

# UC BERKELEY DEPARTMENT *of* HISTORY



WINTER 2019 NEWSLETTER

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## Berkeley Department of History

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## Dear Friends of Berkeley History,

The elite reputation of the University of California, Berkeley History Department derives, first and foremost, from its world-class faculty, which comprises of 45 tenure-track professors divided into 16 regional and thematic fields. As a community of teachers and scholars, our ranks are fortified annually by several dozen lecturers and instructors, many of whom we recruit from the huge talent pool provided by our current and recently graduated Ph.D. students. The Department was dominated by full professors when I started here twenty-five years ago, but a recent youth movement has transformed its composition and character. Just under half of our current ladder faculty are early career or mid-career scholars and a full one third of our active members were hired after 2013. Again, in stark contrast to the recent past, just over one half of our faculty are women, including ten of the last fifteen scholars hired by History.

In keeping with this general trend, among the most significant developments in History over the past year is the successful recruitment of Bernadette Pérez. A specialist in the social history of Chicanx and Latinx communities in the American West as well as the histories of race, capitalism, migration, and the environment more generally, Bernadette comes to UC Berkeley from the Society of Fellows in the Liberal Arts at Princeton University. She is currently working on a book project, derived from a prize-winning dissertation, about the social history of agribusiness in the sugar beet fields of Colorado's Arkansas River Valley. She starts at Berkeley in Fall 2020, and I join many of my colleagues in warmly welcoming her arrival.

The excellence of the History Department is reflected in the trove of awards and honors showered on our faculty. Of special note, Professor Emeritus Mary "Beth" Berry, a brilliant specialist of early modern

Japan, was awarded this year the highest honor granted by the American Historical Association: the Award for Scholarly Distinction, presented to senior historians for lifetime achievement. UC Berkeley historians also won Guggenheim and Mellon awards, Fulbright fellowships, and research grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Stanford Humanities Center. Professors Schneider, Rosenthal, Stahl, Laqueur, and Slezkine won prestigious book awards, and the latest issue of Smithsonian Magazine named Stephanie Jones-Rogers' new book, *They Were Her Property*, as one of the "Ten Best History Books of 2019."



While research and writing awards tend to garner the most attention within the profession, we are equally proud of the multiple campus teaching awards won by our faculty during this period. Sarah Gold McBride, one of our recent Ph.D.'s and a visiting lecturer at Cal, won the Faculty Award for Outstanding Mentorship of Graduate Instructors. Ethan Shagan was selected for the Distinguished Teaching Award. And Caitlin Rosenthal won the Carol D. Soc Distinguished Graduate Student Mentoring Award.

Finally, as the "Faculty Update" section indicates, the past year witnessed Cal historians engaging in a wide array of public-facing activities outside the walls of the ivory tower. Among the most interesting examples, Ronit Stahl co-authored the historians' amicus brief against the Trump administration's transgender ban in the military, which was submitted to the Court of Appeals in October 2018. The newsletter includes a fascinating interview with Ronit about her experience.

Please join me in celebrating the wide-ranging achievements of our remarkable community!

—Peter B. Zinoman, Department Chair

# MEET THE NEW FACULTY

## BERNADETTE PÉREZ, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR (HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN WEST)

The Department of History is delighted to welcome Bernadette Pérez to our faculty Fall 2020. Pérez is a historian of race and environment in the United States, specializing in the histories of Latinx and Indigenous peoples. She earned her Ph.D. in U.S. History from the University of Minnesota. She holds an M.A. in Latin American Studies from the University of California, Berkeley and a B.A. in International Relations from the University of Colorado, Boulder (her hometown).

Professor Pérez is working on her first book, *American Sugar: Violence and Power in the Colorado Beet Fields*. Her manuscript centers the generations of Mexicano, Nuevomexicano, Tejano, Indigenous, and Japanese American migrant workers who labored in Colorado's sugar beet fields in the 20th century. The Organization of American Historians, the Western History Association, the Council on Library and Information Resources, and the Mellon Foundation generously supported her research in local archives, corporate records, U.S. and Mexican state archives, and ethnographic collections.

Of joining UC Berkeley's Department of History, Pérez says: "I'm thrilled to join such an intellectually generous and engaged department. I am most

excited about working with Cal's fantastic students on issues of environmental justice and racial inequality. I feel incredibly lucky to be so close to the Bancroft Library and the Ethnic Studies Library. Given the vibrancy of Bay Area communities, I could not have asked for a better place to land. Looking forward to Fall 2020!"



# FACULTY UPDATES

**MARY ELIZABETH BERRY** recently co-edited (with Marcia Yonemoto) *What Is a Family? Answers from Early Modern Japan* (which is available free in the open-access Luminos series of the University of California Press). She is also trying to finish a monograph on the economic culture of 17th-century Japan. She is a 2020 recipient of the Award for Scholarly Distinction bestowed by the American Historical Association. Previous winners of this award in our department are, in chronological order, Woodrow Borah, Kenneth Stampp, Nicholas Riasanovsky, Tulio Halperín Donghi, Lawrence Levine, Leon Litwack, and Martin Jay.



Professor Emerita Mary Elizabeth Berry

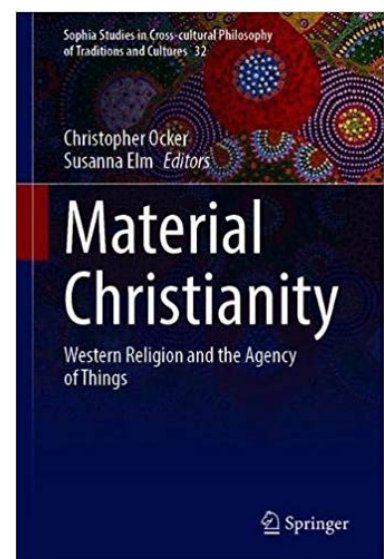
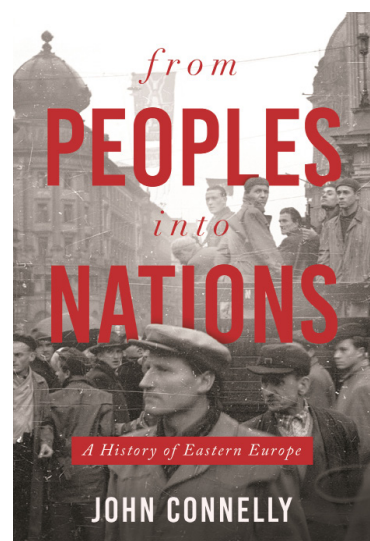
In October, **MARGARET CHOWNING** went to San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, for a two-day event devoted to her 2006 book, *Rebellious Nuns*, which was set in San Miguel. The program featured a play written by an American expat, with expat actors. Of this experience Chowning writes, "The play had everything: my own words and eighteenth-century characters, but also time travel, a narrator from outer space, singing and dancing, and an Apple tablet from the future that represented the devil (I think). The finale was the whole cast singing 'You Make Me Feel Like a Natural Woman'. I probably do not need to say that these were not elements of my book. But

