

In This Issue

In 1845 Philip St. George Cocke commissioned Alexander Jackson Davis to design a Gothic revival villa for Belmead. In doing so he radically departed from the tradition of Palladian and classical architecture that had characterized elite Virginia plantations since the mid-eighteenth century. In **A. J. Davis's Belmead: Picturesque Aesthetics in the Land of Slavery**, **Daniel Bluestone** argues that a Davis design resonated differently on the banks of the James River than on the banks of the Hudson. The appeal of Davis's design lay in its sensitivity to the reciprocity between buildings and landscape, highlighting Cocke's advocacy of greater stewardship of the land in the place of generations of ruinous agricultural practices. Beyond his villa and his land, Cocke commissioned Davis to design Belmead's slave quarters. This was an attempt to harmonize himself with his slaves and the nation with an agricultural system based upon chattel slavery rather than yeomen farmers. This essay encourages us to look beyond the universals that often frame architectural history discussions of picturesque aesthetics to situate picturesque designs more precisely within a place-centered context of client vision and socio-cultural meaning.

The *Sooro*, the pillared entrance hall to the majority of palaces now existing in northern Cameroon, is an important index of political change in this region. **The Spread of the Sooro: Symbols of Power in the Sokoto Caliphate** traces the proliferation of *sooroji* from the time that Fulbe conquerors incorporated this region within the Sokoto caliphate in the early nineteenth century until Cameroon's independence in 1960. The status of Fulbe rulers who conquered the region was not high enough to employ the political symbolism of the *sooro*, but the use of this building type spread quickly after German colonial borders separated northern Cameroon from the rest of the caliphate in 1901. Eventually the form expanded beyond the boundaries of the Fulbe and spread among non-Fulbe rulers. By explaining the changes in the form and political symbolism of the *sooro*, **Mark DeLancey** argues that it was a symbol of power spread in direct

relation to the loss of real political power of rulers in colonial northern Cameroon.

Female Agency and Early Modern Urbanism: The Paris of Maria de' Medici analyzes the urban history of early modern Paris and the impact of the interventions promoted by Queen Maria de' Medici during her regency (1610–17) over the long-term development of the city. On the basis of new archival evidence, **Sara Galletti** reinterprets the queen's Parisian projects—among them the Luxembourg Palace and the Arcueil Aqueduct—as the constituents of an ambitious urban plan that radically transformed the Left Bank, left a permanent imprint on the city, and ultimately determined the direction of its future developments. Maria de' Medici's projects are discussed within the broader context of the interventions realized on the banks of the Seine by the royal family, the city government, and a number of private investors during the first half of the seventeenth century; these established a new relationship between the city and its river and drew the urban fabric out of its medieval boundaries.

Andrea Palladio's Venetian churches of San Giorgio Maggiore and Il Redentore overlook the Bay of San Marco and its tributaries, the Grand Canal and the Giudecca Canal. In **Palladio and the Water-oriented Scenography of Venice**, **Daniel Savoy** examines the churches from their surrounding waterways, explaining them as centerpieces in an elaborate program of urban scenography that must be seen as a work of collective civic authorship. Through close topographical and contextual analysis, he shows that Palladio and his patrons oriented the churches to be seen from the perspective of the waterways approaching and transversing the city while evoking the visual experience and cosmological associations of theater. The scheme accords with Palladio's theoretical project but also builds on Venetian conventions of aquatic urbanism and symbolic geography, implicating the architect in a centuries-old tradition in which the mythical image of Venice was projected through the city's spectacular waterfront architecture.