The Beijing Olympics



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The Beijing 2008 Olympic ceremonies were spectacular performances and technological accomplishments by the People's Republic of China. However, the audience in Beijing was only the most overt element of a global audience receiving the message of the Games. For this global audience, the Beijing performances were a harbinger of wider regional and international ambitions; a message of intent that pointed to a larger Chinese plan to a degree not seen since the Ming dynasty. New Chinese ambitions embrace both soft power and hard power. The actor in this political drama of international scope is the Chinese state and its political ambitions on the world stage. The Beijing Olympics can be seen as its opening act, and the audience as global. Rather than the kind of "morality" play that is typically used in China to educate the people in politics, this new production—a production on many levels—was one aimed at audiences all around the world, and one that was a calculated expression of realpolitik. This book was previously published as a special issue of the International Journal of the History of Sport.

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