

DR TIMOTHY FERNYHOUGH (1953-2003)

This issue of *EnterText* is offered as a tribute to the memory of Dr Timothy Fernyhough by his colleagues at Brunel University. Timothy Derek Fernyhough who died suddenly, with no history of serious illness, on 8 October 2003, shortly before his fiftieth birthday, was an Africanist by training who specialised in the history of colonial Ethiopia, especially southern Ethiopia. Brought up by parents who were diplomats and travelling widely while still a child to Ethiopia, Latin America and diverse parts of Europe, Tim acquired a lifelong interest in the countries where he lived, especially Spain and Ethiopia. He took degrees in History at Goldsmith's College, London and the University of Sussex, where his master's degree dealt with the counter-revolution in Brittany during the French Revolution. He then migrated to the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, where he took his doctorate in African History in 1986 under the supervision of Professor Donald Crummey, who has contributed a paper to this edition of *EnterText*. Tim's teaching career included spells at a college in Barcelona, at an English Community School in Addis Ababa and at the University of Florida, where he held an assistant professorship in History and served as Deputy Director of the Center for African Studies. From 1990 until his death Tim taught at, first, the West London Institute of Higher Education and, when that was reorganised, at Brunel University in the greater west London area. He was latterly Director of Studies for History there, carrying a considerable administrative burden in addition to his teaching.

Tim Fernyhough was my colleague and friend throughout his career at Brunel. We taught courses together and always maintained a collegial and friendly relationship. He was an excellent teacher and talented researcher. This is not the place to provide a lengthy personal memorial tribute—I have already done so elsewhere—except to say that Tim was universally liked by his colleagues and students. He was a man of energy, charm, intelligence, academic rigour and moral probity. He had the gift of listening well to students and colleagues facing problems and would always try to suggest a helpful solution. He took much trouble with students who experienced

academic difficulties. In his final year he had to cope with a heavy workload, a department undergoing restructuring and much anxiety in caring with his wife for a sick son. It is sad that he did not live to see his son recover fully, and that the restructuring turned out to be more painless than anticipated. His memory was honoured by his colleagues at a tree-planting ceremony at the university (complete with a brass plate and plinth) in recognition of his contribution to the life and work of Brunel University. The tree, appropriately, is an evergreen—Eucalyptus Gunni, which grows in Ethiopia and is hardy.

Tim's scholarly work focused mainly on the history of Ethiopia in the colonial era. His enthusiasm in teaching about slaves, serfs and modes of resistance in Ethiopia was such that he had a devoted band of undergraduates who regularly took his third-year seminar on this topic. But Tim ranged widely in his teaching and regularly delivered lectures and seminars on the French Revolution, the Spanish Civil War and the reconstruction of western Europe since 1945. Beyond Brunel University he was a regular contributor to the Avignon conferences on Slavery and Forced Labour and the periodic Ethiopian Studies conferences held in different parts of the world. Tim published articles in various historical journals and sets of conference proceedings. He was most proud of his chapter on "Human Rights and Precolonial Africa" in R. Cohen, G. Hyden and W. Nagan, eds., *Human Rights and Governance in Africa* (University Press of Florida, 1993). He thought he had written a good piece of historical analysis—and it is a wide-ranging, powerfully argued paper, drawing on social theory as well as hard evidence. Tim was also committed to the removal of slavery and human rights abuses in the contemporary world. His academic work and his life reflected that commitment. At the time of his death Tim had virtually completed a book entitled *Serfs, Slaves and Shifta: Modes of Production and Resistance in pre-revolutionary Southern Ethiopia*. This is a study of the interaction of land, state and society in that region from the 1850s to the early 1970s that situates slavery in the context of changes in political economy. We must hope that Tim's book, based on years of research and writing, will soon be published and acknowledged as an important contribution to slavery and Ethiopian studies.

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