3. The polemics of possession
Rolena Adorno

‘The polemics of possession’ examines the polemic regarding the Castilians' right to govern the New World. As the Indies had not threatened Spain the conquest of their lands was not ‘just’ in the traditional sense. The monarchs Ferdinand and Isabel convened a junta to determine the legitimacy of Amerindian slavery by Spanish rulers. It concluded that only ‘cannibals’ should be enslaved. Francisco de Vitoria originally saw Spanish rule as the natural order, before redefining the justness of Spanish conquest as a defensive move. Charles V convened another junta, with Sepúlveda, arguing for Spanish rule, pitted against Las Casas, who doubted the rule of Christianity outside Christian lands.

5. Beneath the Surface
Mary Beard and John Henderson

‘Beneath the Surface’ considers more detailed thoughts on the construction of such monuments as the Apollo Temple at Bassae and the various society conditions that made the building possible. How was the transportation of the huge weights of building materials arranged? And who paid? These questions all point to slavery. Greece and Rome were notorious slave-owning societies. In fifth-century bce Athens, slaves formed about 40% of the total population. Modern classical archaeology looks to answer these questions. It draws on the newest techniques of scientific analysis, and on the newest theories of economic and social change. The combination of these new skills with the long-known evidence of ancient writers makes the most impact.

1. What is diaspora?
Kevin Kenny
‘What is diaspora?’ attempts to define this wide-ranging — but often inappropriately used — term. Diaspora is more than simply migration. It is an idea which helps to explain the world created by migration. The term originates from Ancient Greek, where it had negative connotations. This became applied to Judaism when Greek scholars translated the Penteteuch — Jewish cultural history is highly diasporic. The term expanded to include the Armenian and African diasporas, but since the 1980s it has ballooned even further. If overused, the term can become arbitrary, so it is best applied to groups which have migrated involuntarily, which maintain an interest in their homeland, and have multiple groups worldwide.

2. Migration

Kevin Kenny

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‘Migration’ looks at the movement of peoples across the globe from a diasporic point of view. When applied to migration, the term diaspora tends to homogenize the experiences of large groups. If used properly, however, it can illuminate particular aspects of migration. There is little point applying the idea of diaspora to prehistoric migration, as little evidence exists. Jewish diaspora has a theological basis. Whilst tarring all Jewish migration as diasporic is inaccurate, intolerance has pushed many Jewish communities around the globe. Similarly, African and Irish migration can be linked to slavery and famine, but non-related migration has also occurred. Western historical bias has skewed the understanding of Asian migration.

2. Law and African American slavery

G. Edward White

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‘Law and African American slavery’ illustrates how the colonial heritage of slavery in America helped foster the population growth, expansion of the labour force, extraction of abundant agricultural resources, and commercial prosperity that seemed to make the United States a singularly favoured nation in the first half of the nineteenth century. African American slavery, however, was also the root cause of the breakup of that nation in 1860 and the civil war that accompanied it. A civil war was necessary to end slavery in America and forcibly restore a union of northern and southern states, but the legacy of slavery would survive in the form of pervasive discrimination against African Americans.
2. Babylonian society through the perspective of Hammurabi’s Laws

Trevor Bryce

An imposing stone stele (pillar) discovered during excavations of the ancient city of Susa in AD 1901–2 depicts Shamash, god of justice, and the Babylonian king, Hammurabi. It is also inscribed with a series of laws that largely define Hammurabi’s role as the shepherd of his people, and the protector of the weak and vulnerable among his subjects. ‘Babylonian society through the perspective of Hammurabi’s Laws’ outlines the nature and content of these laws and describes the information they provide about social hierarchy in Babylonia. In practice, Hammurabi’s Laws were not prescriptive rulings, but a set of guidelines—embodying important principles of justice—for the good governance of society.

