

## Abstracts

*Robert Aldrich*

### **France and the *Patrimoine* of the Empire: Heritage Policy under Colonial Rule**

This paper explores French heritage policy – the preservation, conservation and valorisation – of material heritage in the colonies from the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s. French authorities wilfully destroyed much pre-colonial heritage, such as the citadel walls and a number of temples in Hanoi, in order to build sites of European power on conquered areas, including a majestic Governor-General’s palace and a grand municipal theatre in the Indochinese capital. Yet the French also investigated and developed other sites, such as Angkor War, Champa ruins and the temples of Luang Prabang. Heritage policy in different parts of the empire reveals much about French perspectives on indigenous cultures, the incorporation of pre-colonial and newly constructed sites into the *patrimoine* and colonial imaginary, developing ideas and strategies of historical preservation (and its political value), and the material legacies left by the colonialists to successor states.

*Greg Burgess*

### **The Demographers’ Moment: Georges Mauco, Immigration and Racial Selection in Liberation France, 1945-46**

The figure of Georges Mauco looms large over studies of the politics of French migration in the 1930s and 1940s. Influential in debates about the deleterious impact of migration on the French population and cultural identity in the 1930s, Mauco re-emerged after Liberation to head the Consultative Committee for Population and the Family (*Haut Comité Consultatif de la Population et de la Famille*), which was charged with, among other things, the drafting of a new immigration law (adopted 25 November 1945). Historians find Mauco’s influence in 1945 evidence of a “return to kind” in French ideas about population and immigration. Mauco’s advocacy of rigorous selection among prospective immigrants, based on racial preference, suggests a return to the racist tendencies of the latter years of the Third Republic and, by extension, that these racist ideas are deeply embedded in post-war policy. This paper recalls, however, that Mauco’s

ideas found little support. A study of the challenges to Mauco not only contests the historically accepted view of the influence of racial thinking of post-war French migration; it also questions why historians seem compelled to emphasise the racial currents of debates on migration, however marginal they may be.

*Barbara Creed and Jeanette Hoorn*

### **Memory and History: Early Film, Colonialism and the French Civilising Mission in Indochina**

This paper explores the themes of memory and history in relation to some of the first colonial nonfiction films made; films which to date have received very little critical acknowledgement or analysis. Our focus is on films shot in the French colonial lands of Indochina, drawn from two archival collections: the Lumière Brothers collection (1895-1905) and Albert Kahn's Archives de la Planète (1908-1931). In viewing these early nonfiction films of Indochina over a century later, we can see that they retain an immediacy and freshness and continue to challenge the imagination. Because they are unedited and without commentary, our understanding of how interpretation works draws on multiple perspectives: there is no over-riding, singular view. The spectator is encouraged to respond personally to what he or she sees. These early films represent history in terms of a range of small narratives and individual voices, and they offer new ways of thinking about the relationship between memory and history today.

*Helen Davies*

### **Friendship in the Revolution: A Sephardic Correspondence (1794-1799)**

Revolutionary historiography on Bordeaux frequently highlights the political violence, economic chaos and financial collapse which visited the city. A rare collection of letters in a private archive, written over 1794-1799 by three Sephardic Jews who were doing business together, provides a more nuanced account of "ordinary" life. The principal purpose of the writers was to convey business information, and the letters thus shed light on the activities of the Sephardic network at that period. The correspondents also provide insights into the conflict inherent in Sephardic revolutionary aspirations and their circumstances as Jews. But the main focus of this paper is to explore what these three men tell us about friendship, intimacy and affection in a time of fear and upheaval, and what their letters contribute to our understanding of letter-writing of that period.

