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Chris Hann (Ed.)

Realising Eurasia.
Empire and Connectivity during
Three Millennia

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Ed. by Chris Hann

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Preface: Recognizing Eurasia[1]

Chris Hann

ABSTRACTS

Die Beiträge in diesem Heft werden in einem konzeptionellen Rahmen zusammengeführt, der dem anhaltenden Gewicht des Eurozentrismus entgegenwirkt, indem er auf langfristige Konnektivitäten und Gemeinsamkeiten in *Eurasien* aufmerksam macht. Dazu werden Ansätze auf Makro- und Mikroebene vorgestellt und maritime wie terrestrische Kommunikationsnetze und verschiedene Formen der politischen Gesellschaft untersucht – von den Agrarimperien der Antike bis zur heutigen Volksrepublik China. Die Autoren, die mehrere Nationalitäten und theoretische Traditionen vertreten, arbeiten in den Bereichen der Sozialanthropologie, der Area Studies, der Geschichtswissenschaft und der (historischen und politischen) Soziologie.

Presenting both macro- and micro-level approaches, exploring maritime as well as terrestrial networks of communication, and investigating diverse forms of political society from the agrarian empires of the ancient world to the People's Republic of China in our era, the essays in this special issue are brought together in a frame that counters the continuing weight of Eurocentrism by drawing attention to long-term connectivities and commonalities across *Eurasia*. The authors (representing multiple nationalities and theoretical traditions) work in Social Anthropology, Area Studies, History and (Historical and Political) Sociology.

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1   This Special Issue derives from a panel at the Fifth European Congress on World and Global History (Budapest, 31 August – 3 September 2017). Our title was "Empires, exchange and civilizational connectivity in Eurasia". Dagmar Schäfer was among the presenters but was unable to write up her paper for this issue. We are delighted that Jack Goldstone was able to come on board to round off the set. My thanks to all authors for patiently revising their papers for this publication.

The world of the early twenty-first century is still very much in thrall to the idea of sovereign nation-states. However illusionary this state model, given the entanglements of political economy, the consolidation of supra-national organizations, and massive power differentials, it remains entrenched. The nation-state is the hallmark of industrial modernity, in the same way that empire is taken to be the archetypal form of what Ernest Gellner theorized as the Agrarian Age. Gellner's philosophy of history has a materialist foundation, but the new order has a distinct emotional dimension in unprecedented forms of collective belonging. Whereas *Agraria* was characterized by complex multiculturalism, *Industria* creates homogenized linguistic and cultural units that have to be (for the efficient functioning of an industrial society) "congruent" with the political units.[2]

As the continuing interest in Geller's oeuvre indicates, these ideal types have been productive. But they have been found wanting in numerous respects. One complaint is that the genesis and dissemination of nationalism does not correlate well with the rise of industrialism. Another is that Gellner exaggerates the homogeneity of the nation-state and fails to deal with the new forms of migration and cultural diversity that seem endemic to mature *Industria*. New forms of imperialism have emerged in the wake of the formal dissolution of both "continental" and "overseas" empires in the course of the twentieth century, but Gellner does not investigate these, or their relation to global political economy. As a characterization of several thousand years of human history, the model of *Agraria* is similarly deficient. Can Gellner's favourite examples, the Ottoman Empire and the Habsburg Empire, really stand for empire everywhere, e.g. in East Asia? What about the many communities that did not practise any form of agriculture and were hardly integrated into the empires at all?[3]

Historians and anthropologists looking to grasp the contours of human history in more precise and comprehensive ways than Ernest Gellner evidently need more conceptual tools to do so. One helpful tool-box is that offered by historical sociologist Johann P. Arnason.[4] Building especially on Marcel Mauss's seminal theorizing of *civilisation* as a "family of societies", Arnason argues that civilizations are fluid macro social formations that are found throughout human history. Civilization is, of course, a problematic term due to the baggage it has accumulated, from the Enlightenment binaries that opposed "us" to savages, to contemporary notions of a liberal Christian Europe versus its multitudinous enemies. Most historians and social scientists have ignored it. This is particularly

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2   Ernest Gellner, Nations and Nationalism, Oxford 1983. See also Gellner, Plough, Sword and Book. The Structure of Human History, London 1988.

3   The scholarly literature on empires is vast and rapidly expanding. Major recent contributions include Krishan Kumar. Visions of Empire. How Five Imperial Regimes Shaped the World, Princeton 2017; Hans-Heinrich Nolte, Kurze Geschichte der Imperien, Wien 2017. Nolte specifies rigorous criteria for recognizing an empire and covers altogether fourteen imperial or quasi-imperial polities. The USA is classified as a "globale Nation" rather than an "Imperium". Nolte has little to say concerning the European Union, though this polity is nowadays vigorously critiqued as a "liberal empire" by some of its own citizens (notably the Prime Minister of Hungary, Viktor Orbán).

4   Johann P. Arnason, Civilizations in Dispute: Historical Questions and Theoretical Traditions, Leiden 2003. Johann P. Arnason and Chris Hann (eds.), Anthropology and Civilizational Analysis: Eurasian Explorations, Albany 2018.

true of German scholarship, due to the continuing legacy of the binary that opposes *Zivilisation* to *Kultur*.[5]

Yet the concept of civilization is potentially helpful in accounting for the rise and decline of Eurasian agrarian empires, discussed in this Special Issue by Krishan Kumar. The pastoral nomads of the steppe represent another type of civilization, but, as Marie Favereau stresses in the following contribution, the case of the Mongols can only be grasped in terms of their intimate connections with sedentary neighbours. This particular civilizational encounter was evidently conducive both to enhanced trade across the Eurasian landmass and substantial intra-civilizational economic transformations. It is a similar story in the Indian Ocean World explored by Burkhard Schnepel. For many centuries, and again in own era, civilizational boundaries in this vast region reflected the expansion of Chinese influence. The interaction of Europeans and Asians which followed the maritime expansion of the West can also be fruitfully approached through Arnason's language of civilizational encounters. The micro-level study by Ildikó Bellér-Hann shows that the oasis of Qumul is a Silk Road hub where different civilizations have overlapped during millennia (in recent centuries primarily those of China and Islam). Finally, though he uses the term culture rather than civilization, in his contribution Jack Goldstone shows how consciousness of imperial traditions influences the power holders who are managing the rejuvenation of China that is unfolding in the twenty-first century.

I discuss civilizational analysis in more depth in the paper that follows. Adding the dimension of civilization helps to correct the inadequacy of a model that theorizes modernity in terms of the transition from empires to nation-states. But it is also necessary to address the geographical imagination that assigns both to "continents". When problems arise in doing so, not only with Alexander the Great but also in more recent centuries in the case of Russia, instead of questioning the notion of continent (a relatively recent artefact of Western Eurasian historical writing), we tend to say that the Russian Empire and its successors (including the present Federation) straddle two continents. But the history of the Eurasian landmass in recent millennia does not support the binary that opposes Europe to Asia.

In the opening paper I elaborate a multidisciplinary approach that synthesizes the perspectives of Jack Goody (especially concerning "alternating leadership" between East and West) and Karl Polanyi (who offers the tools to analyse a very long-run dialectic of market exchange and redistribution). I begin with the concept of Eurasia, which has not been adequately theorized hitherto and is frequently used ideologically. I argue that attention to the common characteristics and connectivity of Eurasian civilizations is an indispensable corrective to the Western Eurasian (European) bias that has infected so much historiography, including that of the social sciences since their inception. Mainstream accounts (at least in the Euro-American narratives) of world history have long been constructed on the premise of a breakthrough in Europe. Ernest Gellner was one of

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5   Norbert Elias, Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation. Soziogenetische und psychogenetische Untersuchungen, 2 vols, Basel 1939 (second edition1969).

many scholars who subscribed to the notion of a "European miracle."[6] Towards the end of the twentieth century, when the club of wealthy, successfully modernizing East Asian states was joined by the People's Republic of China, the Eurocentrism of the dominant narratives began to be questioned.[7] Alternative models with quite different spatial and temporal characteristics were put forward. The pendulum continues to swing: in recent years, it is possible to detect a "pushing back" against those accused of belittling the unique contributions of Europe.[8]

The dust has not yet settled on these debates and perhaps it never will. A satisfactory account of human history will need to combine investigations of socio-economic conditions (including demographic variables and labour productivity) with analysis of ideas and ideologies, including religions. Universal history aspires to transcend the particular contexts of its genesis and does not flatten out important sources of difference. But later analysts will always seek to disentangle the local roots of even the most ambitious attempts to grasp the general and the universal. For the purposes of theorizing Eurasia, the most pertinent body of literature is that which has become known as Axial Age theory. I assess the debates surrounding this concept and its prominent place in civilizational analysis in my paper below.

My argument concludes by considering an alternative binary to that which celebrates the achievements of Western Europe and its offshoot in North America vis-à-vis the East and the rest of the world. Instead of "the West versus the rest", I suggest that the old dichotomy "old world versus new world" might offer a better understanding of the dilemmas of our moment in history. When President Donald Trump shuts down his government and (in his 2019 State of the Union address) rails against "socialism" as being incompatible with the values of the American people, he is rhetorically positioning himself (cleverly and effectively, in the eyes of seasoned commentators) for the next presidential election in 2020. At the same time, he is drawing attention to oceanic chasms, because the blatant denigration of government and ideals of collective responsibility and solidarity is hardly conceivable in the rooted civilizational traditions of either Western or Eastern Eurasia. Of course, other states of the New World are much closer to endorsing the models that have evolved in the Old World; it is not inconceivable that they will eventually prevail in the USA. But nor is it inconceivable that an individualist, pro-market nexus, punctuated by phases of populist protectionism, will undermine the solidarities which evolved to contain libertarian impulses in the Old World. In this precarious contest, it is all

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6   Eric L. Jones, The European Miracle. Environments, Economies, and Geopolitics in the History of Europe and Asia, Cambridge 1981; John A. Hall and Jean Baechler (eds.), Europe and the Rise of Capitalism, Oxford 1988.

7   Andre Gunder Frank and Barry K. Gills (eds.), The World System. Five Hundred Years or Five Thousand?, London / New York 1993; Jack Goody, The East in the West, Cambridge 1996; André Gunder Frank, ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age, Berkeley 1998; Kenneth Pomeranz, The Great Divergence. China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy, Princeton 2000; Jack Goldstone, Why Europe?, New York 2008.

8   Peer Vries, Via Peking back to Manchester: Britain, the Industrial Revolution, and China, Leiden 2003; Ian Morris, Why the West Rules – For Now: The Patterns of History and What They Reveal about the Future, New York 2010; Jürgen Kocka and Marcel Van der Linden (eds.), Capitalism. The Reemergence of a Historical Concept, London 2016.

the more important to recognize commonalities across the civilizational pluralism of Eurasia. At present the contrast to the USA is starkly evident on issues such as climate accords, universal health care and pensions, not to mention access to weapons for the citizenry. But the most important challenge is responsible regulation of the economy and world trade in the interests of social justice and planetary stewardship.

The issue continues with a wide-ranging overview of empires by historical sociologist Krishan Kumar, who emphasizes the aspirations to "universalism" that distinguish (world) empires from other types of political community. The enduring exemplar is that of Alexander the Great. We owe most of what we know about Alexander to the Romans, but of course his empire was not limited to the eastern Mediterranean. Alexander conquered and tried to integrate the Achaemenid Persian Empire, he was a reference point for Mauryan India, later for the entire Muslim world, and even for those Europeans who reached the Orient by maritime routes. Noting not only the spatial connectivities that resulted from commercial and military encounters but also the complex temporal continuities through which imperial social orders are reproduced, Kumar concludes that we can speak of "a continuous experience of empire across the entire Eurasian landmass" since the Axial Age.

The empires explored by Kumar are familiar to us in the sense that they represent forms of "high culture" based on literate, sedentarized populations with large cities and complex divisions of craft labour. Not all Eurasian empires conformed to such a model. Historian Marie Favereau explores the steppe empire created by Chinggis Khan and maintained over a century by his descendants. She shows that it is erroneous to approach the century-long Mongol Peace with the paradigm (contentious with reference to its primary object) of Pax Romana. Rather, Favereau invites us to begin with the distinctive concepts and cosmology of the Mongols themselves, in order to grasp how the expansion of trade in "luxury" items fed into redistribution and the reproduction of status hierarchy in Mongol society. Both foreign and Mongol merchants were supported by the khans and their administrations at multiple levels. Merchants were granted access to the *yam* network of communications and incentivized to settle permanently in new ports of trade. When maritime links to China via the Persian Gulf became problematic due to the decline of the port of Tabriz, in the 1330s the Venetians responded by accepting the initiatives of the Jochid khan and further developing the northern, terrestrial route. While long distance trade between China and Europe was the ultimate goal of many merchants, Favereau shows that the institutional supports created by the Mongol rulers were simultaneously conducive to commerce on more modest local and regional scales throughout this Eurasian space.

If the steppe lands to the north played a key role in the intensification of connectivity across Eurasia, so too did "seaborne empires" to the south. Social anthropologist Burkhard Schnepel, engaging with the interdisciplinary field of Indian Ocean Studies, reminds us of the importance of Chinese explorers, diplomats and traders (above all Admiral Zheng He in the early fifteenth century). The Western Europeans who arrived on the scene later misrecognized the "polycentric" political systems they encountered

in South Asia. The port cities of the Srivajaya empire (Malacca Straits) were a notable example, more akin to the Hanseatic League than to a centralized European monarchy. Schnepel analyses these cities as hubs in dense networks of "connectivity in motion," both in relation to each other and to their respective hinterlands. He goes on to illustrate "the art of hubbing" on the island of Mauritius, where he has conducted long-term field research. After deconstructing the "ethnic" categories conventionally used to denote collective identities, Schnepel concludes at the level of "individual and family hubbing" with a close-up analysis of continuity and change among Franco-Mauritians since the late eighteenth century.

Ildikó Bellér-Hann brings us back to the heart of terrestrial Eurasia with her case study from the Silk Road oasis of Qumul (Chinese: Hami) in what today is the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China. This Silk Road hub lies at the boundary between sedentary agriculturalists and the steppe to the north. Of greater significance for Bellér-Hann is its location on an east-west boundary. Qumul is positioned at the extreme eastern edge of the Turkic-Muslim world. A Muslim dynasty maintained a degree of autonomy from the expansive Chinese empire until 1930, but contemporary elites are obliged to construct regional and ethnic identities within the dual constraints of socialist ideology and Beijing's concerns over Uyghur secessionism. The indigenous narratives extracted by Bellér-Hann from a recently published biographical dictionary of "outstanding personalities" of the oasis make little use of Silk Road imagery and do not invoke grand geostrategic projects. Bellér-Hann shows, however, that the subjects treated are deeply embedded in transregional and transnational networks. Methodologically the analysis of these life-histories constitutes an original example of relational history, in which grand narratives, whether of the kind proffered by Jack Goody or by nationalist politicians in the reform era of the PRC, are connected to the level of metis and the perspectives of local actors. These biographical texts offer rich seams of data concerning tradition, stability and social change in a province that is currently subject to extraordinary repressive measures, apparently designed to ensure the definitive assimilation of the Uyghurs into the Chinese nation-state.

Jack Goldstone concludes the issue with an assessment of how the present rulers of this polity are endeavouring to restore its traditional standing as the "middle kingdom", central to trade and politics not just in Eurasia but in the world. The Belt and Road Initiative of President Xi Jinping is a massive investment programme with military and geostrategic as well as economic and technological implications for the planet. It proclaims distinctive messages, which can be interpreted as forms of "soft power" (exemplified by Confucius Institutes) that contradict the assumptions of Euro-American liberal social science. According to Goldstone, imperial China was never the monolithic political unity that the West frequently imagined it to be. But while the old dynastic empire proved incapable of meeting modern challenges in the nineteenth century, now, in the twenty-first century, the communist-led nation-state is well on the way to confirming the validity of Jack Goody's long-term model of alternating leadership. These processes are currently transforming the life worlds of ethnic minority citizens in cities such as

Qumul / Hami, discussed in the paper by Bellér-Hann. What this new phase of Chinese hegemony or world empire (without the hyphen) might mean for the planet in the era of the Anthropocene (also known as the Capitalocene but perhaps, as I shall argue, best viewed as the *Eurasiacene*) remains to be seen.

Eurasian Dynamics: From Agrarian Axiality to the Connectivities of the Capitalocene

Chris Hann

ABSTRACTS

Der einleitende Beitrag umreißt einen Rahmen, der die Dynamik der eurasischen Landmasse (flexibel definiert) in den Mittelpunkt der Weltgeschichte der letzten drei Jahrtausende stellt. Konzepte von Kulturraum, Zivilisation und Weltsystem werden kritisch überprüft. Besonderes Augenmerk gilt den Theorien der Achsenzeit, die sowohl religiöse als auch säkulare Varianten der Transzendenz umfassen, sowie deren Rolle bei der Legitimation politischer Institutionen. Diese Ansätze werden durch den Rückgriff auf den anthropo-archäologischen Materialismus von Jack Goody ergänzt, der die „alternierende Führung" zwischen Ost und West betont. Der Fokus von Goody auf die wachsende städtische Differenzierung in den agrarischen Reichen der Bronzezeit kann erweitert werden, indem das Spektrum der Zivilisationen über die der intensiven Landwirtschaft hinaus ausgedehnt wird. Dieser Ansatz lässt sich mit theoretischen Erkenntnissen von Karl Polanyi gewinnbringend kombinieren, um eine neue historische ökonomische Anthropologie anzuregen, die es uns ermöglicht, verschiedene Varianten des Sozialismus auf die Formen der sozialen Inklusion und der „imperialen sozialen Verantwortung" zurückzuführen, die in der Achsenzeit entstanden sind. Der Aufsatz argumentiert weiterhin, dass die eurasischen Zivilisationen, die die „große Dialektik" zwischen Umverteilung und Marktaustausch hervorgebracht haben, angesichts der Widersprüche der heutigen neoliberalen politischen Ökonomie die beste Hoffnung sind, um die Spannungen des Kapitalozäns (angemessener wäre „Eurasiazän") aufzulösen.

This introductory paper outlines a frame that places the dynamics of the Eurasian landmass (flexibly defined) at the centre of world history in the last three millennia. Concepts of culture area, civilization and world system are critically reviewed. Particular attention is paid to Axial Age theories, including both religious and secular variants of transcendence, and their role in

the legitimation of political institutions. These approaches are supplemented with recourse to the anthropo-archaeological materialism of Jack Goody, who emphasizes "alternating leadership" between East and West. Goody's focus on increasing urban differentiation in the agrarian empires of the Bronze Age can be expanded by widening the range of civilizations considered beyond those based on intensive agriculture. This approach can be fruitfully combined with theoretical insights of Karl Polanyi to inspire a new historical economic anthropology that allows us to trace multiple varieties of socialism back to the forms of social inclusion and "imperial social responsibility" that emerged in the Axial Age. It is further argued that, in the light of the contradictions of contemporary neoliberal political economy, the Eurasian civilizations that launched the "great dialectic" between redistribution and market exchange are the best hope we have for resolving the tensions of the Capitalocene (which might be more appropriately termed Eurasiacene).

The papers gathered in this Special Issue illuminate multiple facets of the history of Eurasia and the world in the last three millennia.[1] While any starting point is in a sense arbitrary, for the purposes of theorizing Eurasia the most pertinent body of literature is that which has become known as Axial Age theory, which continues to generate debate.[2] Its most influential exponent was the German philosopher Karl Jaspers in the years immediately following the Second World War.[3] Jaspers' identification of an "axial" transformation in five distinct locations between the eastern Mediterranean and China across the Eurasian landmass in the five centuries between 800 BCE and 300 BCE was by no mean altogether without precedent in European historical narratives. If one strand in Enlightenment thought was to emphasize universal reason, with its apotheosis in Paris, another strand, with its primary intellectual centres in the German-speaking world, emphasized the plurality of human cultures and the unique value of each one of them. Further distinctions were drawn as various scholars pluralized the notion of civilization, while restricting its use to a limited set of "high cultures". Anquetil-Duperron seems to have been the first to notice the coincidence of striking innovations in human cosmologies in the middle of the first millennium BCE.[4] Numerous scholars pursued this line of enquiry in the course of the nineteenth century. The formulation of a "moral revolution" by Scottish

2   Johann P. Arnason, Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, and Björn Wittrock (eds.), Axial Civilizations and World History, Leiden 2005; Robert N. Bellah and Hans Joas, The Axial Age and Its Consequences, Cambridge, MA 2012; Robert N. Bellah, Religion in Human Evolution: From the Paleolithic to the Axial Age, Cambridge, MA 2011.
3   Karl Jaspers, The Origin and Goal of History, translated by Michael Bullock, first published in 1949, Abingdon, UK 2010.
4   Abraham Hyacinthe Anquetil-Duperron, Zend-Avesta, ouvrage de Zoroastre: contenant les idées théologiques, physiques & morales de ce législateur, Vol. 1, Paris 1771. See also John Torpey, The Three Axial Ages: Moral, Material, Mental, New Brunswick, NJ 2017.

folklorist John Stuart-Glennie is one intervention that has become prominent in recent research. According to these arguments, new notions of *transcendence* (not necessarily in the form of a monotheistic God) initiated forms of normative regulation that promoted the solidarity of the community. While the contributions to Axial Age theorizing differ considerably, most can be understood as responses to the world domination of Western Eurasian powers, and then, more specifically, to the catastrophes which engulfed them in the twentieth century. Jaspers' formulations following the Second World War were a reaction to that cataclysm, comparable to that of Max Scheler following the First World War.[5]

Some aspects of axiality theorizing seem too vague to be tested. Some have suggested that the concept of Axial Age can be pluralized, for example by identifying the onset of industrialization or our ongoing digital revolution as equivalent moments of rupture.[6] But this would hardly be compatible with the main thesis of Jaspers, which asserts a momentous shift in the capacity of human cognition, involving reflexivity, criticism and individuality, that cannot be matched by any later transformations. Jaspers was a German idealist philosopher, in a lineage established by Kant and Hegel. His vision is one that downplays the distinctive features of the five cases treated, as well as possible links between them. When its propositions are formulated as testable propositions, e.g. concerning the prevalence of new moralizing norms backed up by formal legal codes, the locations and centuries identified by Jaspers receive no clear confirmation in the historical-archaeological record.[7]

A second key field of ongoing debate is the connection between the new modes of thought and *politics*, more specifically the organization and legitimation of states larger in scale and more complex than any previous polities. No consensus has emerged concerning the links between empire and cosmology. Johann Arnason, one of the most influential contributors to the debates in recent decades, has concluded that it is impossible to identify any general pattern. The contrasts between the city states of Greece and the embryonic unity of China are so great that no concept of empire can be stretched to cover both; they require separate, singular narratives.[8] In any case, conceptions of empire changed radically towards the end of the Axial Age, in the wake of Alexander the Great, as Krishan Kumar demonstrates in this issue. In later centuries, both land-based and maritime empires enabled the dissemination of goods and ideas and the trans-Eurasian mobility of their human carriers.

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5   Max Scheler, Krieg und Aufbau, Leipzig 1916. Jan Assmann is currently writing a comprehensive account of these contributions and my discussion draws on his presentation at the Uppsala Workshop (see note 1).

6   Torpey, The Three Axial Ages.

7   Daniel A. Mullins et al, A Systematic Assessment of 'Axial Age' Proposals Using Global Comparative Historical Evidence, in: American Sociological Review 83 (2018) 3: 596-626.

8   Johann P. Arnason, Rehistoricizing the Axial Age, in: The Axial Age and Its Consequences, eds. Robert N. Bellah and Hans Joas, Cambridge, MA 2012, pp. 337-65. While he does not consider axiality to be a "meaningful concept", Arnason retains "Axial Age" as an "Epochenbegriff". In his view, "redefinitions of the link between politics and religion" reveal a "common problematic behind the different patterns" found in the civilizations originally identified by Jaspers (Arnason, personal communication).

At this point it is important to clarify my understanding of Eurasia. Contrary to a substantial Russian historiography that privileges the role of the Russian nation in the forging of a vast intercontinental space, and certain Euro-American approaches which replicate this focus on an *interface* between Europe and Asia, the definition adopted here is one that rejects the *a priori* existence of Europe and Asia as distinct continents.[9] This construction, which derives ultimately from the ancient Greeks, has no civilizational justification. The Eurasia which concerns us is not confined to the landmass conventionally described as Europe and Asia but includes the southern shores of the Mediterranean. At the same time, the historical model of Eurasia as "Old World", based on the agrarian empires of temperate geographical zones, with their epicentre in Mesopotamia, is clearly not congruent with the entire territory of the world's largest landmass. In the long history of intensifying connectivity, some regions were more involved than others. The civilizations of the steppe were of great importance, as Marie Favereau demonstrates in this issue. Vast expenses of ice and tundra were hardly incorporated in substantive ways until recent generations. Like the enclaves of "tribal" society that persisted in the heart of many agrarian empires, such regions formed "remote" parts of the Eurasian dynamic. But this kind of complexity does not invalidate generalizing about "Eurasian history" any more than the persistence of Sami nomadic cultures invalidates generalizations about the history of Europe. Conventional emphasis on the agrarian empires implies a concentration on the terrestrial, and on arteries of communication such as the original Silk Routes. This is clearly insufficient. Just as we need to look north of the agrarian empires to understand the contribution of the polities of the steppe, so we need also to look south and engage with the Indian Ocean World in order to grasp maritime connectivities. This is the subject of Burkhard Schnepel's contribution to this issue. Our conception of Eurasia must be flexible enough to include the Swahili coast of Africa as well as the southern shores of the Mediterranean.[10]

Approaches to Macro-History

The concept of Eurasia is a challenge to powerful narratives in history and the social sciences that oppose a stagnant Orient to a dynamic Occident and, more fundamentally, tradition to modernity. It is not just the notion of "continent" that needs to be questioned. Concepts such as "society" and "culture" are also problematic to the extent that they reflect the prominence of the nation-state as a hegemonic form of polity in our era.[11] Many attempts have been made to correct the distortions that arise from these blinkers, in order to move global history to a more truly universal level.

9   Chris Hann, A Concept of Eurasia, in: Current Anthropology 57 (2016) 1: 1-27.
10   This point was emphasized at the Budapest panel by Dagmar Schäfer.
11   Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller, Methodological Nationalism and Beyond: Nation-State Building, Migration and the Social Sciences, in: Global Networks 2 (2002) 4: 301-334.

The concept of culture area constitutes a significant contribution from socio-cultural anthropology. It can be traced back to the German-speaking countries before the First World War under the name *Kulturgeschichte*.[12] Ethnologists, as they came to be known at the time, often based in museums where they were confronted with artefacts of diverse provenance, worked out rigorous methods for reconstructing the likely paths of their diffusion. Some emphasized the constraints set by the material environment, others were more interested in kinship and domestic organization, others again in rituals and cosmological beliefs. Eventually, following the so-called "fieldwork revolution", a great deal of twentieth-century anthropology was devoted to the investigation of how all of these fitted together to form holistic localized societies. Meanwhile to grasp larger scales the concept of culture area was developed in North America. It was associated with the quantitative analyses enabled by the "Human Relations Area Files," developed by George Peter Murdock.[13] This database has been continuously refined but, in a discipline that is nowadays primarily oriented to the gathering of new ethnographic data, it has acquired a largely historical (even antiquarian) character. It might be supposed that the accelerated flows of globalization would revive interest in diffusionist methods and the potential for identifying culture areas in the twenty-first century; but this does not seem to be happening. In Eurasia as elsewhere, the older ethnological approaches are more useful to archaeologists engaging with prehistory than to global historians. In anthropology, the concept of culture area has been largely relegated to disciplinary history.

The concept of civilization warrants more careful inspection. Definitional uncertainty and normative associations have dogged this term since it was coined in the eighteenth century.[14] Despite these confusions, a plural, non-normative concept of *civilisation* was productively developed by Émile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss in the first decades of the twentieth century.[15] This drew on their familiarity with contemporary work in German ethnology, but it was intended to capture much more than the museological traits which dominated *Kulturgeschichte*. A *civilisation* was a "family of societies" and non-literate aboriginal Australia furnished excellent illustrations. *Civilization* was a macro-level complement to *society*, the master concept of Durkheimian sociology. In this sense, it was potentially applicable to all human societies in time and space. However, although Mauss returned to the theme after his uncle's death, his later writings on the subject remained fragmentary. As Johann Arnason has shown, the civilizational dimension has been of considerable importance in French anthropology down to the present day, even if the word itself is seldom employed. But it has been explored selectively in regions such

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12 The best known variant of German diffusionist theory is the *Kulturkreislehre* of the Vienna School of Pater Wilhelm Schmidt. See Andre Gingrich, The German-speaking Countries, pp. 59-15 in One Discipline, Four Ways: British, German, French, and American Anthropology, Fredrik Barth et al., Chicago 2005.

