, unified culture’.¹¹ The Roman empire can be seen to support this view in the widely acknowledged fluid versatility of Roman identity that persisted across its territory and throughout the duration of its lifespan.¹²

Perhaps implicitly recognising the impossibility of subsuming peoples into the empire, the Romans became adept at the cultural assimilation of the vanquished. They often went to some lengths to suggest similarities between the colonised peoples and themselves, highlighting connections between gods worshipped. Even occasionally conflating the personalities of the gods, creating dual aspect deities to be integrated into the wider Roman pantheon. Examples of this practice can be seen in the creation of Lenus-Mars – worship based around Trier in Germany – and Apollo-Grannus – widely worshipped in Celtic territories of the empire.¹³ Archaeological research has examined how location and

8 Robert Turcan, *The Gods of Ancient Rome: Religion in Everyday Life from Archaic to Imperial Times* (Antonia Nevill (trans), Edinburgh University Press 2000) 18, 39–41.

9 Ibid 62.

10 Ibid 95.

11 Domenico Parisi, Federico Ceconi and Francesco Natale, ‘Cultural Change in Spatial Environments: The Role of Cultural Assimilation and Internal Change in Cultures’ (2003) 47(2) *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 163, 163–4.

12 R Laurence and J Berry (eds), *Cultural Identity in the Roman Empire* (Routledge 1998).

13 Guy de la Bédoyère, *The Romans for Dummies* (Wiley 2006) 157; detailed research into religious cultural interaction and assimilation in the Egyptian provinces of the Roman empire supporting this conclusion has also been undertaken, see David Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance* (Princeton University Press 1998).

orientation of ‘cult building[s]’ for the worship of Lenus-Mars suggests ‘a process that was agreed . . . for cultural survival, tolerance and syncretism, which would have allowed . . . a bond of kinship with Rome while safeguarding . . . local identities’.¹⁴

Interestingly, Janus appears to have been uniquely Roman, not identifiable in competing or subjugated societies of the classical Mediterranean. While the expression Janus-faced is used colloquially, Janus is not a god that is as well understood as Jupiter, Mars or Saturn in wider contemporary culture. This is somewhat odd given that whenever Janus was invoked, whether in conjunction with other gods, or in a stand-alone context, he played a considerable role – often competing with Jupiter (the king of the gods) for primacy.¹⁵ It is tempting to propose that Janus lacks contemporary relevance because he did not have a planet named after him, but, of course, the month of January is derived from his name. Therefore, might a better explanation be found in the singularly Roman nature of Janus, the lack of presence in wider classical pantheons contributing to a lesser impact of cross-cultural assimilation?

2 Deduction: material consideration, the nature of glass

This section addresses the more abstract idea of my personal intellectual engagement with the Janus-headed intaglio. Abstract is an ideal term to describe the nature of this particular enterprise, due to the lack of hands-on interaction. Nonetheless, this section presents the most fruitful aspect of the entire project – as it has unfolded thus far. The intaglio is made of glass, which in decorative ornamentation might be considered an oddity. Glass is a functional material, a building material, it surrounds us in everyday life. Glass is extremely common in museums, precisely because it is unobtrusive. Glass is expressly designed, in many of its applications, not to gain our attention (Figure 2). The function of glass is not to obstruct our access to light and views of our surroundings. This functional unobtrusiveness of glass is summed up by Shelby who suggests that ‘[t]he presence of glasses in our everyday environment is so common that we rarely notice their existence’. Indeed, it seems that the functional appeal of glasses has always been present as ‘[t]he first crude man-made glasses were used . . . to shape into tools requiring sharp edges’.¹⁶

Consideration of a principle ingredient of glass triggers a certain cognitive dissonance: silica, or sand (in primary school chemistry terminology). I grew up on a small island; sand was a regular part of my life for more than 15 years. I associate it with the beach, sea and surf, sun, barbecues – essentially, fun. I also associate it with grit in the eye, scratchy clothes and being shouted at because there seemed to have been little puddles of the stuff accumulating around my house – in other words, annoyance. Neither line of thought prompts considerations of the importance of



Figure 2: Glass display cases can apparently be subject to user error, British Museum

14 David Espinosa Espinosa, A César González-García and Marco V Garcia Quintela, ‘On the Orientation of two Roman Towns in the Rhine Area’ [2016] *Mediterranean Archaeology and Archaeometry* 233, 238. This general thesis of fluctuating and negotiated cultural merger has also been considered in relation to depictions of clothing in the Rhine region of the empire, see U Rothe, *Dress and Cultural Identity in the Rhine Region of the Roman Empire* (Archaeopress 2009).