*Vesna Drapac*

### **Thérèse of Lisieux: The Appeal of a French Saint at a Time of International Crisis**

This paper seeks to establish a framework for the transnational study of devotion to one of the most popular saints of the modern period, Thérèse of Lisieux. It is a preliminary study that explores the impact of a young, provincial, French Catholic woman on the institutional and social history of the Church from the 1920s to the 1940s. Thérèse's story is well known and studies of her life and Thérésian spirituality abound. While I draw on

this large body of work, my focus is historical rather than biographical or theological. Thérèse's impact spread far beyond France, and her teaching underpinned various strategies that the Church devised to offer guidance in the twentieth century. Episcopal pronouncements and popular Catholic texts alluded to the links between Thérèse's "Little Way" and the choices available to Catholics caught up in the ideological confrontations of the twentieth century. Catholic practice and devotional life comprised some of the mechanisms by which one's local (or regional) and national identities coexisted with one's transnational (or universal) Catholic identity at a time of international crisis. I argue that an examination of devotion to Thérèse at all levels within the Church enables us to understand more fully this phenomenon.

*Denise Fisher*

### **France in the South Pacific: An Australian Perspective**

France's longstanding presence in the South Pacific has stemmed variously from a spirit of enquiry, missionary zeal, rivalry with "les anglo-saxons" and power projection. It has maintained a sovereign presence in its scattered archipelagos, dubbed "les danseuses qui coûtent cher" (expensive indulgences, or "dancers"), into the twenty-first century, despite the tide of decolonisation in the second half of the twentieth century. What keeps it in the Pacific and is it likely to stay?

*Susan Foley*

### **"A Great and Noble Painting": Léon Gambetta and the Visual Arts in the French Third Republic**

Léon Gambetta (1838-1882) is remembered as a politician and orator, one of the leading architects of the Third Republic in the 1870s. He is not generally remembered as a devotee of the arts, and the fact that he established the first dedicated Ministry for the Arts in his short-lived Ministry (1881-82) is often attributed to the influence of his colleague, the art critic Antonin Proust. But Gambetta's private correspondence – especially with his lover Léonie Léon – offers a different picture. It reveals Gambetta's passion for art, his strong aesthetic preferences, and his mainstream rather than avant-garde tastes. Gambetta's commitment to the arts when in government was inspired by his own interests, not merely by the influence of others or by utilitarian considerations. In revising our understanding of Gambetta's engagement with the arts, this article highlights the benefits of examining private correspondence when considering questions of taste and aesthetics.

*David Garrioch*

### **Mutual Aid Societies in Eighteenth-Century Paris**

Mutual aid societies in France have generally been thought of as labour organizations. Thanks to the work of Michael Sibalis, we know something of their formation and operation in early nineteenth-century Paris. This paper traces their appearance within

religious confraternities in the course of the eighteenth century and shows that they were not confined to the trades. It suggests that they were inspired by the ideology of the confraternities and by existing collective work practices, but were also a response to changes in the labour market and to new religious attitudes and financial practices.

*Hamish Graham*

### **Humble Petitioners? Seigneurial Courts, Royal Justice and the Role of Litigants in the Eighteenth Century**

The seigneurial courts of pre-Revolutionary France have long had a bad press. Concerns about the capacity of “private” jurisdictions to cheat and oppress the local population loomed large in the pamphlets and *cahiers* of 1789, while many subsequent scholars were sure that seigneurial justice was incompatible with political and institutional “modernity.” About a generation ago, however, some historians began to reassess the activities and usefulness of the Old Regime’s seigneurial courts. In this article I take issue with recent analyses of this judicial system and its operations that focus primarily on magistrates and lawyers. Using examples of woodland contention in south-western France, I argue that it was litigants who played a large part in determining the course and outcome of a “disputing process” in the eighteenth century.