13 George P. Murdock, Ethnographic Atlas, Pittsburgh, PA 1967.

14 Johann P. Arnason, Civilizations in Dispute: Historical Questions and Theoretical Conditions, Leiden 2003.

15 See Nathan Schlanger (ed.), Techniques, Technology and Civilization. Marcel Mauss, New York 2006.

as Amazonia, remote from the prime locations of recent planetary transformations in Eurasia.[16]

In contrast to the analysis of culture areas, civilizational analysis has been a more interdisciplinary enterprise. When it comes to Eurasia, the work of historians has been complemented by sociologists and many others. Not all embraced the term civilization and those who did, most famously Braudel, often did so loosely and ambiguously.[17] Working in a Weberian tradition, Shmuel Eisenstadt theorized agrarian empires as an ideal-type and later supplemented this political sociology with an engagement with Axial Age ideas.[18] By the end of the twentieth century the concept of civilization had been taken up by other, more powerful voices. The most influential was that of political scientist Samuel Huntington, who soon after the end of the Cold War proclaimed that the old East-West rift was now being replaced by a "clash of civilizations."[19] This usage was diametrically opposed to that of Arnason, and behind him of Mauss, Durkheim and many others, for whom civilizations are never the closed, essentialized entities projected by Huntington. Whether or not the term civilization is considered to be too contaminated by its Enlightenment origins and its associations in the contemporary public sphere to be deployed analytically in historical analysis, it does raise other problems. From the point of view of political economy, it is open to the same principled objection as the idealist notion of Axial Age: to focus on civilization is to neglect the realities of material existence. The most influential attempt to identify larger units of analysis in order to transcend particularist (cultural) boundaries, irrespective of their level (societal or civilizational), is the world-system approach of Immanuel Wallerstein.[20] Wallerstein has devoted most of his career to analysing the "modern world-system" of capitalist accumulation since the sixteenth century. He insists, however, that his method can be adapted for the study of earlier periods. The terminology is confusing because not even the modern world-system embraces the entire world (though this is nowadays belatedly coming about in the course of accelerating globalization). Rather, "world-system" refers to a complex constellation of "world-economy" and "world-empire" in which the "world" is the signifier of connectivity. According to Wallerstein, the modern world-system is characterized by the endless accumulation of capital. This has been made possible by an interstate system in which particular polities (Great Britain in the nineteenth century and the United States in the twentieth) exercise hegemony, but not as a "world-empire" in the manner that, for example, the Romans (discussed in this issue by Kumar) or the Chinese dynasties (discussed

16   Johann P. Arnason, Mauss Revisited: The Birth of Civilizational Analysis from the Spirit of Anthropology, in: Civilizational Analysis and Anthropology. Eurasian Explorations, eds. Johann P. Arnason and Chris Hann, Albany, NY 2018, pp. 1-33.

17   Fernand Braudel, Civilization and Capitalism, 15th–18th century, 3 vols., Berkeley 1982–84. See also Braudel, A History of Civilizations, New York 1993.

18   Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, The Political Systems of Empires, New York 1963; Idem, Axial Age Civilization and the Axial Age Reconsidered, in: Axial Civilizations and World History, eds. Johann P. Arnason et al., Leiden 2005, pp. 531-64; see also Sheldon Pollock, Axialism and Empire, ibid., pp. 397-450.

19   S.P. Huntington, The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order, New York 1996.

20   For a mature outline, see Immanuel Wallerstein, World-systems Analysis. An Introduction, Durham, NC. 2004.

by Goldstone) formed world-empires. World-empires are a threat to the logic of capital accumulation because they are liable to disturb the norms of the world-economy.

From this perspective, the most exciting question in the geopolitical debates of our era is whether the ancient civilization of China is currently morphing not simply into the new dominant player in the interstate system but into a world-empire capable of changing the rules of the game at the planetary level. In any case, the recent rise of the People's Republic poses a challenge to the caesura that has dominated the work of Immanuel Wallerstein. He acknowledges that key diagnostic features of commodity economy (including money, credit and wage-labour) were present in East Asia in ancient times, but distinguishes these earlier forms from fully-fledged capitalism. Following Braudel, he maintains that capitalist modernity began only in the age when the far West of the landmass entered the most dynamic period in its history. But if we remove the ubiquitous hyphens from the conceptual apparatus provided by Wallerstein and aim instead, in the spirit of a universal history, to explain planetary transformation, then the case for privileging Western Eurasia is by no means obvious. It is necessary to acknowledge the technologies of production and communication developed in the course of inter-civilizational encounters across and at the edges of the landmass over a much longer period.

The Materialist, Anthropo-archaeological Approach of Jack Goody

The social anthropologist Jack Goody arrived at a concept of Eurasia by a distinctive route that privileged neither ideas and moralities in the manner of the Axial Age theorists, nor political economy in the manner of the Marxists. Goody analysed production and consumption in the context of a comprehensive vision of technologies of communication and evolving social relations, with particular attention to domestic organization and the intergenerational transmission of property. From his perspective, the classical philosophical texts of the Axial Age are explicable by the development of literacy (however restricted), rather than some prior tectonic shift in human mental and moral capacities. For Goody, while human social relations are continuously in flux, certain key elements of cognition are universal to our species. Changes in this domain are for investigation by evolutionary biologists rather than historians or social scientists. Compared to the proponents of axiality, Jack Goody is therefore a gradualist. He is sceptical of terms such as modernity and capitalism, and never embraced any of the conceptual frameworks discussed in the previous section.

Goody spent the first decades of his academic career as an Africanist, working in small, non-literate, non-centralized communities in what is now northern Ghana.[21] From here, forms of production, consumption, kinship organization and social stratification in agrarian societies across Eurasia looked very similar, in comparison with the simpler,

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21   For an introduction to the work and life of Goody, see Chris Hann, John Rankine Goody, 1919–2015, in: Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the British Academy XVI (2017): 457-81.

more egalitarian forms of sub-Saharan Africa. In Africa, for example, marital payments generally took the form of "horizontal" transfers between kin groups rather than "vertical" transfers to endow the new couple, the paradigmatic form across Eurasia. Bridewealth consisted in the circulation of valuables between groups that were more or less equal in status, whereas dowry constituted a form of pre-mortem inheritance in significantly more differentiated societies. The position of women, notably their role in systems of production and property, reflected this structural difference.[22]

Goody traced these differences back to technologies of production. Both Eurasia and Africa had experienced the Neolithic, but only in Eurasia had intensive forms of agriculture based on the plough produced the surpluses necessary for new forms of urban life to emerge and flourish. In stressing the urban revolution of the Bronze Age, Goody was following archaeologist Gordon Childe (whose Marxist version of prehistory he had first read in a German prisoner of war camp). This chronology posits the era of decisive change well before the centuries identified by Jaspers and other Axial Age theorists. Goody was unswervingly loyal to the Childean account, which he saw as free of the Eurocentric bias of the many social theorists and historians he criticised in his own late work. Goody's last major book was a return to materialist first principles in which he explored the significance of "the search for metals" and the techniques of their mining and processing for the larger story of the emergence of "capitalism", from prehistory to the industrial era.[23]

Apart from his pioneering contributions to the study of kinship and domestic organization, Goody augmented Childe's materialism in two further ways. First, he paid more attention to commerce and consumption. Without denying parallel invention in different Eurasian locations where similar material transformations were under way, he emphasizes the role of commercial relations ("merchant cultures") for the transmission of *knowledge*, over and above the exchange of specific goods and technologies. The demand to consume and display luxury goods is associated with "connoisseurship" on the part of urban elites, which Goody views as an embryonic form of bourgeois social emulation. Following a pioneering investigation of the relationship between haute cuisine and social class in Eurasia, his definitive demonstration of these forms of distinction was a massive study of flowers.[24]

A second field in which Jack Goody significantly embellished the archaeological accounts concerned technologies of communication, above all literacy. This was a salient theme in his oeuvre from early days, when he realised how rapidly changes could take

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22 Jack Goody, The Oriental, the Ancient and the Primitive: Systems of Marriage and the Family in the Pre-industrial Societies of Eurasia, Cambridge 1990.

23 Jack Goody, Metals, Culture and Capitalism: An Essay on the Origins of the Modern World, Cambridge 2012. Others have been more critical of Childe in this regard: see David Wengrow, Comment to Hann's article: The Concept of Eurasia, in: Current Anthropology 57 (2016) 1: 20. See also Maxime N. Brami, The Invention of Prehistory and the Rediscovery of Europe: Exploring the Deeper Intellectual Roots of Gordon Childe's Neolithic 'Revolution' (1936), in: Journal of World Prehistory (forthcoming).

24 Jack Goody, Cooking, Cuisine and Class: A Study in Comparative Sociology, Cambridge 1982; The Culture of Flowers, Cambridge 1993.

place in the orally transmitted myths of the LoDagaa in Northern Ghana. Writing created the possibility to advance knowledge more systematically, including science and technology. In early formulations Goody thought that alphabetic scripts, notably that of the Greeks, heralded the breakthrough. Later he conceded that logographic representations, as in East Asia, could have the same implications for the organization of society and the development of science.[25] He revisited the theme of literacy throughout his career, consistently opposing the hypothesis of Claude Lévi-Strauss, who contrasted "savage thought" to the thought of modern humans. Alongside differences in technology and the devolution of property, new technologies of communication were central to his account of the emergence of more complex and differentiated forms of society. But human beings themselves did not become new creatures in the relatively short time span of these developments. The capacities for "moralizing punishment" and "universal" abstraction celebrated by the Axial Age theorists are present in oral cultures (not merely latent); they are susceptible to intensification when new possibilities arise to store knowledge in textual forms, but the changes are gradual and hardly "axial".

Historical Economic Anthropology: From Imperial Social Responsibility to Socialism

In this section, following a critical assessment of Goody's own critique, I move to a synthesis with the help of a very different thinker. Goody's work on metals and on the merchant cultures of the Indian Ocean world as well as the terrestrial routes is consistent with that of scholars such as Johann Arnason, who emphasize inter-civilizational encounters.[26] He is right to place considerable weight on connectivity, and to remind Western readers that the main features of contractual social relations, "rational" entrepreneurship (including credit and double-entry accounting) were all present in East Asia before the Common Era. They were not "inventions" of the West, any more than notions of democracy, civil society and the *Rechtsstaat* are the unique prerogative of Western Eurasia. Goody is also right to note that clerical literati could, in certain times and places, promote education and critical attitudes to existing knowledge, while at other times their influence was conservative and even repressive. In general, however, he downplays the significance of ideational (or ideological) factors.

Goody may go too far when he asserts that religious ideas played no significant role in themselves, or that they were less important in promoting Eurasian connectivity than the decentralized activities of merchants.[27] He shies away not only from religion but from a consideration of *politics* in the broadest sense. Traders did not operate in a political vacuum. Whether in relatively small city-states or large-scale imperial formations, they

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25   Jack Goody, The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society, Cambridge 1986.
26   Goody does not use the vocabulary of civilizational analysis.
27   This tendency is conspicuous in a late short synthesis: Jack Goody, The Eurasian Miracle, Cambridge 2010.

were always constrained by secular power holders (as Favereau and Bellér-Hann demonstrate in this issue). Changes in the legitimation of power, in the relations between secular and religious officials where these have become differentiated, and in the cosmologies linking both to the wider society, must all be taken into account. One way to open up a more comprehensive approach is to return to the holistic economic anthropology of the polymath Karl Polanyi.[28] In the "substantivist" approach that he elaborated in the 1950s, Polanyi argued that the study of economy must embed the phenomena of production, distribution and exchange in wider societal contexts. Formalist theories in terms of choice-making to maximise profit or utility were rejected in favour of approaches that paid close attention to history. Polanyi himself never worked out a coherent philosophy of history, and he certainly did not work with a concept of Eurasia. What he offers is a general theory of economy that combines material and moral-ethical aspects, and a basic tool-kit for analysis. The central tools are ideal types which he variously called "principles of economic behaviour" and "forms of integration." These are combined in different ways in different social formations. The three types that he retained in his mature work (having dropped the category of "householding") were reciprocity, redistribution and (market) exchange.[29]

For my purposes here, the most interesting types are redistribution and market exchange. Redistribution is characterized by Polanyi as the flow of resources into a centre and their reallocation. His illustrations are taken from historical and ethnographic sources. They include the tribal chief who gathers valued objects together before distributing them to the community (sometimes destroying some or even all of them in the course of elaborate rituals). Redistribution, then, is nothing new in human history. Polanyi eschews evolutionist theory, but there is nonetheless a clear sense in which, in technologically simple societies lacking a political centre, the main form of integration is reciprocity. Redistribution is a principle that emerges later but retains its prominence, even in complex industrial societies, as a counter to the principle of market exchange. Polanyi's major work investigated the catastrophic consequences of the "disembedding" of the economy from social contexts in the laissez-faire "market society" of Britain in the nineteenth century.[30] He was a committed socialist (albeit an unorthodox one), who believed to the end of his life (Polanyi died in 1964 in Canada) that redistribution in the form of central planning, as practised by the Soviet Union and its allies, including his native Hungary, was the only conceivable way to redeem the world from the iniquities of capitalist class society. Polanyi never embraced historical materialism or any other theory that smacked of economic determinism. But he recognized the affinity between the new secular princi-

28   The synthesis advanced here draws on Chris Hann, Long Live Eurasian Civ. Towards a New Confluence of Anthropology and World History, in: Zeitschrift für Ethnologie 142 (2017) 2: 225-44.
29   Karl Polanyi, The Economy as Instituted Process, in: Trade and Market in the Early Empires: Economies in History and Theory, eds. Karl Polanyi et al., Glencoe, IL 1957, 243-70.
30   Karl Polanyi, The Great Transformation. The Political and Economic Origins of our Time, New York 1944.

ples of socialism, enunciated by the prophet Karl Marx, and the earlier doctrines of Jesus Christ, the prophet of Christianity.[31]

From the perspective of Polanyi, the market society of the nineteenth century was an unprecedented distortion of the long-term dialectic between redistribution and market economy. On this occasion the "double movement," whereby society responded to the utopian illusion of the "self-regulating market," led ineluctably to Fascism and the catastrophes of the first half of the twentieth century. It is sometimes argued that Polanyi's call for a "great transformation" was answered shortly after the publication of his *opus magnum* with the post-war settlement and the consolidation of welfare states throughout Western Europe during the next thirty years. Closer inspection of his writings suggests that his socialism was more radical. Redistribution in the guise of socialism was the dominant form of integration across Eurasia in the last decades of his life, when drastic social transformations were implemented even in very remote regions of the landmass, often in the most brutal ways. The milder forms of Western Europe were perhaps exemplified in Scandinavia. Yet Polanyi seems to have doubted that the latter could serve as a general model. Tinkering with capitalism through interventionist policies to regulate markets and ensure higher standards of welfare would not bring more than temporary relief. In the long run, the reformist policies of liberal democracies would only deepen the contradictions of capitalism. This diagnosis was to be confirmed with the rise of neoliberal ideology and the dissolution of the regulatory institutions of Bretton-Woods within a decade of Polanyi's death.

Twentieth century socialism is not merely a reaction to uneven development in the era of industrial capitalism. It certainly is that, but at the same time it embodies a principle of transcendence whose roots must be traced to the universalist principles that received their first elaborate legitimation in the Axial Age. We can speculate on the ultimate origins of this principle. While cooperation and sharing are well documented in "tribal" societies, the agrarian empires of Eurasia (and also the Mongol empire analysed in this issue by Favereau) carried collective organization forward on a new scale. These polities are characterized by the violent extraction of resources and by extremes of economic exploitation, including slavery. But they are also marked by new solidarities and by the consolidation of systems of tribute and taxation that did not depend solely on coercion. This is where the approaches of the classical Axial Age theorists are invaluable. Without subscribing to notions of "moral revolution" and without denying the possibility of "transcendence" in non-literate societies, we must recognize new forms of social inclusion and legitimation in the agrarian empires. The Chinese Emperor enjoys the Mandate of Heaven, but he also carries the burden of responsibilities for all of his people. For many centuries, *charity* on the part of religious and economic elites was more important than the actions of states with little or any fiscal capacity. But increasing differentiation and class inequality were accompanied by new forms of inclusion and belonging that

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31   See Gareth Dale, Karl Polanyi: A Life on the Left, New York 2016. See also Tim Rogan, The Moral Economists: R.H. Tawney, Karl Polanyi, E.P. Thompson, and the Critique of Capitalism, Princeton, NJ 2017.

found their ethical justification in the nexus where politics and religion came together. In the oasis of Qumul, as described by Bellér-Hann in this issue, officials, merchants and rulers alike were expected to be devout in their faith and generous in their support of the society's weaker members. If "corporate social responsibility" is the euphemistic label for the compensatory activities of capitalist corporations, the dominant economic agents of the industrial era, the ethos of the agrarian empires in Eurasia, precursors of the secular ideals of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist socialism, might be described as one of imperial social responsibility.[32]

A New Eurasian Age?

I noted that the interventions of Karl Jaspers in the late 1940s were a significant effort to move beyond teleological narratives that privilege one civilizational tradition. How do the prospects for a trans-Eurasian universal history look seventy years later? No contemporary political entities correspond exactly to the civilizations identified by Jaspers. China comes closest, but Jaspers would surely be disturbed by the way in which the Party ideologists have seized upon his notion of axiality in recent years, deploying it not in a universalist spirit but in Sinocentric terms to assert the antiquity of the Chinese.[33]

The present assertiveness and cultural nationalism of the Middle Kingdom (vividly demonstrated by Jack Goldstone in his contribution to this issue) must be grasped against the background of a dominant "Western" constellation. Euro-American intellectuals have invested heavily in a world order they generally term liberal, which is built on "democratic politics" (implying a plurality of political parties), "human rights," and, in the economic domain, far-reaching scope for the principle of the "free market". But what if the constellation surrounding the political economy of neoliberal globalization is not universal at all, just an ideology that masquerades as such? I have suggested in the preceding section that at the core of Eurasian history we need to recognize unprecedented notions of responsibility, solidarity and social citizenship. Marxist-Leninist-Maoist socialism appears retrospectively as an aberration, because its pseudo-universalism failed in reality to show sufficient respect for the individual human personality that first moved centre-stage

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32 Redistribution is put forward as a general if not universal analytic term by Polanyi. In this issue it is taken up most explicitly by Favereau for the case of the Mongols. Nonetheless, the consolidation of communitarian responsibility on an unprecedented scale is primarily an innovation of the political societies which flourished across Eurasia in the wake of pioneering transformations in Mesopotamia and Egypt. This notion of responsibility is related to the notion of "prosocial behavior" in the model advanced by Mullins et al ("A systematic assessment"). However, the latter is misleading to the extent that it implies a general transformation of social action. In fact, the sphere of egotistical action associated with impersonal markets becomes more prominent at the same time. This is the micro-level tension that underpins the "great dialectic" between redistribution and the market at the macro-level of social evolution. See Chris Hann, The Anthropocene and Anthropology: Micro and Macro Perspectives, in: European Journal of Social Theory 20 (2017) 1: 183-96; Idem, Making Sense of Eurasia: Reflections on Max Weber and Jack Goody, in: New Literary History 48 (2017) 4: 685-99.

33 Hainer Roetz emphasized the paradoxical invocation of Axial Age theorizing in contemporary China at the Uppsala meeting.

in the philosophical texts of the third millennium BCE. Embryonic forms of mixed economy, representative politics and generalized provision for the weaker members of the community seem to be intrinsic characteristics of the polities that took shape in the Axial Age. The principles of Confucianism, nowadays revived in Xi Jinping Thought, and those of economist Milton Friedman, cited for contrast to Xi in the paper of Goldstone in this issue, mark the extremes of a spectrum that is common. There is a broad consensus across Eurasia today, from Brussels to Beijing, that markets are indispensable, but that it is no less essential to maintain the essentials of a welfare state that looks after all of its citizens, and takes seriously its responsibilities to the natural environment.

Of course, such concerns are not confined to Eurasia. But it is impossible to overlook the fact that, under its 45th President, the hegemonic state of the current era is pushing in the opposite direction. Donald Trump and the Republican Party claim to have an electoral mandate for policies that will *reduce* many citizens' access to social insurance and pensions.[34] Meanwhile China, in spite of its authoritarianism and the fact that its GNP per capita remains greatly inferior, is steadily improving collective welfare provision in the direction pioneered in the last century by Western Eurasia. President Trump's withdrawal from the Paris Accords of 2015, to which the rest of the world declares its adherence, is another sign that established geo-political and military affiliations are increasingly out of kilter with the socio-cultural preferences (values) of citizens. This President calls upon the states of Western Eurasia to which he is bound in a military alliance to increase their "defence" budgets to the level of his own, while pursuing economic and social policies that accentuate the inequalities that the great majority of European citizens deplore. Has his policy of "America first" disturbed the links between the United States and Eurasia fundamentally? Together with the result of the Brexit referendum in Britain, is this not evidence that Polanyi's dialectic between the market and redistribution has entered a new phase, demanding more radical solutions than the Keynesian compromises of Bretton-Woods? Is it not high time to translate the commonalities of Eurasian "big history," above all civic-imperial principles of responsible inclusion, into a contemporary common cause against the follies emanating from the White House?

In the first decades of the twenty-first century, some scholars are seeking to move political debate to a new level. It is argued across a range of disciplines that humanity has already had such a far-reading "geological" impact on the earth that we have entered a new age, that of the Anthropocene. By contrast, Jason W. Moore has popularized

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34   Hans Joas has objected (at the seminar in Uppsala, see note 1) that I paint an unwarranted contrast between the USA and Eurasia. He is surely right to point out that the USA owes a great deal to European religious and political systems, and that this country had made substantial contributions to what I am characterizing as a Eurasian dialectic (notably in promoting ideals of individual freedom and human rights). Many citizens of the USA share the pro-welfare state preferences to those of Eurasian citizens – and others around the world. But I think it is more than a matter of a perverse electoral system that prevents these predilections from being implemented. Frontier conditions and slavery created a variety of capitalism in North America that, despite its Protestant roots, could not lead to the kind of morally embedded redistributive economies that have evolved in Europe, which I see as closer to societal aspirations throughout Eurasia.

the concept of Capitalocene.[35] For this US sociologist cum political ecologist, it is the capitalist mode of production which is responsible for the irresponsible devastation of so much of our fragile planet in recent centuries. Moore begins his narrative with mercantile capitalism in the fifteenth century. Like so many others, including the majority of neo-Marxist thinkers (including Wallerstein), he thus remains fundamentally within the familiar Europeanist paradigm. But this is inadequate in at least two ways. E. A. Wrigley has demonstrated that the most important caesura in world history takes place *later* than suggested in the standard Europeanist narratives, namely in the eighteenth century, when an "energy revolution" based on the exploitation of fossil fuels enables the transcendence of "organic" economy.[36] Secondly, and this is the main argument of this essay, the Europeanist narrative misses the earlier transformations that were indispensable for all that has happened on Earth in the last half-millennium. Goody shows us that the social relations of the capitalist mode of production must be traced back to the urban revolution of Bronze Age Eurasia. Polanyi offers tools to analyse the dialectic of global history that began in this era, and to evaluate this dialectic. The label Anthropocene implies that humanity everywhere bears responsibility for the predicament of the planet today. This is grossly unfair to the vast majority of humanity, above all indigenous peoples all over the world. From this angle, the concept of Capitalocene has its attractions. But the very notions of capitalism and modernity are saturated with Eurocentric bias, and for this reason Moore's term is misleading. The present era in the history of our planet might be more accurately identified as the *Eurasiacene*. It originated with specific human populations and technologies in Eurasia. These have long spread to embrace the entire world, but the states of Eurasia constitute the best hope we have of finding solutions; this is a universal responsibility.

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35   Jason W. Moore, Capitalism in the Web of Life: Ecology and the Accumulation of Capital, London 2015. See also Jason W. Moore (ed.), Anthropocene or Capitalocene? Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism, Oakland 2016.
36   E. A. Wrigley, The Path to Sustained Growth: England's Transition from an Organic Economy to an Industrial Revolution, Cambridge 2016.

Empire and Eurasia:
In the Footsteps of Alexander

Krishan Kumar

ABSTRACTS

Alle Imperien streben nach Universalität, das heißt, sie wollen Weltreiche sein. Sie sind sich jedoch im Allgemeinen der Existenz anderer Imperien in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart ebenso wie der Notwendigkeit bewusst, sich mit ihnen auseinanderzusetzen. Es hilft, wenn sie sich ideologisch und materiell miteinander verbinden können. Im Falle der älteren eurasischen Landimperien – Rom, Byzanz, Arabische und Persische Reiche, Indien, China – wurden die Verbindungen durch Handel und religiösen Austausch – christlich, islamisch, buddhistisch – hergestellt. Mit den neueren überseeischen Reichen – spanisch, holländisch, französisch, britisch – wurden diese Verbindungen fortgesetzt, nun aber ergänzt durch die starke europäische Präsenz in allen Ecken der Welt, die sie noch stärker zu eurasischen macht. Vieles davon, so wird argumentiert, stützt sich auf das Beispiel des großen eurasischen Reiches von Alexander dem Großen, dessen Erinnerung in praktisch jedem nachfolgenden Reich zu finden ist und dessen Vorbild alle nachahmen wollten.

All empires aspire to universality, which is to say that they aim to be world empires. But they are generally aware of the existence of other empires, past and present, and of the need to come to terms with them. It helps if they can make links, ideologically and materially, with each other. In the case of the older Eurasian land empires – Rome, Byzantium, the Arab and Persian empires, India, China – the links were supplied by trade and religious interchange, Christian, Islamic, Buddhist. With the newer overseas empires – Spanish, Dutch, French, British – these links continued, but were supplemented now by the strong European presence in every corner of the globe, making them Eurasian in an even stronger sense. Behind much of this, it is argued, is the example of the vast Eurasian empire of Alexander the Great, the memory of which is to be found in practically every succeeding empire, and the example of which all aspired to imitate.

> "Another thing that puzzles me is why three distinct women's names
> [Libya, Europe, Asia] should have been given to what is really a single land-mass".
>
> Herodotus, *The Histories*

> "Now that commerce has connected the entire universe, that politics are en-
> lightened regarding its interests, and that humanity extends to every peo-
> ple, there is no sovereign in Europe who does not think like Alexander".
>
> Louis de Jaucourt, *Encyclopédie,* 6, 1756

Universal Empire: Linking East and West

Empires have always striven to be universal. There could, in principle, only be one em-
pire in the world, one that possessed the true religion, one that could give direction and
guidance to the whole of humanity.[1] Dante, in his *De Monarchia* (c. 1314), gives the
fullest and most eloquent expression of why that should be so.

> *Mankind is the son of heaven, which is quite perfect in all its workings … Therefore
> mankind is in its ideal state when it follows the footsteps of heaven, insofar as its nature
> allows. And since the whole sphere of heaven is guided by a single movement (i.e. that
> of the* primum mobile*), and by a single source of motion (who is God), in all its parts,
> movements and causes of movement, as human understanding perceives quite clearly
> through philosophical reasoning, then if our argument is sound, mankind is in its ideal
> state when it is guided by a single ruler (as by a single source of motion) and in accord-
> ance with a single law (as by a single movement) in its own causes of movement and in its
> own movements. Hence it is clear that monarchy (or that undivided rule which is called
> 'empire') is necessary to the well-being of the world.*[2]

Whatever their aspirations, most empires have not sought a literal conquest of the earth.
The claims have largely been symbolic. But they have been seriously meant all the same.
Humanity is one. Peace, righteousness and justice require the rule of one – monarchy or
empire, as Dante says. An empire might not literally rule the whole world, but its influ-
ence and authority should irradiate that world. Others should acknowledge that cen-
tre of authority, as subordinates or tributaries. In calling itself Zhongguo, the "Middle
Kingdom", the Chinese Empire did not mean to suggest that there were other kingdoms
beyond. It meant that it was the only kingdom, the centre of the world. Beyond that
were only barbarians.[3]

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1   Peter Fibiger Bang, and Darius Kołodziejczyk, eds. Universal Empire: A Comparative Approach to Imperial Cul-
    ture and Representation in Eurasian History, Cambridge 2012.
2   Dante, Monarchy [De Monarchia], translated and edited by Prue Shaw (c. 1314), Cambridge 1996, 13.
3   Besides noting that the word "Zhongguo" (which he says is "more accurately" translated as "Central Kingdom",
    not "Middle Kingdom") as the name for the country of China only came into general use under the Qing (1644–
    1912) – before that the country was referred to usually under the name of the reigning dynasty, Han, Song,

The Roman Empire too thought of itself as ecumenical, as ruling the "*orbis terrarum*", the whole of the known earth. That was the destiny famously laid out for it by Vergil in the *Aeneid* (1: 278), where Rome is said to have been granted "*imperium sine fine*", empire without end. "It was a familiar concept to the Romans", says the great classicist Theodor Mommsen, "that they were not only the first power on earth, they were also, in sense, the only one."[4] A fifth- century poet, Rutilius, praises Rome because "thou hast made a city of the once wide world."[5] It was not just that Rome was itself a cosmopolis, a "world city", but that – in the words of the second-century CE rhetorician Aelius Aristides – it had made a world in its own image, it had established "a civil community of the World."[6]

There was something else too that Rome was held to have accomplished. It had healed the traditional enmity of West and East, Europe and Asia, as recorded in various ancient myths and legends. In one version (as e.g. in Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, II, 812–44), Europa, a Phoenician (Asian) princess, was seduced by the Greek god Zeus disguised as a white bull, and carried off to Crete. This "rape of Europa" is repaid by Paris, the son of the Trojan (Asian) king Priam, when he in turn captivates (or seduces) the Spartan King Menelaus' wife, Helen, and takes her off to Troy.

Herodotus in his *Histories*, seeking to explain the lengthy war between Persia (Asia) and Greece (Europe), draws on Persian and Phoenician sources to give a more extended – and, he hopes, more historical – account of the origins of the enmity of Europe and Asia, as symbolized in the legends. His is a story of the seizures of not two but four young women, all princesses, two of whom (Io and Helen) are European and two (Europa and Medea) Asian. First Phoenician sailors capture the Greek princess Io in Argos and take her to Egypt – "the first of a series of unjust acts". Then some Greeks – "probably Cretans" (here is the echo of the old story about Zeus) – put into the Phoenician port of Tyre (in modern-say Lebanon) and carry off the king' s daughter Europa – "thus giving them tit for tat". The Greeks continue the "outrages" by sailing to Colchis on the Black Sea – this is usually held to refer to the voyage of Jason and the Argonauts in search of the golden fleece – and, "not contented with the regular business which had brought them there, abducted the king's daughter Medea." Some time later Paris retaliates when he "steals a wife for himself out of Greece" and carries Helen off to Troy. When the Trojans

etc. – Endymion Wilkinson rightly remarks: "It is sometimes implied that Chinese people were unique in regarding their country as the center of the civilized world. Nothing could be further from the truth: like the ancient Chinese, the Mesopotamians, Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Indians, Japanese, Khmers, Aztecs, Incas and Mayas all saw themselves as the center of the world and in modern times imperial powers and superpowers have had the same tendency. The difference is that the Chinese, albeit very late in their history, came to use the concept for the name of their country." Endymion Wilkinson, Chinese History: A New Manual, Cambridge, MA 2012, 191. See also Goldstone, this issue.

4   Quoted by Anthony Pagden, Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain, and France, c. 1500–c. 1800, New Haven, CT 1995, 23.

