

# Saxon Signposts

London: Edward Arnold Publishers, 1999.

(Special Issue of *German History* 17, no. 4)

**Guest Editor: James Retallack**

## Abstract

This special issue explores the intersection of culture and power in Germany history. It does so by examining a collection of modernising visions excavated from Saxon history. Supplementing cultural and political analysis with attention to economic and social change, the authors examine the experience of culture *vor Ort* and the exercise of power at those points where it becomes capillary, that is, in its more regional and local forms and institutions (Michel Foucault).

The culture / power / history nexus has been explored elsewhere. But why Saxony? A focus on Saxony can provide a unifying principle for divergent explorations of German history by drawing out three common themes: i) the attempts of liberal reformers, burgher activists, and other culture-builders to challenge the authoritarian state and modernise the exercise of power; ii) the diffusion and circulation of power in modern societies, not only between the centre and the periphery but around, in between, and through these spaces; and iii) the interpretation of boundaries, frontiers, and other symbolic representations associated with place that facilitated individual and local efforts at identity-building.

These essays map a multiplicity of paths from the past to the present, charting historical developments that do not converge at a familiar time *or* space. Nevertheless, scholars will continue to search for other signposts: those that pointed contemporaries on their way, but also those that hinted at the difficulty of moving from the familiar toward the unknown.

## Articles

**James Retallack**

Saxon Signposts: Cultural Battles, Identity Politics, and German Authoritarianism in Transition

**Robert Beachy**

Local Protest and Territorial Reform: Public Debt and Constitutionalism in Early Nineteenth-Century Saxony

**Glenn Penny**

Fashioning Local Identities in an Age of Nation-Building: Museums, Cosmopolitan Visions, and Intra-German Competition

***James Retallack***

Conservatives and Antisemites in Baden and Saxony

***Marline Otte***

Sarrasani's Theatre of the World: Monumental Circus Entertainment in Dresden, from  
Kaiserreich to Third Reich

---

This information is provided by the [Department of History](#) at the University of Toronto.  
All contents © 2001-2021 [James Retallack](#) and the [University of Toronto](#). All rights reserved.  
Last Updated: 1 November 2021.