the play was weirdly cool, and a two-day event about one's own book, whether the acting was great or not, is kind of an academic's dream. Everything else I did this year paled by comparison."

In January, **JOHN CONNELLY** will begin a semester as a Fulbright visiting professor at Queen's University in Belfast; he also anticipates publication of the book *From Peoples into Nations: A History of Eastern Europe*.

In early 2020 Springer Nature will publish a volume edited by Christopher Ocker and **SUSANNA ELM** entitled *Material Christianity: Western Religion and the Agency of Things*; they are very excited. Together with LARes, the Late Antique Religions et Societies group, they were delighted to host Edward Watts and Erika Hermanowicz on campus. During the summer and fall Elm also gave a number of seminars and lectures in Bologna, Rome, Oxford and Wesleyan, in part on her current research topic, Augustine the Economist.

**ERICH GRUEN**'s most significant event in recent months (even years) is the fact that he presided over his granddaughter's wedding in August 2019. Nothing on the academic front can compare with that. He does, however, maintain a connection with that front as well. His book, *Constructs of Identity in Hellenistic Judaism*, was the subject of a special panel at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature. Three articles have appeared since the last update: "Fragmentary Jewish Historians and Biblical History," "Philo and Jewish Ethnicity," and "Philo's

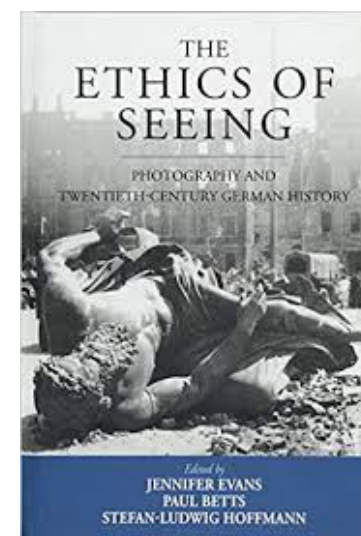


**Top to bottom:** *From Peoples into Nations: A History of Eastern Europe*, John Connelly (Princeton University Press 2020); Library of Congress online exhibition: Ancient Manuscripts from the Desert Libraries of Timbuktu; *Material Christianity: Western Religion and the Agency of Things*, Susanna Elm (Springer Nature, 2020)

Refashioning of Greek Myth.” Speaking engagements have also allowed him to pile up mileage on flights. They include visits to lecture at U. of Texas, Austin, U. of Virginia, Brown U., U. of Maryland, U. of Oregon, and Columbia U. As a result, he managed to crack the million-mile mark on United Airlines.

In the spring of 2018, the West African Arabic Manuscript Database (WAAMD), the largest collection of bibliographic records of Arabic manuscript material for sub-Saharan Africa, was successfully moved to its new home at the UC Berkeley library server. **BRUCE HALL** is the general editor of the database, which comprises decades of work by scholars from Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and North America. In January 2019, Hall hosted Dr. Mohamed Diagayété, director of the largest archive of Arabic manuscripts in West Africa, situated in the Institut des Hautes Etudes et de Recherche Islamique - Ahmad Baba, in Timbuktu (Mali), and one of the partners of WAAMD. While on campus, Dr. Diagayété delivered a talk on the state of Timbuktu’s Arabic manuscripts. In June of 2019, Hall co-organized a workshop in Nantes (France) which brought together scholars from Africa, Europe, and North America to produce a new published collection of translated Arabic texts from West Africa focused on Muslim writings about European colonialism. He also participated in other initiatives and meetings connected to the literary heritage of Muslim West Africa.

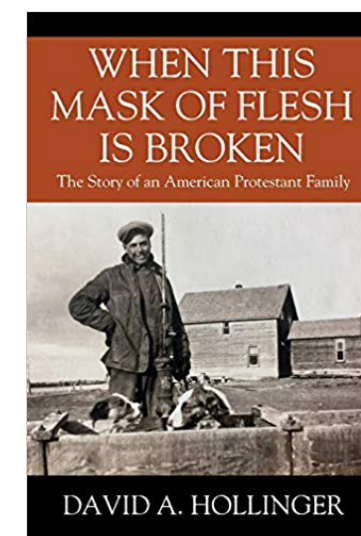
**REBECCA HERMAN** spent the 2018-2019 academic year on sabbatical finishing a draft of her first book, tentatively titled *The Americas at War*, and beginning research on a new one. This second book will offer a global history of Antarctica from the perspective of Latin America and the broader Global South. Rebecca’s first stop on her research tour for this book was Santiago, Chile, where she spent time working in the Chilean Foreign Ministry archives and interviewing renowned Chilean geologist Francisco Hervé about his four decades of research on the “frozen continent.” In June, she traveled to Amsterdam to consult



**L to R:** *The Ethics of Seeing: Photography and Twentieth-Century German History*, Stefan-Ludwig Hoffman et al (Berghahn Books, 2018); *When This Mask of Flesh is Broken*, David A. Hollinger (Outskirts Press, 2019).

Greenpeace International’s records at the International Institute of Social History. Rebecca was awarded a Hellman Faculty Fellowship to support continued research on Antarctica in Argentina, New Zealand, Washington and the UK over the coming years. She welcomed her second child, Zoe Adlie, in August.