5   Peter Heather, The Fall of the Roman Empire, London 2006, 234.

6   Krishan Kumar, Visions of Empire: How Five Imperial Regimes Shaped the World, Princeton, NJ 2017, 49.

refuse to return Helen – there is no evidence that she wishes to go back – the Greeks, under Agamemnon, unleash war against the Trojans.[7]

Though Herodotus declines to pass judgment on the "truth or falsity" of what the Persians and Phoenicians say, it is clear that this is a rhetorical trope and that he agrees that "it was the Greeks who were, in a military sense, the aggressors."

> *Abducting young women … is not, indeed, a lawful act; but it is stupid after the event to make a fuss about avenging it. The only sensible thing is to take no notice, for it is obvious that no young woman allows herself to be abducted if she does not wish to be. The Asiatics, according to the Persians, took the seizure of the women lightly enough, but not so the Greeks: The Greeks, merely on account of a girl from Sparta, raised a big army, invaded Asia and destroyed the empire of Priam. From that root sprang their belief in the perpetual enmity of the Grecian world towards them – because the Persians claim Asia and the barbarian races dwelling in it as their own, Europe and the Greek states being, in their opinion, quite separate and distinct from them.*[8]

It was because the Romans were so aware of this historical memory that they made so much of their Trojan origins. The Trojan War, as recounted in Homer's *Illiad*, was the defining instance of the enmity between Europe and Asia, East and West. Rome, founded by Trojans but developed on western soil with western (Latin) peoples, symbolized the healing of the breach and the fusion of the two. As recounted in Vergil's epic of empire, the *Aeneid* (c. 20 CE), the foundations of Rome were laid by the Trojan prince Aeneas, fleeing the Trojan war with his father Anchises and his son Ascanius. Vergil renames Ascanius "Iulus Ascanius", and, in the famous prophecy concerning Rome made by Jupiter to Venus in Book 1 of the *Aeneid,* declares him the ancestor of the Julian family and so of the emperor Augustus.

> *To Romans I set no boundary in space or time.*
> *I have granted them dominion, and it has no end …*
> *From the fair seed of Troy there shall be born a Trojan Caesar (Augustus),*
> *Iulius, his name derived from great Iulus. Shall his empire*
> *Reach to the ocean's limits, shall his fame end in the stars* (Aeneid Bk. 1, 278-9)

In his *De Monarchia*, Dante quotes liberally from the *Aeneid* to show that Aeneas, by ancestry, birth and marriage, fuses in his own single person all the known continents of the world, Asia, Africa, and Europe.[9] The Romans were particularly fascinated by the figure of Aeneas' son, Ascanius. In artistic representations, Aeneas is usually shown in European or Western dress. But, as Rolf Michael Schneider has so beautifully shown, Ascanius is always depicted as "the handsome Asian", in the typical Asiatic garb of long trousers, belted v-necked tunic, and soft shoes. If Aeneas symbolizes Rome's Western foundations,

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7   Herodotus, The Histories, trans. Aubrey de Sélincourt, revised with an introduction and notes by John Marincola, London 2003, 3-4.
8   Ibid., 4.
9   Dante, Monarchy, 34-37.

Iulus Ascanius keeps alive the memory of its Oriental origins. "The Trojan East and the Roman West were brought together by the genealogical model of father and son … Iulus became the Trojan prince on whom Rome's claim of imperial universalism depended." [10] In his plea for universal monarchy or empire, Dante singled out the Roman Empire as the providentially ordained agency for bringing peace, justice and righteousness to the whole world. Again he quotes Vergil, where Anchises lays out to Aeneas Rome's destiny (*Aeneid* VI, 847–53):

> *Roman, remember to rule over other nations.*
> *Your arts shall be: to impose the ways of peace,*
> *Spare subject peoples, and subdue the proud.*

"The Roman people", says Dante, " were ordained by nature, carrying out God's purpose, to rule; therefore the Roman people by conquering the world came to empire by right."[11] One might question – as did Tacitus and several other Roman writers – Rome's right to rule. But Dante is writing in a long tradition – starting with the Church fathers – that saw in Rome's empire the signs of a divinely ordained mission to unify and pacify the world.[12] Certainly if universalism is one of the hallmarks of empire, in Western thought Rome became the supreme expression of that principle, one that later Western empires sought also to embody.

Alexander the Great: Eurasianism in Action

The Romans, some of them at least, Pompey and Caesar chief among them, were also admirers of Alexander the Great (356–323 BCE). Indeed practically all we know about Alexander comes from Roman writers, though many of them wrote in Greek. Though something like twenty accounts by contemporaries – some of whom fought with Alexander – are known to have been written, none of them have survived. What we have are histories – drawing on documents extant at the time – by writers such as Arrian , Curtius, and Plutarch, writing some four hundred years after the events they describe, about Alexander's conquests and policies in his empire.[13] Not unnaturally, they give us an Alexander shaped by Roman hopes and concerns. "The Alexander that we know and re-interpret is a 'Roman' construct, a product of Roman sensibilities and worldview; it was the Romans who made him 'the Great'."[14]

What appealed to the Romans – what they aspired to imitate – were the great breadth of Alexander's empire (stretching from Macedonia to northern India), and his cosmopoli-

10   Rolf Michael Schneider, The Making of Oriental Rome: Shaping the Trojan Legend, in: Bang and Kołodziejcczyk, Universal Empire, 76-129, here at 105-106.

11   Dante, Monarchy, 47.

12   Kumar, Visions of Empire, 68-73.

13   Tania Gergel (ed.), Alexander the Great: Selected Texts from Arrian, Curtius and Plutarch, London 2004.

14   Diana Spencer, The Roman Alexander: Reading a Cultural Myth, Exeter, UK 2002, xv.

tanism, his embrace of the many peoples incorporated in the empire. Plutarch records that in this respect Alexander rightly ignored the advice of his tutor, Aristotle, to treat all but Greeks as "mere brutes and vegetables". That would have "filled his empire with fugitive incendiaries and perfidious tumults." As so often, the student proved himself wiser than his teacher.

> *Believing himself sent from Heaven as the common moderator and arbiter of all nations, and subduing those by force whom he could not associate by fair offers, he labored thus, that he might bring all regions, far and near, under the same dominion. And then, as in a festival goblet, mixing lives, manners, customs, wedlock, all together, he ordained that every one should take the whole habitable world for his country, of which his camp should be the chief metropolis and garrison".[15]*

Alexander has been called "the last of the Achaemenids"[16], and there is a good deal of plausibility in seeing him as continuing the Persian inheritance as well as mixing it with a strong dose of Hellenism. In conquering the Persian Empire of the Achaemenids, Alexander took over a vast empire with a clearly Eurasian character, stretching from the eastern Mediterranean – including at one time Macedonia – to the Indus: the first "world empire", it has fairly been claimed.[17] He found there established institutions and structures that had proved remarkably successful in governing the far-flung empire with its mixture of peoples and cultures. The wanton – and perhaps accidental – destruction of Persepolis aside, Alexander took care to adopt many of the institutions and practices of the Persians. He kept rule through satraps and satrapies; he took over the vast machinery of the treasury and of record-keeping in Babylon; he maintained the administrative centres of Susa and Ecbatana; he appointed many Persians to the bureaucracy and the army. In addition he himself married two Persian princesses, having previously also married

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15   Plutarch, The Fortune or Virtue of Alexander the Great, in: Plutarch's Morals, ed. William W. Goodwin, 5 vols., Boston 1871, 1: 475-516, here p. 481. Drawing on Plutarch, among others, Montesquieu, in *The Spirit of the Laws* [1748], lavishes praise on Alexander for the respect that he showed to the customs and traditions of the peoples he conquered, thereby winning the gratitude of the conquered. He aimed, says Montesquieu "to unite the two nations" of Greeks and Persians, and to "abolish the distinction between a conquering and a conquered people." Baron de Montesquieu, The Spirit of the Laws, trans. Thomas Nugent, Two Volumes (1748), New York 1962, I: 144. Plutarch's account is also the basis of Sir William Tarn's classic interpretation of Alexander's empire and his achievements: W. W. Tarn, Alexander the Great. 2 vols., Cambridge 1948. It has been much debated; for recent accounts, with extensive reference to the literature, see A. B. Bosworth, Conquest and Empire: The Reign of Alexander the Great, Cambridge 1993; Paul Cartledge, Alexander the Great: The Hunt for a New Past, New York 2004. See also James Davidson, Bonkers about Boys, in: London Review of Books, 23 (2001) 1: 7-10; Pierre Briant, Alexander the Great and His Empire: A Short Introduction, trans. from the French by Amélie Kuhrt, Princeton, NJ 2012; Carol G. Thomas, Alexander the Great in his World, Malden, MA 2007; Anthony Pagden, Worlds at War: The 2,500-year Struggle between East and West, New York 2008, 41-68.

16   Pierre Briant, From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire, trans. Peter T. Daniels, Winona Lake, IN 2002, 876.

17   Amélie Kuhrt, The Achaemenid Persian Empire (c. 550–c.330 BCE): Continuities, Adaptations, Transformations, in: Empires: Perspectives from Archaeology, eds. Susan Alcock et al., Cambridge 2001, 93-123, here p. 93; see also Josef Wiesehöfer, The Achaemenid Empire, in: The Dynamics of Ancient Empires: State Power from Assyria to Byzantium, eds. Ian Morris and Walter Scheidel, New York 2010, 66-98.

Roxanne, daughter of the Bactrian (Afghan) king. He also made several of his commanders marry Persian brides. He never had a wife from his native Macedonia.[18]

Alexander's desire to unite East and West, to merge Greek and "barbarian", also had Persian roots, in the claims of the Achaemenid rulers since Cyrus to be "king of the four rims of the earth", "king of kings" (*shahanshah* in modern Persian, as adopted by later Persian rulers and those influenced by them, such as the Ottomans and the Mughals).[19]

Their universalism was to be a feature of practically all later empires. But it was Alexander who most forcefully stamped his imprint on this universalism. Partly this was because his empire actually went beyond the Persian, in incorporating the Greek territories, making it the most extensive Eurasian empire before that of Chingiz Khan. Partly also because the Hellenism – the Greek culture – that infused the empire proved flexible enough to accommodate many local variants, drawn from existing traditions, as was clear in the Hellenistic kingdoms that succeeded Alexander's empire. Hellenistic culture was fundamentally syncretic, a fusion of Greek culture with the cultures of western Asia Minor, Egypt, Syria, Iran and India.[20]

Alexander's influence has been carried by myth and legend, as much as – perhaps far more than – by any recorded achievements. Early in the 3rd century CE there appeared the *Alexander Romance*, by the Greek writer "pseudo-Callisthenes", a fanciful, mostly eulogistic, account of Alexander's conquests and accomplishments. Phenomenally successful over the ages, it was translated into practically all the "high" Eurasian languages – Latin, Arabic, Ottoman Turkic, Persian, Sanskrit – thereby making it available to the elites of all the Eurasian empires. "More than eighty versions of the Alexander-romance, in twenty-four languages, have been collected … No other story in the world has spread like his".[21]

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18 Thomas plausibly suggests that Alexander was here following, on a larger canvas, many of the policies of his father Philip in relation to Macedonia's own imperial territories and peoples, in Greece, Thrace, and Illyria. And in invading Persia Alexander was of course simply renewing Philip's abortive attempt of 337-6 BCE. Alexander the Great, 220. Macedonia itself had been – intermittently - part of the Persian Empire between 512 and 476 BCE, and had prospered under it. Briant suggests that the Macedonian kings may have learned much from Achaemenid rule. Here again Alexander's empire represents continuity, not disruption: From Cyrus to Alexander, 875; see also Pagden, World at War, 48-9.

19 Kuhrt, The Achaemenid Persian empire, 105.

20 Carlos A. Picon and Sean Hemingway (eds.), Pergamon and the Hellenistic Kingdoms of the Ancient World, New York 2016; Peter Thonemann, The Hellenistic Age, Oxford 2016.

21 Tarn, Alexander the Great, I: 145. Stoneman says that "in the Alexander Romance the historical Alexander is almost entirely overlaid by another Alexander, a protean character who is able to embody some of the deepest fears and longings of the human condition." Richard Stoneman, Alexander the Great: A Life in Legend, New Haven, CT 2008, 2-3; see also Spencer, The Roman Alexander, xiii. Stoneman gives the fullest account of the worldwide spread and manifold uses of the Romance in all the major world literatures, East and West. See also François de Polignac, From the Mediterranean to Universality? The Myth of Alexander, Yesterday and Today, in: Mediterranean Historical Review 14 (1999) 1: 1-17; Garth Fowden, Pseudo-Aristotelian Politics and Theology in Universal Islam, in: Bang und Kołodziejczyk, Universal Empire , 130-148, here p. 133; Phiroze Vasunia, The Classics and Colonial India, Oxford 2013, 103-104.The attribution to "Callisthenes" artfully links the Romance to the historian Callisthenes, Aristotle's nephew, who travelled with Alexander and wrote an account of his campaigns, The Deeds of Alexander, which was a prime source for later accounts in the Roman era. It was unfinished because he fell foul of Alexander and was condemned to death in 327: Bosworth, Conquest and Empire, 296.

Alexander features prominently in the Persian poet Firdausi's great tenth-century epic of pre-Islamic Persian history, the *Shahnama*, "whose cultural authority was second only to that of the Quran" in all Muslim empires.[22] Here Alexander is presented however not as a Greek conqueror but as the son a Greek princess and a Persian emperor who goes on to become a world-ruler famed for his magnanimity and respect for Persian traditions. When in 1501 Shah Ishmail inaugurated the Safavid Empire in Iran, he placed himself in succession to the pre-Islamic kings of the *Shahnama*, among them "Iskandar", the Muslim name for Alexander.[23] In Persian legend, Alexander has become not so much the conqueror of the Persian Empire as its inheritor, charged with its continuation and fulfilment. Hellenism and Iranism, in this view, both prepare the way for Islam; they are its antecedents, not its antitheses.[24]

Muslim empires – Arab, Ottoman, Mughal, Safavid – were indeed all enamoured of Alexander. Besides translating the *Alexander Romance*, the Arabs also translated and lavished much commentary on the (untitled) "Alexander File" and the *Secret of Secrets*, Greek works purporting to be letters from Aristotle to his pupil Alexander and containing advice, in the form of "the mirror of princes", on how to rule his vast empire. The great prestige of Aristotle in the medieval Muslim world ensured that these "pseudo-Aristotelian" writings, focusing on Alexander, would achieve great prominence and inspire Muslim rulers. The *Secret of Secrets* declares - *contra* Plutarch! - that "by following [Aristotle's] good advice, and obeying his commands, Alexander achieved his famous conquests of cities and countries, and ruled supreme in the regions of the earth far and wide".[25]

In the Ottoman Empire there was even a genre, the *Iskendername*, or *Book of Alexander*, that recounted and celebrated Alexander's exploits.[26] The cult of Alexander was well-suited to Ottoman ideologies that wished to stress the Empire's linking of East and West. "Eastern and Western traditions were typically mixed in the Ottoman political vocabulary and symbolically united in the person of Alexander the Great (*Iskender Du'l-karneyn*, lit. 'Alexander, lord of two horns')." [27]

In India too, a succession of rulers and regimes aspired to follow in the footsteps of Alexander. When Chandragupta ("Sandrokottos" to the Greeks), the founder of the third-century BCE Mauryan dynasty, was asked how he had conceived his empire, he is said to have replied, "I watched Alexander when I was still a young man". Alexander, he claimed, having taken northern India, could have gone on to conquer the whole of India, "since the king at the time was hated and despised for his iniquity and low birth".[28]

22   Stephen F. Dale, The Muslim Empires of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals, Cambridge 2010, 20.
23   Ibid., 70.
24   Garth Fowden, "Pseudo-Aristotelian Politics and Theology in Universal Islam", in Bang and Kołodziejczyk, Universal Empire, 130-148, here p. 136.
25   Quoted ibid., 139-140.
26   Dale, Muslim Empires, 168.
27   Darius Kołodziejczyk, Khan, Caliph, Tsar and Imperator: The Multiple Identities of the Ottoman Sultan, in: Bang and Kołodziejczyk, Universal Empire, 175-193, here p. 182.
28   Plutarch, Alexander, in: Greek Lives: A Selection of Nine Greek Lives, trans. Robin Waterfield, Oxford 1998, 369; Robin Lane Fox, Alexander the Great, London 1986, 372.

Chandragupta, as well as his most famous and successful Mauryan successor, Ashoka, maintained strong links with the Hellenistic kingdoms – especially the Seleucid – that were formed by Alexander's generals after his death, thereby ensuring the persistence of Hellenic culture in the empire.[29] The Indian cities of Secundra and Secunderabad, named after the "great Secunder", still today testify to Alexander's presence in the region and his impact there. Hegel indeed went so far as to claim that "by spreading the maturity and culmination of [Greek] culture over the East", Alexander "as it were changed the stamp of subjugated Asia and assimilated it to a Hellenic land ." [30] Nationalist historians of India have indignantly denied this; but allowing for the hyperbole most scholars have been willing to accept the degree of truth it contains.[31]

The Muslim rulers of India were, as we have noted, likewise powerfully attracted by the Alexander romance. In the last years of the Delhi Sultanate, Nizam Khan (r. 1489-1517) of the Lodi dynasty, known to history as Sikandar Lodi, was only one of the several Delhi sultans who formally styled themselves "Sikandar".[32] Following them the Mughal emperors even more fervently embraced the Alexandrian legend. Like the Delhi sultans, they were heavily influenced by Persian literature and poetry, and drew heavily on the Alexander story as recounted in Firdausi's *Shahnamah* and Nizami's *Iskandarnamah* (part of his twelfth-century *Khamsah*).[33] Mughal court painters, using these sources, responded to the rulers' wishes by displaying explicit parallels between Alexander and their imperial patrons, for instance by portraying them in locations associated with Alexander, or showing Alexander's funeral with attendants clothed in Mughal attire. Indian writers, like Ottoman ones, developed the genre of the *Iskandarnamah*, in which Alexander's achievements are offered, in the manner of the "mirror of princes", as objects for emulation by Mughal rulers (the Arabic *Secret of Secrets*, translated into Persian, may have been

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29   Peter Fibiger Bang, Between Asoka and Antiochos: An Essay in World History on Universal Kingship and Cosmopolitan Culture in the Hellenistic Ecumene, in: Bang and Kolodziejczyk , Universal Empire, 60-75, here pp. 60-62.

30   Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, The Philosophy of History, trans. J. Sibree (1830-31), New York 1956, 272.

31   See especially the essays by Ioannis Xydopoulos and Alastair Blanshard in eds. Himanshu Prabha Ray, and Daniel T. Potts, Memory as History: The Legacy of Alexander in Asia, New Delhi 2008, 19-39; see also Bang, "Between Asoka and Antiochos". On Indian nationalist historiography, and the denial of Alexander's importance, see Vasunia, Classics and Colonial India, 91-92. Vasunia points to the importance of the Hegel-inspired German historian Johann Gustav Droysen's History of Alexander the Great (1833) and History of Hellenism (1877-8) in establishing the view of Alexander's lasting impact on Asia: ibid., 36-51, 101. It is fair to say that not only nationalist Indian historians deny these claims – see e.g. Romila Thapar, A History of India, Vol. One, Harmondsworth 1966, 59; John Keay, India: A History, Uttar Pradesh 2000, 70-71; Thomas R. Trautmann, India: Brief History of a Civilization, New Delhi 2011, 56. Yet Thapar, Keay, and Trautmann all show the extensive contacts, in trade and people, between the Mauryan Empire and the Hellenistic kingdoms that stretched from India's western border all the way to the eastern Mediterranean (Thapar, History of India, 60-2; Keay, India, 82-5; Trautmann, India, 57, 63-4). A good deal of what we know of Chandragupta's empire in fact comes from the memoirs of the Seleucid ambassador, Megasthenes; while the famous Rock Edicts of the emperor Ashoka – some of which are in Greek and Aramaic – specifically mention Alexander as well as the Hellenistic kingdoms of the Seleucids, the Antigonids, and the Ptolemies (Bang, "Between Asoka and Antiochos", 60; Trautmann, India, 59). Alexander's impact, and that of Hellenism generally, clearly cannot be reduced to Alexander's two-years in the Punjab.

32   Keay, India, 250, 289; Vasunia, Classics and Colonial India, 104.

33   Nasim Akhtar, Visual Illustrations of the Life of Alexander in Persian Manuscripts, in: Ray and Potts , Memory as History, 76-88.

an inspiration). Even when, in the nineteenth century, Persian ceased to be the principal literary language at the Mughal court, Urdu continued the tradition of the *Iskandar-namah* – aided now by the translation of Plutarch's "Life of Alexander" into Urdu.[34]

The British, as successors to Mughal rule in India, were if anything even more enthusiastic in wishing to take on the mantle of Alexander. In the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a host of British agents, explorers, and geographers painstakingly traced the route of Alexander's march from Iran to India, noting the many settlements established by Alexander and even purporting to find the traces of descendants of Alexander's soldiers, in such peoples as the "white" Kafirs of Kafiristan in northern Afghanistan (Rudyard Kipling's famous short story, "The Man Who would Be King" [1888] draws on this belief).[35] In doing so, they felt that they, and the British Empire that they represented, "were not simply walking the same ground as Alexander, but playing an identical historical role. They explored; they conquered; they civilized."[36] With the conquest of the Punjab in 1849, which gave Britain possession of the whole of India, and so completed the process begun by Clive at Plassey in 1757, the British commander General Hugh Gough could declare triumphantly that "that which Alexander attempted, the British army have accomplished".[37]

"If you wanted to establish your own empire or march your army towards India or explore the limits of power, Alexander had got there first."[38] Western imperialists, regarding Alexander as one of theirs, were of course even more drawn to Alexander's example than their Eastern counterparts. Here they followed in the tradition of Pompey, Caesar, Trajan, and Caracalla, Roman leaders who all aspired to be the "Roman Alexander".[39] For Western empire-builders, Rome was always the model; for them too the "Roman Alexander" – the Alexander as conceived by Rome – was virtually irresistible as an example to follow.

The French were particularly drawn to him, as a whole tradition of French painting – especially the grand sequence by Charles Le Brun – attests.[40] Le Brun influenced the official painters who flatteringly portrayed Napoleon on horseback in the dashing manner of Alexander. Napoleon himself, arriving in Egypt in 1798, was fully conscious that he was walking in the footsteps of Alexander, as he contemplated the further move to India and the conquest of the Orient– a parallel that the British were also only too

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34   Vasunia, Classics and Colonial India, 105-115.

35   Ibid., 51-89.

36   C. A. Hagerman, Britain's Imperial Muse: The classics, Imperialism, and the Indian Empire, 1784–1914, Houndmills, Basingstoke 2013, 175, 153-154, 162, 178-181; see also Hagerman, In the footsteps of the 'Macedonian Conqueror': Alexander the Great and British India, in: International Journal of the Classical Tradition 16 (2009) 3/4, 344-392.

37   Quoted Lawrence James, Raj: The Making and Unmaking of British India, New York 1998, 118

38   Vasunia, Classics and Colonial India, 115.

39   Spencer, The Roman Alexander, 165-203; Bosworth, Conquest and Empire, 181.

40   Spencer, The Roman Alexander, 164; E. J. Baynham, Power, Passions, and Patrons: Alexander, Charles Le Brun, and Oliver Stone, in: Waldemar Heckel and Lawrence Trittle (eds.), Alexander the Great: A New History, Malden 2009, 294-310; Pierre Briant, The First European: A History of Alexander in the Age of Empire, trans. Nicholas Eliott, Cambridge, MA 2017, 31.

acutely aware of.[41] In a nice reversal, Alexander, in the words of the French writer Denis Jullien du Rouet in 1809, was now seen as "the Napoleon of the Ancient World, [who] cleared the path to a universal commerce for Europe." [42] Even Chateaubriand, a bitter opponent of the French Revolution and critic of Napoleon, was driven to write in later years that "our armies like Alexander's spread light among the peoples where our flag wanders: Europe became French under Napoleon's footsteps, like Asia became Greek in Alexander's course."[43] In the late nineteenth century, as the French set about re-building their empire in North Africa and Indo-China, Alexander was again invoked as the great exemplar of the carrier of the *mission civilisatrice* to Asia and other non-Western regions. Hellenization and Gallicization made congenial bed-fellows.[44]

Universal Empire: The Axial Moment and the Axial Age

Given the immense popularity of the Alexander legend over two millennia of world history, and its capacity to inspire rulers throughout Eurasia, Peter Fibiger Bang has suggestively proposed that we should think of Alexander as representing an "axial moment" in the development of "large empires with universal aspirations."[45] The analogy of course is with the "Axial Age" (*Achsenzeit*), the term coined by Karl Jaspers to describe the epoch – roughly 800 to 200 BCE – in which "were born the fundamental categories within which we still think today, and the beginnings of the world religions, by which human beings still live, were created." Both Alexander's empire and the systems of thought and ethics of the Axial Age were "a step into universality", as Jaspers characterizes the Axial Age.[46] Just as the thinkers and religious prophets of China, India, Palestine and Greece offered accounts of the "good life" and transcendental histories that incorporated all of humanity, so the succession of empires inspired by Alexander broke through the more limited, self-enclosed, horizons of the ancient civilizations to claim universal rule and the unification of all peoples. In both cases this meant effectively Eurasia, though the aspirations were of course for all humans, and contact with the pre-Columbian civilizations of the New World cannot be ruled out.[47]

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41 Hagerman, Britain's Imperial Muse, 164-165, 179; Briant, The First European, 208-209, 249-250; After his defeat, while in exile, Napoleon wistfully reflected "if I had stayed in the Orient, I would probably have founded an empire like Alexander, by going on a pilgrimage to Mecca, where I would have prayed and genuflected". He also regretted that he had been unable to follow Alexander's example of mixing peoples by "making each of the [European] peoples into a single body of nations" (in Briant, The First European, 253). Charlemagne is often cited as the inspiration of the European Union; it is also possible to invoke Alexander!

42 Quoted Briant, The First European, 249.

43 Quoted Ibid., 246-47.

44 Pierre Briant, Impérialismes antiques et idéologie coloniale dans la France contemporaine: Alexandre le Grand modèle colonial, in: Dialogues d'histoire ancienne 5 (1979): 283-292; Vasunia, Classics and Colonial India, 33-34.

45 Bang, "Between Asoka and Antiochos", 63-64.

46 Karl Jaspers, The Origin and Goal of History, trans. by Michael Bullock (1949), Abingdon, UK 2010, 2.

47 See the suggestions in Peter N. Stearns et al. , World Civilizations: The Global Experience, Seventh Edition, Upper Saddle River, NJ 2015, 167-168. Striking similarities between Olmec and certain African – if not Eurasian – sculptures suggest some contact across the Atlantic.

Is there a link between the Axial Age of universal thought and the axial moment of universal empire that occurred at much the same time – the middle centuries of the first millennium BCE? Any answer is bound to be tentative and speculative – but no more so than Jasper's own speculative (and inconclusive) propositions concerning the simultaneous yet distinct origin (in no more than three of or four places) of the thinkers of the Axial Age.[48]

There have always been those who have held that the philosophy of the Epicureans, Cynics and Stoics, with their idea of the "cosmopolis" and the "brotherhood of all men", was inspired by Alexander's achievements. These were influential thinkers of the Axial Age whose schools developed, in the third and second centuries BCE, in the wake of Alexander's empire.[49] More generally we can say that while, as Jaspers suggests, the sources of Axial Age thinking are to be found in a period of "Warring States" – to use the Chinese expression – throughout Eurasia, their decisive development, the foundations of schools and sects, takes place in the succeeding age of empires. For the West, these are those of Alexander and his Hellenistic successors, the Seleucids, Antigonids, and Ptolemies. Rome too built up its empire in this time during the Republic, including the important victory over the Carthaginians, before formally inaugurating the Augustan Empire (27 BCE). In India this is the period of the Mauryan Empire (321–187 BCE), in China the formation of the Qin and Han Empires (221 BCE–220 CE).

These empires covered the entire Eurasian landmass, from the Atlantic to the eastern Pacific. But more importantly, there was intensive interaction between all of them, in diplomacy, in commerce, and in the movement of people and ideas. The Hellenistic king-

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48   Jaspers, Origin and goal, 13-21. Jaspers explicitly rules out, as an explanation for the origins of the Axial Age, "the unity of the whole Eurasian bloc, determined by constantly renewed advances, migrations, and conquests from Central Asia" – the thesis essentially of Alfred Weber, of a series of invasions by the Indo-Europeans from Central Asia. In other words, he denies connections between the different places and peoples within which Axial Age thinkers arose, insisting – against Weber and others – on independent and separate origins. But in place of this view he has little to offer, beyond the suggestion of certain "common sociological conditions favourable to spiritual creativeness" – many small states and small towns, incessant conflict, upheavals and "misery" caused by wars and revolutions – which he admits "merely illuminate the facts and do not provide a causal explanation of them." In the end he has to confess that "no-one can adequately comprehend what occurred here and became the axis of world history!", and that "the fact of the threefold manifestation [China, India, the West] of the Axial Period is in the nature of a miracle, in so far as no really adequate explanation is possible within the limits of our present knowledge", ibid., 17-18. See also Robert Bellah, Religion in Human Evolution: From the Paleolithic to the Axial Age, Cambridge, MA 2011, Chs. 6-9, and the essays in The Axial Age and its Consequences, eds. Robert N. Bellah and Hans Joas, Cambridge, MA 2012.

