

## Editorial Foreword

**CSSH AT SIXTY** At sixty-years strong, the journal remains as fit and agile as ever. The print edition is now accompanied by a dynamic website including interviews, conversations between authors, features on the research processes behind groundbreaking articles, and much more. Please visit our website at <http://cssh.lsa.umich.edu/> to see all that's new. Ten years ago, in honor of the journal's half-century jubilee, we celebrated the occasion with an expanded issue. We're pleased to continue that tradition on this anniversary, presenting fifteen extraordinary essays.

**GODS IN THINGS** Divinities need mundane materials in order to appear and be perceived by human devotees. Those materials of appearance, in turn, give contour and definition to sacred powers. How these transductions occur is hotly debated within religious traditions themselves. **Webb Keane's** and **Stephan Palmié's** essays each consider the material risks and affordances faced by gods. Keane's essay, "Divine Text, National Language, and Their Publics: Arguing an Indonesian Qur'an," interprets the controversies that followed efforts to render the Qur'an in a poetic, literary, and vernacular form. Palmié's article, "When Is a Thing? Transduction and Immediacy in Afro-Cuban Ritual; or, ANT in Matanzas, Cuba, Summer of 1948," revisits William Bascom's 1948 fieldwork in Cuba to explore how gods (*orichas*, in this case) come to dwell in specific stones, and the tension between notions of stones as representations versus stones *as* the god's body.

**ARMORED BODIES** Soldiers and athletes attempt extraordinary physical feats with bodies that too often fail or let them down. Far from extinguishing such efforts, the vulnerabilities of the human body provoke further efforts to craft new versions that transcend the limits of pain, exhaustion, injury, and death. "From Idiophylaxis to Inner Armor: Imagining the Self-Arming Soldier in the United States Military from the 1960s to Today," by **Andrew Bickford**, explores efforts by military biologists and engineers to solve this body problem. They developed programs to make and deploy modified human soldiers outfitted with special components or hyper-durable skin. Bickford shows how fantasy, imagination, and violence are interwoven in the figure of the (always) future supersoldier. **Niko Besnier, Daniel Guinness, Mark Hann,** and **Uroš Kovač's** article, "Rethinking Masculinity in the Neoliberal Order: Cameroonian Footballers, Fijian Rugby Players, and Senegalese Wrestlers," enters the arena of global sport to consider the forms of masculinity produced by sports markets. They find both repetitions—especially in the neoliberal gendering of men, the historically homosocial character of spectator

sports, and the precarious position occupied by men who spend lives devoted to skills that rarely translate to economic spheres outside the field or stadium—as well as striking local differences. Ironically, they show how the forms of physical strength produced by sporting masculinities leave their subjects especially at risk in the game of life.

**ARCHITECTURAL POLITICS** Built structures shape the social lives that move through them. They shelter, direct, invite, decorate, obstruct, captivate, imprison, and enliven. The designs of buildings quite literally “give form” to a nation, or an internationalist order. **Leo Coleman’s** essay, “Building Scotland, Building Solidarity: A Scottish Architect’s Knowledge of Nation,” offers an ethnography of infrastructure. It examines Scottish architecture through the planning vision of Robert Hurd, who envisioned the “small burgh” as at once a political resource, a social plan, and a kind of physical structure to build Scotland. **Michał Murawski’s** “Actually-Existing Success: Economics, Aesthetics, and the Specificity of (Still-) Socialist Urbanism,” takes apart the persistent myth of “failed” socialist architecture, routinely imagined as either too economic or as not attentive *enough* to economic realities. Working against the grain, Murawski shows the “success” of many socialist structures, from Warsaw’s Palace of Culture and Science to Khrushchev’s mass-housing program. Socialist structures produced boredom, but also togetherness, adventure, spontaneous encounters, love, and conflict in equal measure. Murawski argues that socialist architecture needs to be read in its own terms, as “social condensers” addressing a key question of economics and aesthetics, namely, what structures and spaces could activate a properly *socialist* social life?