Two new volumes co-edited by **STEFAN-LUDWIG HOFFMANN** came out last year: *The Ethics of Seeing: Photography and Twentieth-Century German History* (Berghahn Press) and a new translation of the theoretical writings of Reinhart Koselleck, *Sediments of Time: On Possible Histories* (Stanford UP). In May, the Cambridge Centre for Political Thought organized a symposium on the latter book at King’s College with Christopher Clark among the commentators. Hoffmann has also published two new essays, for the *Los Angeles Review of Books* on the recent history of human rights and for the *Zeitschrift für Ideengeschichte* on urban ruination and experiences of time in mid-20th century Berlin. Apropos the thirty-year anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, Hoffmann is taking part in a forum on 1989 for *Central European History* together with other historians who grew up under late socialism, and will join a roundtable discussion entitled “From Wall to Wall,” at the Guadalajara International Book Fair, the world’s second largest book fair after Frankfurt.



Professor Emeritus **DAVID A. HOLLINGER** recently published his eighth book, *When This Mask of Flesh is Broken* (Outskirts Press, 2019). His previous book, *Protestants Abroad* (Princeton, 2017) has won the Peter Dobkin Hall Prize. Hollinger has published several articles, including “The Global South, Christianity, and Secularization: Insider and Outsider Perspectives,” *Modern Intellectual History* (2019), and “Charles W. Eliot’s Maritime Pastoral,” *Chebbacco* (2019). He was the keynote speaker for an international conference on the history of Christian missions held in Salt Lake City, Utah. He is active in the affairs of the American Philosophical Society and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and currently serves on committees of both organizations. The Obama Foundation has appointed him to the Advisory Board of the Obama Oral History Project, run by Columbia University in cooperation with the Obama Presidential Library being developed in Chicago. On campus, he serves on two Academic Senate Committees: the Committee on Memorials and the Faculty Welfare Committee, of which he is co-chair. Hollinger is also First Vice President of the UC Berkeley Emeriti Association, serves on the Board of the UC Berkeley Retirement Center, and is the Department’s designated Emeriti Representative to the Campus.

**MARTIN JAY** was elected to the American Philosophical Society in 2019. The *Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics*, which is published in Orissa, India, dedicated its Autumn 2019 issue to his “75th Birth Anniversary” and published an extensive interview about his career. Verso Press will publish his latest collection of essays, *Splinters in Your Eye: Frankfurt School Provocations*, in 2020. He gave keynote addresses at conferences in Frankfurt, Beijing, Taipei, and Princeton.

In spring 2019, **ETHAN KATZ** spent two weeks as a short-term fellow at the Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. This period of intensive research and writing enabled him to make substantial progress on his main book project, which recounts the story of the Algiers underground, a largely Jewish resistance movement that paved the way for the success of the Allied landing in North Africa in November 1942. Ethan continues to work on a collective project on tensions and crosscurrents between “devotionist” and “relativist” approaches to Jewish studies; this project launched in October 2018 with a major international workshop that he co-organized at the Center for Jewish History in New York. In September 2019, Ethan traveled to Paris to consult on a forthcoming exhibition at France’s National Museum of Immigration History, based on the French translation of his first book (*Juifs et musulmans en France: le poids de la fraternité*, Belin 2018). The topic of antisemitism has also been on Ethan’s mind as both a scholar and an educator. He published an article in the *American Historical Review* on antisemitism, Islamophobia, and colonialism, and co-edited a special issue of the journal *Jewish History* on “Judeophobia and Islamophobia in France



Top to bottom: *Splinters in Your Eye: Frankfurt School Provocations*, Martin Jay (Verso Press 2020); Ethan Katz in Paris.

Before and After Charlie Hebdo and Hyper Cacher.” Most recently, he has helped to spearhead a major antisemitism education initiative at Berkeley that includes a speaker series, a powerpoint module that all new students must complete, and in-person trainings that Ethan helps conduct for various units of staff and students.

Along with a colleague in Oslo, **GEOFFREY KOZIOL** has received a grant from Berkeley’s Peder Sather Center to write a comparative history of Scandinavian and non-Scandinavian political institutions during the high middle ages. In preparation for this project, next semester he will be teaching an undergraduate seminar titled “Civilizing the Vikings,” which will include a lot of fascinating archaeological material on Viking settlements (including “Vinland”). A slew of his articles written over the last three years is also just now appearing, among them an overview of medieval Christianity (for *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Europe*) and a history of ideas of peace in medieval Europe (for *Cultural History of Peace in the Medieval Age*, published by Bloomsbury Academic). On leave this semester, he has just returned from

Italy, where, at the Vatican Library, he examined the oldest-known French legal customary (BAV Reg. Lat. 596), which will figure in a forthcoming article on the reasons such customs began to be written.

**MASSIMO MAZZOTTI** presented his recent research on the history of algorithms at the universities of Milan and Trento last October, and during the same trip met with the curators of the Museo della Scienza e della Tecnologia in Milan, with whom he has a long-lasting collaboration. The goal of the meeting was to imagine new ways in which digital technologies can

be presented to broad audiences in the context of a museum’s permanent collection or exhibition. On December 9, the same museum will inaugurate the world’s largest permanent exhibition dedicated to Leonardo da Vinci, covering both his artistic and scientific productions. The Leonardo Galleries—an ongoing project that will span over the next few years—integrate an impressive collection of mechanical models with virtual reality experience and rigorous historical reconstruction. If you are planning to visit, feel free to [contact Massimo](#) to set up a guided tour with one of the curators.

This year **CARLOS NOREÑA** has published an edited volume, *The Cultural History of Western Empires in Antiquity* (Bloomsbury Academic), and several articles and reviews. He delivered a keynote lecture in Hong Kong at a comparative history conference on “The City and the State in the Ancient World.” He has also signed on as series co-editor for Cambridge University Press’ new series, *Greece and Rome in Global Context*, with two volumes already in the pipeline.

In October, **MICHAEL NYLAN** lectured in Shanghai (via NYU and Fudan) on a new project: the history of emotions in China, as glimpsed from the newly excavated documents. In Ukiyah, at the Dharma Realm University (devoted to study of the Chinese Classics), she lectured for two days on the *Documents* classic. Michael is hard at work on a book manuscript entitled *The Politics of the Common Good in Early China*, and in some sense, these lectures, all four of them, touched upon important aspects of that project.