15 Turcan (n 8).

16 James E Shelby, *Introduction to Glass Science and Technology* (2nd edn, Royal Society of Chemistry 2005) 1.



Figure 3: Sand and windows perhaps lack immediate mental correlation, Priory Bay, Isle of Wight



Figure 4: Clarity of the glass facilitates the clarity of the ornamentation, British Museum



Figure 5: Designs on and of glassware, British Museum

glass – and by extension silica – to the everyday functionality of buildings. Even less, is there any consideration of glass, not as a material designed to be unobtrusive, simultaneously facilitating access to (visually) and separation from (physically) things, but glass designed to be the centre of attention, to be the *thing* itself (Figure 3). Glass, when considered at all, is thought at its best when clear. Clarity is the key. The primary function of glass is to be used in windows, at their most unobtrusive and useful when at their clearest. Glass is most appreciated when unnoticed, indeed, the window-cleaning industry is predicated on the basis that we will pay for the privilege of being able to live in blissful ignorance of our windows.

Even when glass is being used in a decorative fashion, clarity is key to its form. When glass is decorative, the attraction is the contrast of the clarity of the base material to the opaque decoration (Figure 4). This focus on clarity even informs the

general principles of chronological periodisation of glass, with the imagining of a linear progression towards ever greater clarity as the ‘quality of material betrays the date of glass . . . but it is mainly its purity’.¹⁷ The cut faces and planes of the glass, augmenting the underlying clarity of the material, focus attention; creating images as much in the mind’s eye as in the physical form. Ornamental glassware – wine glasses spring to mind – shares this ideal.¹⁸ Glasses are (usually) designed to be as unobtrusive as possible while augmenting their contents, to aerate the wine, and to subtly highlight its colours, and

17 Lewis F Day, *Stained Glass* (HM Stationery Office 1913) 92.

18 I am far from alone in making this association, see Beatrice Warde, ‘The Crystal Goblet, or Printing Should Be Invisible’ [1932] <www.arts.ucsb.edu/faculty/reese/classes/artistsbooks/Beatrice%20Warde,%20The%20Crystal%20Goblet.pdf>.

perhaps textures, through careful manipulation of the light playing on incised planes or the curvature of the glasses themselves.¹⁹ The historic development of a plethora of glassware designs during the establishment and growth of the eighteenth-century British glass industry has been accounted in lavish – if somewhat archaic – detail (Figure 5).²⁰



Figure 6: Canterbury city centre (including Cathedral) from Dane John, Canterbury

Even in contexts when clarity is not the primary function, it remains crucial, as with stained glass. Whether all readers will share my initial thoughts when considering the idea of decorative glass, I could not say. However, as a resident of Canterbury, the Cathedral is a daily factor of life (Figure 6) and, consequently, stained glass quickly rises to the mental foreground when thinking of decorative glass. One of the first things my grandmother said to me, upon hearing of my relocation to Canterbury, was that I must go to see the windows, the very blue windows (the Cathedral enjoys wide notoriety for the depth and richness of its *blue* stained glass which are not just the subject of a centenarian's exclamations: Figure 7). Stained glass is designed from first principles to be eye-catching, the centre of our attention.²¹ It does this best by being as transparent as possible, facilitating the fullest illumination of its colouring and/or imagery. Clarity and transparency are the keys to the properties of glass (Figure 8).

The Janus-headed intaglio lacks transparency, therefore, cannot be internally illuminated. It is made from black glass paste,²² not a promising characteristic for the



Figure 7: Illuminated Blue Window, post-World War II Hungarian production, Canterbury Cathedral (left)

Figure 8: A story in a widow, St Anselm's Chapel, Canterbury Cathedral (above)

19 Andrew Smith and Jenny Dodd, *The Wine Pocket Bible: Every Wine Rule of Thumb at your Finger Tips* (Crimson Publishing 2009) 128–30.