49   See, e.g., George H. Sabine, A History of Political Theory, 4th edition, revised by Thomas Landon Thorson, Hinsdale, IL 1973, 125-156; Sheldon S. Wolin, Politics and Vision: Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought, expanded edition, Princeton, NJ 2004, 63-85; A. R. Burn, Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic World, new edition, New York 1962, 187-188. The association is strengthened by Alexander's well-known admiration for, and meeting with, the Cynic philosopher Diogenes of Sinope, as recounted by Plutarch and others; and Onesicritus's History – a now lost contemporary account by a follower of Diogenes who served with Alexander as his naval commander – portrayed Alexander as a Cynic philosopher-king. Plutarch in his turn declared that what Zeno, the founder of Stoicism, had imagined as "a philosophical commonwealth", Alexander "made good by his deeds", by mixing Greeks and barbarians: "The Fortune or Virtue of Alexander the Great", 481, 487; "Alexander", 309, 323; The Oxford Companion to Classical Civilization, eds. Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth, Oxford 1998, 203.

doms interacted not just with each other but with the Mauryan empire of Chandragupta and Asoka.[50] They later contributed hugely to the trade and culture of the Roman Empire. Rome had extensive trading links with China, and while Romans themselves may not have gone to China, there were plenty of intermediaries along the Silk Road and the oceanic routes that connected the two regions .[51] Just as Paul was able to travel and preach his Christianity throughout the Roman Empire, as a Roman citizen, so traders, scholars, artists, monks, and missionaries travelled between empires with the sense of an emerging *ecumene* encompassing the whole of Eurasia. The new universal empires created a vast, pan-Eurasian space, for the sharing of goods, ideas, and people.

Indian links with other Eurasian empires are a good example of this inter-imperial traffic. Indian science – astronomy and mathematics especially – shows clear signs of communication with the Hellenistic empires, especially that of the Ptolemies, though the influences certainly went both ways. India contributed "algebra" and "Arabic numerals" – though carried westwards by the Arabs and so having Arabic names – while receiving much from the Greeks, as indicated by the incorporation of certain Greek scientific terms (*hora*, *kendra*, *kona*) into Sanskrit.[52] Indian traders travelled to Alexandria in Egypt, Greeks came the other way and established trading settlements in South India. There was also an extensive trade with Rome, as evidenced by the large number of Roman coins found in South India and Sri Lanka.[53] Later the Mughal emperors continued this pattern of trade with the European empires, being particularly in need of the silver (for their currency, as with China) which the European trading companies brought to India.[54]

Indian religion, along with Indian art, Indian science, the Indian language, and Indian political forms, similarly spilled over into adjacent Eurasian realms in Central, East and South-East Asia. Here there took place, beginning with the Mauryan empire and stretching over a millennium and a half, a comprehensive process of "Indianization".[55] Religion lead the way, with Buddhism and Hinduism being adopted, or co-existing with other religions, in a wide swathe of lands from Central Asia to China and Indonesia – Sogdian merchants of the Silk Road being among the principal carriers.[56] But Indian goods – textiles, elephants – also had a ready market, while the Indian language – Sanskrit – formed

50 Thapar, History of India, 70-74.

51 John Ferguson, China and Rome, in: ANRW 11 (1978) 9/2: 581-603; Peter Fibiger Bang, Commanding and Consuming the World: Empire, Tribute and Trade in Roman and Chinese History, in: Rome and China: Comparative Perspectives on Ancient World Empires, ed. Walter Scheidel, New York 2012, 100-120, here 120; Ann Kolb and Michael Speidel, Imperial Rome and China: Communication and Information Transmission, in: China's Development from a Global Perspective, eds. Maria Dolores Elizalde and Wang Jianlang, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK 2017, 28-56.

52 Trautmann, India, 122.

53 Ibid., 137; William Dalrymple, The Great and Beautiful Lost Kingdoms, in: New York Review of Books, 2015 May 21: 11-14, here p. 13.

54 Dietmar Rothermund, Empires in Indian History, in: Empires in Indian History and Other Essays, New Delhi 2013, 15-35, here 30.

55 Georges Coedès, The Indianized States of Southeast Asia, trans. Susan Brown Cowing, Honolulu, HI 1968. See also Schnepel, this issue.

56 Peter Frankopan, The Silk Roads: A New History of the World, London 2015, 27-32.

the scripts of several South-East Asian countries (Burma, Thailand, Cambodia), and Indian literature and mythology created something like a "Sanskrit cultural cosmopolis" in the region. Indian artistic forms are to be found all over the region, notably in the sculptures adorning the great Hindu-Buddhist temple of Angkor Wat in Cambodia.[57] Indian royal forms and court cultures were another export, with southeast Asian kings drawing up Indian royal genealogies to claim Indian origins. This whole process of Indianization was largely carried out not, like Hellenization, by conquest and colonization, but by the sheer appeal of Indian civilization, by diffusion and imitation, through the movement and reception of Buddhist monks, Brahmin priests, Indian merchants, and Indian royal officials.[58]

What of China? How Eurasian was the Chinese Empire, formed in 221 BCE, and how did it contribute to the Eurasian culture inaugurated by the Axial Age? In one way its contribution has never been in doubt, in the widespread diffusion of Confucianism into the surrounding region of Japan, Korea, and Indo-China (especially Vietnam), and more generally by the tributary relations established by China with many of its neighbours (extending finally to Tibet). But often the relationship has been seen as one-way only, a perception naturally encouraged by Chinese self-conceptions of the "Central Kingdom". The Chinese invented paper, printing, gunpowder, the compass: others, such as the Europeans, took these over, often through intermediaries such as the Arabs. The trade in Chinese ceramics, silk, tea, spices was enormous and virtually world-wide – but in return the Chinese needed little from anyone else, save European gold and silver, and a few items such as European furs and glass.[59] Overall the impression left by much of the literature is of a relatively self-contained civilization, in the early fifteenth century famously disdaining world exploration and possible colonization even when in possession of a large ocean-going fleet that dwarfed anything developed at that time in Europe.[60]

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57 Angkor Wat was originally built by the Khmer king Suryavarman , in the early 12th century CE, as a Hindu temple devoted to Vishnu; by the end of the 12th century it had become Buddhist. It stands as the greatest monument of Indian art outside India, though the Buddhist stupa of Borobudur in Indonesia is another spectacular example, as are numerous Buddhist temples in China. See especially Lost Kingdoms: Hindu-Buddhist Sculpture of Early South-East Asia, Fifth to Eighth Century, ed. John Guy, New Haven 2014; see also Jacques Gernet, A History of Chinese Civilization, trans. J. R. Foster, Cambridge 1982, 226-232; Amartya Sen, China and India, in: The Argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian History, Culture and Identity, New York 2005, 161-190, here pp. 180-181.

58 For these developments, see Sheldon Pollock, The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture, and Power in Premodern India, Berkeley, CA 2006; Trautman, India, 132-137; Sen, China and India, 167-168; Rothermund, Empires in Indian History, 21-22; Dalrymple, The Great and Beautiful Lost Kingdoms. The phrase "Sanskrit cosmopolis" is Pollock's. Michael Wood has said that "history is full of Empires of the Sword, but India alone created an Empire of the Spirit", quoted Dalrymple, ibid., 12.

59 Janet Abu-Lughod, Before European Hegemony: The World System A. D. 1250–1350, New York 1989, 316-351; Jack Goldstone, Why Europe? The Rise of the West in World History, 1500–1850, New York 2009, 4-14.

60 The reference is to the fleet commanded by Admiral Zheng He in the early Ming dynasty on his seven great voyages across the Indian Ocean to East Africa (and, according to some, possibly beyond, across the Atlantic). See especially Louise Levathes,. When China Ruled the Seas: The Treasure Fleet of the Dragon Throne, 1400–33, New York 1994. Every Chinese museum now celebrates these, illustrating them usually by visual comparisons of the vast ships of Zhen He's dragon fleet with Columbus's diminutive caravel, the Niña, in which he first sailed to the Americas (see, for an illustration, Stearns et al, World Civilizations, 616). The reasons for the destruction of the

This picture of self-sufficiency and self-containment has rightly been questioned in several respects. Peter Perdue has emphasized China's expansiveness and imperial ambitions in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, especially in Central Asia in competition with the Russians. With the acquisition of Xinjiang, Mongolia, and Tibet, China became a much more multi-ethnic empire.[61] Trade between China, India, the Middle East and the Mediterranean – whether along the multiple "Silk Roads" or by the maritime routes – was more of a two-way process than commonly stressed. China was twice conquered by "foreigners" – Mongols and Manchus – and despite their undoubted "sinicization" they retained a sense of their difference from the Han majority, at the same time making their own distinctive contributions to Chinese civilization (for instance Qubilai Khan's founding in 1272 of the future Beijing as the Yuan city of Ta-tu, and the building of the Grand Canal between the new capital and the old Sung capital of Hang-chou).[62]

Most important of the imports was religion. Indian Buddhism – especially in its Mahayana form – entered China in the first centuries CE via the Central Asian oasis kingdoms, carried by Central Asian monks and merchants along the Silk routes.[63] Indian religious scholars travelled to China, bringing with them Sanskrit documents which they translated into Chinese. In the early Tang dynasty, especially under the patronage of the Empress Wu Zetian (690–705), Buddhism enjoyed great influence, as can be seen from the great Buddhist temples and sculptures from the period.[64] It was during this period that Chinese Buddhist monks, such as Xuanzang and Yi Jing, travelled the arduous "Nalanda trail" – a parallel route of cultural communication to the commercial Silk Road – to study at the Buddhist university of Nalanda in north-east India. Others went to Buddhist centres in Central and South-East Asia.[65] Buddhism received an additional boost under the Yuan dynasty, when Qubilai Khan promoted Tantric (Tibetan) Buddhism as the dominant faith in China.[66] Today Buddhism is the most popular religion in China – a testimony to its enduring presence in Chinese civilization.[67]

But the traffic between India and China was not just in religion. Scientific and "secular" concerns were also important. Indian scientists and mathematicians participated in the scientific life of China, one of them, Gautama Siddhartha (Qutan Xida, in Chinese) even becoming the president of the official Board of Astronomy in the eight century. Indian

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fleet by the Ming emperors remain uncertain – for some helpful thoughts, see Abu-Lughod , Beyond European Hegemony 321-322, 343-344.

61 Peter Perdue, China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia, Cambridge, MA 2005); see also Bellér-Hann, this issue.

62 David Morgan, The Mongols, 2nd edition, Oxford 2007, 108, 115.

63 Gernet, Chinese Civilization, 210-232; Frankopan, Silk Roads, 31.

64 Gernet, Chinese Civilization, 219-220.

65 Sen, China and India, 168-169, 173-174; Sen, India: The Stormy Revival of an International University, in: New York Review of Books, August 13 (2015): 69-71, here p. 71; Gernet, Chinese Civilization, 222-225. It is interesting that "the first printed book in the world with a date (corresponding to 868 CE)", was a Chinese translation of a Sanskrit treatise, the so-called "Diamond Sutra", first translated in 402 CE by the half-Indian scholar Kumarajiva based at the Institute of Foreign Languages and Literatures in Xian: Sen, China and India, 183.

66 Morgan, The Mongols, 110.

67 Ian Johnson, The Souls of China: The Return of Religion after Mao, London 2017, 5.

writings on astronomy, astrology, mathematics, and medicine were widely translated into Chinese. Indian phonetics and linguistics helped the Chinese establish a firm basis for the phonetics of their own language Similarly, the Chinese scholars who came to Nalanda did not simply study Buddhism. The Nalanda curriculum included also languages, linguistics, literature, medicine, mathematics and astronomy, and Chinese scholars took back important elements from all these to China.[68]

As is well known, the Jesuits later, in the seventeenth century, introduced key elements of Western science into China, including the idea of "Laws of Nature" – though strongly resisted by Chinese savants of the time.[69] In the late nineteenth-century, mainly via Japan, Chinese intellectuals received additional stimulus from the West – Darwinism and nationalism – together with a discourse of "pan-Asianism" that was itself modeled on Western civilizational models and that, once more, pointed to a world larger than China itself.[70] China gave much to the world; but it also received. It might regard itself as the Central Kingdom, and it had grounds to be proud of its civilization. But it remained a Eurasian civilization, subject to the influences and cross-currents of all Eurasian civilizations.

Empire and Eurasianism: Arabs and After

We have focused so far mainly on the pan-Eurasian character of the early empires – a necessary emphasis in view of the tendency to treat them as separate, more or less independent and isolated entities. With the later empires we can be briefer, since their Eurasian dimension is increasingly obvious. From the Arab empires of the seventh century, to the overseas European empires of the Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, French and British, it would be a highly eccentric scholar who ignored this Eurasian dimension.

The Arab empires were not simply the carriers of a universalist religion, Islam, but were established, mostly in the space of an astonishing one hundred years or so (632–750 CE), across a vast Eurasian region that stretched – like Alexander's empire – from the Mediterranean to the Indus. They actually went further than Alexander, in conquering Spain and Portugal as well as North Africa. Like Alexander, but again to a much greater extent, they stamped their culture decisively on their many territories, leaving a legacy

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68   Sen, China and India, 161-166, 175-180; India, 69; Gernet, Chinese Civilization, 231-232; Coedès, The Indianized States, 88-9. Nalanda Mahavihara, "the oldest university in the world" – Bologna, the first European university, was founded in the eleventh century, Oxford and Cambridge in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries – was a Buddhist foundation of the fifth century CE in Bihar, at the time one of the most prosperous regions of India. Its capital, Pataliputra (modern Patna), established by the Mauryas, served as the capital of the early all-India empires for nearly a millennium. Nalanda, at the time "the greatest repository of learning east of Alexandria", was destroyed by Turkic invaders in the 1190s; it has recently been revived. Sen, India, 69; Dalrymple, The Great and Beautiful Lost Kingdoms, 11.

69   Joseph Needham, The Grand Titration: Science and Society in East and West, Toronto 1969, 308; Joel Mokyr, Culture of Growth: The Origins of the Modern Economy, Princeton, NJ 2017, 300-314.

70   Prasenjit Duara, The Discourse of Civilization and Pan-Asianism, in: Journal of World History 12 (2001) 1: 99-130.

of Islamic religion and in many cases the Arabic language in much of the region (Spain and Portugal are the main exceptions, though both clearly carry the marks of a nearly 800-year period of "Moorish" rule).[71]

Like all the Eurasian empires, the Arab empires not only had a dominant ideology - in their case Islam – which they favoured and promoted, but were also open to the influences of the peoples and cultures that they conquered. When in the eight century the Abbasids conquered Tokharistan and neighbouring parts of Central Asia, they were brought into contact with the Buddhism that was solidly established in the area. Many Central Asian scholars and thinkers were drawn to the Abbasid capital, Baghdad, bringing with them Buddhist doctrines and practices that had a major influence on Arabic thought and institutions.

The Buddhist *vihara*, for instance, the college of higher education of which Nalanda was a prime example, became the model for the Islamic *madrasa* established in Central Asia in the eight and ninth centuries. Other aspects of Indian thought and culture – in science, mathematics, and linguistics – also had a profound effect on Abbasid learning, notably under the patronage of the Barmakid family that monopolized the vizierate under the early Abbasid caliphs. Later, Greek thought began to be cultivated by the Abbasids, and to some extent this displaced or hid the Indian influences. But, says Christopher Beckwith, "many areas of knowledge in classical Islamic culture, including astronomy, linguistics, mathematics, metaphysics, meditational mysticism, and to some extent medicine, nevertheless remained largely Indian in their fundamental inspiration, as did the education system and educational methods of the *madrasa*."[72]

The Arabs were of course the great preservers and transmitters of Greek culture. Christian and Jewish thought also made important contributions, as is clear already in the Qur'an and was especially prominent in Moorish Spain. The Arabs were also fascinated by pre-Islamic Persian (Sasanian) culture, as shown by the many translation of Firdausi's *Shahnama*.[73]

The later Islamic empires of the Mughals, Ottomans, and Safavids were equally open, equally permeable. Not only did they share many things with each other: an admiration and acceptance of Persian as the highest literary language, and the patronage of Persian painters at their courts; the adoption of a common model of mosque building, the *kulliye* complex, which included besides the mosque a *madrasa*, a *hammam* (public bath), and often other public facilities such as a kitchen or library; and the commitment to certain basic planning principles in their cities, such as that major public buildings such

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71 Good accounts of the Arab conquests and the resulting Arab empires can be found in Hugh Kennedy, The Great Arab Conquests: How the Spread of Islam Changed the World We Live in, Philadelphia, PA 2008, and Robert G. Hoyland, In God's Path: The Arab Conquests and the Creation of an Islamic Empire, Oxford 2014. See also Albert Hourani, A History of the Arab Peoples, New York 1992, Part One. For Moorish Spain, see Richard Fletcher, Moorish Spain, Berkeley, CA 1992.

72 Christopher Beckwith, Empires of the Silk Road: A History of Central Eurasia from the Bronze Age to the Present, Princeton, NJ 2011, 154.

73 Dale, Muslim Empires, 15-152; Fowden, Pseudo-Aristotelian Politics and Theology in Universal Islam; Fletcher, Moorish Spain, 131-156.

as tombs or palaces should be surrounded with shops, bazaars, and *caravansarais* (Delhi's Red Fort and Humayun's tomb, as well as the Taj Mahal in Agra, provide outstanding examples). Equally common was the device of the *waqf* – the "pious" or charitable foundation – to fund these public institutions. Architectural styles similarly travelled across all three empires, along with poets, scholars, craftsmen, and merchants (despite the rivalry and enmity between the Ottomans and the Safavids as champions of Sunni and Shi'i Islam respectively).[74]

It is striking that all the Islamic rulers were anxious to claim descent from Chingiz Khan or Timur – preferably both, as in the fortunate case of Babur, the founder of the Mogul dynasty.[75] This was not so much to certify their Islamic credentials – neither Chingiz nor Timur showed much Muslim fervour – as to lay claim to the power and universality that were associated with the vast Chingizid and Timurid empires. The Islamic empires were ready where necessary to go outside the *dar-al-Islam* for inspiration and flattering comparison. We have seen that already with Alexander. But the Romans too exerted enormous ideological power. The Ottomans in the early years, after the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, saw themselves as the successors to Byzantium, and in effect as taking on the mantle of Rome.[76] Ottoman rulers clothed themselves in a lavish variety of titles, from a variety of cultures: not just khan (Central Asian) and caliph (Arab), but also Caesar (*kayser-I Rum*) (Roman), tsar (Slavic), and imperator (Western Christian).[77] With their European possessions in the Balkans and Central Europe, and their increasing involvement as one of the "Great Powers" of Europe, they can perhaps claim to be the most Eurasian of the later Islamic empires.

Russia's Eurasian credentials are also of course impeccable. The Russian Empire, in both its tsarist and Soviet varieties, spanned the vast Eurasian region from the Baltic to the Pacific, taking in a huge variety of religions and cultures.[78] In the early twentieth century, this led to the development of a restrictive and exclusive ideology of "Eurasianism", in which Russia features as the spiritual centre, destined to rule the rest of Eurasia, if not

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74   See on these common features of the Muslim empires Dale, Muslim Empires, 219-221, 226, 229-230, 245-246; on Persian and European influences in the Mughal empire, see also Annemarie Schimmel, The Empire of the Great Mughals: History, Art and Culture, London 2004; Ebba Koch, How the Mughal Padshahs referenced Iran in their Visual Construction of Universal Rule, in: Bang and Kołodziejczyk , Universal Empire, 194-209. On the travels of scholars between the empires, and their sharing of texts and commentaries, leading often to marked similarities in the curricula of the madrasas, see Francis Robinson, Ottomans – Safavids – Mughals: Shared Knowledge and Connective Systems, in: Journal of Islamic Studies 8 (1997) 2: 151-184.

75   One could, and should, of course consider the empires of Chinghis Khan and Timur as prime examples of Eurasian empires – the most clearly Eurasian, in fact, along with that of Alexander's. Space forbids treatment here; a good start can be made with Morgan, The Mongols; Beatrice Forbes Manz, The Rise and Rule of Tamerlane, Cambridge 1999; see also Favereau, this issue.

76   Kumar, Visions of Empire, 89-93.

77   Kołodziejczyk, Khan, Caliph, Tsar and Imperator.

78   Kumar, Visions of Empire, 213-309. One should also remember that for more than a century and a half (1232–1380), Russia was subject to Mongol rule, the rule of the Golden Horde (which formally did not end until 1480). For discussion of the extent to which this left an "Asiatic" legacy in Russian society and culture see Kumar, ibid. 216-7.

the world.[79] But before that, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a rather less ideological version of Eurasianism flourished in Russia, one that saw Russia as neither East nor West but as partaking of both, drawing its principles from the many cultures and traditions that it came into contact with and, in some cases, incorporated.

With regard specifically to Asia, Russia's "orientalism" was not of the one-sided, Eurocentric discourse famously excoriated by Edward Said, but a more interactive and differentiated variety born of the fact that "in Russia, the oriental 'other' was not necessarily an unknown creature set apart by thousands of miles and vast oceans. In Russia, the 'other' was all around – in ethnic enclaves penetrating deep into the heartland of Russian settlement, in scattered settlements and in vast stretches of borderland in which ethnic groups met and interacted over the course of centuries."[80] Russia was itself "orientalized", disparaged as "Asiatic" and the site of "oriental despotism", by many Europeans. Several Russian thinkers embraced this attribution, turning it into a positive quality, marking Russian difference from western European nations and the source of a new kind of civilization bridging both East and West. "Who is closer to Asia than us?", wrote the Russian orientalist and statesman Vasilli Grigorev in 1847; "which of the European tribes preserved in itself more of the Asiatic element than the Slavs, who were the last to leave their primitive homeland?"[81] For Grigorev, based in the borderland outpost of Orenburg on the Ural River, studying and working among Tatars, Cossacks, Bashkirs and Kirghiz, Russia's Eurasian character and destiny were inescapable and to be welcomed.[82]

The European overseas empires of the Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, French, and British were Eurasian almost by definition. From the start, following the discovery and conquest of the New World, the Atlantic powers moved eastwards, whether via the Indian Ocean or the Pacific. Large parts of South, South-East, and Far East Asia fell to them. From the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries, Europeans were an unmistakable presence and power in Asia.

How did that long experience of the East affect them? To what extent were their societies influenced, perhaps in ways that most people were unconscious of, by the long period of contact, during which many generations of Europeans actually lived much of their lives in the East? That has always been the object of endless fascination and speculation, in fiction and literary criticism as much as in the thinking of historians, anthropologists,

79   Chris Hann, A Concept of Eurasia, in: Current Anthropology 57 (2016) 1: 1-27, here 9-10; Dimitri V. Shlapentokh, Thermidor or Mongol Empire: History as Political Model in Russian Émigré Thought, in: Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique 32 (1991) 3: 379-408; Charles Clover, Black Wind, White Snow: The Rise of Russia's New Nationalism, New Haven, CT 2016.

80   Nathaniel Knight, Grigorèv in Orenburg, 1851–1862: Russian orientalism in the service of empire?, in: Slavic Review 59 (2000) 1: 74-100, here p. 95.

81   Quoted Knight, ibid., 79.

82   Russian orientalism is a complex subject, with many differing views of its character. For a good discussion, with reference to much of the recent literature, see Knight, Grigorèv in Orenburg, and the debate over his views in the journal Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History, 1 (2000) 4: 691-727. See also Alexander Morrison, Metropole, Colony, and Imperial Citizenship in the Russian Empire, in: Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History 13 (2012) 2: 327-364.

and sociologists. It became an especially sensitive, and often highly politicized, issue, once the European empires had gone, and Europeans were faced with the need to evaluate their legacies. Some were inclined to belittle the imperial experience, to say that the empires had left virtually no trace in European societies. Others saw plenty of evidence of the effect of empire, not least in the many Asians who now dwelled in the cities of the former metropolises.[83]

Compared to the land empires of the Ottomans and the Russians, where metropole and colony were in close proximity to each other, and the mingling of peoples more extensive as well as intensive, one would expect the Eurasianism of the overseas empires to have a different character, and to leave different legacies. Distance, and the greater cultural and racial difference between colonizer and colonized as compared with the land empires, matter. This remains a subject still waiting serious exploration. What surely cannot be doubted is that these were global empires where the influence of the parts was bound to be, at least to some degree, reciprocal. Europe might initially have gone to Asia more than Asia come to Europe, but in the long run, for better or worse, the fates and futures of the two were conjoined.

As concepts, empire and Eurasia seem tailor-made for each other. The empires considered in this paper were, or aspired to be, world empires. As with all human endeavours, their achievements rarely matched their aspirations. All fell short of attaining that universality, that unification of all humanity, that in principle they stood for. But what matters more for our present purpose is the striving, the desire to be more than a particular people or nation, to make everyone take, as Plutarch saw Alexander's mission, "the whole habitable world for his country", or as Aristides said of Rome, to establish "a civil community of the world".

Eurasia is not the world; but it came to possess or dominate the greater part of it. What happened there had, and continues to have, global consequences. The empires established there competed and fought with each other, even as they sought to make themselves the only empire, the empire of empires. Their worlds thoroughly penetrated each other, in a continuous exchange of ideas, people, and goods. They borrowed the language of illustrious predecessors – Alexander, Rome – in an attempt to show their continuity and harmony with earlier, world-transforming, efforts. We should perhaps stop treating these empires as isolable, independent entities, available, as in the standard treatments, for "contrast and comparison". Rather we should treat them as part of a chain or tradition of empires, a set of instances of what is in fact a continuous experience of empire across the entire Eurasian landmass, with numerous *translationes imperii* as one or another people carried on the tradition.[84] It has often been said that there has really been only one revolution, the Great French Revolution of 1789, and that all other revolution

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83   There is a judicious, empirically-based, and wide-ranging discussion of these issues in Elizabeth Buettner, Europe after Empire: Decolonization, Society and Culture, Cambridge 2016; see also Kumar, Visions of Empire, 465-75.

84   See for some further thoughts on this Krishan Kumar, The Time of Empire: Temporality and Genealogy in the Development of European Empires, in: Thesis Eleven 139 (2017) 1: 113-128, though I restrict myself there to the European empires.

have only led up to it or away from it. Perhaps there has only been one Eurasian empire, Alexander's empire, and all others have, knowingly or not, followed in its footsteps.

The Mongol Peace and
Global Medieval Eurasia[1]

Marie Favereau

ABSTRACTS

Der Mongolische Frieden (pax mongolica) bezieht sich auf die Zeit, in der die Nachfahren von Dschingis Khan den Großteil der eurasischen Landmasse beherrschten. Er war ein bedeutender Moment des globalen Mittelalters, denn er verwandelte die humane Landschaft Eurasiens und verband das Mittelmeer mit Indien und China. Die Mongolen stimulierten neue Formen des Fernhandels, indem sie Vereinbarungen mit den Mamluken, Byzantinern, Italienern und anderen abschlossen. Unter ihrer Herrschaft entstand eine neue Wirtschaftsordnung, die nicht als bloße Wiederbelebung der „Seidenstraßen" der alten Welt angesehen werden kann. Die Forschung hat den Mongolischen Frieden als kontinentales Phänomen eingeordnet, aber nur wenige Historiker haben neuerdings versucht, dieses Phänomen über die Feststellung eines gegenseitigen Interesses der Mongolen und der Kaufleute hinaus zu analysieren. Dieser Artikel vertieft das Verständnis dieser Interdependenz, indem die praktischen Aspekte des *ortaq*-Systems genauer untersucht werden. Er soll, allgemeiner gesehen, das Konzept des Mongolischen Friedens durch einen neuen Ansatz wiederbeleben, der das Handeln der Nomaden in der kommerziellen Wirtschaft in den Blick nimmt. Dies schließt eine Neubewertung der „spirituellen" Motivationen der Mongolen und ihrer politischen und diplomatischen Fähigkeiten bei der Integration des nördlichen Eurasien in das größte ökonomische Netzwerk der Landmasse ein.

The Mongol Peace refers to the period when the descendants of Chinggis Khan dominated most of the Eurasian landmass. It was a major moment of the global middle ages for it transformed the human landscape of Eurasia and connected the Mediterranean Sea to India and China. The Mongols stimulated new forms of long-distance trade by concluding agreements with the Mamluks, the Byzantines, the Italians, and others. Under their domination a new economic order emerged that cannot be seen as the mere revival of the "silk roads" of the ancient world. Scholarship has classified the Mongol Peace as a continental phenomenon, but few historians have actually attempted to analyse it beyond noting a mutuality of interest among the Mongol leaders and merchants. This article deepens understanding of this interdependency by scrutinising the practicalities of the *ortaq* system more closely. The more general aim is to reinstate the concept of Mongol Peace through a new approach that attends to the nomads' agency in the commercial economy. This includes a reassessment of the Mongols' "spiritual" motivations, and of their political and diplomatic skills in integrating northern Eurasia into the biggest economic network of the landmass.

Introduction

The Mongol moment has found its place in new scholarship on early forms of globalisation in Eurasia. It is increasingly recognized that those formerly dismissed as "predatory nomads" in fact initiated economic activities and intensified processes of connectedness on a hemispheric level. In general, however, even revisionist global historians confine the role of the Mongols to acceleration of the links between China and Europe. They tend to see medieval globalisation as a precursor of larger globalization processes, including the Colombian Exchange and the modern world-system. In this article, I approach the Mongol moment without employing the lens of the modern world-system which it supposedly anticipated. To avoid misrepresentation, it is instructive to analyze global medieval Eurasia by focusing on the political and economic motivations of Mongol leaders as they organized their empire.[2]

I begin with three preliminary observations. First, the socio-economic integration of Eurasia in the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries correlated with the post-conquest stability of the Mongol empire. Rooted in the policies of Chinggis Khan between 1206 and 1227, the Chinggisids ruled a territory that stretched from the Sea of China to the Black Sea for

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2   On a pre-1500 "world-system", see Janet Abu-Lughod, Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250–1350, New York/Oxford 1989; and the critical review of Victor Lieberman, Abu-Lughod's Egalitarian World Order. A Review Article, in: Comparative Study of Society and History 35 (1993): 544-550; see also Thomas Allsen, Ever Closer Encounters: The Appropriation of Culture and the Apportionment of Peoples in the Mongol Empire, in: Journal of Early Modern History 1 (1997): 19-23; on the notion of "global middle ages" and extent bibliography on the topic, see The Global Middle Ages. Past & Present Supplement 13, ed. Catherine Holmes and Naomi Standen, Oxford 2018 and esp. Simon Yarrow, Economic Imaginaries of the Global Middle Ages, 214-231. For an overview of the commercial exchange between the Mongols and western Europe, see Roxann Prazniak, Siena on the Silk Roads: Ambrogio Lorenzetti and the Mongol Global Century, 1250–1350, in: Journal of World History 21/2 (2010): 177-217.

roughly a century (1260s–1360s).[3] Scholarship has identified a *Pax Mongolica* modelled on the notion of *Pax Romana*. Yet the latter, a historical concept with its own limits and pitfalls, can hardly be transferred to an empire run by steppe nomads.[4]

Second, the Mongol term for peace, *îlî* or *el* also meant "submission." To accept their peace implied submission to a new economic order, which the rulers stimulated and attempted to the best of their abilities to control. To this end, the Mongols changed the rules of exchange in Eurasia, transforming not only trade routes but also diplomatic conventions, monetary and measuring systems, and scripts and languages. In effect, in the 1260s the Mongols adapted their empire to the new world that had emerged from the conquests – a world they intended to dominate long term and to convert to their own social system. The Mongol Peace must therefore be investigated as a state of subjection to a new social order. This article will contribute to this goal by reconstructing key elements of the Mongol domination.