A CULTURAL HISTORY OF WESTERN EMPIRES  
IN ANTIQUITY  
Edited by Carlos F. Noreña



Top to bottom: *A Cultural History of Western Empires in Antiquity (500BCE-800CE)*, Ed. Carlos F. Noreña; Image of Leonardo da Vinci flying machines, Wikimedia Commons

**VANESSA OGLE** enjoyed developing and teaching a new lecture course on the global history of money in Fall 2019, an introductory survey that begins in the 16th century and runs all the way up to the present and the emergence of cryptocurrencies like bitcoin. In her research, she continues to work on her book

about the history of tax havens and offshore finance, giving talks and keynotes on the topic in the US, UK, and Australia. Vanessa recently completed a major article that charts the connection between the emergence of tax havens in the 1950s and 1960s and the process of decolonization and the departure of European settlers from overseas colonies with the end of European colonial rule. As part of the European withdrawal from empire, settlers started moving assets to tax havens like Switzerland and the Bahamas, thereby contributing to the

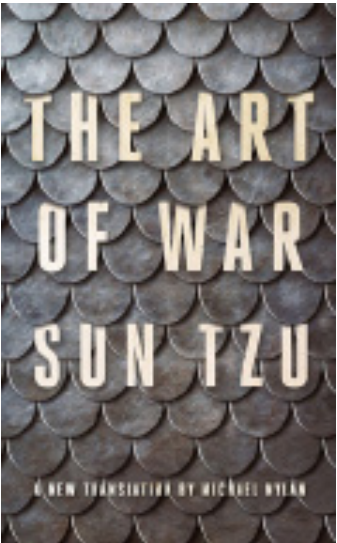
expansion of tax haven business in these emerging havens. The article, forthcoming in *Past and Present*, is the first account to reveal this previously unknown aspect of decolonization.

In Spring 2020, in honor of the 2020 Census, **CAITLIN ROSENTHAL** will teach a special honors thesis course on the history and data of the census. On the research front, she recently returned from the Southern Historical Association where her 2018 book, *Accounting for Slavery* (Harvard UP), was honored with the Francis B. Simkins Award for the best first book in Southern History. The book was selected from more than 70 entries. Rosenthal has recently launched a new project on the history of Human Relations Departments. She will be exploring how women in HR successfully climbed the corporate ladder even as HR was increasingly relegated to a back-office function.

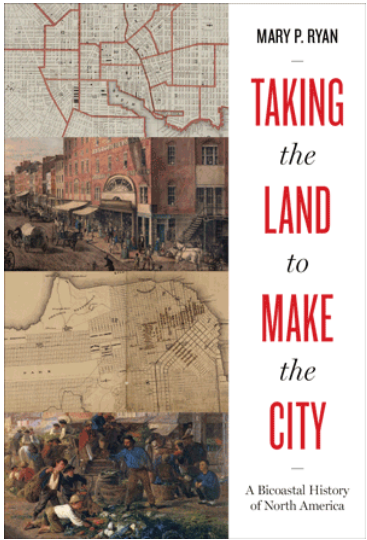
**ELENA SCHNEIDER’S** book *The Occupation of Havana: War, Trade, and Slavery in the Atlantic World* (Omo-hundro Institute/University of North Carolina Press, 2018) received several prizes this year, including the prestigious James A. Rawley Prize in Atlantic History from the Association of American Historians. She is currently working on a project about “fugitive voices” of slavery in the Caribbean. She is examining slave testimony in Spanish colonial archives in cases of maritime marronage (or those who escaped slavery by sea) and wrongful enslavement of formerly free people. This spring she is teaching a lecture course on the history of the Atlantic World, a new addition to the department’s course offerings.

**BILL TAYLOR’S** *Theater of a Thousand Wonders* (Cambridge University Press) recently received the Howard F. Cline Award in Mexican history from the Latin American Studies Association, the John Gilmary Shea Book Prize from the American Catholic Historical Association, and the María Elena Martínez Book Prize from the Conference on Latin American History. He is close to finishing a book called *Fugitive Freedom: The Improbable Lives of Two Impostors in Late Colonial Mexico*.

MORE: NEW FACULTY TITLES



Michael Nylan, *The Art of War: A New Translation by Michael Nylan* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2020)



Mary P. Ryan, *Taking the Land to Make the City: A Bicoastal History of North America* (University of Texas Press, 2019)

IN MEMORIAM

JOHN MASSON SMITH

*Professor of History Emeritus*



Photo courtesy of George Martin

John Masson Smith, Jr. was born in 1930 in Massachusetts. He graduated from Harvard where he also met and married his wife, Grace. He served in the army for three years before obtaining his Ph.D. in Near Eastern History at Columbia. He and Grace then spent a year in Istanbul, where he directed the American Research Institute in Turkey. They then moved to Berkeley, where John spent over forty years as a professor in the Department of History and Grace taught Turkish.

John was a world-renowned scholar of Islamic coinage and of the history of the Mongol Empire. John’s great achievement was enabling scholars and students to understand the history of steppe nomad empires not only from the vague statements of their sedentary enemies but especially from a quantitative analysis of material.

John also traveled all over the world, supported the opera and symphony, and was an equestrian. He was an able squash player and enjoyed sporting bow ties. John is survived by his wife, Grace.

—George Martin, Brother-in-Law

SAMUEL HABER

*Professor of History Emeritus*



Photo courtesy of Mary Elizabeth Berry

Samuel Haber passed away on Friday, November 29. He was a much beloved faculty member, who taught in the UC Berkeley History Department between 1965 and 1995. Born in New York City on May 5, 1928, Sam died in Berkeley at the age of 91.

Samuel Haber’s engagement with Berkeley transcended his thirty-year career as a regular faculty member. He earned his B.A. (‘52) and his Ph.D. (‘61) at UC Berkeley, the latter under the supervision of Henry May. While teaching in our department, Sam published his most well-known works: *Efficiency and Uplift: Scientific Management in the Progressive Era, 1890-1920* (University of Chicago Press, 1973) and *Authority and Honor in the American Professions, 1750-1900* (University of Chicago Press, 1991). Among the many forms of service that he provided to the university, Sam ran the UC Education Abroad Program in Jerusalem from 1989-92. Upon retirement, he continued to teach and to carry out research at UC Berkeley as a Professor of the Graduate School and Emeritus Professor. As late as 2014, Sam was offering popular freshman and sophomore seminars.