2. Fear of the dark?: blacks, Jews, and barbarians

Ali Rattansi

The concept of race long preceded the invention of the term. The idea that human biological characteristics such as skin colour, facial features, hair, and skull size were associated with ingrained cultural and behavioural traits was well established. It was even thought that the level of ability to use reason, capacity for ‘civilization’, and the arts could all be measured by appearance. ‘Fear of the dark?: blacks, Jews, and barbarians’ charts the history of these racial ideas through various ages and geographical areas including the ancient Egyptians, the Greeks, the Roman Empire, the Middle Ages, China, South Asia, and the Middle East.

Conclusion

David A. Gerber

The United States is truly a multicultural society, or a global society, as any visitor to the country will attest. This global society has developed in fits and starts. The Conclusion takes an overall look at the history of American immigration and summarizes the various debates about how the United States has handled issues relating to immigration. These debates are complicated and emotionally fraught. But the United States should be respected for the way it has managed to achieve a global society that exists in the main in harmony. The country has a cosmopolitan dynamism that seems uniquely American.
African indigenous religion in contemporary Africa struggles to maintain its legal tone and identity in the face of the forces of Islam and Christianity, especially radicalized forms. But ‘African religions today’ shows that while African traditional religions are engaged in a battle for their lives on the African continent, they and their sister African diaspora religions are thriving elsewhere in the world—particularly in the Americas and in Europe. African diaspora and immigrant religions are discussed and a new wave of African religions, such as Rev. Sunday Adelaja's Embassy of God church in Ukraine, described.

Introduction
G. Edward White

The ‘Introduction’ explains that a review of American Legal History must confront the defining issues in the development of American civilization and culture. The law is connected to, has reacted to, and has helped to shape America's geographic isolation, economic abundance, transatlantic settlement, the relations between European settlers and indigenous tribes, African American slavery, the importance of agricultural householding, the growth of industrial enterprise and urbanization, and the emergence of the United States as a world power. The focus of this VSI is on the topics and issues that are connected to central themes in American history.

2. Oviedo and Las Casas
Rolena Adorno

‘Oviedo and Las Casas’ compares the differences between the histories of Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo and Bartolomé de Las Casas. Oviedo, a product of the Italian and Castile courts, criticized previous writers for lacking experience and writing in Latin. He claimed the New World had been settled before, and sought to defend it from the Holy Roman Empire. Las Casas, who moved to the Americas at the age of eighteen, advocated the end of Spanish rule, and sought to protect Indian rights. He concentrated on history's actors in the sixty years of Spanish rule, ultimately calling for an end to Indian slavery in the Americas.
1. The Atlantic slave trade
Heather Andrea Williams

Slavery had long existed in Europe and Africa, but the history of the Atlantic slave trade begins in the 1440s with Portuguese exploration of West Africa. ‘The Atlantic slave trade’ charts the increased demand for slave labor in Portugal and the Christian justification of African enslavement. In the 1490s, the journeys of Christopher Columbus to the Caribbean and North and South America opened up mineral-rich and fertile lands on which European countries planted their flags and the Christian cross. More than 12 million Africans boarded the ships, but nearly 2 million died during the Middle Passage. Of those who survived, only about 5 percent went to North America, with most going to South America and the Caribbean.

3. The work of slavery
Heather Andrea Williams

‘The work of slavery’ describes the wide range of work and duties allocated to enslaved people—men, women, and children—in the North and South. From the 1600s to 1865 the vast majority worked in agriculture producing the cash crops that generated the wealth of the nation. The slave trade created mass consumer markets that traded sugarcane, sugar, rum, molasses, tobacco, indigo, coffee, rice, and cotton. Slavery also existed in urban spaces, where people worked in owner’s homes and in commercial enterprises performing domestic duties or skilled work in factories and textile mills. Many enslaved people took great pride in their work—it sustained their egos and their need to have meaningful lives.