Third, recent studies have revealed a deep contradiction in the classical view of the periodization of the Mongol empire. According to this paradigm, the unified empire lasted from 1206 to 1260, when succession struggles burst into a war (1261–64) that led to the "dissolution" of the empire and its division into four sub-empires: the Great Khans or Da Yuan, the Golden Horde, the Ilkhanate, and the Chagatay khanate. During the period of the Peace, the descendants of Chinggis Khan were thus simultaneously engaged in bitterly fighting one another whilst successfully promoting new forms of exchange across the landmass. This periodization and the historical narrative of "dissolution" have to be reconsidered.[5] If the Mongols were able to maintain and even intensify their exchanges after 1260 as Thomas Allsen, Hodong Kim, and others have demonstrated, the sociopolitical structure of the Chinggisid empire or the *Yeke Mongghol Ulus* as the Mongols called it, requires what Kim calls "a holistic approach".[6] The Mongols themselves saw this as one single system with a complex hierarchy of lineages. The "golden lineage" cre-

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3   Chinggis Khan founded the Mongol empire in 1206 but the Mongol domination of most of the landmass was achieved by Chinggis Khan's sons and grandsons. On the economic system of the empire, see the pioneer studies of Thomas Allsen, Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire: A Cultural History of Islamic Textiles, Cambridge 1997; Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia, Cambridge 2001; Michal Biran, The Mongol Empire and Inter-Civilizational Exchange, in: The Cambridge World History. Volume 5: Expanding Webs of Exchange and Conflict, 500CE–1500CE, ed. Benjamin Z. Kedar and Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, Cambridge 2015, 534-558; Reuven Amitai and Michal Biran (eds), Eurasian Nomads as Agents of Cultural Change, Honolulu 2015.

4   Nicola Di Cosmo, Black Sea Emporia and the Mongol Empire: A Reassessment of the Pax Mongolica, in: JESHO 53 (2010): 91.

5   The necessary reappraisal has recently been launched in several important studies. See Christopher Atwood, How the Mongols Got a Word for Tribe – and What It Means, in: Studia Historica Mongolica 10 (2010): 63-89; David Sneath, The Headless State. Aristocratic Orders, Kinship Society, and Misrepresentations of Nomadic Inner Asia, New York 2007; Lhamsuren Munkh-Erdene, Where Did the Mongol Empire Come From? Medieval Mongol Ideas of People, State and Empire, in: Inner Asia 13 (2011): 211-237; The Rise of the Chinggisid Dynasty: Pre-Modern Eurasian Political Order and Culture at a Glance, in: International Journal of Asian Studies 15 (2018) 1: 39-84. On the notion of "dissolution", see Peter Jackson, The Dissolution of the Mongol Empire, in: Central Asiatic Journal 32 (1978): 186-244.

6   Hodong Kim, The Unity of the Mongol Empire and Continental Exchange over Eurasia, in: Journal of Central Eurasian Studies 1 (2009): 33.

ated by Chinggis Khan had supremacy over all others. Its four major branches (Jochid, Ögödeyid, Toluid, Chagatayid) went back to Chinggis' four sons who had received their own *ulus* (people) from their father. The constituent *uluses* were based on bounded territories and, despite localised conflicts on particular borderlands (notably in the Caucasus and the Tarim basin), they never laid claim to each other's territories during the long century of their domination. Consistent with this, the Jochids and Chagatayids never claimed the title of Great Khan.

To reappraise this complex period, a redefinition of the concept of "peace" was critical. A major step was Kim's essay, published in 2009, in which he showed that four decades of political struggle between the Toluids and the Ögödeyids were marked by very few battles and no continuous armed clashes. The opponents lined up their armies as deterrents occasionally raided one another. Yet, "neither side made serious plans to attack the capital area of the enemy."[7]

Also important were the contributions of Nicola Di Cosmo.[8] When the Genoese and Venetian trade colonies are given their proper place within the larger schemes of Global Eurasia, the concept of the Mongol Peace appears in a different light. Di Cosmo analyzed the creation of the *comptoirs* of Caffa and Tana, the extent of their trading networks, and their duration. He also offered a more accurate estimation of the role of individual merchants in the building of new connections between Europe and Asia, distinguishing between the individual Italian traders working in Central Asia, Persia, and China and the strategic interests of the Italian powers vis-à-vis the settlements they created in western Asia. Noting that the Italian Republics did not invest beyond the lower Volga, he pointed out that the khans never renounced their ruling prerogatives in these regions.[9]

The relationship between the Mongol elite and the foreign merchants contributed to the consolidation of the empire. Historians have provided thorough studies of the *ortaqs*, merchants licensed to run business for the Mongols, and of the Italian traders who settled in the Crimea and the lower Volga in the 13th–14th centuries. This article argues that these phenomena, previously studied separately, were two sides of the same coin: the *ortaq* status implemented by the Mongols generated competition among merchants which both triggered the Italians to invest more in transcontinental trade and set limits to their expansion. The Italian settlements and trade networks were both a reaction to the "unifying" effect of the Mongol empire and a response to the privileges of the *ortaqs*.[10] To demonstrate this, I shall explore three key aspects of Mongol domination: their distributional and ideational drivers, their use of mobility, and the institutions they established to support the unification process of the empire. The first part of the article analyses how a complex system of beliefs shaped Mongol economic activity.

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7 Kim, The Unity of the Mongol Empire, 19.

8 Di Cosmo, Black Sea Emporia, 83-108; Mongols and Merchants on the Black Sea Frontier in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries: Convergences and Conflicts, in: Mongols, Turks and Others: Eurasian Nomads and the Sedentary World, ed. Reuven Amitai and Michal Biran, Leiden 2005, 391-424.

9 Di Cosmo, Black Sea Emporia, 104-106.

10 Ibid., 85.
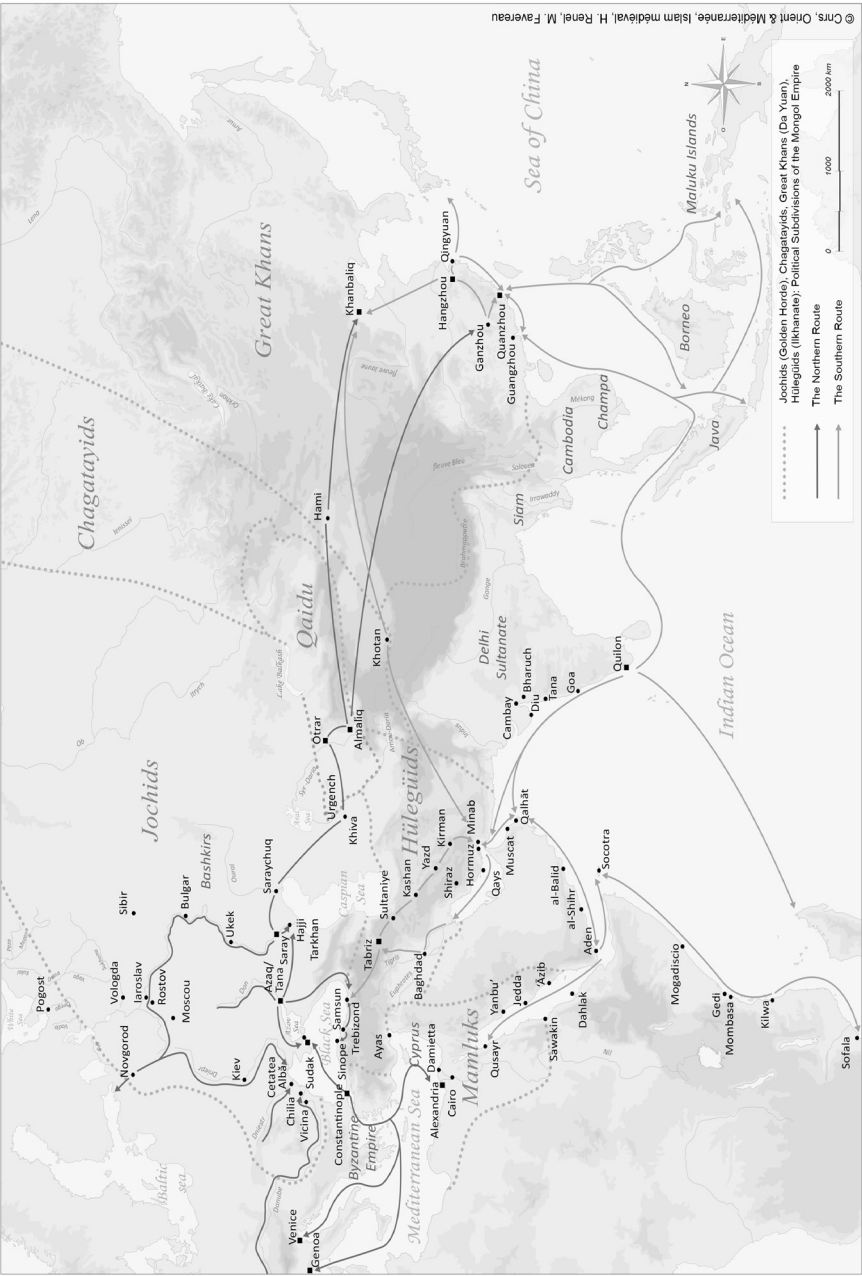
Map 1: The Northern and Southern Routes during the Mongol Peace.

The Chinggisid rulers were market-oriented and attempted to control finance, but I shall show that they were not driven by criteria of economic efficiency in the sense of maximizing pastoral production or hoarding wealth. The second part investigates the institutions associated with the northern land route from China to Europe, which we now realise were more secure than the equivalent overseas routes.[11] At every hub along these long routes, merchants stimulated the local economy. Finally, the third part analyzes the contents and consequences of the trade treaties the Mongols granted to Venice. I show that the terrestrial north-Eurasian connections were of utmost importance for the global trade system that flourished under the Mongols.

Redistribution, Happiness, and Order

The Mongol khans shared a political system and an economy, both of which were underpinned by the principle of redistribution.[12] The act of redistributing was crucial in the political culture of the time: a khan redistributed booty, animals, and war captives during great assemblies called quriltai. Participants received their share according to their status in the social hierarchy. The major change that Chinggis and his successor Ögödei (1229–41) introduced in the steppe political culture was a change in the conception of hierarchy. Formerly, hierarchy was based on age seniority, but under Chinggis this was supplemented by a new notion of status. This was the prerogative of the khan.

The Qubi *system*

One central mechanism in this status hierarchy, introduced by Chinggis Khan himself, was the system of *qubi*, shares.[13] Each of his sons had possessions in the territories of others and received revenues from them. Thus, under Great Khan Ögödei the three other sons of Chinggis and their descendants received taxes and tributes from regions that were under the direct supervision of the Great Khan. This system was extended when the Mongols finally crushed the Jin and took control of North China in 1236. The Jochids, Ögödeyids, and Chagatayids were allocated territory and people in western Shanxi Province, while the Toluids were granted the south of Hebei, and the brothers of Chinggis Khan received eastern Shandong. As Yihao Qiu has recently established, Batu,

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11   Kim, The Unity of the Mongol Empire, 24-30.
12   On the complex redistribution system of the Mongols, see Thomas Allsen, Sharing out the Empire: Apportioned Lands under the Mongols, in: Nomads in the Sedentary World, ed. Anatoly M. Khazanov and André Wink, Richmond 2001, 172-190. For redistribution in theoretical terms as a "form of integration" of the economy, see Karl Polanyi, The Economy as Instituted Process, in: Trade and Market in the Early Empires, ed. Karl Polanyi, Conrad Arensberg, and Harry Pearson, Glencoe 1957, 243-70.
13   Allsen was probably the first to appreciate the significance of the Mongolian system of shares. See his review of Isenbike Togan, Flexibility and Limitation in Steppe Formations: The Kerait Khanate and Chinggis Khan, Leiden 1998, in: Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi 10 (1998–1999): 242-244.

the head of the Jochids dwelling in the area of the lower Volga, personally received 41, 302 households located in north-western China.[14]

The Mongols originally distinguished the steppe – a space where they lived, raised herds, celebrated, and rested – from the sedentary areas that they ruled but did not colonize.[15] The most densely populated regions of the empire were China, Khorasan, South Caucasus, Khwarezm, and the Russian principalities. Here the Mongols divided up the cities, villages, fields, orchards, vineyards and other valuable resources among the descendants of Chinggis Khan. The grantees received not only tax incomes in silver, gold, coins or goods but also people: more precisely, a specific number of households that they could move to other areas and relocate according to the needs of the elite. After 1264, when the frontiers of the four *uluses* crystallized, one might have expected the *qubi* system to disappear. In fact, it continued until the fall of the Da Yuan in 1368. Not only die revenue streams from China and Central Asia continue to flow to the Jochids, Toluids, and Chagatayids, but additional incomes were generated from the newly conquered regions. Soon after Qubilai (*c.*1260–94) conquered Song China, he apportioned households according to the *qubi* system. The Jochids, still living in the lower Volga, were allocated 60, 000 families in Yongzhou in today's Hunan, from whom they received their assigned revenues until well into the fourteenth century.[16]

The Circulation of Happiness

Although the Mongol khans accumulated commodities in their treasuries, their ultimate purpose was not to retain but to circulate wealth. Rashid al-din (1247–1318), vizier of Ghazan Khan, recorded several anecdotes emphasizing the liberality of his masters:

> *One day, when he* [Great Khan Qubilai] *had laid the foundations of Qaraqorum, he went into the treasury and saw nearly a hundred thousand bars* [of silver]. *"What benefit do we derive from all these stores?" he asked. "They have to be constantly guarded. Have it announced that everybody who wants a bar should come and take one." The people of the city, high and low, rich and poor alike, all rushed to the treasury, and everyone got an abundant share.*[17]

14   Yihao Qiu, Independent Ruler, Indefinable Role. Understanding the History of the Golden Horde from the Perspectives of the Yuan Dynasty, in: REMMM 143 (2018): 33.

15   On Chinggis Khan's original apportionment of his empire to his next of kin, see Allsen, Sharing out the Empire; Ever Closer Encounters, 2-11.

16   Qiu, Independent Ruler, shows that Pingyang and Yongzhou remained the Jochids' most important possessions in China. After 1227, the Jochids also received revenues from Shazhou, a city of the old Tangut kingdom that Batu had contributed to submit. Along with several other dispersed places that were too small (10, 000 households or less) or too remote, the Jochids lost these possessions in the second half of the thirteenth century when they were integrated into the dominions of the Great Khan. In 1336, Özbek Khan sent his emissaries to the court of the Great Khan to recover the Jochids' share.

17   Rashīd al-Dīn, Jamiʿuʾt-tawarikh. Compendium of Chronicles, tr. W. M. Thackston, Cambridge, Mass. 1998-9, 338.

According to Rashid al-din, the Great Khan claimed that what he had given to his subjects would return to him anyway.[18] Other anecdotes show that the khans often gave silver and golden ingots (*balish*) to their subjects as capital to begin a trade or a new business.[19] The Great Khan even acted as guarantor for his subjects: creditors were entitled to claim from the treasury the private debt due to them. The debtor was then liable to repay the ruler, who was more likely to accept delays but who could also legally impose other sanctions, including servitude and slavery. Khans wanted creditors to have trust in the system and continue the business of lending money. For similar reasons, they provided warrants for their traders and compensation if heavy losses were incurred in commercial transactions. The same security was extended in the event of a bad harvest: "if there is no harvest, they may take full compensation from the storehouses."[20]

The contemporaries who witnessed and described the khans' impressive generosity sometimes misunderstood it. Ögödei had a reputation for overpaying for war equipment like arrows and arrow heads.[21] Not only court historians but foreign travelers and envoys depicted the khans as non-profit oriented buyers, who often offered more than the economic value of the goods they acquired. As I shall argue below, this was a strategy to lure merchants away from older circuits. In the steppe world, the role of the ruler was first and foremost to create the best possible conditions for the circulation of things, and especially luxuries. The fluidity of the redistribution system embraced not only the living but also the dead, whose spirits needed to be properly fed through everyday rituals. The capital in which the Mongols were interested was not only material but spiritual and immaterial. The khans' wealth derived mainly from the incomes of their personal workers, herds, taxes, and war spoils. Long distance trade fulfilled a different need. While free Mongols were by definition able to sustain themselves, their families, and their servants, the elites needed luxuries, including silver and gold ingots, precious textiles, furs, and pearls, for their political economy. The khans recycled the goods the merchants brought to their courts in the wider circle of their acquaintances and followers, who in turn passed them on to their subordinates. This fulfilled a triple function: reward for loyalty, royal distribution to bolster the khan's prestige, and symbolic food to sustain society. The redistribution was supposed to penetrate all levels through the tümen, decimal order, that Chinggis Khan had established: "they have divided all the people into companies of ten,

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18   Ibid., 337.

19   Ibid., 336. It seems that in the early empire, the Mongols minted and used silver and gold coins for tax payments only. For trade and for exchange in general they used *balish*, ingots of gold or silver. In the 1250s "the balish is worth fifty misqals of gold or silver, round about seventy five rukni dinars, the standard of which is two thirds." Juvaynī, Genghis Khan: The History of the World Conqueror, trans. J. A. Boyle, Manchester 1953, I, 23. In Turkish, the Persian word *bālish* became yastuq, meaning "cushion": see Peter Jackson (ed., with David Morgan), The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck: His Journey to the Court of the Great Khan Möngke 1253–1255, Cambridge 1990, 156; Paul Pelliot, Le prétendu mot 'iascot' chez Guillaume de Rubrouck, in: T'oung Pao, XXVII (1930) 190-92. On money in the early empire, see Timothy May, The Mongol Conquests in World History, London 2012, 128.

20   Rashīd al-Dīn, Jami'u't-tawarikh, 342.

21   Ibid., 339: "Someone brought him [Ögödei] two hundred bone arrow heads. He gave him a like number of bars (of silver)."

appointing one of the ten to be the commanders of the nine others; while from among each ten commanders one has been given the title of 'commander of the hundred', all the hundred having been placed under his command. And so it is with each thousand men and so also with each ten thousand, over whom they have appointed a commander whom they call 'commander of the tümen.'" Thus the khan distributed to those who attended the quriltai, among whom were the commanders of Tens of Thousands, who then passed on luxury items to the men of a lower rank, and so forth.[22] Quriltai redistribution was modelled on traditional meat sharing.[23] To receive their share of booty, tax revenues, diplomatic gifts, and other luxury products, members of the elite had to participate in these meetings, which were held at least twice a year.[24] From the end of the thirteenth century onwards, war spoils became rare as the Mongols were at peace with most of their neighbours. The majority of the commodities redistributed at court were diplomatic gifts and special commodities that were, in Allsen's words, "an absolutely essential ingredient in the nomads' redistributive political culture."[25] The circulation of luxuries was both a pillar of the social order and its reflection.

There was more to this than the circulation of material luxuries, which are better viewed as the receptacle or medium of something immaterial. In the Mongol conception, the circle of redistribution brought happiness.[26] The things they shared, apportioned, and circulated among themselves had a direct impact on the well-being of the society and its vital hierarchy. This was the key to maintain social order, and to repair social disorders. It is hard to reconstruct how the Medieval Mongols defined collective happiness, but they certainly believed that the circular movement of things was crucial in producing it.[27]

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22   Juvaynī, Genghis Khan: The History of the World Conqueror, trans. J. A. Boyle, 31.

23   The medieval Mongols were a non-egalitarian society divided between *ochigin* or *ini* (younger brothers) and *aqa* (older brothers); when they shared, they took into account gender, age seniority, and kinship position. On this crucial distinction between juniors and seniors, see Tatyana Skrynnikova, Relations of Domination and Submission: Political Practice in the Mongol Empire of Chinggis Khan, in: Imperial statecraft: Political forms and techniques of governance in Inner Asia, sixth-twentieth centuries, ed. David Sneath, Bellingham, WA. 2007, Chapter 3: 87.

24   The commodities redistributed were seldom steppe products, but commodities acquired through war and trade. Precious textiles were in high demand at the Mongol courts, as a piece of textile could be cut into small pieces to be distributed to more people - each part of it retaining some of the magic of the whole. Artisans working for the Mongols made luxury textiles called nasij (gold threatened silk brocades) which their masters used for themselves and offered to their guests as "robe of honors": see Allsen, Commodity and Exchange; Zvezdana Dode, Tkani 'zar andar zar' (zolotom po zolotu) v kontekste 'mongol'skogo tekstilya', in: Vestnik Moskovskogo Universiteta 8 (2016) 2: 123-134. On contemporary meat sharing and clan sacrifices, see Sandrine Ruhlmann, L'appel du bonheur. Le partage alimentaire mongol, Paris 2015; on possible links with medieval rituals, see esp. 230-233.

25   Allsen, Isenbike Togan, Flexibility and Limitation, 244.

26   On the herders' definition of happiness in contemporary Mongolia in connection with food sharing and food circulation, see Ruhlmann, L'appel du bonheur, 176-78. See also, 308: "A trop accumuler le bonheur, on s'attire du malheur." As Ruhlmann explains, in contemporary Mongolian the terms used for this notion of happiness are *bujan hishig*, *zhargal*, and *az* (luck) *zhargal*. Today this notion is enmeshed with the Buddhist notions of "blessing, merits, virtues," but in the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries this was not necessarily the case. The metaphor of the circle of redistribution is mine.

27   The medieval Mongols practiced the cult to the ancestors, and believed in the spirits of the dead. Under Chinggis Khan, most of them were apparently polytheists and held in great esteem diviners (or maybe shamans – still a matter of debate). In the second half of the thirteenth century, an increasing number of Mongols became

Sharing was thus a way to invoke human flourishing and to attract it to oneself and clos-est kin. According to the Mongol worldview, things that circulated always came back. In the steppe, the accumulation of wealth was widely accepted, yet it only made sense in terms of its redistribution. As Great Khan Ögödei reportedly declared: there is no differ-ence "between buried treasure and dust." [28] The Mongols believed in the rebirth of their souls: putting into circulation and sharing with a huge number of guests would bring the host happiness and prosperity not only in his everyday life but also in his afterlife, as it increased his chances of an optimal rebirth. The spirits of the dead had to be continuous-ly appeased to protect the living from a negative interference of the "bad" or "ill dead." The aim of circulation was both to attract happiness and repel hardship and misfortune. During the redistribution assemblies, participants received not the mundane things of everyday life, nor some kind of salary, but rather a portion of the social happiness to which they themselves contributed. By circulating it, they increased their own part.[29] The Mongol elites did not need the redistribution system to feed themselves in any literal way – the nomadic household, though seldom isolated, was highly self-sufficient – but rather to survive as a group and to perpetuate their social hegemonic order.

Finally, the ideology of 'circulation' was a necessary element of the Mongol economic sys-tem. In this system, mostly based on the extraction of tributes and taxes, the Chinggisids asked their subjects and tax payers to produce the money-type goods – such as metal coins, silk, salt, furs – in which they had to pay their taxes and tributes. Thus by put-ting some of these goods back into circulation the system developed a mechanism that allowed the formation of reciprocity circuits. As we shall see, next to the redistributive institutions of *quriltai* and *tümen*, the Mongols used the merchants as another channel of circulation. The link between the happiness of the *ulus* and the socio-political impera-tive of redistribution is key to understand how the Mongol system was able to reproduce itself on the long run.[30]

Taoist, Buddhist, Christian, and Muslims, but they seemed to have maintained their old belief system. For new re-search and general bibliography on the medieval Mongols' belief system, see Christopher Atwood, Validation by Holiness or Sovereignty: Religious Toleration as Political Theology in the Mongol World Empire of the Thirteenth Century, in: The International History Review 26 (2004) 2: 237-256; Florence Hodous, Faith and the Law: Religious Beliefs and the Death Penalty in the Ilkhanate, in: The Mongols' Middle East: Continuity and Transformation in Ilkhanid Iran, ed. Bruno de Nicola and Charles Melville, Leiden / Boston 2016: 106-129; Jonathan Brack, Theolo-gies of Auspicious Kingship: The Islamization of Chinggisid Sacral Kingship in the Islamic World, in: Comparative Studies in Society and History 60 (2018) 4:1143–1171.

28   Rashīd al-Dīn, Jami'u't-tawarikh, 334. On Ögödei facing the problem of storage, see May, The Mongol Conquests, 116.

29   Allsen, Ever Closer Encounters, 20-21; Hodous, Faith and the Law, 107-109; Ruhlmann, L'appel du bonheur, 176-178.

30   Obviously, the notion of 'public wellness' associated with circulation of wealth and legitimate governance is not typical of the Mongols and can be found in diverse societies under a variety of shapes. Most helpful here are Polanyi's concepts of redistribution and reciprocity in pre-industrial societies, and his analysis of the importance of non-economic motivations in socio-economic systems underpinned with the institutional patterns of sym-metry and centricity, in which the economy is "a mere function of social organization": see Karl Polanyi, The Great Transformation. The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time, Boston 2001, 49-58 [1st ed. New York 1944].

A Unified Landmass

The climatic and ecological continuities of the Eurasian steppe belt do not suffice to explain how the Mongols achieved an unprecedented scale of territorial integration. In this section I attend to their organizational innovations, in particular their synergies with merchants through the institution known as *ortaq*.

Institutional coordination of the territory

The Mongol khans were nomadic rulers and the way they moved was different from the mobility of sedentary rulers – the Mongols probably moved less.[31] The khans visited their next of kin and other Mongol leaders but not their sedentary subjects and vassals. The latter were expected to come to the court, wherever it had settled. *Quriltai* were not necessarily held in the capital or near big cities, but more often in the steppe. In times of peace, the khans' mobile courts practiced seasonal migration: they went north in summer, and south in winter. In the western steppe, they followed the great valleys of the Irtysh, Syr-Daria, Ural, Volga, Don, Dniepr, Dniestr and Danube rivers, while in the eastern steppe they practiced transhumance. These migrations occurred at roughly the same time everywhere in the empire.

To communicate between courts, the Mongols dispatched express envoys across the steppe. The major obstacles to travel were not the mountains (which the Mongols were well able to pass even with heavy loads, as they had several times demonstrated during the conquest) but the major rivers. The frozen water could be easily traversed in winter, but in summer serious logistical challenges had to be met. Travellers were impressed by the Mongols' ability to cross rivers at any season of the year:

> When they come to a river, they cross it in the following manner, even if it is wide. The nobles have a circular piece of light leather, round the edge of which they make numerous loops, though which they thread a rope; they draw this up so that it makes a pouch, which they fill with their clothes and other things, pressing them down very tightly together; on top of these, in the middle, they put their saddles and other hard things. The men also sit in the middle and they tie the boat they have made in this way to the tail of a horse. They make one man swim in front with the horse to guide it, or sometimes they have a couple of oars with which they row to the other side of the water and so cross the river. The horses, however, they drive into the water, and a man swims by the side of one horse, which he guides, and the others all follow it; in this way they cross both narrow and wide rivers.[32]

To be able to communicate across their vast empire, the Mongols developed a complex relay system that allowed a horseman to go from Qaraqorum to the Volga in several

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31   On power projection and mobility, see Christopher Atwood, Imperial Itinerance and Mobile Pastoralism. The State and Mobility in Medieval Inner Asia, in: Inner Asia 17 (2015): 293-349.

32   John of Plano Carpini, The Mission to Asia: Narratives and Letters of the Franciscan Missionaries in Mongolia and China in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries, ed. Christopher Dawson, London 1955: 35.

weeks.[33] The *yam* embraced two kinds of network: one allowing officials and members of the 'golden' (Chinggisid) lineage[34] to communicate with each other; and the other facilitating the provisioning of military posts, courts and cities.[35] Under the Great Khans Ögödei, Güyük (1246–48), and Möngke (1251–59), the Mongols expended both networks on the scale of the landmass:

> *when the extent of their territories became broad and vast and important events fell out, it became essential to ascertain the activities of their enemies, and it was also necessary to transport goods from West to the East and from the Far East to the West. Therefore throughout the length and breadth of the land they established yams, and made arrangements for the upkeep and expenses of each yam, assigning thereto a fixed number of men and beast as well as food, drink, and other necessities. All this they shared out amongst the tümen, each two tümen having to supply one yam.*[36]

The *yam* made long-distance connectivity more predictable and thus contributed to the unification of the empire. It created horizontal mobility (west-east-west) which intersected with the north-south migration routes of the khans' mobile courts. The *yam* formed part of a larger system that integrated different kind of mobilities. By making horses, food, and drink available to envoys who were also able to cross the great rivers, the Mongols built a system that allowed a diversity of circulations. While special envoys usually needed to travel at full speed, merchants, pilgrims, ambassadors, and other travelers could opt for a different tempo. As a result, the *yam* came to be a symbol of the Chinggisids empire, and they themselves saw it as a reflection of peace. In 1304, the khan Öljeitü, who ruled Iran, Azerbaijan, and Seljuq Anatolia, explained in a letter to the king of France Philip the Fair how this connectivity worked to unify the Mongols:

> *Now under the inspiration of the Sky (Tengri), we Tëmur qaan* [the Great Khan]*, Toqta, Chapar, Du'a, and others, descendants of Chinggis Khan, while since forty five years until recently we used to recriminate against each other, now, under the protection*

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33   The journey from the lower Volga to Qaraqorum took Plano Carpini 80 days; it took Rubrouck between 70 and 75 days; a Mongol horseman would go faster.