—Peter Zinoman, Department Chair

*An extended reflection on Samuel Haber is forthcoming from the Berkeley community.*

## The Medievalists Are Coming, The Medievalists Are Coming! *Event Spotlight*

Hundreds of scholars will gather on campus next March 26th-28th for the 95th Annual Meeting of the Medieval Academy of America. The oldest and most prestigious association for medievalists in North America, the Academy last met at Berkeley in 1984. Leading preparations is Professor of History Maureen C. Miller. Inducted as a Fellow of the Academy in 2015, along with her program committee co-chair, Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe (Department of English), Miller broached the idea with her Berkeley colleagues four years ago during her tenure as the director of Berkeley's Program in Medieval Studies. The Program's faculty and students, representing 17 different disciplines across the humanities and social sciences, embraced the project and have been hard at work ever since. The conference will feature special sessions for Bay Area K-12 instructors of the state's 7th-grade curriculum on "Medieval and Early Modern Times" organized in collaboration with the department's History-Social Science Project. A graduate-student taught pre-meeting workshop will allow students from other campuses to explore the Jean

Gray Hargrove Music Library's collection of medieval liturgical manuscripts. Even Berkeley's undergrads are getting involved! Students from Professor Miller's freshman-sophomore seminar on "Fashion, the Middle Ages, and the Catholic Imagination: Reconsidering the 'Heavenly Bodies' Exhibit" will be contributing papers for a special issue of the department's undergraduate history journal, *Clio's Scroll*, to be published for the conference. Miller is particularly proud of initiating—for the first time in the association's history—blind review of paper and panel proposals. This innovation yielded both the most diverse program to date, with 40 participants from under-represented minorities, and the highest number of graduate student presenters ever. The program will be posted and registration opened in mid-December on the [Academy's website](#). Local enthusiasts for all things medieval are warmly invited to attend!

—Professor Maureen Miller



## Against the Transgender Military Ban: A Q&A with Ronit Y. Stahl



Photo: U.S. Navy/Wikimedia Commons

After first announcing the ban in 2017, the Trump administration implemented a formal memorandum banning transgender people from openly serving in any military branch in March 2018. Assistant Professor of History Ronit Stahl and Jennifer Mittelstadt, Professor of History at Rutgers University, penned the [historians' amicus brief](#) against the transgender ban. This amicus brief was submitted to the Court of Appeals in October 2018 and was sponsored by the Organization of American Historians. Despite facing a number of lawsuits, the ban went into effect on April 12, 2019. In the following interview, Professor Stahl reflects on her experience as a historian contributing to public discourse on contemporary legislation, and the process of writing an amicus brief. This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

"The proffered justifications for the exclusionary policy at issue here must be viewed against this historical pattern of discrimination followed by successful inclusion of the excluded group into our Nation's armed forces. Once forced by law or exigency to integrate formerly excluded groups, the military has consistently discovered that its leaders' former concerns about effectiveness and readiness were either unwarranted or mitigated by the benefits derived from greater inclusion. Today, the Department of Defense officially recognizes diversity and inclusion as 'critical to mission readiness.'"

—Brief for The Organization of American Historians and 47 Historians of the Military, National Security and Foreign Relations as amici curiae in support of Plaintiffs-Appellees in *Jane Doe 2 v. Donald J. Trump*, 18-5257 (Oct. 29 D.C. Cir. 2018)

Can you provide some background for how you became involved with this historians' amicus brief?

RONIT STAHL: The ban emerged first in the summer of 2017, when Trump tweeted that he was going to ban transgender troops. When he announced this by tweet, my colleague Jennifer Mittelstadt and I wrote an [op-ed](#) for *The Washington Post*. I had written a book about religion in the military [[Enlisting Faith](#)], and she had written a book about what she calls the military-welfare state. So, we've both spent a long time thinking about the military as an institution—socially, politically, economically, and otherwise. In the amicus brief, we highlighted that there is a consistent pattern in the U.S. military: first of discrimination, and then once there's a military need, inviting a discriminated group in, at which point they become essential. The op-ed is quick, it's brief, it basically argued this decision was an anti-military move. When the litigation started around this issue in 2018—and there were multiple cases in different circuits across the country—we were contacted to see if we would write the historians' amicus brief for the case. And we agreed.

We thought historians could provide the historical background and the historical framing and context for why a ban like this, among other things, makes no sense and is harmful. In the brief we lay out that there's a historical pattern in which the military first discriminates against a group of people—first, excluding them or allowing them only marginal roles in the armed forces, and then, when there are pragmatic needs, the government allows formerly discriminated-against groups into the military. And then they make arguments that the group is actually essential for readiness, preparedness, efficiency.

Even though transgender personnel had been allowed in under the Obama administration after an extensive RAND study, part of the basis of Trump's argument was that transgender troops would be, among other things, not just costly, but a threat to national security. Ours was an argument against that, using history to show this pendulum swing is a pretty common feature of the military's personnel policies—and in the end, every group that has been discriminated against gets welcomed in and the rhetoric shifts from antagonism and discrimination to 'this group is absolutely essential.'

***You noted a historical pattern of language that the military's used to discriminate against certain groups. Does the language used to argue for the ban on transgender service members follow the same historical pattern?***

This differs in a couple different ways. One, this ban was rescinding permission to a group that had been allowed to serve as equal to everyone else, and then was told they couldn't. That's really different.

The Obama administration commissioned this really detailed study and report from RAND, which said transgender troops would not affect readiness, preparedness, or morale. It wouldn't harm the military financially or in any other way. What's different about this case is that they've done this report and then the policy changed. In 2016 transgender people could openly serve and self-identify as trans. So, recruiters could recruit people who openly identify as trans, people who are already in the service could say that they were trans without facing any penalties or harm. They could access medical care and so on and so forth. Part of what's different about this case is that these are people that have been permitted to openly serve. And

then the ban from Trump says, no, you can't.