20 E Barrington Hayes, *Glass: Through the Ages* (Penguin Books 1949) 155–238.

21 Day (n 17). This is a recurrent theme through the author's musings upon stained glass.

22 British Museum (n 4).

production of ornamental glass. However, here I am as author – as are you as reader – giving detailed consideration to an ornamental object that contravenes the essential properties associated with value in glass. It is, counter-intuitively, the very opacity of the glass used to form this item (and the faces of Janus it displays) that allows such pronounced image clarity. The Janus-head would not appear so starkly if formed in (or on) transparent glass. Paradoxically, the seamless transition between his two faces – so effectively created by the careful incision of the hair and beard(s) – are successful because they are produced in a material that is denied its essential function: transparency. The image of Janus can be seen because light cannot transition through *this* glass. This counter-intuitive paradox comfortably fits the collective cultural relationship between people and glass. To return to the ellipsis in the above quote from the exuberant work of Shelby ‘[t]he first man-made glasses were used to produce beads, or to shape into tools requiring sharp edges’,²³ it would appear the dual facets of glass – decorative and functional – have developed in tandem throughout our history. Indeed, ‘[o]ur heritage as humans would seem to provide a bias towards placing a high value on [decorative glass]. We are still fascinated by “bright, shiny objects”.’²⁴ Shelby suggests that the key to answering this seemingly age-old fixation with glass may lie in the transmission of light.

Unlike many other materials, glasses are also [a]esthetically pleasing to an extent which far transcends their mundane applications as drinking vessels and ashtrays, windows and beer bottles . . . What aspects of objects made from glass make them so desirable for their beauty, as well as their more pragmatic uses?

The answer to these questions may lie in the ability of glasses to transmit light. Very few materials exist in nature which are transparent to visible light.²⁵

Unfortunately, this does not necessarily assist in addressing the atypical opacity of this Janus-headed intaglio, but it does highlight the creative space opened by the counter-intuitive opacity of the glass of this object.

3 Future research: Janus and the Bill of Rights

This final section of the article addresses the impact of the legal object commentary process upon my research, hinting at possible future trajectories. However, this is also the point of most flagrant deviation from Prown’s suggested structure.²⁶ Instead of focusing upon a research agenda designed to further examine and understand the Janus-headed intaglio, this section outlines the way in which my relationship with the intaglio has interacted with my current research. The reasoning behind my selection of the Janus-headed intaglio can be traced to an innocuous quote in a history book, concerning public administration of Restoration England:

The king relied on a social pyramid stretching down from leading peers . . . down to yeomen and merchants undertaking the often arduous offices located within parishes and wards. This very large number of men stood between the king and their own neighbours, and represented a Janus-faced wall of functioning administration. When looking one way, they could choose to explain and enforce the king’s will; when looking another, they might represent their localities’ anxieties and hopes to the king.²⁷

23 Shelby (n 16).

24 Ibid (n 16).

25 Ibid 2.

26 Prown (n 1) 10.

27 George Southcombe and Grant Tapsell, *Restoration Politics, Religion and Culture: Britain and Ireland, 1660–1714* (Palgrave Macmillan 2010) 97.

This is in relation to the sense of distance, dissatisfaction and dissociation felt by the Protestant populace towards their Catholic monarch, James II. This gap between people and ruler becomes deeper when considering that many of the lowest levels of governmental office-holders, even if their 'Janus-faced' bureaucratic colleagues could communicate with the king, were unable to participate in national government even by representative. The required numbers for filling administrative posts outstripped the size of the electoral franchise considerably.²⁸ Not only was the seat of administrative power out of touch with its subjects – and the higher echelons increasingly staffed by Catholics – the people undertaking daily hands-on administration (in their communities) had no real way to report their dissatisfactions with proceedings.²⁹ The attempted absolute monarchic reign of James II was ended by the Glorious Revolution. The legal representation of this, and subject of my research, is the English 1688 Bill of Rights.

The above reference to Janus, anachronistic as it might at first appear, became a breakthrough moment in my thinking about the legitimacy of the Bill of Rights as a constitutional settlement to what, by the time of the Glorious Revolution, had been 60 years of English constitutional crises.³⁰ Instead of trying to reconcile conservative and radical reform agendas and think about how they might fit into a single document; I reorientated my view and began to picture how the Bill of Rights itself might be Janus-faced. This would allow simultaneous presentation of a radical face of constitutional reform and a conservative restatement of the vaunted Ancient Constitution – freed from the tyranny of the 'Norman Yoke'.³¹ When factoring in the counter-intuitive opacity of the intaglio glass, this became even simpler. Rather than simultaneously allowing a transparent view of both faces of the Bill of Rights, might a part of its legitimacy not be facilitated precisely by the closing down of this unifying view? Not only might the document present two distinct facets of itself to two opposing political positions, but might it not also close down interaction within the document between these two sides and the aspects of the legal reforms it made that appealed to each group? Following this line of thought, I was presented with the ability not only to conceive of how people might view the Bill of Rights, but also how the Bill itself might perceive its environment and react in a Janus-faced way, showing only one face, rather than both, if *required* for specific audiences.