*Reine-Claude Grondin*

### **Jeux et enjeux des mémoires dans l’espace français durant l’expansion coloniale, XIXe-XXe siècles**

L’historiographie et les opérations historiographiques du fait colonial depuis le XIXe siècle à nos jours ont créé les conditions d’une opposition entre Mémoire et Histoire en France. Dans un premier temps, le récit de l’expansion coloniale élaboré par des acteurs coloniaux a offert aux “colonistes” l’opportunité de reconstruire et de justifier une identité nationale mais n’a pas pu intégrer le récit national. De plus, l’institutionnalisation de l’histoire nationale précédant la définition d’un champ disciplinaire “colonial” au cours de l’Entre-deux-guerres, a accentué l’ex-territorialité de l’histoire coloniale ainsi que son approche fragmentée et idiographique. A la Décolonisation, les histoires ont aussi servi d’argumentaire aux divers engagements et sont aujourd’hui mobilisées pour penser la société multiculturelle en chantier. Tous ces éléments ont concouru à l’élaboration de “mémoires alternatives” qui étayaient, en France, soit une vision positive de la colonisation, rassurent sur l’absence d’impact sur la culture nationale ou encore confortent les positions victimaires. A cela, il faut ajouter les pratiques des historiens qui ont privilégié l’analyse d’un corpus de textes, de prises de positions de ténors, de la presse, c’est-à-dire des archives conservant la trace d’une production idéelle (ou d’une proposition), et les ont transformées en “icônes” pour des générations de praticiens. Or, ces archives ayant bénéficié d’un pouvoir de résonance ont contribué à éclipser dans la mémoire culturelle des textes témoignant d’autres visions de l’expansion coloniale et/ou introduisant la mémoire longue (celle de la première colonisation) ou les mémoires particulières (de l’Empire napoléonien ou encore celle des régions). C’est donc par l’instauration d’une démarche archéologique, qui prendrait en compte l’ensemble des pratiques sociales, qu’on peut envisager de sortir de l’opposition histoire/mémoire. Celle-ci permet non

seulement de comprendre les raisons qui ont rendu acceptable, à certaines époques, le fait colonial, mais témoigne aussi que l'histoire coloniale, en dépit de son extranéité, a inscrit sa trame événementielle, idéologique, mémorielle dans le roman national.

*Peter McPhee*

### **Integrating Private and Public in the Life of Maximilien Robespierre**

One of the most powerful and durable images of Robespierre is that of a man devoid of personal warmth, evident most notoriously in his involvement in sending his friends Danton and Desmoulins to the guillotine and echoed in his apparent inability to forge an intimate personal relationship. What are we then to make of his love letters and poetry written when in his late twenties and speeches on the family to the Royal Academy of Arras? And how might the sentiments expressed there be related to his own personal background and to the views he expressed about the ideal family during the course of the Revolution? Robespierre emerges from this analysis as a passionate man to whom close friendships, especially with women, were important, and whose views about family relationships were central to his attitudes in revolutionary debates about family law and education.

*Jean-Dominique Mellot*

### **Un mouvement historiographique à la lumière de l'histoire du livre: les Bénédictins de Saint-Maur et le gallicanisme éditorial**

Les Bénédictins de la congrégation de Saint-Maur, ces "académiciens de cloître," historiens de l'Eglise de France, des provinces mais aussi de la monarchie française aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles, ont développé une véritable école historiographique fondée sur le recours aux documents et à leur critique exigeante. Mais cette école toute de rigueur a bénéficié non seulement des encouragements mais aussi des faveurs de la monarchie absolue dont elle servait les desseins. C'est ainsi que la diffusion des travaux des Mauristes a été avantagée par des conditions éditoriales exceptionnelles qui ont contribué à leur rayonnement en France et à l'étranger. L'examen de ces conditions et du contexte dans lequel ont été menés les travaux des Mauristes peut nous apprendre beaucoup sur la construction de leur renommée et de leur influence.

*Jennifer Milam*

### **Imagining Marie Antoinette: Cultural Memory, Coolness and the Deconstruction of History in Cinema**

This paper addresses the filmic representation of Marie Antoinette by Sofia Coppola as deconstructive cinema. It considers how anachronisms within the film draw attention to an ideological investment in Realism and questions if this is why we reject it as a dismal failure as a period film. Did Coppola build an image of Versailles simply to destroy it, as the final shots of the film suggest, leaving the viewer with only a "gold-plated" hang-over of vacuous consumption, a memory and sensation that they momentarily share with the

film's protagonist? More importantly than this, however, is whether or not in destroying an image of the eighteenth century that is based on historical documentation, Coppola destroys our faith in any image of history? Certainly the film causes viewers "in the know" to distrust this image of history.

