

Editorial Foreword

GLOBALIZATIONS World markets and nation-states have been the strong forces of history for the last two centuries, interacting in complex ways. Are markets getting the upper hand over states? Many argue that the current quantum leap of global economic integration has brought about conditions that are altogether different from those of the past. The first two papers, examining effects of an earlier globalization which began in the mid-nineteenth century, tend against that view.

Andreas Wimmer compares Kurdish nationalism, emerging under conditions which brought the Ottoman empire to an end, and the intensification of patronage for religious festivals in an Indian community in Mexico, as differing responses to early globalization. The cases taken together undermine the claim that the overall drift of globalization is toward homogenization and synchronism; their opposites (disjuncture and desynchronization) are also produced.

The British Virgin Islands became a communications node in a worldwide circuitry long before becoming an offshore tax haven in worldwide financial networks, **Bill Maurer** tells us. This story of globalization goes back at least to the aftermath of the Indian Mutiny (1856) when the British began planning an advanced communications system and originally it had an imperial logic rather than a financial or technological one. The interplay of network and island, of globalizing technologies and state sovereignty, is complicated, and the two must jibe for tax havens to work. The author traces the paths they take through narratives of different kinds.

CHRISTIANITIES The global spread of Christian missions has left an abundance of new Christianities that are attracting study by ethnologists and historians. (See also a pair of articles in 34:4: Sabine MacCormack, "Sin, Citizenship, and the Salvation of Souls: The Impact of Christian Priorities on Late-Roman and Post-Roman Society," 1997:644–73, and Webb Keane, "From Fetishism to Sincerity: On Agency, the Speaking Subject, and Their Historicity in the Context of Religious Conversion," 1997:674–93.) The next article shows how rich this new terrain is; the one following compares Christian and non-Christian forms of millenarian belief.

David Maxwell gives a history of the Zimbabwean Assemblies of God, Africa through its written scriptures, contributing to a new and growing body of work on forms of Christianity in Africa. The consolidation of a Christian sect into an institutionalized and international church is traced through the analysis of its *Sacred Text* and other historical narratives.

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Millenarian beliefs are regularly held together with their seeming opposite, an everyday sense of time and action, **Joel Robbins** tells us. But how does “everyday millenarianism” survive its internal contradiction? He develops the concept through comparison of ideas of time among the Urapmin of Papua New Guinea and Protestant Christian Dispensational premillennialists of the United States, whose religion the Urapmin have since adopted. He holds that the answer is to be found in narrative structures involving notions of secrecy and prophecy. (Of related interest: Bob Scribner, “Practical Utopias: Pre-modern Communism and the Reformation,” 1994:743–74.)

MEDITATION MODERNIZED Death has always been an object of religious contemplation, but modern technology delivers new means for its apprehension, as the next essay shows.

Does the sight of death inure one to it? **Alan Klima** joins discussion of the effects of the increasing circulation of repetitive images of death and dying through new technologies of vision. He presents an ethnography of the meditation on dead bodies by monks and nuns of the Toong Samakhi Thamm Temple of Central Thailand, which aims at a very different, liberational effect. In his own meditation, much influenced by Benjamin, the author concludes that we cannot disengage from making history through vision, and that our seeing is not captive to the technology of it.

VIRTUE AND THE NATION Nationalism and education go together; ethics is the connective tissue, according to the next essay. (For another instance see Uffe Østergård, “Peasants and Danes: The Danish National Identity and Political Culture,” 1992:3–27.)

Rebecca Bryant finds that in the island of Cyprus conceptions of being a good person are virtually inseparable from conceptions of being a good Greek or Turk. Education is “an aesthetic enterprise in which the student attempts to mold himself after an ethnic type represented as ‘cultured,’ ‘civilized,’ and therefore morally better.”

CSSH NOTES A review article by **Paolo Squatriti** examines two new works on Britain and Ireland in the middle ages, and another by **Barbara Walker** takes on books about patronage and networking in the Soviet Union.