What gets especially tricky here is that because of the shift in policy under the Obama administration, military personnel have self-identified as trans. As a result, the litigation in different circuits have dealt with trans people in different situations. Some were trans people who wanted to serve, but hadn't yet been commissioned. Some were about people who were already in the service. Some were college students at the service academies. So what's going to happen with all these groups?

***Is there a comparable historical moment that either we can learn from or that you drew from most heavily in the brief to argue for the overturning of the ban?***



Photo: Wikimedia Commons

Johnnie Phelps, member of the Women's Army Corps in WWI and LGBTQ activist.

In the brief, we chose to look at four groups—African-Americans, immigrants, women, and gays and lesbians—because we wanted to document the historical pattern of discrimination, followed by a group becoming essential to readiness. We brainstormed what's the best way to do this? Do we focus on one particular group? What's the best process here? And for every group, there is a story that maps onto the pattern—there are certainly specifics, but we thought being able to show common experiences across multiple groups was the way to make the strongest case.

Amicus briefs are kind of a funny genre in that you're speaking to judges, to try and show some facet of a case that might not be illuminated by witness testimony. One could say, "What does history have to do with a current day issue that's being litigated on a very particular set of facts that are specific to this conflict?" What we could add was historical pattern recognition. We know that this is a pattern, and we see what

happens when formerly marginalized groups are let in. It turns out all those arguments that were made to support discrimination in the past were dismantled once these marginalized groups were allowed to serve in the armed forces, thus historically, the military itself clearly showed that those arguments lacked merit. Judges should thus be really skeptical. Time and time again, inclusion showed the problem of exclusion: the supposed justifications for discrimination were proven false.

***Do you plan to continue to do work around the transgender military ban?***

I was just on a conference call about this! The transgender ban is now in effect, but lawyers are continuing to litigate it. Jen Mittelstadt and I have continued to talk to the lawyers and will likely be writing another op-ed about it.

***Any last thoughts you'd like to share?***

The genre of the amicus brief is definitely new and interesting to write. There's a whole set of rules about what they look like and how they work that's different from anything I've ever written before. As a process, it was really fascinating because Jen and I had to write a draft in less than six weeks. We wrote a draft and then got feedback from the lawyers, figuring out what's clear to them, what's not. It was really different from getting feedback from historians, and it really pushed us to a type of clarity in a very short amount of space. Historians love the funky little details that make a story fascinating. But we needed the specifics and to get to the point. We also had to compile our own archive of every primary and secondary source we used because the firm's paralegals went through every single citation to check it for accuracy. That level of rigor and fact-checking—you had to really make sure everything in there was Absolutely. Correct. We needed to be precise. We had six thousand words and we had to cover a lot of ground, and it sort of forced us to get to the argu-

ment more quickly than a historian typically would.

There is fantastic work being done on the social history of the military by lots of people, including many of the individual historians that signed onto the brief. Future historians will continue to trawl these questions because the military is not just an important institution of American politics, but also an important window into American society. It becomes this space in which people make claims—sometimes for discrimination, sometimes against discrimination. This is the space where social issues play out.

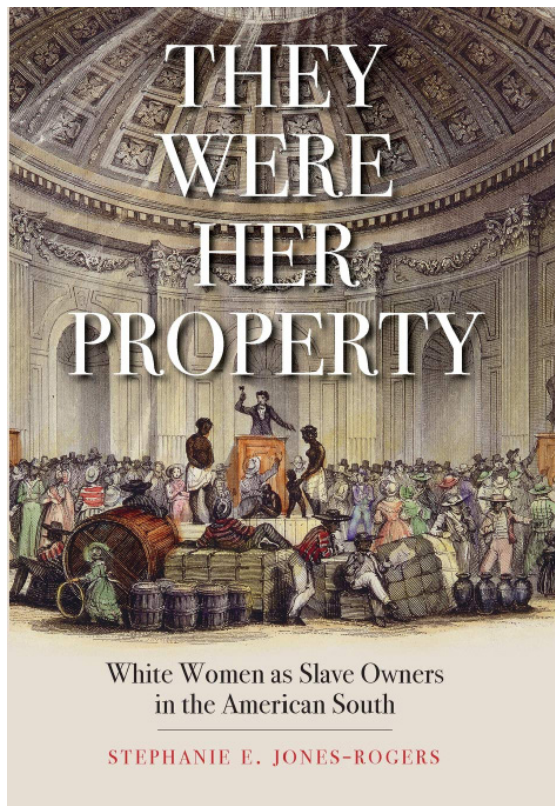
This was an incredible opportunity as a historian to draw on historical knowledge to contribute to contemporary litigation.

*Interview by Maya Sisneros, Communications Coordinator*



# They Were Her Property:

## A Reflection with Stephanie E. Jones-Rogers



Yale University Press, 2019

Associate Professor Stephanie E. Jones-Rogers published her book [They Were Her Property: White Women as Slave Owners in the American South](#) (Yale University Press) in February 2019. Since its release, *They Were Her Property* has gained wide acclaim, from highlights in mainstream news outlets, to its selection as one of Smithsonian Magazine's "[Top Ten History Books of 2019](#)." We asked Jones-Rogers to take a moment and reflect on what this year has been like for her work.

*Is there anything about the book that, in its reception, has been overlooked, that you'd like to highlight?*

JONES-ROGERS: Two important and interconnected dimensions of the book which I think have been routinely overlooked are: 1) the majority of the white slave-owning women in the book were married, and 2) the women in *They Were Her Property* were not counted among the most elite Southerners in the 19th century South, and these two elements are important for a number of reasons. First, married women had to overcome immense obstacles in order to own and maintain control over property, which single and widowed women did not. *They Were Her Property* helps folks understand just how it was possible for some married women to own, control, buy, sell, hire, bequeath, and inherit enslaved people, and personally hold legal title to them even though, on the surface, Southern laws seemed to make it extremely difficult for them to do so.

Furthermore, the married slave-owning women in *They Were Her Property* ranked among the majority of slave-owners who owned twenty enslaved people or fewer. In fact, most of the women in the book owned less than ten enslaved people. This is an important feature of the history I present because most studies of white Southern women in slaveholding households were highly literate, which means they often left records behind, and they frequently hailed from wealthy, often politically connected families. Therefore, the women at the center of prevailing studies of white women and American slavery represent a very small group of an already small community. By foregrounding the testimony of enslaved and formerly enslaved African-Ameri-

cans, and using their reflections to guide my research in the archives, I was able to craft a history which elucidates white, non-elite, married slave-owning women's deep and profound economic investments in the institution of American slavery.