Prior to the above quote, I had not come across (in hindsight perhaps I had not noticed) any reference to Janus in my research. I have since found Janus (and his faces) arising frequently. Janus has been a central motif in a research project addressing emblematic distinction between the public and private branches of law,³² while less central references also appear. In constitutional literature, as an example, Martin Loughlin claims in point eight of his 'Pure Theory of Public Law' that: 'A positive theory of public law must not only

28 For an historical overview of the nature and scale of office-holding in early modern England, see Mark Goldie, 'The Unacknowledged Republic: Officeholding in Early Modern England' in Tim Harris (ed), *The Politics of the Excluded, c. 1500–1850* (Palgrave 2001); Joan Kent, 'The Centre and the Localities: State Formation and Parish Government in England, circa 1640–1740' (1995) 28(2) *Historical Journal* 363.

29 Southcombe and Tapsell (n 26); Tim Harris, *Revolution: The Great Crisis of the British Monarchy, 1685–1720* (Penguin 2007); Steve Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution* (Yale University Press 2009).

30 This would be to start the 'constitutional crisis' with the parliamentary presentation of the *Petition of Right* (1628), as opposed to the ascension to the throne of England of James I in 1603.

31 'The belief that Anglo-Saxon institutions had been essentially democratic until replaced by autocracy under the Normans': John Cannon, 'Norman Yoke' in his *The Oxford Companion to British History* (Oxford University Press 2009) <www.oxfordreference.com.chain.kent.ac.uk/view/10.1093/acref/9780199567638.001.0001/acref-9780199567638-e-3102>.

32 Peter Goodrich, 'The Political Theology of Private Law' (2013) 11(1) *International Journal of Constitutional Law* 146; and by the same author, *Legal Emblems and the Art of Law: Obiter Depicta as the Vision of Governance* (Cambridge University Press 2014).

accommodate the Janus-faced character of the modern state but also the special range of tasks that law is obliged to perform.³³ In the introduction to their reconsideration of classical European constitutional developments, Grotke and Prutsch suggest:

Constitutions have long presented a Janus-faced expression of both universalism and particularism, allowing for considerable flexibility and adaptation. The enduring tension between these simultaneous tendencies, each of whose realisation is prevented by the pull of its opposite, is a feature that marks the constitutional form, its history, and the ordering norms after which it strives, not least because the word ‘constitution’ itself admits of multiple understandings and translations in multiple contexts.³⁴

Meanwhile, from a legal historical perspective, Tomlins and Comaroff state that:

Janus, the God of Gates and those who keep them, is surely these days the most popular of academic deities . . . Steven Wilf [in the same UC Irvine Law Review edition] names Janus the God of Legal Historians . . . Maxime du Camp, famed author of *Paris, Its Organs, Its Functions, Its Life*, anointed Janus the God of History more than 150 years ago. History, he explained, ‘is like Janus, it has two faces’.³⁵

In considering the legitimacy of the Bill of Rights as a constitutional *reform* and *settlement*, where might the authority for its enactment have been found? The Bill of Rights was not the first attempted constitutional settlement or reform of the seventeenth century. However, it is the lasting one. Here, again, Janus might prove useful. According to Arendt, the *auctoritas* (authority) of Roman law was based in tradition.³⁶ We might think of this as authority stemming from the beginning or founding, an arena of Janus. This would certainly justify the Ancient Constitution argument: the finding of parliamentary authority to provide a *settlement* in its immemorial (Saxon), pre-Norman Yoke foundation – the Witan.³⁷ From the opposite perspective, or face, this would not imbue the Bill of Rights with a revolutionary *reform* character. However, Janus, as the god of beginnings and endings, may once more assist. When viewing the reform face of the document, might its authority be found in the ending of an old order, tainted by civil war and revolution, and the beginning of a new one: a legally supreme Parliament limiting a constitutional monarch? That is, a new constitutional order alongside, and growing from, a new Protestant religious order:³⁸ a new religious order which relocated its authority in a similar re-constitution, through the recognition of the individual (and collected congregation) as the central component of spiritual authority, rather than the papacy. These questions

33 Martin Loughlin, *The Idea of Public Law* (Oxford University Press 2003) 155.

34 Kelly Grotke and Markus Prutsch, ‘Constitutionalism, Legitimacy, and Power’ in Kelly Grotke and Markus Prutsch (eds), *Constitutionalism, Legitimacy and Power* (Oxford University Press 2014) 11–12.