4. Struggles for control
Heather Andrea Williams

It took persistent effort on the part of slave owners and their allies to keep slavery in place, to make people work without pay, and to sustain the arguments that justified the forced labor of other human beings. ‘Struggles for control’ outlines the range of mechanisms deployed by white elites to gain and maintain control over enslaved people, including violence, legislation, slave patrols, religion, paternalistic demeaning behavior, and racist proslavery ideology. Enslaved people drew from a reservoir of strategies including literacy, religion, escape, malingering, and rebellion, to resist enslavement and its attendant
hardships. Key influences on the enslaved were the Appeal of free man David Walker and preacher Nat Turner's 1831 rebellion in Virginia.

3. Connections
Kevin Kenny

‘Connections’ examines how exile and alienation have unified diasporic groups throughout the world. Babylon, synonymous with ancient greatness, remains a byword for Jewish exile and sorrow to this day. Despite this, the Jewish people have prospered in a range of adverse situations. The Irish also had a strong sense of exile, but created strong and vibrant American communities. African migrants suffered extreme racism, but were bound together by the burden of slavery. When African slaves were freed, Asian workers filled the labour gap. Despite the temporary nature of this Asian migration, settling did occur. Exile from a homeland often fostered a diasporic nationalism, which allowed cultural growth and political activism.

3. Indigenous, colonial, and postcolonial utopianism
Lyman Tower Sargent

There were two types of colonies: one was primarily formed to exploit labour, raw materials, and resources and the other was designed for settlement. ‘Indigenous, colonial, and postcolonial utopianism’ examines the importance of colonies to utopianism. They represent utopian dreams and more intentional communities have been established in colonies than in colonizing countries. Settler colonies became places of utopian experimentation, and as early as 1659, intentional communities were established in the American colonies such as the Ephrata community in Pennsylvania. Some of these communities are secular, others religious; some are open, others are closed; some date hundreds of years and some are being established now.

4. Utopianism in other traditions
Lyman Tower Sargent

Are utopias a Western creation? Most scholars argue that utopian traditions have existed in other cultures such as Buddhism, Confucian, Hinduism, Japanese Shintoism, and Islam. ‘Utopianism in other traditions’ looks at such utopias and analyses whether the myths that
are part of the idea of a utopia share any similarities. There are two common utopian forms with parallels in the West and other cultures: an ideal society in the past and some version of a paradise. Visions of a good life to be brought about by human efforts seem to be common and culturally specific. Social movements such as feminism and environmentalism have raised questions that have been answered in similar ways in different places.

1. Why migration matters
Khalid Koser

One in every 35 people in the world today is an international migrant, but migration affects far more people than just those who migrate. It has important social, economic, and political impacts at home and abroad. ‘Why migration matters’ shows why the topic of migration is important in the modern world. Migration began when Homo erectus and Homo sapiens moved out from the Rift Valley and colonized Eurasia, a process that has continued for centuries after. There are numerous opportunities for international migration with migrants contributing to economic growth as well as the social and cultural spheres of life. There are also challenges and some concerns, but are they all legitimate?

2. Who is a migrant?
Khalid Koser

‘Who is a migrant?’ looks at defining and measuring migration. Migrants can be categorized, based on whether they migrated voluntarily or involuntarily, whether they are economic or political migrants, or their legal status. These categories, while somewhat useful, tend to blur in reality, and the situation migrants find themselves in can change quickly. It is difficult to measure migration for a number of reasons, and any statistics produced are open to misuse. People can stop being migrants by returning to their own country or by obtaining citizenship of the host country. National policies on migration and citizenship balance assimilation with multiculturalism. Migrant communities often form diasporas and maintain transnational attachments.

1. Traditions
James Marten
More is known about ancient childhoods in the West than elsewhere in the world, but from what is known, all cultures believed that childhood was more than a phase of biological immaturity, and all developed institutions, practices, and concepts designed to bring children up to continue their cultures. “Traditions” describes what is known about childhood in prehistory, outside the ancient West, in the ancient West, and in pre-contact America. It goes on to consider the visions of childhood in Christianity, Islam, and other religions, and childhood in the medieval world. The life of a child was shaped by the rise of settled societies and complex economies, systems of belief, and philosophical and practical innovations.