*What have you learned while touring and speaking about your book since its release?*

As a historian, I always hope that my work can offer a broader historical context within which to understand the present, or at the very least, the not-so-distant past. The African-descended people I meet or interact with via social media express appreciation that I produced a study that supported what they already knew in their hearts/guts about white women's power and investments in white supremacy all along. More importantly, they are grateful that I centered the voices and experiences of African-Americans in telling the history of white married slave-owning women's economic relationships to enslaved people's bondage in the nineteenth century and their continued oppression in the decades that followed emancipation.

This was an important decision to me but I learned that it was equally important to people in African-descended communities across the country. Moreover, they highlight the ways in which the book helps explain the tensions they felt within 20th-century liberation movements, especially the feminist movement and the movement for reproductive justice, and continue to feel when building activist coalitions across the color line.

The people I meet who do not explicitly identify as African-descended often make connections between the story I tell and more contemporary phenomena such as white conservative women's recent voting patterns. This was not an explicit connection I considered extensively until after the book was set to be published. It does my heart good to know that my research is useful in a multitude of ways both in and outside of the classroom.

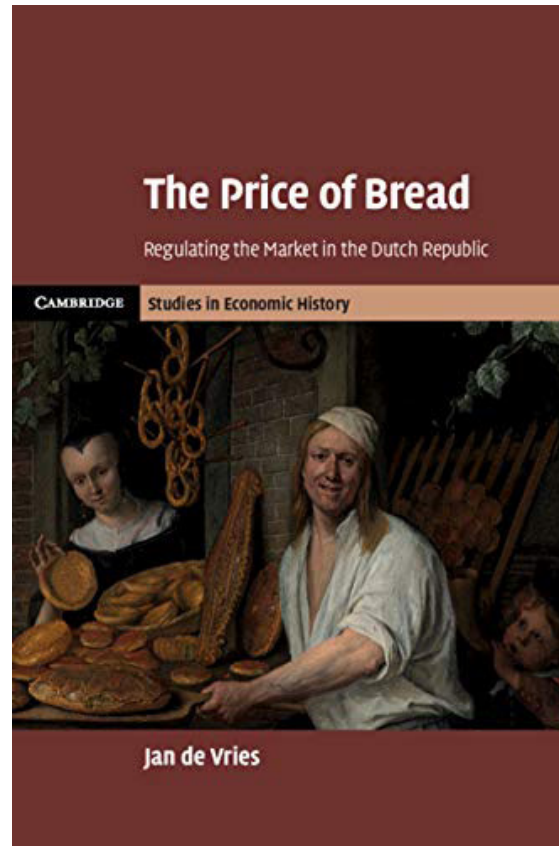
*What about the reception of *They Were Her Property* has been most surprising?*

Of course, I anticipated that the book would be acquired by libraries and that instructors would assign the book in their classes, but I only hoped that folks outside of institutions of higher learning would read the book. I never dreamed that *They Were Her Property* would gain such a wide readership, and this has been the most wonderful and appreciated surprise of all.



Associate Professor Stephanie E. Jones-Rogers

Interview by Maya Sisneros, Communications Coordinator



CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2019  
REVIEW BY THOMAS W. LAQUEUR

Jan de Vries' new book, *The Price of Bread: Regulating the Market in the Dutch Republic* is astonishing. It is astonishing in its ambition: to see through the prism of the price of bread in the Dutch Republic the emergence of a new relationship between state, economy, and society beginning in the 1590s.

Regulation of the price of bread—the staff of life—through state regulation of the grain trade was ubiquitous in the ancient world and in medieval and early modern Europe. It was done largely through regulating the price of grain. For example, storing it to release in lean years when the price was high; forcing bakers to buy grain at artificially high or low prices; preventing grain from leaving needy communities for others where it might fetch a higher price. Direct market intervention guaranteed the baker enough grain to make a fixed amount of bread.

The most advanced capitalist society of early modern Europe, the Dutch Republic, was born not of deregulation itself but of a novel, directed, and highly

sophisticated method that was emphasized less on intervening in the market—that is, creating an artificially low or so-called just price for bread—than for “discovering the market.” The commissioners in charge of bread prices made their decisions on weekly prices in each city after ascertaining the costs of bread production—the bakers’ fixed vs variable costs—the costs of rye and wheat, and the yields of various kinds of bread from the different grains used. Bread supplies for the poorest of the poor were assured not through supporting a so-called moral economy but by direct distribution to the needy.

The consequences of this revolution in bread price regulation were enormous: in the first place, an excise tax on milling provided a steady 10% of State income; it also directed consumer preferences through differential prices of different kinds of bread. The Dutch led Europe in a shift to white wheat bread, and households worked harder to afford this luxury product with its costly tax burden. The new pricing policy of bread may have been an important factor in what de Vries in an earlier book called the *Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), the intensification of household economic activity in order to buy more goods produced outside of the home. The pricing regimes seemed to have created a politically stable local economy in bread: while in England there were hundreds of food riots, in the Dutch republic there were none.

By the mid-nineteenth century the once new regime of bread price regulation was old and no longer workable in an increasingly modern industrial economy. But it proved difficult to modify precisely because it was so intricately crafted, and in 1855 it was abolished. What had been an innovative way of channeling market forces for the public good had, after more than two centuries, created all sorts of distortions, inefficiencies, and windfall profits that were protected by what had become an ossified administration. Regulation has a “use by” date but exactly when that is and how to move on to some other policy is a lesson to be learned from the Dutch experience.

Making the new system of bread pricing work required a highly skilled and mathematically sophisticated bureaucracy in each city to ascertain weekly prices of inputs (bakers’ materials and labor) and outputs (bread of various sorts) to bring into line a

bewildering array of different weights and measures; to record in a useable form all this data; to translate the data into regulated prices; to negotiate with vested interests like the baker’s guilds; and perhaps from the State’s point of view, calculating and collecting the excise. In a sense, this history of the price of bread is a history of how a modern state governs. The fact that de Vries figured out how they did all this is testimony to his deep knowledge both of the underlying economic theory and of the nitty gritty mechanics of the system. Imagine being confronted with the US Tax Code three hundred years from now and trying to figure out both what social policies were behind its array of depreciation schedules and how companies actually worked the system.