35 Christopher Tomlins and John Comaroff, ‘“Law as . . .”: Theory and Practice in Legal History’ [2011] University of California Irvine Law Review 1039, 1078–9, citing Maxime du Camp, epigraph to Walter Benjamin, *Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century, Exposé [of 1939]*, in Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project 14* (Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (trans), Belknap Press 1999).

36 Hannah Arendt, ‘What is Authority?’ in *Between Past and Future: Six Exercises in Political Thought* (Faber & Faber 1961).

37 For analysis of the Witan in seventeenth-century politics, see, J G A Pocock, *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law: A Study of English Historical Thought in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge University Press 1957); for a history of legal ‘assemblies’ such as the Witan, see Harold Berman, *Law and Revolution: The Formation of the Western Legal Tradition* (Harvard University Press 1983) 49–84.

38 The changing character of authority stemming from the Protestant Reformation is analysed in Herbert Marcuse, *A Study on Authority* (Joris De Bres (trans), Verso 2008); alternative analysis addressing loss of authority as symptomatic of modernity is provided by Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (Faber Modern Classics 2016).



Figure 9: My somewhat unconventional SLSA presentation (academia never escapes its textuality so my thanks to Harold Berman; Hans Kelsen; Carter Lindberg; Martin Loughlin; Steve Pincus; and Chris Thornhill for their weighty contributions)

drive my research and the ability to simultaneously view their Janus-faced divisions is a generative force of creativity. Might the Janus ‘passage’ facilitate this dual-faceted transition?

Conclusion

Hopefully, this commentary article is able to convey some of my experiences from engaging with this Janus-headed intaglio and my wider participation in both the Legal Object Workshop and the SLSA 2017 Pop-Up Museum of Legal Objects stream. When writing this, I realised the challenges both in concluding this piece and to articulating exactly what I will be taking away from my experiences with Janus. On a worldly, everyday level, I now possess a surprisingly large collection of images of stained glass and museum display cases; hopefully, while reading my ramblings, you have been able to derive at least half the enjoyment from the selected images as I do. On a more serious note, there is a process and a purpose to activities such as these: the benefits are real, if at times seemingly slightly intangible.

I now have a firmer grasp of aspects of my research that might be understood to animate my project. I also find myself more able to explain why, and potentially more importantly how, I conduct my research, as well as possessing a pre-packaged set of analogies and stories to explain the processes at play to any interested souls who wander my way. Even if no other gains had been forthcoming, this self-reflexive understanding of my own work, and my engagement with it, is of great personal comfort and no little utility as I further develop my current research, not least because my practical experiences

of Prown's *An Introduction to Material Culture and Method* have better equipped me to think about alternative ways of approaching historical documents as something other than written text. The thinking involved has not necessarily been the challenging part in this process, rather it is the articulation; but now I possess descriptive and explanatory source material (and first-hand experience of its application), which may well prove invaluable.

As a final thought, I shall briefly dwell on a point raised in the introductory article: 'one highlight of the SLSA event was the observation of an audience member that, as a PhD student with dyslexia, she found a spontaneous use of clay models to explain relationships between law and trust to be revelatory'.³⁹ As a fellow dyslexic PhD student, I have come to share a similar sense of wonder at the potential for communication through non-written media. The capacity to undertake a research journey through recourse to personal interactions with glass and the ability to communicate this journey to others through utilising objects, pictures and verbal commentary – all more central to the process than text, until this point – has been a fantastically liberating experience (Figure 9). When considering barriers to engagement, while museums are imposing and troubling constructs to many, from a personal perspective, the difficulty in transferring ideas to paper in a manner acceptable to academic standards is (at times) frankly terrifying. The ability to be able to verbally engage with peers, not just during presentations, but to construct an entire research project from the premise that written text is of secondary (if not tertiary) importance has been my revelation.

39 Amanda Perry-Kessaris, 'The Pop-Up Museum of Legal Objects as Socio-legal Research Design' (2017) 68(3) Northern Ireland Legal Quarterly 225–44 (this volume) 239.