**RELIGIOUS OTHERS AND THE FRENCH REPUBLIC** The political implications of the French term *laïcité* are far from transparent. In her “‘We are all Republicans’: Party Articulation and the Production of Nationhood in France’s Face Veil Debate,” **Emily Laxer** reaches into one of *laïcité’s* many pockets of ambiguity. The *niqab* and *burqa*, she argues, played a key part in the realignment of political parties. The 2010 ban derived less from arguments or assaults on freedom of religion than from political parties’ struggles for legitimacy. Parties on the left toughened their positions on the covered face in order to regain power lost to the Front National, all the while veiling their attack as a “defense” of women’s dignity. Through fieldwork interviews with members of the commissions that generated the key documents, Laxer sheds needed light on the political stakes of religious practices in the public sphere. **Kimberly A. Arkin’s** “Historicity, Peoplehood, and Politics: Holocaust Talk in Twenty-First-Century France,” meanwhile, takes on the issue of Shoah memorialization in France. She shows the ambiguity of North African Jewish experience under Nazi roundups, previously excluded from the narratives of the European Holocaust, but now increasingly incorporated into those commemorations. Which versions of time and history, Arkin asks, expand “outward”

toward a broad, universal, or more inclusive Jewish Holocaust, and which versions restrict the Holocaust to a specifically European, and Ashkenazi, event and trauma?

**DIASPORIC BELONGING** This pair of essays interprets German migrant communities in the Americas—Paraguay and the United States—in relation to the relative sense of affinity a given community maintained for the homeland, and the degree of belonging to the hostland they cultivated. **John Eicher's** “Rustic Reich: The Local Meanings of (Trans)National Socialism among Paraguay’s Mennonite Colonies” compares two different *Auslands-deutsche* communities in Paraguay during the 1930s. He asks why one group readily adopted Nazi programs while the other was resistant to them. One settlement repurposed the German national narrative as central to their local story; the other used their local identity, local material repertoires, and an extra-national “theology of migration” to reject the National Socialist project of an extended German *Volk*. “Integration and Identities: The Effects of Time, Migrant Networks, and Political Crises on Germans in the United States,” by **Félix Krawatzek** and **Gwendolyn Sasse**, presents an analysis of over a thousand letters written by Germans in the United States across a century-long period. Their focus on a wide range of data allows them to discern trends of engagement with the homeland over the *longue durée*, and the degree to which variables like the shifting political environment of the host country, and the opportunities for inclusion, influenced the sense of integration or its lack. Their essay offers insight on how large data sets and statistical analysis can prove useful to establish qualitative historical claims.

**EDGES OF SOVEREIGNTY** In “Denouncing Sovereignty: Claims to Liberty in Northeastern Central African Republic,” **Louisa Lombard** opens a window onto the issue of how legality and governance work in the many places where little state presence exists. In the borderlands of the Central African Republic, armed conservation park guards, foreign settlers, poachers, and other groups coexist in a zone of contested sovereignty, a “negative liberty” premised on not being encroached upon, and potential violence. In this place, the capacity to generate persuasive and potent denunciations against another party determines the right to kill, and the consequences of violence. By comparing two vivid acts of killing and their consequences, Lombard shows how sovereignty is less a stable thing than a continuum of power from being highly centralized in a “sovereign” at one end, to widely distributed and debated at the other. **Sheetal Chhabria** guides us to colonial Bombay and the wilds of caste and capital in the absence of any single governing legal process for land acquisition, in “The Aboriginal Alibi: Governing Dispossession in Colonial Bombay.” Here the “aboriginal alibi” refers to the concessions allotted to claims made about aboriginal Koli lands in the city that in fact allowed for the dispossession of others. The diverse applications of nativist claims to land accelerated as the values of capitalist land markets rose. Even more, Chhabria

shows, the claims of aboriginal concessions even hastened the acceleration of land speculation in Bombay.