Fifty-five figures and ninety-nine tables present a staggering amount of data, not just on bread and grain prices and consumption, but on tax revenues, baker’s fees, orphanage dietaries, costs per calorie of various other foods, measures of standard of living, and much more. All of this data was extracted and cleaned over decades—itself a Herculean task—

mostly from manuscript sources in scores of archives. Even if the book were not as important as it in fact is, it represents a remarkable technical achievement.

Jan de Vries is a rare creature in the historical ecosystem: a scholar with a high level of mastery of a wide field who can write elegantly on a large scale—*The Economy of Europe in an Age of Crisis, 1600-1750* (Cambridge University Press, 1976), for example—and can make much from more focused studies. *Barges and Capitalism: Passenger Transportation in the Dutch Economy* (HES Publishers, 1981) was a pioneering work in the study of climate based on data about when canals froze and thawed over the centuries. And now, this book about how a revolution in government and economy is refracted in the price of bread.



BERKELEY HISTORIANS IN THE WORLD

Derek Kane O’Leary, Ph.D Candidate and AHA Career Diversity Fellow



Christopher Casey	Natalie Mendoza	Jason Rozumalski
Analyst, Congressional Research Service; Instructor, Syracuse University’s Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs (B.A. ’07, M.A. ’10, Ph.D. and J.D. ’17)	Assistant Professor of U.S. History, University of Colorado, Boulder; 2019-2020 Fellow at the Clements Center for Southwest Studies (M.A. ’10, Ph.D., ’16)	Global Programs Manager, Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes (CHCI); 2018-2020 Mellon/ACLS Public Fellow (M.A. ’10, Ph.D., ’17)
My most recent project was a lengthy brief for Congress on the history and contemporary use of presidential emergency economic powers. For that project, I read original documents, scholarly monographs and articles, and I talked with other scholars from a variety of disciplines (including economists, political scientists, and sociologists).	At CU-Boulder I led what came to be the History Teaching & Learning Project (HTLP), a pedagogical effort aimed at rethinking and improving undergraduate education by developing department-wide learning goals and examining teaching practices and assessments. We relied upon history pedagogy research, including the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in History (SoTL).	One of my current projects is organizing the research and authorship of the World Humanities Report, which is the core project of a strategic partnership between CHCI, the International Council for Philosophy and Human Sciences (CIPSH), and UNESCO. This report is designed to take stock of the state of the humanities in the world: recognizing contributions, identifying possibilities, and making recommendations for the future.
While I enjoy thinking daily about how to make use of history to serve the public, I do miss being able to spend days pursuing anything that I find interesting. While there is less whimsy in my day-to-day work, I find satisfaction in providing answers to questions that other people are actually asking. I also enjoy that the work is often truly interdisciplinary and collaborative. I frequently coauthor reports and memos and hold briefings and office hours with colleagues from a diversity of disciplines, from economists to primatologists.	Both my previous experience teaching high school and my CSU undergrad experience led me to view teaching and research as <b>equally</b> important parts of my professional identity as a historian. Now, as an assistant professor, this view also maps onto the practical reality of the daily work I do as faculty. Even at an R1 institution, much of my time is spent teaching—designing my courses, interacting with students, and being in the classroom—and here my research and expertise have just as much impact as they would at a conference or with a peer-reviewed publication.	Graduate study at Berkeley offered me the time, resources, and community for diverse and deep intellectual and social engagement. At its best, my current work requires me to have fluency in a great variety of humanities research, methods, and practices in order to collaborate with and support people all over the world. Those are the aspects of this job that are thrilling and meaningful for me; and my ability and enjoyment of them grew through the interdisciplinary, international, and diverse work that I accomplished at Berkeley.

Tell us a bit about a project you’ve worked on since finishing your Ph.D.

How does your current work compare with your experience as a historian at Berkeley?

Is there any particular experience you had or skill you developed at Berkeley that has been surprisingly helpful in your work beyond Berkeley?

Christopher Casey	Natalie Mendoza	Jason Rozumalski
Cal is a beautifully bureaucratic public institution. The skills I learned navigating the University’s bureaucracy (as well as state-run archives) have been invaluable in working for the world’s largest bureaucracy.	Organizing the Teaching History Conference gave me the opportunity to practice skills that I used at CU-Boulder: communicating with guests at workshops, developing those workshops, creating text about HTLP for the public, and fostering professional relationships.	It feels cliché to say this, but human societies are in critical need of creativity and care, which people who are dedicated to the humanities are in a strong position to be able to offer, if only they can find their opportunity.

ALUMNI NOTES

SUBMIT AN ALUMNI NOTE: HISTORY.BERKELEY.EDU/ALUMNI

**CHRISTOPHER BOLAS (BA ’67)** was the bibliographer for the history department in 1966-67 and studied with Carl Schorske, Kenneth Stampf and Robert Middlekauff. In 2018, his book *Meaning and Melancholia: Life in the Age of Bewilderment* was published by Routledge.

**GARBER DAVIDSON (MA ’64)** taught history to senior high students in Ethiopia as a Peace Corps Volunteer; he subsequently taught history at both the secondary and college levels before entering law school where he earned a JD. Davidson practiced first in Baltimore and then joined the Foreign Service, serving in USAID in the Middle East and Latin America as a legal advisor. After retiring from USAID, he worked as a private consultant working in rule of law projects in Latin America, the former Soviet Union and Central Asia. In 2011 Davidson was appointed Chairman of the Foreign Service Grievance Board by Secretary Clinton, and now plans to retire from that position this year.

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### Graduate Student Research Symposium

Thursday, February 27, 2020 | Time To Be Announced | 3335 Dwinelle Hall

### History Homecoming

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### The 101 Circus: An Undergraduate Research Showcase

Wednesday, May 6, 2020 | 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. | 3335 Dwinelle Hall

### Department of History Commencement Ceremony

Wednesday, May 20, 2020 | 9 a.m. | Zellerbach Auditorium