34   On the notion of Chinggisid lineage also known as the golden lineage, see Marie Favereau and Liesbeth Geevers, The Golden Horde, the Spanish Habsburg Monarchy, and the Construction of Ruling Dynasties, in: Prince, Pen and Sword. Eurasian Perspectives, ed. Maaike van Berkel and Jeroen Duindam, Leiden / Boston 2018, 454-455.

35   On the imperial *yam*, see Secret History, § 279-281, 297; Juvaynī, Genghis Khan: The History of the World Conqueror, trans. J.A. Boyle, 33. On the origins of the term, Gerhard Doerfer, Türkische und mongolische Elemente in Neupersischen, Wiesbaden 1963–1975, iv: 110-118, nr. 1812. On the *yam* as a practice of power, and its diffusion across the landmass, see Didier Gazagnadou, trans. by L. Byrne, The Diffusion of a Postal Relay System in Premodern Eurasia, Paris 2016, 47-63 [First edition: La Poste à relais. La diffusion d'une technique de pouvoir à travers l'Eurasie. Chine, Islam, Europe, Paris 1994]; also Adam Silverstein, Postal Systems in the Pre-Modern Islamic World, Cambridge 2007), reviewed by Thomas Allsen, Imperial Posts, West, East and North: A Review Article, in: Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi 17 (2010): 241-242; Márton Vér, The Origins of the Postal System of The Mongol Empire, in: Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi 22 (2016): 227-239; The Postal System of the Mongol Empire in Northeastern Turkestan, PhD Dissertation, Szeged 2016.

36   Juvaynī, Genghis Khan: The History of the World Conqueror, trans. J.A. Boyle, 33. A *tümen* was the largest military and administrative unit of the empire; it was theoretically composed of 10 000 men.

of the Sky, [we] *elder brothers and younger brothers, reached a mutual agreement; our states are but one from southern China, where the sun rises, as far as the Talu Sea* [the legendary ocean surrounding Eurasia] *and now our postal stations* (*yam*) *are connected once more.*[37]

Öljeitü correlated the unity of the Mongols with the circulation of goods, people, and information through the communication and supply system which, in his view, not only covered the entire landmass but forged unity between the descendants of Chinggis. Öljeitü did not see this unity as the domination of one ruler but of one lineage, the golden lineage. He saw peace as a direct emanation of circulation, and the *yam* as a concrete instrument to facilitate the circulation of happiness.

In addition to the yam, the Mongols implemented a host of policies to enhance the security of trade routes, to stabilize not only diplomatic conventions but also means of payment, weights and measures, and the use of common scripts and languages.[38] The pacification of the territory resulted not just from the Mongols' superior mobility and unique technologies but also from their capacity to create and maintain unifying institutions. Chinggisid accountants and financiers connected and merged Islamic and Chinese systems of measurement, the first time this had been accomplished on a hemispheric scale. Financial reforms were only half successful and the Mongols could never persuade Muslims in the Middle East to trust banknotes. Yet, the monetarization of northern Eurasia – including the Russian principalities where the citizens began to use coins under the Jochids – was a direct consequence of the Mongols' economic domination. The peak of monetarization coincided with the flourishing time of the long-distance trade (roughly the first half of the fourteenth century).[39] The overarching institutions were carefully cultivated by the khans, even during periods of extreme conflicts within the golden lineage, since they were determined at all costs to avoid economic isolation.

Attracting the Merchants and creating the *ortaqs*

The collection of taxes and tribute in the form of cash, goods, and people was the main resource of the empire in its formative period. Trade revenues gradually increased in importance from the mid-thirteenth century onwards. The Mongols transformed the

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37 Antoine Mostaert and Francis W. Cleaves, Les lettres de 1289 et 1305 des ilhan Arghun et Öljeitu à Philippe le Bel, Cambridge, Mass. 1962, 55-56 (Mongolian Text), 56-57 (French Translation). This is a quotation of lines 21-29; it was quoted also in Kim, The Unity of the Mongol Empire, 35.

38 These policies cannot be reviewed here for reasons of space. On the Mongols' weight system, see Dai Matsui, Unification of Weights and Measures by the Mongol Empire as Seen in the Uigur and Mongol Documents, in: Turfan Revisited – The First Century of Research into the Arts and Cultures of the Silk Road, ed. Desmond Durkin-Meisterernst, Simone-Christiane Raschmann, et alii, Berlin 2004, 197-202. For a fine-grained analysis of the Mongol monetary system, see Richard von Glahn, Monies of Account and Monetary Transition in China, Twelfth to Fourteenth Centuries, in: Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient 53 (2010): 463-505.

39 In 1292–1293, the imperial administrators decided to introduce Chinese paper money in the Ilkhanate. It was first tried in Tabriz for two months but after a general strike of eight days, the reform of paper money was finally abandoned, see Judith Kolbas, The Mongols in Iran: Chingiz Khan to Uljaytu, 1220–1309, London / New York 2006, 290.

most productive trades of their regions into quasi-monopolies: they controlled the grain, rice, and silk trades in the east; the fur, slave, and salt trades in the north-west; and the spice, silk, cotton textile, and slave trades in the south. This meant that Mongol political leaders needed to attract merchants and their caravans to their camps.[40] They thus transformed their hordes into major redistribution centres. To facilitate access to Qaraqorum and to connect central Mongolia more closely to north-western China, Great Khan Ögödei established wells with brick walls in the Gobi Desert.[41] In this period, the Great Khan gained a reputation for paying in excess of the value of the merchandise:

> *Ögödei ordered further that the merchants be paid a premium of ten percent over the total of their sold merchandise. His courtiers notified him that he already bought their merchants over their value: "Merchants deal with the treasury in hopes of a profit," the Qa'an said, "and they have an expense to pay off you* bitigchis [secretaries]. *It's the debt they owe you I'm discharging lest they come away having taken a loss in dealing with us."*[42]

Like Chinggis Khan before him, Ögödei included the costs of administration and transportation for the merchants who would come to them, thus enabling the latter to make more accurate calculations of the costs of their long distance trade. To obtain these generous prices, the merchants had to be physically present at the court.[43] To make this even more attractive, Chinggis Khan and his successors adapted the *ortaq* partnership, a traditional form of interpersonal credit, and raised it to a new level. Wealthy members of the golden lineage and their close relatives invested private capital into partnerships with merchants.[44] The partners – the Mongol investor and the merchant(s) – shared the final benefits on various terms. This was not a contract made on equal terms, since the *ortaqs* in fact became the dependent private traders of the elites. These "licensed merchants" soon came to dominate commercial transactions across the empire. Ögödei and his successor Güyük went a step further to attract such merchants by maintaining very light taxation with numerous exemptions. The trade in currencies – textiles, silver, gold, precious stones and pearls – was not taxed at all in order to support their use and circulation.
 These khans created patrols to protect the traders and their goods. Even more importantly, they let merchants access the facilities of the *yam* and thus the long-distance logistics of the empire. Safe-conduct documents and requisition orders were issued in the

40   May, The Mongol Conquests, 110: "The Mongols created a scenario where the trade came to them."
41   May, The Mongol Conquests, 117, based on Igor de Rachewiltz (trans. and ed.), The Secret History of the Mongols, Leiden 2004, 214.
42   Rashīd al-Dīn, Jami'u't-tawarikh, 338.
43   On the trade during Chinggis and Ögödei's rules, and the move from Chinggis old capital of Avarga on the Onon-Kerülen river valleys, to Qaraqorum and the Orkhon valley under Ögödei: May, The Mongol Conquests, 110-119.
44   Many members of the ruling family, including khatuns (women of the Mongol elites) and emirs or begs, developed *ortaq* partnerships. On the *ortaqs* under the Chinggisids, see Thomas Allsen, Mongolian Princes and their Merchant Partners, 1200–1260, in: Asia Major, third series, 2 (1989) 2: 83-126; Elizabeth Endicott-West, Merchant Associations in Yüan China: The Ortogh, in: Asia Major 3 (1989) 2: 127-153; Christopher Atwood, Ortoq, in: Encyclopedia of Mongolia and the Mongol Empire, New York 2004, 429-430.

form of passes (made of gold, silver, bronze or wood) which the Mongols called *gerege*.[45] The *gerege* gave the bearer authority to requisition animals, goods and services from local populations and other officials. One only had to show the pass to claim what one needed and access the *yam*. In the early thirteenth century this privilege was restricted to a small number of officials, but it was inflated as the imperial administration grew and by the time of Ögödei (1229–41) it had been extended to merchants working for the elite. The right to bear a *gerege* and use the *yam* was a huge advantage for these merchants as it entirely erased their transportation costs. It promoted long distance trade, including the development and formalization of many new trade routes.

With the opening of the *yam* to merchants, power became increasingly open to abuse and the administrators working for the Great Khan lost control on the *ortaqs*. To reduce the number of *gerege* in circulation, a new ruler would order the collection of all existing passes before issuing his own. Great Khans and khans implemented several rules inconsistently.[46] Möngke specifically prohibited merchants from using them:

> *When he* [Möngke] *became Khan and the key of Empire was placed in the hand of his severity and justice, the order was given that* paizas [gerege] *should not be given to merchants so that a distinction might be made between them and those engaged in the affairs of the Divan. That merchants should make use of* ulaghs [yam] *was inequitable in the extreme…*[47]

While friction between *ortaqs* and administrators was often considerable, the khans never expelled the licensed merchants from the *yam* system. Many merchants were closely related to members of the golden lineage and played a key role in the empire's economy. Under Qubilai (1260–94) merchants continued to use the *yam*, most famously Marco Polo. The major problem of the *gerege* was the fact that they were anonymous and thus easily transferable. In the Ilkhanate, Ghazan Khan (1295–1304) required *gerege* holders to exchange old ones for new passes which had the names of the bearers on them and were to be sent back at the end of the bearers' missions. The Great Khan decreed that the best horses should be reserved for express couriers and secret envoys, who were to enjoy preferential service over all other travelers.[48] Despite these measures, until the early fourteenth century *ortaqs* working for the Mongol elites were still allowed to hold *gerege*. After Ghazan's reform, only *ortaqs* working for the khan were supposedly authorized to use the *yam*.[49]

In summary, after Chinggis Khan many merchants who resided in the empire and were in possession of lands, places, and people were considered "*tarkhan*", protected sub-

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45   On the proliferation of the *gerege* (*paiza* in Chinese) and the later corruption of the system, especially under the regency of Töregene Khatun, see May, The Mongol Conquests, 119-122 based on Juvaynī.
46   Juvaynī, Genghis Khan: The History of the World Conqueror, trans. J.A. Boyle, 255, 257, 508-509, 551, 598-99; Atwood, Paiza, in: Encyclopedia of Mongolia and the Mongol Empire, 433-434.
47   Juvaynī, Genghis Khan: The History of the World Conqueror, trans. J.A. Boyle, 606.
48   Rashīd al-Dīn, Jami'u't-tawarikh, 716-717; Atwood, Paiza, 433-434.
49   Rashīd al-Dīn, Jami'u't-tawarikh, 714-715, 727-730.

jects who benefited from partial or total tax-exemption. Great Khan Möngke introduced some restrictions to the more liberal system of his predecessors, requiring merchants to be administratively registered through the census, and to pay taxes on their possessions. Yet the *ortaq* system persisted until the end of the Mongol empire. Even during wars and internal conflicts, *gerege* enabled merchants, both Mongol and non-Mongol, to be mobile across Eurasia. Foreign emissaries, who had less freedom, often joined trading caravans to cross troubled areas.

The routes of long-distance trade

To stay safe and maintain their wares under protection, merchants abandoned insecure itineraries and followed the routes formalized by the Mongols, including specific bridges and crossing points. Two trade arteries traversed the whole empire: the southern and northern routes. The first one combined land and sea itineraries while the second one was exclusively terrestrial. They largely reflected the land partition between Jochids and Toluids, the two most powerful Chinggisid lineages.

The southern route was mostly under the control of the Toluid lineage, except between Hormuz and China where the territories in question fell under the authority of the Ögödei leader Qaidu (*c.*1260–1301), whose relations with the Toluids were unstable.[50] Tabriz, Kashan, Yazd, Kirman, and Hormuz were the main hubs along this southern route. Western merchants usually departed from Trebizond to reach Tabriz. Once in Hormuz, they could either go by land to China or by boat from Hormuz to Kollam and on to Quanzhou. The maritime section of the route was reputed to be long and dangerous and so western travellers generally preferred the land route, which was also quicker.[51] To promote terrestrial connectivity between Iran and China the Great Khan Qubilai improved the facilities and postal stations in the Tarim basin, especially between Hami and Khotan. However, since this road passed through the territories of Qaidu, it was only intermittently open to traders. In 1275, Qaidu was at war with Qubilai and links between their territories were fraught. News spread quickly and merchants responded by choosing the maritime route. In 1288-89, Qubilai finally abandoned his project of controlling and securing this part of the route.[52] From then on, travellers, ambassadors, and merchants who journeyed across Eurasia had the choice between the southern land

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50   The Persian portion of the southern route belonged to the Hülegüids, a branch of the Toluids, and its Chinese portion to the Great Khans, another branch of the Toluids.

51   The land journey between Tabriz and Khanbaliq (Beijing) took at least 100 days. Kim, *The Unity of the Mongol Empire*, 27-28; Yule, Sir Henry, *Cathay and the Way Thither*, London, 1913-16, vol. 3, 49. On the eastern portion of the sea route, see Roderich Ptak, The Northern Trade Route to the Spice Islands: South China Sea – Sulu Zone – North Moluccas (14th to early 16th century), in: *Archipel* 43 (1992): 27-56; From Quanzhou to the Sulu Zone and Beyond: Questions Related to the Early Fourteenth Century, in: *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 29 (1998) 2: 269-294; Kenneth R. Hall, Sojourning communities, ports-of-trade, and commercial networking in Southeast Asia's eastern regions, c. 1000–1400, in: *New Perspectives on the History and Historiography of Southeast Asia*, ed. Michael Arthur Aung-Thwin and Kenneth R. Hall, London 2011, 56-73.

52   Kim, *The Unity of the Mongol Empire*, 29-30.

and sea route, a journey which lasted two to three years, and the northern steppe route, which took seven to eleven months.[53]

The northern route was mostly in the hands of the Jochids. Its main hubs were the Crimean harbour of Sudak, Azaq and Tana on the Don River, Hajji Tarkhan (later Astrakhan) and Saray on the Volga River, Saraychuq on the Ural River, Khiva-Urgench on the Amu-Daria River, and Otrar on the Syr-Daria River. Otrar was the most easterly city of Jochid territory and the last stop before the journey to north-western China. It took ten days from Tana to reach Hajji Tarkhan on horseback (or twenty-five days by camel-carts), one day by boat on the Volga to reach Saray from Hajji Tarkhan, and twenty days by camel-carts to reach Saraychuq–Urgench.

The testimony of contemporary travellers is revealing. When the inland route from China to Iran became too perilous because of the political tensions between Qubilai and Qaidu, they preferred the northern route across the steppe to the maritime alternative.[54] In January 1305, Montecorvino, who came to China by the maritime route, wrote:

> *As for the road: I report that the way by the land of Cothay* [Toqta, the Jochid khan]*, the emperor of the Northern Tartars, is safer and more secure, so that travelling with envoys, they might be able to arrive within five or six months. But the other route* [the southern sea route] *is the most long and perilous since it involves two sea voyages, the first of which is about the distance of Acre from the province of Provence* [Hormuz-Malabar]*, but the second is like the distance between Acre and England* [Malabar-China]*, and it may happen that the journey is scarcely completed in two years.*[55]

Several Italian traders reported insecure conditions in and around the city of Tabriz. Their complaints and experiences were recorded in Francesco Balducci Pegolotti's trade manual, *La Pratica della mercatura*. The Florentine trader, noting that the Mongol ruler was unable to ensure order and protect foreign traders, strongly advised the merchants to take the northern route on the grounds that it was not only faster but safer.[56] In the first half of the fourteenth century, the entire southern route was considered hazardous by westerners, while the northern route became the most secure and direct channel across the empire.

Global history usually focuses on commercial exchange between West and East – often summed up as "silver against silk" – but it should be born in mind that merchants sometimes made greater profits in local and regional seasonal fairs and intermediary

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53 The total journey from Saray to Khanbaliq (Beijing) was around 200 days along the inland route for a horseman, but a trade caravan would need at least 270 days. See Kim, The Unity of the Mongol Empire, 25-26. Although the southern land route through the cities of the Tarim basin was intermittently insecure, even foreign merchants like the Polos were able to trade and pass.

54 On the dangers of the overseas trade and especially the navigation on the Indian Ocean, see Kim, The Unity of the Mongol Empire, 27-28. Shipwrecks were common.

55 Also quoted in Kim, The Unity of the Mongol Empire, 28. Diplomacy between the three *uluses* intensified after 1304–1305, the time when communication on the northern route accelerated (30).

56 Francesco Pegolotti, La Pratica della Mercatura, ed. A. Evans, Cambridge, Mass. 1936. Pegolotti composed his trade manual around 1336 on the basis of information that dated back a.1315.

hubs. Long-distance trade across Eurasia should be represented as a "loop" rather than as a return trip from Europe to China. The traders' aim was not necessarily to travel quickly from west to east and back, for profits could be amplified by multiplying small commercial transactions along the way. Pegolotti described the practice of "long-distance bulk trade," a model in which a trader carried with him a number of *balish*, which were used to purchase and sell goods along the outward journey in order to fructify his initial capital. After arriving in eastern Asia, he would buy the commodities that would maximize returns back in Europe.[57] The whole business was not simply one of connecting the end points (China, India, Italy). Rather, multiple transactions were necessary to cover the costs of transportation and survival in distant lands, while minimizing the risk of loss. Pegolotti always attempted to calculate merchants' transport costs for long distance trade, as this was a crucial requirement of those in the west who financed them.[58] His manual was addressed to merchants who were not *ortaq* and did not benefit from the *yam* facilities – outsiders who needed advice on how to compete with the *ortaqs*.

Commercial treaties with non-*ortaq* merchants

Mongol leaders were always keen to formalize trade. Guaranteeing merchants legal security was part of the general strategy to control and stimulate the exchanges. Already under Chinggis Khan commercial negotiations were a prime purpose of the Mongols' diplomacy. In order to change commercial relations to their advantage, they developed their own tributary system with both vassal and neighbour states.[59] The Mongol leaders maintained a clear distinction between *ortaqs* and other merchants, irrespective of whether they were locals with only modest capital resources or more lavishly endowed foreigners. They made another clear-cut distinction between "real" foreigners, such as the Venetians, and non-Mongols who have been based in territories of the empire since before the conquest such as the Russians, the Qipchaqs, and the Chinese. The latter were the Mongols' old subjects, ruled by laws that dated back to the conquest, while the others were newcomers who had to negotiate their status, sometimes on an individual basis, and were liable to be expelled from the empire. At the same time, however, the Mongols welcomed foreign traders who wanted to become *ortaq* and associate with a wealthy *noyan* ("aristocrat"). The *ortaqs* were thus a very mixed category. In Central Asia they were mostly Muslim, but in the Toluid and Jochid dominions we know of several cases of Christian, Buddhist, and Jewish *ortaqs*.[60] In the last quarter of the thirteenth century, non-*ortaq* traders, especially Venetians and Genoese, became increasingly active

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57   Allsen, Mongolian Princes, 93.
58   Abu-Lughod, Before European Hegemony, 182; May, The Mongol Conquests, 110.
59   May, The Mongol Conquests, 124-125. In several cases, Mongol trade expansionism led to military conflicts: the war with the Khwarezmshah is a case in point.
60   See, for instance, the cases mentioned in Benjamin Kedar, Segurano-Sakrān Salvaygo: un mercante Genovese al servizio dei Sultani Mamalucchi, c. 1303–1322, in: Fatti e idée di storia economica nei secoli XII–XX. Studi dedicati a Franco Borlandi, Bologna 1976 [Reprint. in The Franks in the Levant, 11th to 14th Centuries, Aldershot 1993, Art.

in the Eurasian trade. The opening of the *yam* to non-*ortaq* merchants in 1304-5 had far-reaching consequences. I will focus here on the Venetians, as they constitute the best-documented case for the first half of the fourteenth century.

Tabriz, Tana and the rise of the northern route

The first khan to offer the Venetians extended trading rights was Öljeitü. The *yarlïq*, treaty, was signed at Mughan, modern day Azerbaijan, in the year of the snake (November 1306).[61] The Venetians did not go to Öljeitü's court to ask for rights. Rather, the Mongol khan himself sent his envoys to Venice to offer better conditions to trade in his land. He granted the Venetians special rights that were valid throughout his territory and sanctioned by the death penalty. These rights included light taxation;[62] freedom to sell to whom the traders wanted; freedom of religion; freedom of movement (including the right for the Venetians to let their animals graze free of charge for three days); personal security;[63] the transmission of property – if a Venetian died, his belongings and goods should not be taken by officials but handed over to the Venetian consul;[64] justice – if a Venetian had committed a crime and asked that the Mongols judged him instead of his own people, he was allowed to go to the great *yarghuci*, the khan's judge; and personal liability, in the sense that one was responsible for oneself.[65]

This political overture corresponded to alterations in the western section of the trade route. During the first years of Öljeitü's reign, northern Anatolia and hubs in the Black Sea commercial circuits became more active than Mardin, Mosul, and other cities across northern Iraq.[66] At that time Tabriz – with more than 200, 000 inhabitants in the early fourteenth century – attracted an increasing numbers of merchants and foreigners.[67] But the route between Ayas, and later Trebizond, to Tabriz was dominated by the Genoese.[68] To counter their power, Öljeitü introduced more competition. In order to attract new foreign traders, and especially the archenemy of the Genoese, the Venetians, he granted

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XXI; Marie Favereau, Venecianskie istochniki po istorii Zolotoj Ordy: novye perspektivy izuchenija, in: Golden Horde Review / Zolotoordynskoe obozrenie 1 (2016): 39-54.

61   For the full text of the treaty, see Archivio di stato di Venezia (ASVe), Commemoriali f.289 [1306, Novembre primi – Traduzione di diplôma presentato da un messo dell'imperatore dei Tartari].

62   The treaty specified no extra customs duties, no extra tolls, and no taxes on imported wine for personal consumption.

63   The Venetians were under the protection of Mongol officials. In case of robbery, Mongol officials were expected to assist the merchants and/or to reimburse them.

64   The *noyans* were forbidden to ask the Venetians for gifts or any other forms of tribute.

65   Di Cosmo, Mongols and Merchants. 409-411.

66   This change and the decline of the route across northern Iraq was perhaps a consequence of Ghazan's last campaign in Syria. See Kolbas, The Mongols in Iran, 366, who reaches this conclusion on the basis of numismatic evidence.

67   May, The Mongol Conquests, 127.

68   Since the 1290s, the Hülegüids had an alliance with the Genoese who soon became out of control. On this alliance and its consequences, see Virgil Ciocîltan, The Mongols and the Black Sea Trade in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries, Leiden / Boston 2012, 95-96; 114-138. In 1321, the Mamluk troops occupied Ayas (Laiazzo) in Cilician Armenia – one of the greatest commercial hubs of the area – and they expelled the Genoese who had to seek for another entry point to Tabriz and the southern route.

them similar privileges to those of the *ortaqs*.[69] But there was more: after 1306 the Mongols wanted to deal with the Republic of Venice and not with the Venetians as private entrepreneurs. The expansionist economic and diplomatic policy of the Toluids was part of a larger ideological agenda. To assert themselves as Eurasia's only super-power in Eurasia, they sought to established a new tributary system in which Venice was cast as their principal commercial partner.

However, the Venetian senate refused to invest public finances in Öljeitü's domain until 1320, when a second treaty was concluded with Abu Saʻid, the successor of Öljeitü.[70] The Genoese, who remained powerful in Trebizond and Tabriz, prevented them from penetrating a market they considered their own. When the Venetians began to invest the southern route after 1320, they soon complained about the lack of security on the route to Hormuz and especially in Tabriz.[71] The policy was a failure not only because the Venetians had no local support in Tabriz, but also because they could not control the entry point to the route while the Genoese had their own well-established private merchants in the whole area. Given their inability to penetrate Mongol markets via Tabriz, the Venetians turned north. In 1333 the Venetian Senate negotiated their first treaty with the Jochid khan Özbek, who allowed them to build a permanent settlement along the steppe route near the small town of Azaq. There the Venetians founded Tana, the Latin designation of the Don River, located close to the mouth of the Don and the sea of Azov.[72] By granting new trade privileges to the Venetians, Özbek had several purposes in mind: to weaken the Toluids, to divert traders and investors towards the northern route, and to limit the expansion of the Genoese based at the Crimean harbor of Caffa. The main clauses of Özbek's grant included a territorial concession, for which the Venetians paid annual rent, and the right to build houses, to trade and to practice their religion. Taxation was favourable – the commercial fees, *comercium imperiale* or *comerclum* collected by the Jochids from the merchants were fixed at a rate of 3% of the value of the merchandise sold.[73] No taxes were levied on gold, silver, and precious or semi-precious stones. Goods were to be weighed by both Venetian and Mongol parties

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69 In 1305, Öljeitü also sent an embassy to inform the Mamluk sultan that he was ready to allow Mamluk merchants into his lands. He also offered an exchange of war captives. On the relations between the Mamluks and Ilkhan Öljeitu, see Anne Broadbridge, Kingship and Ideology in the Islamic and Mongol Worlds, Cambridge 2008, 94-98.

70 For the full text of the treaty, see ASVe, Libri Pactorum: Liber Albus, f. 244 [Pactum cum Monsait, imperatoris Tunisii, per Michaelem Delphino, ambaxadorem illustris domini ducis Veneciarum celebratum]; Louis de Mas-Latrie, Privilège commercial accordé en 1320 à la République de Venise par un roi de Perse, faussement attribué à un roi de Tunis, Bibliothèque de l'école des Chartes 31 (1870): 95-102.

71 Ciocîltan, The Mongols and the Black Sea Trade, 133-34.

72 Tana was only 30 kilometres from the mouth of the Don and 16 kilometres from the sea of Azov.

73 This tax policy served the interests of the Jochids, also because many products were re-sold several times over. On the eight treaties granted by the Jochid khan to the Venetians, and on their background and consequences, see Louis de Mas-Latrie, Privilèges commerciaux accordés à la république de Venise par les princes de Crimée et les empereurs mongols du Kiptchak, in: Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes 29 (1868): 580-595; A.P. Grigor'ev, V.P. Grigor'ev, Kollekciia zolotoordynskikh dokumentov XIV veka iz Venecii, St Petersburg 2002; István Vásáry, Immunity charters of the Golden Horde granted to the Italian towns Caffa and Tana, in: Turks, Tatars and Russians in the 13th–16th Centuries, Aldershot/Burlington 2007, XII: 1-13; Di Cosmo, Mongols and Merchants; Marie Favereau, Convention constitutive. L'approche historique des contrats: le cas des Vénitiens et de la Horde d'Or, in: Diction-

to an exchange. Personal liability was guaranteed. Disputes between Venetians and locals were to be solved by the Venetian consul and "the lord of the land," the khan's deputy.[74] This treaty – the first of the eight *yarliqs* Özbek and his successors concluded with Venice between 1333 and 1358 – shows that the Jochid lineage developed strategies that differed from those of the Toluids. Indeed, the latter focused on the freedom of the traders, and their grants appeared to be hugely advantageous for the Venetians, who were offered unheard of freedom of movement in the Mongol empire. Yet, because Venice had no local agency in Tabriz and beyond, this policy was insufficient to initiate new commercial dynamics. By 1333, when Özbek issued his *yarliq*, Tabriz was already in decline. By granting the Venetians a permanent trading post at Tana, the Jochids delivered a final blow to the Toluids' commercial ambitions and the southern route lost its attraction. The Venetians began to invest massively in the northern route. The hubs on this route were all located in river valleys that the Mongol leaders knew intimately as a result of their seasonal migrations. The Jochids allowed western traders to access the *yam* route and shared their horizontal mobility in order to benefit from the traders' activities, but they retained exclusive control over vertical mobility, i.e. the north-south routes (which involved the Russian principalities, the Baltic, and the far-north). By letting the non-*ortaqs* penetrate only parts of their networks, the Jochids were able to sustain the dynamics of the Mongol Peace for many years, beyond the collapse of the Toluids in the second half of the fourteenth century.

Conclusion

The aim of this article was to shed new light on the Mongol Peace, a phenomenon that triggered a new phase in the globality of Eurasia. I began by drawing attention to the underlying principles of Mongol economic behaviour, in particular commercial and taxation practices. Beyond the valuation of certain luxury goods, spiritual motivations cannot be overlooked. The Mongols did not value economic efficiency for its own sake, just as they disdained hoarding. These features were noted by numerous contemporary sources. Dealing with the afterlife and the spirits of the dead in order to increase their own chances of the best possible rebirth in the shape of their own descendants was a major concern. Yet, the circulation of happiness is not only illustrative of the Mongol system of beliefs, it was also a necessary ideological condition for their domination system to be able to reproduce itself over time. Because the process of circulation was key to their social hegemony, the Mongols solicited and protected traders – not necessarily *any* trader, but their *ortaqs* or "partners". I have thus argued that the ideology of circulation,

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naire des conventions, ed. Philippe Batifoulier et alii, Villeneuve d'Ascq 2016, 82-87. For the original documents, see ASVe – Libri Pactorum: Liber Albus, ff.249, 250, 251; III, ff.225, 236, 247; V, f. 160; Commemoriali: VI, ff.80-81.

74   Di Cosmo, Mongols and Merchants, 411.

the redistribution order, and the technical organization of merchants' operations in the Mongol world were interconnected.

It is often asserted that the Chinggisids created a unified empire that stretched from China to Europe in which the Eurasian trade routes were more secure than ever before. This was true, but it was not equally true for all. Merchants from outside the empire had a lower status and did not enjoy the same protection and privileges as the *ortaqs*. In Mongol territories, the status of *ortaqs* reached a level unseen before in west Eurasia and China. The main reason was the fact that they contributed directly to the most important value of Mongol society: happiness, in the sense of human flourishing. The Mongols closed off this possibility to other private and foreign traders.

