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Editors

Global History and New Polycentric Approaches

Europe, Asia and the Americas in a World
Network System



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“The development of a global economy has generated a movement for a truly global history. There is still a long way to go, but this volume of essays by Western and Asian historians constitutes a brave attempt to bridge the great divide.”

—Sir John Elliott, *Regius Professor of Modern History,
University of Oxford, UK*

“The multiple perspectives offered by this volume’s chapters together make an important contribution to the goal of transforming global history from an aspiration to a reality.”

—Jan de Vries, *Ehrman Professor Emeritus, University of California
at Berkeley, USA*

“These scholars delve deeply into Asian data and global interpretation, showing the centrality of East Asia in the trade networks of the early modern world. They successfully set Atlantic developments in the context of the Asia-Pacific region.”

—Patrick Manning, *Andrew W. Mellon Professor of World History,
Emeritus, University of Pittsburgh, USA*

“This is a stimulating attempt to present Global History, focusing on comparison of Maritime History between the Asia-Pacific and the Atlantic. Readers may clearly understand a rich historiography in East Asia on Global/World History studies.”

—Shigeru Akita, *Chairman, Asian Association of World Historians,
South Korea and Professor of British Imperial History
and Global History, Osaka University, Japan*

“Manuel Perez Garcia and Lucio de Sousa have edited a thought-provoking volume, addressing the question of global history as conceived by European, Chinese and Japanese scholars, and revitalizing this field of studies in East Asian historiography. No doubt that this volume, linking maritime history and global history, will open new paths of research free of any “centrisms” as has often been the case so far. The various chapters that make up this volume combine different scales of analysis (local, regional, transnational and global) to implement a truly interdisciplinary analysis of a world network system that has shaped international trade from the the XVIth through the XIXth centuries.”

—Francois Gipouloux, *Emeritus Research Director, National
Centre for Scientific Research, France*

“A thoroughly, well-organised and outstanding book for a deeper understanding of the real impact of global history on East Asian historiographies and fresh insights on intercontinental comparisons.”

—Liu Beicheng, *Professor, Tsinghua University, China*

“This book demonstrates superbly the important contribution of GECEM project and the Global History Network (GHN) in bringing together diverse Asian, European and American historiographical approaches based on different methods, sources, and theories. The cases presented urge a careful reconceptualization of our received streams of thought, a process that will open exciting new routes for grasping history and expanding our cognitive capabilities, as the challenges of our rapidly globalizing world demand.”

—J. B. Owens, *Research Professor, Idaho State University, USA*

“Global history releases itself from the straightjacket of national boundaries and supersedes the East-West divide that still characterises much scholarship: in this book, the early modern world is analysed by a new type of global polycentric history.”

—Giorgio Riello, *Professor, University of Warwick, UK*

“Global History and New Polycentric Approaches features a group of scholarly essays from western and eastern historians that clearly show how to assess the great questions posed by a truly global history. The book is a must – read for academics and students that want to deepen their understanding of modern world history.”

—Antonio Ibarra Romero, *Professor, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, México*

“Manuel Perez Garcia and Lucio de Sousa have magisterially collected fresh research works by outstanding scholars in Global History and East Asian studies. Certainly, it gives a new ‘polycentric’ turn going beyond Eurocentric and Sinocentric perspectives in Global history.”

—Bernd Hausberger, *Professor, Colegio de México, México*

This research has been sponsored and financially supported by GECEM ('Global Encounters between China and Europe: Trade Networks, Consumption and Cultural Exchanges in Macau and Marseille, 1680–1840') project hosted by the Pablo de Olavide University, UPO (Seville, Spain). The GECEM project is funded by the ERC (European Research Council)-Starting Grant, under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme, ref. 679371, www.gecem.eu. The P.I. (Principal Investigator) is Professor Manuel Perez Garcia (Distinguished Researcher at UPO).

