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PROJECT

Spectacles of Sovereignty: Persian Shahs in Imperial Europe

During my year at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, I will work on a book entitled *Spectacles of Sovereignty: Persian Shahs in Imperial Europe*. It will examine the European tours of the Qajar monarchs Nasir al-Din Shah (1873, 1878, and 1889) and Muzaffar al-Din Shah (1900, 1902, and 1905) in the era of high imperialism. Both monarchs were received with full pomp by the emperors, kings, and statesmen in St. Petersburg, Istanbul, Berlin, London, Vienna, Paris, and Brussels. A global microhistory, the study will offer a reinterpretation of the relationship between European and non-European rulers in an age of European domination. It will explore how participation in the rituals and ceremonials of a state visit – such as gift-giving, the exchange of decorations, and military spectacle – gave expression to the non-European monarchs' dynastic legitimacy and their country's sovereignty. It seeks to show that state visits provided non-European monarchs with a way of integrating themselves and their countries into a system of international relations that was dominated by the European powers. The work draws on sources from British, French, German, Austrian, Belgian, Dutch, Swiss, Russian, Turkish, and Iranian archives, including the Persian travelogues (*safarnamas*) of the shahs.

Moreover, I will use the year at the Wissenschaftskolleg to complete an edited volume on the expansion of international society in the long 19th century, entitled *Struggles for Sovereignty: Non-European Powers in the Imperial Age*, which is closely related to my work on the shahs. The book will explore the relationship between the few nominally independent non-European states and the Concert of Europe. It will examine how countries such as Abyssinia, China, Japan, the Ottoman Empire, Persia, and Siam managed to keep European imperialism at bay, whereas others, most notably Hawaii, Korea, and Morocco, struggled, but ultimately failed, to maintain their sovereignty. Bringing together historians with different regional expertise, the volume aims to give agency to the non-European actors and to connect this history with wider debates on sovereignty, territoriality, and hierarchy in the modern world order.

Recommended Reading

Motadel, David, ed. *Islam and the European Empires*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014.

- . *Islam and Nazi Germany's War*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2014.

- . "Qajar Shahs in Imperial Germany." *Past and Present* 213, 1 (2011): 191-235.

Struggles for Sovereignty: Persian Shahs in Imperial Europe, 1873-1905

The paper will look at the European tours of the Qajar monarchs Nasir al-Din Shah (1873, 1878, and 1889) and Muzaffar al-Din Shah (1900, 1902, and 1905) in the era of high imperialism. Both monarchs were received with full pomp by the emperors, kings, and statesmen in St. Petersburg, Istanbul, Berlin, London, Vienna, Paris, and Brussels. In my talk, I will offer a reinterpretation of the relationship between European and non-European rulers in an age of European domination. I will explore how participation in the rituals and ceremonials of a state visit - such as gift-giving, the exchange of decorations, and military spectacle - gave expression to the non-European monarchs' dynastic legitimacy and their country's sovereignty. The paper will show that state visits provided non-European monarchs with a way of integrating themselves and their countries into a system of international relations that was dominated by the European powers.

Motadel, David (Göttingen,2024)

Globale Monarchie : royale Begegnungen und die Ordnung der Welt im imperialen Zeitalter

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1888194472>

Historische Geisteswissenschaften ; Band 16

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1888194472>

Motadel, David (New York, NY,2020)

What do the Hohenzollerns deserve

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1736701657>

Motadel, David (2019)

Worlds of a Muslim bourgeoisie : the sociocultural milieu of the Islamic minority in interwar Germany

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1683539451>

Motadel, David (Princeton,2019)

The global Bourgeoisie : the rise of the middle classes in the Age of Empire

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1678970999>

Motadel, David (Cambridge,2018)

Discussion : the futures of global history

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1678735914>

Motadel, David (Bonn,2018)

Für Prophet und Führer : die islamische Welt und das Dritte Reich

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1043641114>

Islam and Nazi Germany's war

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1043641114>

Motadel, David (Cambridge, Massachussets,2017)

Islam and Nazi Germany's war

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1031275886>

Islam and Nazi Germany's war

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1031275886>

Motadel, David (Oxford,2016)

Islam and the European empires

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=856620882>

The past & present book series

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=856620882>

Motadel, David (London [u.a.],2013)

Islam and Germany's war in the Soviet borderlands, 1941–5

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1668623943>

Motadel, David (Oxford,2011)

Qajar Shahs in imperial Germany

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1668624621>