**WHAT EMPIRES CAN AND CAN'T DO** The title of this rubric is taken from **Richard Lachmann's** incisive essay reviewing major recent studies of empire, in works by Krishan Kumar, Valerie A. Kivelson and Ronald Grigor Suny, and Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper. All the books discussed by Lachmann, we add parenthetically, are by *CSSH* authors, though this was not by design. He draws the work of these scholars into conversation to reflect comparatively on empire in its many iterations: China, Rome, the Ottoman Empire, Russia, France, Great Britain, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the United States and its neocolonial extensions. Lachmann draws out key themes and gaps in the books, including counterintuitive ones like the ways empire often depended on the maintenance of fissiparous rivalry and competition between its constituents in order to survive, rather than absolute centralization. In "Theologies of Auspicious Kingship: The Islamization of Chinggisid Sacral Kingship in the Islamic World," **Jonathan Brack** explores imperial dimensions and effects of ideas about Islamic kingship in fourteenth-century Iran. He demonstrates how Persian and Islamic concepts of kingship were activated to translate Mongol claims to govern as divinely mandated, and thus to expand Mongol power. This produced a new vocabulary and discursive realm of sacred kingship that was later deployed by other imperial regimes far afield in time and space. **Jean-Philippe Dedieu** and **Aïssatou Mbodj-Pouye's** entry, "The Fabric of Transnational Political Activism: 'Révolution Afrique' and West African Radical Militants in France in the 1970s," explores the post-imperial space linking France and Africa. They consider the effects of May '68 through the prism of activist alliances between Africans and French in the fight against neocolonialism and a lingering French Empire. Even though the movement dissipated by the 1970s, it left key consequences in its wake. The "Révolution Afrique" movement helped define and form a new African political leadership. It helped develop new vocabularies and tools for French belonging. Yet, at the same time, it also helped to institute and sediment new divisions between French African elites and the working class. In a comparative vein, Dedieu and Mbodj-Pouye's project leads to broader considerations of how transnational activism is transformed into national forms of political action.

**INAUGURAL JACK GOODY AWARD** In this last issue of Volume 60, we are pleased to announce the Jack Goody Award for the best *CSSH* article in Volume 59. Nominations were made by *CSSH* Editorial Board members. A special jury of esteemed outside readers, Sherry Ortner, Krishan Kumar, and Gregory Starrett, read and adjudicated the five finalists. The winners of the first Jack Goody Award are **Isabelle Grangaud** and **Simona Cerutti** for their paper "Sources and Contextualizations: Comparing Eighteenth-Century

North Africa and Western European Institutions.” Here is what the jury wrote to describe the winning contribution:

“Sources and Contextualizations: Comparing Eighteenth-Century North Africa and Western European Institutions” provides not only a clear and systematic summary of common ways of thinking about comparison, but offers a fresh way of conceptualizing what kinds of comparisons might be done, what results from them, and how this method both illuminates particular cases and prompts further questions about broader issues. Reorienting the existing literature on the institutions of the French *droit d'aubaine* and the Ottoman *Bayt al-mal*, Cerutti and Grangaud show that what seemed like mechanisms of state expropriation come to appear instead as mechanisms for the definition and protection of private interest, particularly as concern lineages and families. At first reading, the intriguing approach they propose appears methodologically troublesome, as the similarities between the two institutions are only discoverable after the fact. But in the end, the extraordinary insight and depth of the actual interpretation may not have been possible without the framework they set forth. By not taking at face value the textual statements of laws and regulations, but instead digging away at the actual interpretations and actions of administrative agents, the authors show affinities and similarities that are counter-intuitive and highly revealing. In doing so they open up a whole series of questions relating to distinctions between the religious and the secular, the foreign and the local, family and property, poverty and belonging. What is particularly important are the implications for the general study of citizenship and “foreignness” in *ancien regime* societies. By demonstrating that, for both early-modern French society and Ottoman society, “foreignness” and “poverty” belong in the same category, reflecting the same condition of being “unplaced” and lacking social bonds, they undermine many anachronistic accounts of citizenship and belonging in the early-modern state. Altogether this is a very fine and original piece of work, an inspiring model for how one might approach any number of issues.

The award comes with a \$1,000 prize, and we urge the winners to spend it unwisely. Congratulations to Professors Grangaud and Cerutti, and our heartfelt thanks to the jury!