*We would like to dedicate this book to Liu Beicheng (Tsinghua University)
and Naotoshi Kurosawa (Tokyo University of Foreign Studies), respectively
our mentors in China and Japan.*

FOREWORD

History is marked by alternating movements across an imaginary line, separating East from West in Eurasia.¹

As an evangelical advocate for the inclusion of courses in global history for systems of higher education throughout the world, I strongly applaud the endeavours of two young Iberians, with posts at major universities in China and Japan, to persuade their East Asian colleagues to make real space in their curricula for an engagement with history that is ‘truly global’.

‘Truly global’ means that teaching and research in faculties of history should represent something much more profound, heuristic and modern than extensions to the histories of East Asian or European societies that includes hard-won knowledge of other countries and cultures. The editors and their distinguished colleagues conceive of global history as a challenge to obsolete, patriotic and centric histories of all kinds.

Located as both editors are as foreign academics in cultures with ancient and strong national identities, their laudable mission has met with a different kind and quality of resistance to both the now-moribund antipathies of post-modern critics in the West to grand narratives, as well as the more conventional and explicable obsessions of professional historians everywhere with erudition, detail and archival research. How could this contemporaneously significant, politically necessary and morally imperative style of history meet the standards of rigour long established for the social sciences and for national and international histories are not questions that are easy to evade or to answer. Could the respect

for evidence, the comprehension of contexts, aspirations for imaginative insights and elegant clarification demanded by modern micro-history be satisfied?

Japanese history with deep roots in Rankean scholarship continues to be meticulous in its attention to detail, while China's ancient tradition in writing encyclopaedic histories of imperial dynasties could only strengthen a preference for world, rather than the more refined and complex approach to global history that the editors have in mind. Furthermore, objections to the whole notion for global history (particularly if it is explicitly comparative) as a moral malign agenda for Western triumphalism and cultural domination continue to be made by European as well as Chinese radicals, who have suffered from both.

Nevertheless, there has been a revival of grand narratives and most historians now recognize that further and prolonged engagement with philosophers for history, linguistic turns and literary theory are producing diminishing returns and bore their students.

For millennia, historians from all civilizations (Chinese, Japanese, Islamic and European) have been involved with the problem of how best to reconcile religious beliefs, cultural norms and packages of "modernities" from outside their communities, polities and empires with the indigenous traditions and traditional values they wish to preserve.

How these interactions between the local and the global played out historically in the port cities of East Asia and the Spanish Empire in the context of maritime commerce is cogently analysed with respect for facts and imaginatively conveyed by the chapters in a book that sets out to expose the role and connections rather than the divisions or ranks in a global history of civilizations.

This collection of scholarly essays exposes and illustrates an early modern history of the East in the West. They represent the most persuasive way of persuading a conservative profession to welcome a style of history that has escaped from national narratives, avoids centrism and evades invidious comparisons. This volume should allay the fears or anxieties of Chinese, Japanese and European and Latin American historians who have been explicitly sceptical if not antipathetic to the global turn. Indeed, as the editors hoped, they are 'polycentric' and represent an innovative, ideologically neutral and enlightened approach to a global history for these times of inescapable and intensified globalization.

These chapters represent history that is politically, economically and culturally significant for the great debates of our times, not because

the subject could recover truth and hard evidence about the past, but because an understanding of the economic, social and political processes that are intrinsic to maritime commerce can be acute and useful. The opportunity should be seized because history without purpose or agendas is just another form of literature. Yes, ironic detachment and careful attention to evidence are universal virtues to be nurtured. But so too are the construction and reconfiguration of meta-narratives, which will educate societies, appeal to the young and serve the needs of dangerous times for a sense of global citizenship. Anything less would be folly and, as Bolingbroke anticipated, folly can be remedied 'by historical study which should purge the mind of national partialities and prejudices. For a wise man looks upon himself as a citizen of the world'.²

Patrick O'Brien
Emeritus Professor University of London and
Fellow of St. Antonys College
University of Oxford

NOTES

1. Quoted by A.G. Frank, *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1998), p. ix.
2. B. Southgate, *Why Bother with History?* (London, Longman, 2000), p. 163.