In the final section, I examined why the Mongols decided to open the system to non-*ortaq* merchants. After 1305 the political competition between Toluids and Jochids, the two most powerful Chinggisid lineages, created an opportunity for non-*ortaq* traders to penetrate the Mongol markets. This internal competition had direct consequences for the trade routes. Conflicts between Mongol leaders certainly affected these routes but, contrary to a commonly held view, the outcome – at least temporarily – was beneficial to the northern steppe route at the expense of the maritime route via India and the Persian Gulf. Global historians exploring the links between Europe and China have neglected terrestrial Eurasian connectivity. I hope to have demonstrated in this article that under the Mongol Peace the most important trade routes converged in the valleys of northern Eurasia. It was here that Mongol leaders settled their courts and permanently resident merchants made substantial profits.

I began by noting that the concept of "peace" for the Mongols entailed "submission to our economic system." This system was based on the circulation of people, money, and goods; on the mobility of the ruling elite and the administration, including the *ortaqs* who had access to the *yam*; and on exchange with the outside world according to a new mixture of tribute and trade. The Chinggisids constrained official relations with foreign merchants working with private funding. They also tried to force the states of these merchants to formalize diplomatic relations by means of treaties, which were elaborated through the exchange of envoys, letters, and gifts. I focused on the agreements concluded with the Venetians, but similar treaties were signed with the Genoese, the Byzantines, the Mamluks, and others. The long run goal of the Mongol rulers was to maintain overall control through commercial competition. The Jochids and Toluids opened local markets to competition while cementing long-term trust by repeatedly confirming established treaties. They created favourable conditions for foreign merchants to establish trading posts within their empire, and they engaged actively with their finances and traders. This added up to new new forms of commercial connectivity across Eurasia. Of course, the trade routes were embedded in socio-political contexts. The resilience of the Jochids' domination in the north was based on the restriction of certain privileges to their leaders and close associates. Territorial control; safe passage for merchants, travelers, and local landholders; effective justice; and selective access to resources: these were the *sine qua non* of Mongol power.

Seaborne Empires and Hub Societies: Connectivity in Motion across the Indian Ocean World[1]

Burkhard Schnepel

ABSTRACTS

In diesem Artikel wird die Welt des Indischen Ozeans als Referenz gewählt und eine Perspektive eingenommen, die vom Konzept der „Konnektivität in Bewegung" ausgeht. Zunächst werden einige historische Varianten der Seeimperien (Portugiesen, Niederländer und Briten) betrachtet, um herkömmliche, terrazentrische Modelle des Staates zu hinterfragen und zu modifizieren. Die drei Hauptteile des Beitrags untersuchen die Insel Mauritius als „Hub" und „Hub Society" und stützen ein zentrales Argument für ein polyzentrischeres, gebrochenes und durchlässiges Modell. In drei miteinander verbundenen analytischen und empirischen Schritten wird zunächst die Außendimension des mauritischen Hubs untersucht. In den nächsten beiden Abschnitten wird auf die interne Dimension des „Hubbing" eingegangen, zunächst in Bezug auf kollektive Identitäten und dann auf der Ebene individueller und familiärer Strategien. Abschließend werden die empirischen und historischen Daten, die in diesen drei Abschnitten präsentiert werden, unter Bezugnahme auf die diskutierten theoretischen und methodologischen Fragen analysiert. Eine entschiedenere Anerkennung der Mobilität und der maritimen Dimension der menschlichen „Konnektivität in Bewegung" bietet neue Einsichten in die konventionellen Auffassungen von Staatlichkeit, Nation und Territorium – und, außerhalb von ausschließlich terrestrischen Ansätzen – der eurasischen Landmasse.

This article takes the Indian Ocean world as a frame of reference and applies a perspective guided by the concept of "connectivity in motion". It looks, to start with, at some historical paradigms of seaborne empires (Portuguese, Dutch and British) in order to question and modify conventional, terra-centric models of the state. Substantiating an argument in favor of a more polycentric, fractured and porous model, the three central sections of the paper investigate the island of Mauritius as a "hub" and "hub society". In three interconnected analytical and empirical steps, first the external dimension of the Mauritian hub is scrutinized. The next two sections zoom in to focus on the internal dimension of "hubbing", first with respect to collective identities, and then at the level of individual and family strategies. In conclusion, the empirical and historical data presented in these three sections are analyzed with reference to the theoretical and methodological issues raised earlier. It is argued that the more decisive recognition of mobility and of the maritime dimension of human "connectivity in motion" brings new insights into conventional notions of statehood, nation and territory – and of the Eurasian landmass, beyond exclusively terrestrial approaches.

Introduction

Historically, the Indian Ocean world is one of the oldest and most important zones of trading, contact and exchange in the world. For many centuries now, it has been traversed in all directions by vessels transporting not only human beings and commercial goods, but also flora, fauna, ideas, ideologies, rituals, religions, art genres, technologies, languages, knowledge, money, waste, and unfortunately also diseases. Last but not least, political systems and modes of statecraft, which stand in the fore of this paper, have also travelled across the Indian Ocean world for centuries, if not millenia. But its importance is not just historical. At present, it is re-emerging as a significant arena of globalization, with India, China and the USA as prime actors,[2] but also with a number of regional actors, such as South Africa, Iran, Singapore and Indonesia playing important trans-maritime roles. Hence, politicians and their advisors have gradually come to acknowledge that this ocean can be "neglected no longer."[3]

"Indian Ocean Studies" have long been preoccupied with studying the points of departure and arrival of maritime movements.[4] The main places starting, continuing and ending these movements are, of course, the ports and port cities along the shores of the Indian Ocean world, as well as on its numerous coastal and deep-sea islands. Submit-

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2   One should not forget some remnants of the old French and British colonial powers in the southwestern part of the ocean (Mayotte, Réunion, Chagos).

3   Donald L. Berlin, Neglected No Longer: Strategic Rivalry in the Indian Ocean, in: Harvard International Review 24 (2002) 2: 26-31; Christian Bouchard and William Crumplin, 'Neglected No Longer': The Indian Ocean at the Forefront of World Geopolitics and Global Geostrategy, in: Journal of the Indian Ocean Region 6 (2010): 26-51.

4   For some of the most important studies on the history of the Indian Ocean world at large, see Edward A. Alpers, The Indian Ocean in World History, Oxford 2014; Kirti Narayan Chaudhuri, Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750, Cambridge 1985; Chaudhuri, Asia Before Europe: Economy and Civilisation of the Indian Ocean from the Rise of Islam to 1750, Cambridge 2000; Kenneth McPherson, The Indian Ocean: A History of People and the Sea, New Delhi 1993; Michael N. Pearson, The Indian Ocean, London 2003.

ting these places, here identified and analyzed as "hubs" and "hub societies", to closer empirical investigation and adopting the perspective of a *longue durée* makes one realize that ports are less the a priori foundations of these maritime movements than their relational and dynamically changing effects. While ports and port cities may achieve some stability and agency of their own, essentially they the outcome of these movements and the results of the ever-shifting, volatile and precarious relations between heterogeneous human and non-human actors on the move. Studying the places of departure and arrival of maritime movements, and investigating the exchanges that thereby take place, with a view to "connectivity in motion"[5] also brings home the need to identify the maritime routes that have criss-crossed the Indian Ocean world. Thus looking at routes and pathways offers a complementary and welcome alternative to the emphasis on space that has been dominating the discussion for some time now since the so-called "spatial turn."[6] Moreover, it is obvious that, against the background of a decidedly route- and mobility-oriented approach, the journeys themselves – and the liminal time and space they represent – enter the overall picture more forcefully.[7] Furthermore, the various material and intangible cargoes that traverse the Indian Ocean do not just move; they are *exchanged* in numerous ways. These exchanges transform the cargoes and their exchangers. Hence, the transportation of animate and inanimate, material and ideational things does not just result in their spatial transfer, but, more often than not, also in translations of their functions, meanings, values and evaluations.

In the context of the papers gathered in this special issue, I wish to argue that taking the Indian Ocean world as a frame of reference and applying a perspective guided by the concept of "connectivity in motion," as briefly laid out above, will add some important insights into the chiefly terrestrial issues that come to the fore concerning Eurasia when understood and investigated solely as a vast landmass. Adding a maritime dimension will also reveal that the "seaborne empires" of Iberian and Northwest European provenance (Portugal, Spain, France, the Netherlands, and Great Britain) arose, and were maintained in existence for a long time, not in spite of the facts that their "mother countries" were marginal, small and looked outward to the sea, but exactly because of these conditions. They were "seaborne empires" because they derived their strength decisively from sea-power, that is, from their control of the seas, islands and littoral societies.[8]

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5   "Connectivity in Motion" is the key concept of my Max Planck Fellow Program, pursued in Halle since 2013. See http://www.eth.mpg.de/2952665/mpfg02. Some of the key concepts and methodological tenets of this program are discussed in Burkhard Schnepel, Introduction, in: Connectivity in Motion: Island Hubs in the Indian Ocean World, ed. Burkhard Schnepel and Edward A. Alpers, Cham 2018, 3-32.

6   See, as one critique of this approach, Tim Ingold, Against Space: Place, Movement, Knowledge, in: Boundless Worlds: An Anthropological Approach to Movement, ed. Peter Wynn Kirby, Oxford / New York 2009, 29-44.

7   In a sense, it is the "trans-" (with all its possible endings) that becomes salient here.

8   While France and Spain were, of course, significant "sea powers," with holdings all over the maritime world (one of which – namely, the Ile de France – will figure largely in this paper). However, as their (sea) power was based to a considerable degree on the domination of territories in continental Europe and the Americas, they could be regarded more correctly as "sea empires" rather than as "seaborne" empires. On "seaborne empires," see Charles R. Boxer, The Dutch Seaborne Empire, 1600–1800, London 1967; Boxer, The Portuguese Seaborne Empire, New York 1969; and Jeremy Black, The British Seaborne Empire, New Haven 2004.
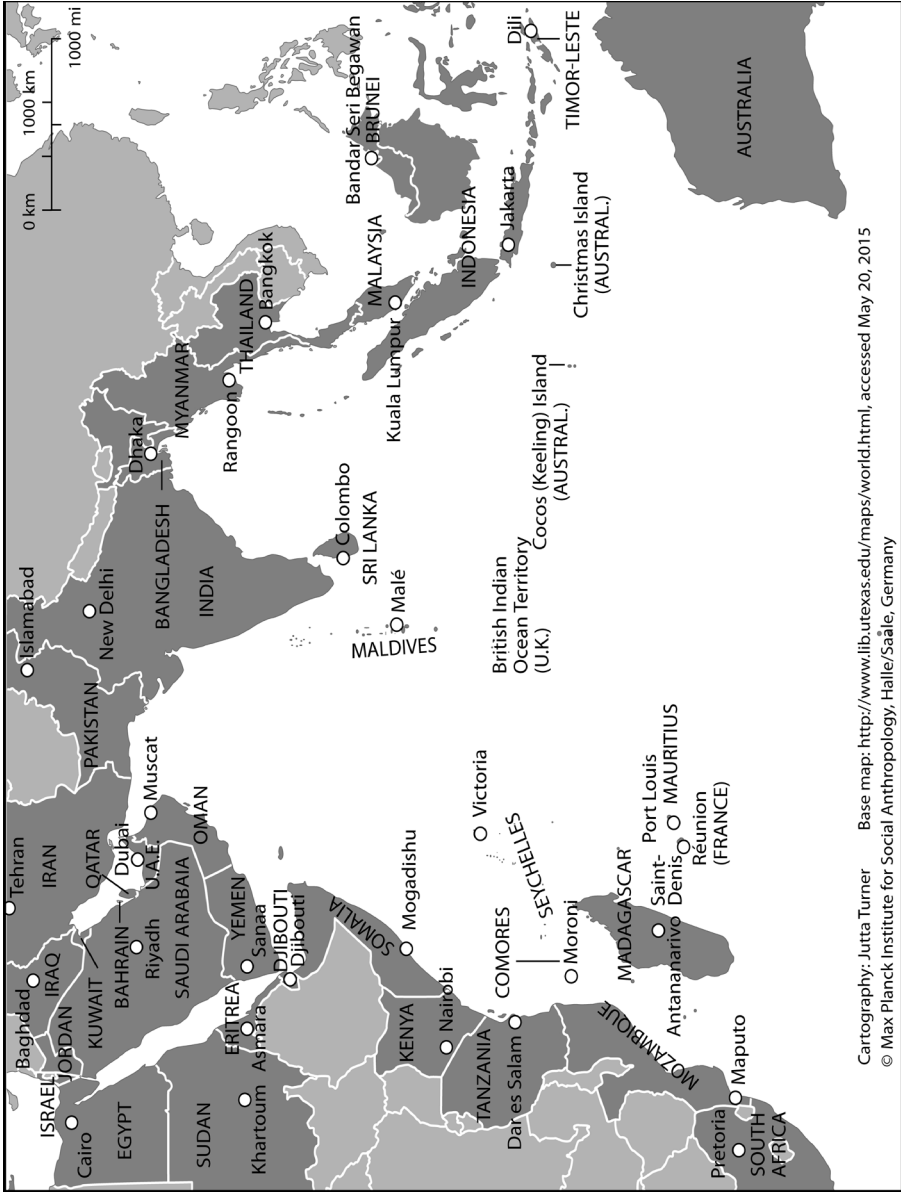
Map 1: The Polities of the Contemporary Indian Ocean World.

In the following section, I shall look eclectically at some contemporary and historical paradigms of sea-powers, but also at historical kingship on the Indian subcontinent, in order to question conventional, terra-centric models of the state. In order to substantiate my argument in favor of a more polycentric, fractured and porous model of the state and a more decisive inclusion of mobility into the analysis and description of statehood, in the three central sections that follow I shall discuss the paradigm of a small island, namely Mauritius, presenting it as a "hub" and "hub society." Here, in three interconnected analytical and empirical steps, I shall first look at the external dimension of the Mauritian hub, while the next two sections zoom in and look at the internal dimension of hubbing in Mauritius, first with a focus on collective identities, then with an analyses of individual and family strategies. I shall conclude by referring the empirical and historical data presented in these three sections back to the more theoretical and methodological issues raised in this Introduction and by taking them further.

Fragmented Statehood

Some years ago, the Chinese government officially launched an initiative it calls "One Belt / One Road."[9] The "One Belt" is the "Silk Road(s)" through terrestrial Eurasia, while the term "One Road" refers to the maritime route(s) that lead from the South China Sea towards West Asia and Africa (and beyond), past the ports of Southeast and South Asia. This latter route, or better routes, are sometimes also called the "Maritime Silk Road(s)." There are at least two remarkable things about this policy. To start with, Chinese *Realpolitik* clearly recognizes a link between the two kinds of Silk Road and regards them as an intertwined whole. In doing so, Chinese foreign policy-makers are pragmatically acknowledging what historians, social anthropologists and geographers have argued for quite some time now, namely that these terrestrial and maritime routes should not be treated as separate, but as complementing one another.[10] No doubt the terrestrial and maritime pathways competed for the trade between eastern and western empires and the wealth to be gained from it, but from the perspective of the *longue durée* they functioned rather as communicating tubes, offering welcome alternatives to traders.

The second notable characteristic of China's "One Belt / One Road" initiative is that China's expansionist policies – beyond its own national borders – are envisaged strategically in terms of routes rather than space and territorial borders. Vital to this policy are the substantial infrastructural projects that have been created and accomplished at strategically important points along both the Belt and the Road. On land, China is pushing forward its neo-imperialist policies – to repeat, *en route* rather than in space – with pipelines, motorways, internet cables and high-speed trains from East China

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9   This programme is the object of an ever-increasing number of studies. See, for example, Tom Miller, China's Asian Dream: Empire-building along the New Silk Road, London 2017; see also Goldstone in this issue.

10   Hermann Kulke, Die Geschichte maritimer Beziehungen im Indischen Ozean: Eine Einführung in das Thema, in: Der Indische Ozean in historischer Perspektive, ed. Stephan Conermann, Berlin 1998, 1-8.

through Central Asia and Eastern Europe as far as Duisburg in Western Germany (and further). The maritime side of this all-encompassing project is being pursued similarly, taking advantage of the possibilities offered by the more fluid medium of the sea. Small but geo-strategically important islands are one pawn in this game, as anyone following the developments regarding the Spratly Islands in the South Chinese Sea will be aware. Another strategy consists in offering poorer or investment-hungry nations around the Indian Ocean world, such as Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Pakistan, the Maldives, Kenya and Oman, financial aid, technological expertise and manpower to improve their infrastructure, both maritime and other. China has built or financed a number of deep-water harbours, free ports, special economic zones, container terminals, bridges and airports in all of these countries and more. These endeavors are being supported by laying underwater fibre optic cables and gas pipelines to connect seaports to each other and to other hubs. In pursuing these policies, the Chinese are following an example set by the European seaborne empires of Portugal, the Netherlands and Britain in the early modern period. The Portuguese set the tone when, from around 1500 onwards, they heavily armed their caravels with guns and soldiers in order to capture strategic points in the Indian Ocean world. Mozambique, Mombasa, Hormuz, Goa, Cochin, Colombo, Malakka and some Southeast Asian "spice islands" fell from Arabian, Indian or Malay hands into Portuguese ones. They built numerous small forts and factories, and a number of large ones, at geo-strategically important sites with a clear view out to sea in order to control and tax the passing traffic. One main base of Portuguese sea power, which remained in Portuguese hands until 1999, was established as far east as southern China, namely at Macau, from where the Portuguese not only conducted their trade in Chinese goods for Lisbon, but also acted as mediators between China and Japan in the profitable exchanges of silk and silver respectively between these two hostile empires. The Portuguese were only drawn into the hinterland from their more important sea-power hubs, where they founded settlements outside their forts and factories. They were sometimes also involved into territorial disputes and military adventures in-land against their express will, namely when local differences between chiefs in the interior required them to take the side of one or the other in order to safeguard the hinterland and supplies of their ports. This happened, for example, in Sri Lanka and Mozambique.[11]

Much the same applies to the Dutch and British seaborne empires, whose trading companies adopted the Portuguese fort-and-factory strategy, often capturing sites from the latter instead of building new ones themselves. Slowly but surely, however, they too were drawn into the hinterland, and even more substantially than was the case with the Portuguese. Initially, this was rather against their own overall plans, at least as far as company directors back home in Amsterdam and London were concerned. However, enterprising governors on the spot in Asia were often keen to expand their spheres of influence into

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11 See Boxer, The Portuguese Seaborne Empire; Sanjay Subrahmanyam, Improvising Empire: Portuguese Trade and Settlement in the Bay of Bengal 1500–1700, New Delhi 1990; Subrahmanyam, The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500–1700: A Political and Economic History, London 1993.

the hinterland, using violence when necessary, as was the case with the Dutch governor Coen on the Moluccan Banda Islands in the early seventeenth century, where Coen eradicated almost the entire indigenous population. While reprimanding such actions officially, gradually the leading figures of what began as decidedly maritime empires came to see the benefits of acquiring and controlling territories far beyond their forts and factories. These land-grabbing and tax-robbing policies reached their height when India, the "jewel in the crown" of the British Empire, became a British Crown Colony in 1858.[12] When the British took over the sovereignty of India from the Moghul emperor, they were soon made to realize that, over the centuries, the number of political actors on the Indian subcontinent had not been confined to the Great Moghul and his provincial governors. Even during the height of power of the Moghul empire – probably the most centralized empire in Indian history before the British Raj – the Indian subcontinent was a long way away from resembling the Western ideal of a centralized state. This fragmented state of affairs did not go unnoticed by Western interpreters from Marx through Weber to Dumont. They had various explanations for this lack of an all-encompassing centralized power, but invariably they all implicitly or explicitly regarded this fragmentation as a deficiency, namely, as a failure on the part of Indian rulers to approximate to the Western ideal of a unitary, centralized state. Indian rulers, so it was assumed, wanted to found a state according to this Western ideal, but they could not. Only from the 1980s onwards did historians and anthropologists start to question this essentially Eurocentric, if not Orientalist view of the Indian state with reference to a number of alternative models or perspectives. Examples include Burton Stein's concept of the "segmentary state," Tambiah's model of the "galactic state," Kulke's idea of the "early state," Dirks' notion of the "little kingdom" and my own study of "jungle kings."[13] Whatever the period or region investigated by these and other scholars, it is now widely accepted that western models of the state are insufficient or misplaced in these Indian contexts. Indian kingdoms, relying heavily on the principle of royal authority from the time of the *Ramayana*, were not mono-archies, but poly-archies. Throughout long periods of its history, the Indian subcontinent can be viewed as harboring flexible, polycentric systems consisting of several "great kings" who stood in well-balanced, though ever-changing relations to each other, and to a large number of "little kings," many of them seeking to become "great" themselves. The boundaries of these kingdoms, whether great or little, did not

12   For the Dutch seaborne empire, see Boxer, The Dutch Seaborne Empire, and Harold J. Cook, Matters of Exchange. Commerce, Medicine, and Science in the Dutch Golden Age, New Haven 2007. For British power in the Indian Ocean world, see Thomas R. Metcalf, Imperial Connections: India in the Indian Ocean arena, 1860–1920, Berkeley 2007, and John Darwin, Unfinished Empire: The Global Expansion of Britain, Harmondsworth 2012.

13   See Nikolas B. Dirks, The Hollow Crown: Ethnohistory of an Indian Kingdom, Cambridge 1987; Hermann Kulke, The Early and the Imperial Kingdom: A Processual Model of Integrative State Formation in Early Medieval India, in: The State in India, 1000–1700, ed. Hermann Kulke, Delhi 1995, 233-262; Burkhard Schnepel, The Jungle Kings: Ethnohistorical Aspects of Politics and Ritual in Orissa, Delhi 2002; Burton Stein, Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India, Delhi 1980; Stanley J. Tambiah, The Galactic Polity in Southeast Asia, reprint in: Tambiah Culture, Thought and Social Action: A Anthropological Perspective, Cambridge 1985, 252-86.

represent clear-cut territorial borders, but shifting and overlapping spheres of influence, ever expanding or retracting.[14]

The present-day "One Belt/One Road" policy of Chinese provenience is supported ideologically by references back to the seven great sea voyages of the Eunuch commander Zheng He in the first half of the fifteenth century.[15] The "soft power" of heritage politics plays an important role here.[16] While Zheng He, or at least parts of his enormous flotilla, may indeed have travelled the western Indian Ocean's waters up to Africa once or twice, from the perspective of the *longue durée* this Chinese intrusion into the Indian Ocean was very much the exception. Chinese merchant and naval vessels seldom penetrated beyond the Straits of Malacca. For roughly 700 years, from the end of the seventh century to the end of the thirteenth, this sub-region was dominated by the now almost forgotten but once powerful Srivijaya Empire. This empire has been labelled a "thalassocracy" (with reference to the ancient Greek "thalassa" or "sea") and likened to the multi-centered system of the "Hanse" of northern Europe, since it consisted of a number of interlinked port cities controlling the sea lanes and their commercial traffic. One of these port cities, for example Palembang in present-day Sumatra, was usually dominant. While clearly relying on their sea power, Srivijaya's multiple port cities also extended their influence into the hinterland, up the inland rivers, with equally well-located trading posts along these fluvial routes. As a result, they were able to barter the goods produced there and to feed these into the transoceanic trade at great profit.[17]

The Island Hub of Mauritius: External Dimensions

It is obvious that such thalassocratic and fragmented structures of the polity can hardly be grasped by conventional models of the centralized and territorially bounded state. Rather, the individual components forcefully command our attention and analysis. These individual components do, of course, have their own histories and internal arrangements. But their main function is that of being nodes in "meshworks"[18] that make movements possible. On account of this mobility function, I suggest calling these special places-cum-people "hubs," seen as agentive knots in a network of transportation systems. As the "effective centre of an activity, region, or network,"[19] hubs are crucial actors/actants and significant points of convergence, entanglement and divergence in the global streams of human beings, animals, finances, material goods, ideas and pieces of knowl-

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14   Schnepel, The Jungle Kings, 14-83.
15   Tansen Sen, India, China and the world: A Connected History, London 2017.
16   Burkhard Schnepel and Tansen Sen (eds.), Travelling Pasts: The Politics of Cultural Heritage Across the Indian Ocean World, Leiden 2019.
17   Hermann Kulke, Srivijaya revisited: reflections on state formation of a Southeast Asian Thalassocracy, in: Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extréme-Orient 102 (2017): 47-96.
18   Ingold, Against Space: Place, Movement, Knowledge.
19   Oxford Dictionary Online.

edge. However, hubs are more than knots or nodes in networks and in the processes of networking; they are "*highly* connected nodes."[20]

On account of the significant role of hubs in connectivity in motion across the Indian Ocean, it is at this point appropriate to "zoom in" and provide a view on an (in many senses: paradigmatic) island hub in the middle of the southwestern Indian Ocean, namely Mauritius. Lying roughly 600 kilometers east of Madagascar, the island today contains 1.2 million inhabitants of African, French, Chinese and, predominantly Indian origin. In the early phase of the island's settlement by the Dutch in the seventeenth century, and then more seriously and successfully by the French in the early eighteenth century, some cargoes that were landed on Mauritius were intended for the needs of the settlers and soldiers, while conversely other provisions like ebony, water and turtles, were loaded on to the ships and taken from the island. Nonetheless these embarkations and disembarkations were nothing but a means to an end, namely to enable the ships to reach their final and main destinations to the east or west. This dimension in the art of maritime "hubbing"[21] consisted in simply the circulation of ships and their crews.

Almost against the express will of the directors of the French East India Company, Mauritius gradually developed into more than just a port of call: it became a colony with its very own needs, but also potentialities, which emerged in addition to and sometimes independently of its function as a naval hub. Having started as a naval hub of merely "passing" significance, Mauritius, with its natural bay at Port Louis, developed into a fragile but thriving colony in the mid-eighteenth century. It eventually became the French East India Company's *chef-lieu* overseas, outstripping first its rival Mascarene sister of La Réunion and then even Pondicherry on the southeastern Indian coast in this function. As a consequence of this functional extension and differentiation, the prime dimension in the art of maritime or naval hubbing was refined and extended into other spheres of economic, socio-cultural, technological and political life. One of the first extensions and refinements of the status of being a naval hub arose out of the necessity to provide the island and its inhabitants with food, construction materials, tools, slaves, basic necessities and certain "luxuries." By the late eighteenth century, Port Louis had become a well-frequented "free port," and through its opening to worldwide commerce, trade with Mauritius increased steadily, with boats from Europe, Asia and America dropping anchor in Port Louis. Mauritius acted as an entrepôt and distribution center for the products of regular trading activities, turning into a fully-fledged *mercantile* hub.

One rather special kind of trade that was instrumental in turning Mauritius into a mercantile hub of some consequence was that associated with acts of piracy. During the decades before the British take-over of the island in 1810, Port Louis provided a safe ha-

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20 Anna Collar, Religious Networks in the Roman Empire: The Spread of New Ideas, Cambridge 2013, 19 (my emphasis).

21 By hubbing, I mean the activities and movements that a given hub sets in motion, organizes and keeps going. For the maritime history of Mauritius I mainly rely on Adolphe Toussaint, Harvest of the Sea: The Mauritius Sea Story in Outline, Port Louis 1966; Toussaint, Port Louis: A Tropical City, London 1973; Toussaint, Port Louis: deux siècles d'histoire, 1735–1935, Port Louis 2013 [1936]).

ven for several dozen French "corsairs," who captured substantial wealth on their "commercial raids." Returning to Mauritius, the pirates unloaded their "enter-prizes" and divided their spoils between captain and crew, while also paying an obligatory share to the government according to fixed rates. Only a small proportion of the newly acquired wealth in gold, diamonds, pepper, fine cloth, spices or porcelain remained on the island in the coffers of the white Franco-Mauritian elite: the greater part of it entered into international commercial and financial circuits. Especially with merchants and whalers hailing from the newly independent America, the booty was exchanged for money and naval supplies.[22]

There were further extensions of the hubbing activities of Mauritius into other, non-maritime areas. From the mid- to late eighteenth century onwards, sugar started to become the main export and source of income for Mauritius under French rule. This continued under British colonial rule until independence in 1968, as it still is today, under various global trade regimes for this much desired commodity. Focusing on the qualities of the island and its inhabitants as a hub, one needs to emphasize the obvious: sugar is not native to Mauritius. Different varieties were brought to the island, often under secretive and dangerous conditions, from India and Southeast Asia and then tested out in the island's botanical gardens or on its sugar plantations, until the most profitable and hardiest species for cultivation under Mauritian conditions were identified. Sugar and its subsidiary products were then produced and exported by the island's planters and merchants. It is therefore a prime example of an item that was brought to the island and transformed on it, only to then leave it again, though not without realizing a surplus.

Jumping now to contemporary postcolonial Mauritius, the social, institutional and mental foundations of this island as an expert hub have experienced further extensions and refinements, namely into spheres in which the maritime dimension is virtually absent. Independent Mauritius has developed into a "service hub," achieving economic success by offering the services that are required in the global markets of today. To start with, there is the textile industry, producing in especially erected so-called "Export Processing Zones" (EPZ). Again, in both its material and manufacturing dimensions, textiles are not "endemic" to Mauritius. The material (wool) may start in Australia, it is then processed into cloth in Hong Kong or Calcutta before being "finished" in Mauritius. The finished products go to the west. For the inner working of that hub, the Mauritian state provides the political and legal framework that offers tax and customs advantages and relatively favorable manufacturing conditions in the EPZs; the Sino-Mauritian community plays a vital role in establishing this business link across the Indian Ocean to Hong Kong; Franco-Mauritians use their sugar fields and their own investments to make this hub workable and profitable; while the Indo-Mauritians and Creoles provide the qualified, but relatively low-cost work force that transforms cloth into valuable designer clothes.[23]

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22   On piracy, see Burkhard Schnepel, Piracy in the Indian Ocean ca. 1680–1750" (working paper, 160, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, 2014).