*Colin Nettelbeck*

### **A Forgotten Zone of Memory? French Primary School Children and the History of the Occupation**

Since the landmark work of Robert Paxton, the process of exploring the French experience of the Second World War has continued unabated. Although work continues across all the major aspects of the field and is likely to do so for some time to come, many of these have now received significant attention. This is the case for most of the military and political aspects of the period, for the Jewish question, for important social issues such as the roles of the Church, of youth, and of women, and for modes of cultural expression such as literature and cinema. At first glance, it may seem surprising that the experience of primary school children should so far have received very little attention: as a group, they represented (conservatively) over 12 per cent of the population. More importantly, they were quite specifically given status as embodying the future of the nation. In offering explanations for this anomaly, this paper will explore the importance of this neglected strand of memory to the overall understanding of the French experience of the so-called "dark years." What is the relationship between this forgotten zone of memory and "un passé qui ne passe pas"?

*Elizabeth Rechniewski*

### **Nicolas Sarkozy on History and Historians**

On 13 January 2009 Nicolas Sarkozy announced to representatives of the cultural field the creation of a museum of the history of France. It would, he said, be located in a "lieu emblématique," that is to say, a place of historical symbolic significance, and its aim would be to cater to the need for meaning and purpose in France today and to reinforce the sense of identity of the nation. According to the Elysée, this was to be the principal cultural project of Sarkozy's presidency. This article examines this museal project in the context of Sarkozy's ongoing attempts to rewrite the history of the nation.

*Michael Sibal*

### **Conspiracy on St. Helena? (Mis)remembering Napoleon's Exile**

In the last few decades, a surprising number of books and articles – all by non-professional historians – have argued that the accepted narrative of Napoleon's last years in exile on St. Helena (1815-21) is false. Behind appearances, there purportedly lies a hidden reality shaped by conspiracy. The best known of these conspiracy theories maintains that Napoleon was the victim of arsenic poisoning. In its variant versions, this particular theory has even made its way into some recent popular biographies of

Napoleon, although almost all professional historians have been dismissive of it. This paper examines aspects of these conspiracy theories not to disprove them but rather to uncover their propagators' thought processes and historical methodology. What personal motives inspire these conspiracy theories: paranoia, hubris or political conviction? How do the men who elaborate them use the historical evidence? How do we explain the appearance of such conspiracy theories? Are they the product of a generalized "conspiratorial mentality" or of researchers' "tunnel vision" or of something else? In reflecting on these questions, this paper explores the contrasting ways that professional historians and amateurs remember, research and reconstruct the past.

*Raymond Spiteri*

### **Surrealism and its Discontents: Georges Bataille, Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes, and the 1929 Crisis of Surrealism**

This paper discusses the crisis of 1929 in the French surrealist movement, focusing on the critiques of surrealism's political position advanced by Georges Bataille and Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes. As editors of the reviews *Documents* and *Bifur* respectively, Bataille and Ribemont-Dessaignes occupied similar positions in the cultural avant-garde, marked by proximity and distance, to the surrealist group gathered around André Breton. The value of their response to the crisis of 1929 is related to the subsequent status of each writer: whereas Ribemont-Dessaignes is regarded as little more than a footnote in the history of Dada and surrealism in France, Bataille is now considered a pivotal figure in twentieth-century French culture (famously described by Foucault as "one of the most important writers of his century"). Their critiques of surrealism differ in the position they assume towards the issues of individual creative freedom and autonomy. Surrealism's political impasse led Ribemont-Dessaignes to limit his activities to the province of art and literature, affirming creative endeavour as a manifestation of individual freedom and autonomy and effectively severing the tension between culture and politics that Breton sought to maintain as one of the defining characteristics of surrealism. Bataille, by contrast, ever sceptical of claims that surrealism could represent a radical political position, embraced the failure of surrealism as the premise of his own enterprise. For Ribemont-Dessaignes freedom remains an abstraction, manifested in the play of the literary or artistic work; for Bataille freedom was the lacerating limit-experience, one that questioned all certainties, including that of the subject itself.