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This book is the result of the 1st GECEM ('Global Encounters between China and Europe: Trade Networks, Consumption and Cultural Exchanges in Macau and Marseille, 1680–1840') workshop, *Quantitative Economic History and Open Science in China and Europe* (host by the University of Chicago-Center in Beijing, China, November 21, 2016), and the 2nd GECEM workshop, *New Technologies, and Databases to Analyse Modern Economic Growth in China and Europe* (host by the Pablo de Olavide University, Seville, Spain February 8, 2017). The long-lasting academic cooperation between Lucio de Sousa and I through the organization of several academic meetings and talks in Beijing, Macau and Tokyo, helped us to come up with the idea of founding an academic network on global history in 2011, *Global History Network* (GHN), invigorating the field in China and Japan. Joining synergies with outstanding experts from Asia, Europe, and the Americas, we might gain a complete picture on the implementation and new directions of global history. The obtaining of my European Research Council (ERC) Starting-Grant in the Fall of 2015, *Global Encounters between China and Europe* (GECEM project) has made possible the current cooperation with Palgrave Macmillan. This book is the first in the series on *Palgrave Studies in Comparative Global History*. The GECEM project, in constant cooperation with the GHN, has contributed to this book. Liu Beicheng, Naotoshi Kurosawa, Patrick O'Brien, Joe McDermott, François Gipouloux, Patt Manning, Shigeru Akita, Antonio Ibarra, Jack Owens, Harriet Zurndorfer, Richard Von Glahn, Bartolome Yun, Anne McCants, Gakusho Nakajima, Mihoko Oka, Carlos Marichal and Colin

Mackerras have been constantly offering us the support, courage and confidence to undertake this work and continue to develop the field of global history in China and Japan respectively. The GECEM team, Sergio Serrano as research fellow of GECEM, Marisol Vidales Bernal as project manager of GECEM, Lei Jin and Guimel Hernandez as GECEM PhD researchers, and professor Bartolome Yun Casalilla as senior staff, have correspondingly contributed to arrange the final format, style and edition, as well as the preparation with Palgrave Macmillan to have the book in Open Access.

The task for Lucio and myself, in China and Japan respectively, to implement global history proved to be a daunting yet rewarding journey. Recognized Sinologists and experts in Japanese studies might know what we are referring to. In our case, as Western scholars and faculty staff in China and Japan, the marginal internationalization and very recent ‘academic openness’ in both countries to engage a global academic agenda in higher education systems constitutes the final frontier and obstacle that we both must confront on an everyday basis. For this reason, we sincerely express our gratitude to scholars and friends, as well as our families, who generously give us support in Beijing, Shanghai and Tokyo. This mission requires patience, but mostly personal sacrifices that we have already undertaken. Without the constant support of our parents in Spain and Portugal, this mission might have been fruitless. A big word of thanks to my father, Manuel Perez, who gave me the courage to come to China in 2011, and of course to my wife Marisol, as we have both gone through many odds in our Chinese venture and have of course shed tears of joy. My gratitude to all my family members and friends for their constant inspiration and support. Special thanks to my deceased friend Pedro Lança. You died very young, but your life will always live on in my spirit.

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In this way, the support of the ERC stands out as being of great importance. Likewise, the assistance of the Delegation of the European Union to China and Mongolia and Euraxess China has been crucial in order to carry out outreach activities and scientific networking in China. I have no words to express my thanks for the constant and generous support of Laurent Bochereau (Minister Counsellor, Head of Science, Technology and Environment Section of the Delegation of the European Union to China and Mongolia) and Andrea Strelçova (former Chief Representative of Euraxess China), their work being of the utmost importance for European and non-European researchers based in China.

Mistakes could have been made, but we can learn from them and improve. Risks must be taken to achieve our goals and objectives, as in life one must bet high: *high risk, high gain*.

Beijing, Fall 2016

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