*John Strachan*

### **Murder in the Desert: Soldiers, Settlers and the Flatters Expedition in the Politics and Historical Memory of European Colonial Algeria, 1830-1881**

This paper uses the ill-fated Flatters Expedition into the Sahara (1881) as a means of introducing and investigating the politics of late nineteenth-century colonial Algeria. It explores the reasons for the apparent marginality of Flatters to the politics and historical memory of the Algerian settler community. Rather than focussing on the Expedition and its memorialisation it makes a broader, historical case for Algérie militaire – the idea that French soldiers like Flatters influenced the development of Algerian colonialism in important ways. Concentrating on the deep-rooted historical animosity between the

military and the civilian settlers, I argue that this relationship is the key to understanding the remembering and forgetting of the Flatters Expedition. Put another way, contemporary attitudes to Flatters and other military figures offer vital insight into the complexities of Algerian settler colonialism in particular and the dynamics of colonial memory in general.

*Timothy Tackett*

### **Rumor and Revolution: The Case of the September Massacres**

Since the period of the French Revolution itself, observers and historians have struggled to interpret the September Massacres of 1792. This paper focuses less on the causes of the massacres *per se*, than on understanding the attitudes toward the killings expressed by the political elites. Indeed, contemporary correspondence and diaries suggest that the great majority of those elites were initially ready to justify the murders as either an unfortunate necessity or a positive good – even though many would change their minds over the following weeks and months. In order to understand this reaction, it is necessary to give particular weight to the power of rumor in shaping elite psychology. Relying on the conclusions of recent studies by social psychologists, the paper attempts to describe and characterize the role of rumor in a time of revolution: how rumors originated; how they spread; how they evolved between the Old Regime and the Revolution; and the conditions under which they moved upward and downward between different “levels” of society. Based on both newspaper accounts and contemporary correspondence, the paper focuses on two types of rumors spreading in Paris between 1789 and 1792: 1) those involving prison break-outs; and 2) those involving counterrevolutionary conspiracy. Under the extraordinary conditions of August and September 1792 – the anxiety and uncertainty of the political situation, the power vacuum, the paucity of reliable information, the metastasis of a culture of suspicion and mistrust – these two rumors coalesced, it is argued, strongly affecting the perceptions of both the popular and the elite classes.

*Julie Thorpe*

### **Thérèse of Lisieux in Austria: A Case Study of Transnational Catholic Revivalism**

Thérèse of Lisieux’s canonization in May 1925 went almost unnoticed in the mainstream Austrian Catholic press: the leading Catholic newspaper in Vienna, *Die Reichspost*, mentioning only that St Peter’s dome had been aglow for an unnamed new saint in Rome. Of more immediate interest to Vienna’s Catholic press, and to Austria’s clergy, was the canonization of the Jesuit counter-Reformation preacher, Peter Canisius, the latter day “Apostle to the Germans.” Yet St Thérèse’s presence and importance for Austrian Catholics are evident in other forms of associational and devotional life: the Eucharistic People’s League founded in Vienna in 1920 included extended coverage of her life, ministry and death. Icons and stained glass windows depicting Thérèse, as well as churches built to commemorate her life, attest to her growing popularity throughout Austria in the interwar period. This paper traces Thérésian devotion in interwar Austria and places the French saint in a larger context of international Catholicism in the twentieth century.

*Garry Trompf*

**Untethering Memory: On French Intellectuals Responding to the Classical Theory of Political Cycles from Montesquieu to the Revolution**

The Theory of the Cycle of Governments, going back to Polybius, even Aristotle, experienced something of a revival in early modern European political thought, more particularly in the works of Machiavelli, Seyssel and Le Roy in the sixteenth century, and Boxhorn, Harrington, Neville and Temple in the seventeenth. At the turn into the eighteenth century we find Giambattista Vico conceiving of a constitutional anacyclosis running from (patriarchal) one-man rule to the (monarchical) one-man rule of his own time, but there was barely any resuscitation of the theory thereafter. This paper considers what glimmerings of it are to be found in certain French political thinkers from Montesquieu to the Revolution. Following Montesquieu, central characters in the discussion are Turpin, Rousseau, Robespierre and De Maistre.