23   For an expert analysis of the Mauritian textile industry and "special economic zones," see Patrick Neveling, Mani-

Then there is the tourism industry. Tourism was initially introduced to Mauritius quite literally "by the way." In the early pre-jet age of commercial air traffic in the 1950s, Qantas Airways discovered Mauritius as a convenient stopover, strategically well located and politically safe, turning flights between South Africa and Australia into flights with one or two stops (Cocos Islands) only. In those days passengers did not come to enjoy the beauties of the island and relax on its beaches, but they stopped over for a day or two only in hotels on the island's rainy upper plateau to wait for connection flights. Nowadays, Mauritius has become a major tourist attraction and destination in itself, attracting more than one million tourists a year, who spend their holidays at the island's many beaches in four- to five-star hotels.[24] From 2000 onwards, the Mauritian economy was further diversified and strengthened by the great success of services in the off-shore banking and communication technologies sectors. These "pillars" of the Mauritian economy – International Financial Services (IFS) and International Communication Technology (ICT) – have catapulted Mauritius right into the center of the present-day global economy. As far as international financial services are concerned, it is especially Indian capital going to and coming from Africa that is routed through and administered in the Mauritian financial hub, which employs roughly 15,000 people. Services in international communication technology have only become possible relatively recently, since Mauritius connected itself to the optical fiber cables going from Australia to South Africa and in other north-south directions along the East African coasts. Since then Mauritius has managed to become a node in these lines of communication, it being an explicit aim of the island's politicians, and the over 300 ICT companies with their more than 12,000 employees, to become a "cyber island."

It is not without significance, at least for the social anthropologist, that the term "hub" is often used by Mauritian protagonists themselves. In conversations or in newspapers one finds Mauritians praising their island as a "seafood hub," a "liquefied petrol gas hub," a "knowledge hub," a "Hub 4.0." or "data hub". Moreover, Mauritians refer back in history and towards their society if they wish to argue why they are experts in the art of hubbing. Take these statements praising Mauritius by a Mauritian bank hoping to attract foreign investors: "A business friendly environment with a long history of hospitality; a safe country with enduring social and political stability; a culturally diverse, multilingual and highly educated workforce; strategically located between Asia and Africa; a convenient time zone; well-developed air and sea links to the rest of the world." Hence, the long history of the island as a hub, and the skills and socio-cultural characteristics acquired by its "multi-ethnic" population thereby, are regarded in contemporary Mauritius as great assets for providing modern-day hub services.

festationen der Globalisierung: Kapital, Staat und Arbeit in Mauritius, 1825–2005, PhD diss., Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, 2012.

24   See Burkhard Schnepel and Cornelia Schnepel, Two Beaches: The Globalization of Mauritian Waterfronts, in: Multiple Identities in Action: Mauritius and Some Antillean Parallelism, ed. Vinesh Y. Hookoomsing, Ralph Ludwig, and Burkhard Schnepel, Berlin 2009, 287-317.

In stressing the island's transport and transit functions, one must not forget that during stopover periods, whether long, medium or short, certain transmutations and translations occur. No matter whether old and maritime or new and cyber in character, all these cargoes that were and are serviced on the island do not merely stop over before being transported further on. They are also acted upon and thereby transformed and translated into different kinds of a thing, more often than not with added or enhanced value, part of which stays on the island and makes it relatively prosperous. In the realm of material things, these "translations" range (in a nutshell) from run-down ships to repaired ones; from sugarcane to refined sugar and its derivatives; from fish to frozen sea-foods, waiting to be canned; from cotton, wool and rough cloth to designer clothes; and from information and communication to knowledge and "bitcoins." In the realm of human beings, these "translations" range (again in brief) from sick and exhausted sailors / soldiers / travelers to healthy and strong ones; from pale and overworked tourists to tanned, relaxed and recuperated ones; and from pirates, adventurers or explorers to settlers.

In a nutshell, Mauritius's success in the economic domain, from its beginnings until the present day, lies in the fact that it realized and developed its qualities by distributing and circulating things. The Mauritian "miracle" is based on its expertise in providing the varying and historically changing qualities and services of a hub.[25]

The Mauritian Hub Society:
Collective Identities and "Persons of Indian Origin" (PIO)

So far our focus on hubs as significant actants for transmaritime connectivity in motion has – paradigmatically – identified the historical, geostrategic, and geopolitical factors that are needed to make a place – in the Mauritian instance: an island in the middle of nowhere – into a hub. The quality of hubs as being "highly connected" – and as playing a role in making and sustaining a seaborne empire – need to be complemented by another quality that hubs exhibit: Hubs are charged with an extraordinary energy that affects their own inner lives and that also and most importantly changes those beings and things that live and partake in them. Hence, hubs have agency and vitality with regard to more than just putting things and beings in motion and making them circulate and flow. They have a special inner life, which is the reason for, and outcome of, their being experts in the art of "hubbing." It is this interior life of a hub *society* – that I wish to address in this section, zooming even further in from an all-Indian Ocean perspective to a localized one, again using Mauritius, this time the social life and collective identities within the Mauritian hub, as a paradigm.

25   For further details on the issues raised in this section, see also Burkhard Schnepel, The Making of a Hub Society: Mauritius' Path from Port of Call to Cyber Island, in: Connectivity in Motion, eds. Burkhard Schnepel and Edward A. Alpers, 231-58.

To start with a rather simple but nonetheless quite particular and even unique dimension to the situation in Mauritius, it is worth remembering that each and every section of the multi-ethnic Mauritian "rainbow" population of today initially came from elsewhere. In other words, no single group currently living in Mauritius can or does claim indigeneity. Certainly, some groups, especially the descendants of the French settlers and of their African slaves, may claim to have come and settled the island first. But even claims to first-comer status do not have any legitimating force on the island today, nor did they in the past. This lack of an aboriginal population or an officially acknowledged and privileged first-comer status makes present-day inter-ethnic negotiations and identity politics quite specific: it is not indigeneity, but the idea and ideology of having come from elsewhere, that is important for many Mauritians in many domains of life. Apart from being Mauritians and Mauritian nationals, all sections of Mauritian society today consider themselves as having strong diasporic roots and continuous diasporic links to their real and/or assumed "homelands."[26]

But where did Mauritians come from? According to a census of 1982 (whose figure will still be correct, by and large) the population of Mauritius is differentiated as follows: Hindus 52%, Muslims 16%, Sino-Mauritians 3% and General Population 29%. Quite obviously, the distinction between Hindus and Muslims in this categorically blurred census is a religious one. It is, however, important to note that the ancestors of both Hindus and Muslims in Mauritius today originally came from India. It is therefore not without significance, not to say irony, that some Muslim groups on the island have recently started to claim a heritage from the Arabian peninsula and to call Arabic (and not Hindi or Urdu) their "ancestral language." The criterion identifying the third group as "Sino" is no longer religious in character, but refers to the region of origin, namely China or East Asia, of those who are subsumed under this category. Under the rather unspecified label of "General Population" are subsumed such heterogeneous groups as white Franco-Mauritians (accounting for 2%) as well as "Creoles" (in the Mauritian context these are the descendants of African slaves), and "Coloreds" or "*gens de coleur*," a hybrid category denoting the off-spring of mixed marriages. The unified "General Population" can also be circumscribed negatively, namely as all those who did not come from Asia, an indicator of the fact that by 1982 political power in Mauritius had come to lie firmly in Indo-Mauritian hands.[27]

For those well-versed in identity studies, it will come as no surprise that applying other criteria or "identity markers" would produce other figures. Many people who find

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26 See Thomas H. Eriksen, Ethnicity versus Nationalism, Journal of Peace Research 28 (1991): 236-78; Eriksen, Nationalism, Mauritian style: Cultural unity and ethnic Diversity, in: Comparative Studies in Society and History 36 (1994): 549-574; Eriksen, Common Denominators: Ethnicity, Nation-building and Compromise in Mauritius, Oxford 1998; Henry Srebrnik, Ethnicity and the Development of a 'Middleman' Economy on Mauritius: The Diaspora Factor, in: The Round Table 350 (1999): 297-311; Srebrnik, Can an Ethnically-Based Civil Society Succeed: The Case of Mauritius, in: Journal of Contemporary African Studies 18 (2000): 7-20.

27 On the intricacies of census activities in Mauritius, see Anthony J. Christopher, Ethnicity, Community and the Census in Mauritius, 1830–1990, in: Geographical Journal 158 (1992): 57-64; and Oddvar Hollup, Arya Samaj and the Shaping of 'Egalitarian' Hindus in Mauritius, in: Folk 36 (1994): 27-38.

themselves grouped together under one category, such as "ethnicity" or "homeland," find themselves joined by others if "ordered" and administered according to another category. If one merely takes "religion" in all instances (and not only the first two) as a group-making criterion, the cards would be re-shuffled quite substantially. Not only all sub-groups of the "General Population," but also large numbers of Mauritians hailing from South India and most Sino-Mauritians are Christians. Taking yet another criterion, namely that of language, would make things both easier and more complicated. Official sources state that in Mauritius fifteen languages are in use, including English, French, Kreol, Bhojpuri, Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, Arabic, Hakka and Cantonese. However, almost everyone on the island in almost all situations of interaction speaks a French-based Kreol; many Mauritians speak French very well, and most of the national media of any kind communicate in French. The official national language, however, is English, even though or maybe just because only a minority of educated Mauritians really master this language and like to use it.[28]

This multi-level and dynamically shifting picture is corroborated if we look merely at Mauritius' "Persons of Indian Origin" (PIO).[29] These constitute, as we have seen, the majority of the Mauritian population, that is, up to seventy percent today when all Indo-Mauritians are considered, and still more than fifty percent when only Hindus are counted. However, the Indian diaspora in Mauritius is heterogeneous in its social, caste, class, religious and linguistic composition and, maybe most importantly, as far as particular places of origin on the Indian subcontinent are concerned. In terms of their social background, the majority of the Indians, who were shipped as indentured laborers to Mauritius in the nineteenth century,[30] came from rural areas and belonged to what were then the lowest and poorest castes and classes on the Indian subcontinent. These people, commonly called "coolies," were joined later in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by independent clerks and priests from the higher castes and better-off strata of Indian society, as well as by merchants from western India. As for their geographical roots, almost two thirds of Mauritian immigrant laborers came from the north of India,

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28   Several studies discuss the importance of language identification in politics in contemporary Mauritius. See, among others, Patrick Eisenlohr, Little India: Diaspora, Time and Ethnolinguistic Belonging in Hindu Mauritius, Berkeley 2006; Vinesh Y. Hookoomsing, Langue et indentité ethnique: les langues ancestrales à Maurice, in: Journal of Mauritian Studies 1 (1986): 117-37; Thomas H. Eriksen, Linguistic Diversity and the Quest for National Identity: The Case of Mauritius, in: Ethnic and Racial Studies 13 (1990): 1-24; Hookoomsing, Ludwig and Schnepel, Multiple Identities in action; Ralph Ludwig and Burkhard Schnepel, Some Ideas on Communication, Culture and Society in Mauritius: Multiple Identities in Action, in: Multiple identities in action, 9-16.

29   The Indian diaspora in Mauritius today has been studied by, among others, Burton Benedict, Indians in a Plural Society, London 1961; Uttam Bissoondoyal and S.B.C. Servansing (eds.), Indian Labour Immigration, Moka 1986; Marina Carter, Servants, Sirdars and Settlers: Indians in Mauritius 1834–1874, Delhi 1995; Carter, Voices from Indenture: Experiences of Indian Migrants in the British Empire, Leicester 1996; Oddvar Hollup, Kinship and Marriage in the Construction of Identity and Group Boundaries among Indians in Mauritius, in: Culture, Creation and Procreation: Concepts of Kinship in South Asian Practice, eds. Monika Böck and Aparna Rao, Oxford 2000, 219-39; Burkhard Schnepel, Guest Without a Host: The Indian Diaspora(s) in Mauritius, in: India beyond India, ed. Elfriede Hermann (forthcoming).

30   On "indentured labor" more generally, see Hugh Tinker, A New System of Slavery: The Export of Indian Labour Overseas 1830–1920, London 1974.

mainly Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, and roughly one third from the south. Those of South Indian origin are further divided into Tamils and Telugus, groups which are of equal size. Looking at another criterion, namely religion, around 65% of Mauritius's "Persons of Indian Origin" are Hindus, around 25% are Muslims and around 10% today are Christians. These various regional backgrounds and ethnic and religious identifications are dynamically combined with other identity-making and identity-unmaking criteria, such as mother tongue, education, rural versus urban residence or differences in economic success and professional standing.

All in all, one should therefore be cautious of speaking of *the* Indian diaspora in Mauritius as a homogenous "we." What is more important than making these *analytical* scruples is the fact that Indo-Mauritians themselves often emphasize these differences strategically and in shifting ways relative to the situation at hand. The diasporic consciousness and diasporic politics have a firm backing in the official policies of the state in both internal and external matters. In Mauritius we encounter an idea of nationhood and the state which differs radically from the nineteenth-century West European prototype and ideal of "one culture / one language / one religion / one nation / one territory / one state." After independence in 1968, Mauritius had to face and tackle the fact that, as we have seen, its population was made up of many different racial, socio-cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds from different parts of the world. Any attempt at building the nation and unifying its various elements into a working unit as well as a sentimental entity had to be modeled in accordance with the well-known slogan of "unity and diversity."

Mauritian Hub Society: Individual and Family Strategies

So far we have discussed collective or communal hubbing and the socio-cultural as well as politico-economic dynamics this entailed. But how, zooming even further in, did families and individuals actually enact and organize their journeys and eventual stays? How was travelling and dwelling strategically used to survive, make a living or even become rich and powerful? To illustrate these matters, I now draw attention away from Indo-Mauritians to the histories of certain Franco-Mauritian individuals and families during the founding and consolidation phases of the Ile de France (Mauritius) in the mid-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Out first protagonist, Josselin-Julien Maingard, was born in St. Malo, Brittany, in 1719 as the fourth of nine children.[31] At the age of ten he entered the navy, first under the command of his father, and then for several years in leading positions, also fighting against the English. He left Lorient for Ile de France in December 1750 and arrived in Port Louis in June 1751, accompanied by his wife Laurence Louisson, whom he had

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31   The following is based on Jacques Maingard, "Mémoire d'un mauricien d'outre-mer," which was contributed to a "Concours d'histoire et de généalogie organisé par la ville Saint-Malo, la ville de Port-Louis et l'Alliance Francaise de l'Ile Maurice" in 2004 (Archives Municipales de Saint-Malo, Signature: 80 S 5).

married three months before their departure, and by his sister Cécile. In May 1759 he received a concession of land on Mauritius and forty slaves. He had six children with Laurence Louisson before his death in 1784. These six children are the ancestors of the numerous descendants of this line now living in Mauritius, as well as in Réunion and France.[32]

One of the better known and most influential of Josselin-Julien's descendants was Josselin-Jean Maingard, born 1759 as the sixth and last child. He received his education in Paris and entered the navy as a cadet in 1777, afterwards becoming a lieutenant, captain and commander in Port Louis. In November 1810 he fought with General Decaen against the British, who were invading Ile de France. After capitulation he returned to France to continue his military service there. Finally, he went to Ile Bourbon (La Réunion) where he died in 1838. Josselin-Jean had nine children.[33] A second distinguished person of this line of descent was Etienne-Josselin, born in 1787 as the first-born of Josselin-Jean and his wife Antoinette-Julie de Barry. At the age of thirteen Etienne-Josselin joined the army, becoming lieutenant in the artillery in 1809. After 1810 he went back to France and joined the army there as captain and commandant, retiring in 1846 after receiving numerous military distinctions. He died 1860 in Bordeaux.[34] Lastly another ancestor, this time closer to the present, was Amédée Maingard de la Ville-ès-Offrans, born in Mauritius in 1918. He studied economics in Britain in the 1930s. During the war he joined the British Army and acted as an important member of the French resistance. After the war he completed his studies in Britain before returning to Mauritius in 1946, where he became one of the most influential figures in establishing the Mauritian tourism industry, thus turning the "circulation and flows" which his dynasty so vividly exhibits into a profession and business. He died in 1981 in Mauritius.

It is not without significance for our discussion of the internal dynamics of the multi-dimensional and multi-level "hub society" of Mauritius that Josselin-Julien Maingard was also the founder of a second line of the Maingard family. This branch he established after the death of his wife Laurence Louisson in "*liaison intime*" with a "*noir libre*" called Pauline. Their first child was Joseph Maingard, who was born in 1767 as, in accordance with the criterion mentioned above, a "gens de couleur." He married on the island and had one son who seems to have left the island. However, the Mauritian line of this branch was kept going by his second son, Hippolyte Maingard (born 1777). He had a son called Hippolyte-Clodomir Maingard (born 1803).[35] He left a number of children, one of whom was Joseph-Clodomir, who was born on the island in 1840 and died there in 1924. Joseph-Clodomir (and we now follow his line only) was married in 1865 to Augusta Werner (1848–1866), the daughter of an Englishman (the island was British since 1810), who lived with his family in the neighborhood. After Augusta Werner died

32   Ibid.: 25-27.
33   Ibid.: 28-29.
34   Ibid.: 29.
35   Ibid.: 31-32.

in 1866, Joseph-Clodomir Maingard married a second time, this time a woman called Marie-Angèle Martin. They had two sons, one of whom was Joseph-Raoul Maingard. In 1913 he married a third time, a woman called Augusta Simonet; they had no children.[36] Auguste Maingard, the only child of the first marriage of Joseph-Clodomir, died on the island in 1934. He never got to know his mother, who had died several days after his birth. In his grief, his father broke with the Catholic Church and converted to the Anglican Church, which also baptized Auguste. Auguste founded a newspaper and became a poet and writer. In 1863 he married Rachel Dinnematin (1863–1924), with whom he had five children.

At this point we have to go one step aside before looking at the children of Auguste and Rachel. Joseph-Raoul Maingard (1873–1919), to recall, was the second son of Joseph-Clodomir Maingard and his second wife Marie-Angèle Martin. He studied in France and, upon returning to Mauritius, married Delphine Thomé in 1903, with whom he had six children, one of whom was Marie-Louise (the second daughter). Joseph-Raoul Maingard worked as a civil servant on the "dependent islands" of Mauritius, namely Rodriguez, Diego Garcia, Coco and Agaléga, where he died. His daughter Marie-Louise was born in Rodriguez in 1906 and died in London in 1990. After Joseph-Raoul died, Delphine and her six children went back to Mauritius without any means. She started working for the Singer sewing company in Port Louis, while her two eldest daughters, Jeanne and Marie-Louise, at that time fifteen and thirteen respectively, worked as *couturières* for the ladies of society. The family was helped by a rich cousin of Délphines in Paris.[37] In 1926 Marie-Louise Maingard was married to Joseph-Bénédict Maingard (1901–1981), the fifth and last child of Auguste Maingard and Rachel Dinnematin, which brings us back to the family of Auguste Maingard. This is how it comes about that two persons both surnamed Maingard married. Hence, in terms of the anthropology of kinship, Joseph-Bénédict married his patrilateral parallel cousin, that is, the daughter of his father's brother or, more exactly, his father's half-brother. Joseph-Bénédict worked in the British Colonial Legal Civil Service, first in Port Louis and, from 1947, in Hong Kong, where he went with his family. However, in 1950 they returned to Mauritius, before they emigrated to England in 1953.[38]

What have we learned so far about families installing themselves on Mauritius from the middle of the eighteenth century onwards? The Maingard men were all involved in maritime activities in both the merchant marine and navy. These activities were combined with activities in commerce. Before the founder of the Maingard family on Mauritius (or better of the two families) brought his wife and sister to the island, he had been there before. This seems to be a general pattern: men in the navy visited and had come to know the island before they brought their families there with them. One main reason for leaving St. Malo was the hardship there and the desire to lead a better life on the

36   Ibid.: 32.
37   Ibid.: 40-41.
38   Ibid.: 44.

island. Becoming established on the island took several generations before it succeeded, and usually several families or branches of families were involved, closely cooperating economically and supporting each other in times of hardship and personal tragedy. In these early years and generations men stuck to their profession in the navy and several times went back and forth between France and Ile de France or roamed the seas on other missions across the Indian Ocean. During these early decades we also see that, bit by bit, land on Mauritius was acquired and that family members took over jobs as landlords, civil servants or businessmen on the island.

It appears that two branches of the Maingard family, one by a lawful wife from St. Malo and the other by a freed slave, Pauline, did not cooperate. One can assume that the "legitimate" branch of Josselin-Julien and his wife Laurence was not inclined to have much to do with the offspring of his father with a "negro," though we do not know for sure. The history of the Pauline branch gives us several hints about how one family always needed the support and backing of other families. For this survival strategy, marriage patterns became important. In the early nineteenth century we find, for example, that Maingards married Werners, a family well-known in the neighborhood. We also find two marriages of Maingards with Martins, one of whom seems to have been the grandmother or grand-aunt of the other. The second marriage within this circle of two families was even one between closely related parallel cousins. These marriages also show an ability to cross nation and denomination, as they were enacted between English and French families, respectively also members of the Catholic and Anglican churches. Co-operation between extended families, branches of families and families aligned by marriage (in-laws) could at times extend across the ocean. For example, a rich cousin from Paris helped a destitute widow and her daughters back in Mauritius, and a young man found accommodation and a job with relatives in South Africa, Australia or England. Hence, we find a system of individual families, more often than not with a considerable number of children, who have networks not only back home but also with other islands and coasts around the Indian Ocean. These networks are activated not only in times of trouble but also for economic purposes and again for marriages.

Individual and family hubbing was gendered. While men travelled back and forth and can be seen as the natural agents of this proto-form of globalization, women seemed to be busy staying put. To be sure, they travelled too, leaving their homes and families of origin, and not only entering a new family after marriage, but also accompanying their husbands to distant and foreign places in order to lead a settled life there. Their main task was having children, one after another, year after year, until they died – usually at a much earlier age than their husbands, who soon married again or had families with concubines. Boys entered the navy at quite early ages. Girls also travelled. It was not uncommon – remember tragic Virginie of *Paul et Virginie* fame – that they left their tropical homes from around the ages of six to twelve to be educated in France, not only in reading, writing and mathematics, but also in the mores of the civilization they were thought to have left behind. So, in the game of family hubbing, the role of women was important. They took care of the home and of the new creole family, providing offspring and stability, as

well as being responsible for the moral economy of the family, which somehow had to keep its socio-cultural identity in a world where many things were done in ways different from what seemed to be correct and acceptable by the standards at home. This local and micro-social stability was essential. Women provided the sheltered center without which it would not be possible for the men to circulate. Hence, the gendered nature of family hubbing and the reproductive as well as stabilizing role of women must not be ignored and lost when it comes to tracing family histories and sociology, even though children, in this world of men, bear the names of their fathers, and, hence the line which families (and their historians follow) is almost automatically paternal, while the world of women is divided, and they appear in larger kinship groups only as the sisters and wives and mothers of men.

In order to redress this imbalance in the awareness and conceptualization of the role of women in the art of hubbing, let us now briefly look at a another family history in which women are at the center of our attention.[39] Our first female protagonist, Julienne Le Gentil (1675–1736), married Jean-Louis Vigoureux in St. Malo in 1700. She was then twenty-five and he was forty-three, from a Malouin merchant family. All in all, she gave birth to twelve children, six of whom survived, four girls and two boys, namely Louis born in 1702 and Jean Baptiste Henry born in 1705. Of the four daughters, Julienne Charlotte, born in 1707, joined the monastery of Ursulines in the convent of St. Charles in Dinan. The other three, namely Jeanne Françoise, born in 1709, Marine Madeleine, born in 1712, and Anne, born in 1715, had difficulties in entering into suitable marriages. Julienne became a widow in 1730, and she was thus left on her own with three unmarried daughters aged 21, 18 and 15. When their eldest brother Louis returned from an Indian Ocean journey as soldier in 1734, he persuaded his mother and sisters to emigrate to the Ile de France, where at this time Mahé de Labourdonnais had just started to colonize the uninhabited island successfully. Life on Ile de France in that early phase was simple and very difficult: famines, cyclones, rats, marooned slaves, hardly any infrastructure and political instability constantly threatened the incipient settlement in its existence. Despite all this, Julienne and her three younger daughters, accompanied by their brother and two domestic servants, left on board the *Jupiter* for Mauritius early in 1735 hoping for a better life. The boat arrived in August 1735. Six months after their arrival, Julienne died in 1736 at the age of 61.

Julienne's first daughter, Jeanne Françoise Vigoureux, married René Joseph Colbert in February 1736 at the age of 25, one month after the death of her mother; the second daughter, Marine Madeleine Vigoureux, married Deshupry le Goff on the same day. Jeanne Françoise's husband, René Joseph, had come to the island on 1733 to work in the colonial administration. After his death in 1743, Jeanne Francoise inherited his prop-

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39   The following information is based on Anne-Marie Chatelain, "Une famille dans le vent de l'histoire: De Saint-Malo a l'île de France. Quatre generations de femmes, 1638–1768" (Memoire présenté dans le cadre du concours d'Histoire et Généalogie Port Louis – Saint-Malo, October 2004), Archives Municipales de Saint-Malo, Signature 80 S 1.

erty, which was in land; they had no children. In 1745 Jeanne Francoise married for a second time, to M. Courtois de Longchamp, a high-ranking soldier in the new army of Ile de France; they also had no children. In 1762 they moved back to France. Marine Madeleine Vigoureux, the second daughter, was 24 years old when she married a cousin of the governor Mahé de Labourdonnais (Deshupry le Goff), three years her younger. Three years after the marriage, in 1739, she died without any offspring. Julienne's youngest daughter, Anne Vigoureux, lived from 1715 to 1745. She married six years after her arrival on Mauritius, namely in 1741. Her husband, Nicolas Duhamel, arrived on Mauritius in June 1735 together with Mahé de Labourdonnais and worked on the island as a company employee. Anne and Nicolas had five daughters. There were only three years and three months between the first two (twins) and the fifth. In 1745 Anne died at the age of thirty, and her husband died soon afterwards, probably a victim of the same epidemic outbreak which had killed his wife. The orphans joined the families of the two brothers, Louis and Jean Bapiste Henry Vigoureux.

The elder brother, Louis, had three "natural" children (*enfants naturels*) with a young Indo-Portuguese woman ("femme libre au service de M. Vigoureux") called Francisca Diès do Santo. These were Nicolas, born in 1744, Jacques François, born in 1745, and Anne Michelle, born in 1747. Louis also had a "natural" son with a domestic slave of Chinese origin. In 1745 Louis appears to have been living in the house of his elder sister Jeanne Françoise, who at that time was in her second marriage and had no children of her own. In 1747, Louis married Perrine Julienne Robin in Saint Denis, the capital of neighboring Ile de Bourbon (Réunion). The couple went back to Ile de France where the bride not only had to face the fact that Louis had had two "concubines," one Indo-Portuguese and one Chinese, with whom he had had three and one children respectively. Furthermore, he had yet another child with another Chinese slave called after his marriage. Perrine Julienne did not lag behind for too long. Soon after her marriage she started to have children too, namely four daughters and three sons. Jean Baptiste, the younger brother, married Elisabeth de Varennes in 1732. The couple first lived in Pondicherry and Chandernagor, India, where they had one child in 1746, during whose birth Elisabeth died. Jean Baptiste married again in 1747, to a young woman from Port Louis called Thérèse Donadieu de Pucherie. He was 42 years old, his bride fourteen and a half. She was the daughter of an officer stationed in Pondicherry after whose death she and her mother went to Ile de France. Between 1748 and 1761 Thérèse had two sons and four daughters. In sum, the two Vigoureux brothers had fifteen legitimate children in addition to five "natural" children, and they had to take care of the four (soon only three) orphans of Anne's.

To conclude this section with the additional information on women that we have now gathered. It seems to have been a common (and successful) strategy 1) to produce as many offspring as possible; however, the death rate among children was high, especially, it seems, for female children; 2) to spread the family widely across the Indian Ocean from Pondicherry to St. Malo; 3) to give the children of both sexes some education in France; 4) to marry strategically; 5) to remarry (both men and women) in case of the premature

death of a partner; 6) to provide support to the widows and orphans of parents, brothers and sisters; 7) to diversify one's assets and business options in terms of business ventures both and their locations; 8) to establish a *domaine* in Mauritius and to produce sugar and other agricultural products for export there; 9) finally, in all this it is not unusual for men to grow rather old, namely to sixty or even seventy, while women rarely get beyond thirty. Finally, we must not ignore that family strategies, as part of the art of hubbing, were racialized. While French and Indian families and communities were able to hub in the way they did, this was not possible for the African slaves; and it is still very often not possible for their "Creole" descendants on Mauritius today who lack the means to travel.

Conclusion

This paper has sought to challenge static and bounded notions of empires, replacing these with an emphasis on the fragmented and polycentric nature and permeable borders exhibited by many realms, especially if relying on or being based on sea-power. It also added mobility to the picture of sea(borne) empires, addressing the means, modes and methods of "connectivity in motion" in both time and space. Moreover, in doing so, it directed attention to the seminal role of the smaller components of empires, here understood to be "hubs," in creating larger maritime polities and aligning them to larger dynamic and ever-changing networks. A maritime and specifically "Indian Ocean" perspective to the overall picture of empires and civilizations, then, shifts the focus of analysis away from a preoccupation with the modern nation-state (and its anxieties over its territorial borders) and away from bounded space as a frame of analysis. Rather, a greater awareness arises of mobility, routes, hubs and the networking processes along and through which exchanges and connectivity have taken place.

These methodological points are congruent, by and large, with what many "new thalassologies" do not tire to point out theoretically and to substantiate empirically.[40] However, this does not mean arguing in favor of any over-exalted "celebration" of mobility, circulation and flow. Travelling and dwelling, as Clifford[41] has rightly pointed out, always need to be viewed in their dialectical interdependencies. There are always people who do not move and have to remain where they are: African slaves or their descendants, for example, or if of female gender. In fact, it may even be essential for those who move that some people do not and cannot move. Furthermore, we can agree with Salazar that the "fashionable imagery of flows is badly chosen if we want to describe how people, objects and ideas move around the world. Global forces are evidently not neutral but always subject to economic privileges and political agendas."[42] We can also follow Ferguson when he argues that "the 'global' does not 'flow' thereby connecting and watering contiguous

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40 For an insightful discussion and summary, see Markus Vink, Indian Ocean Studies and the New Thalassology, in: Journal of Global History 2 (2007): 41–62.

41 James Clifford, Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century, Boston 1997.

42 Noel Salazar, Envisioning Eden: Mobilizing Imaginaries in Tourism and Beyond, Oxford / New York 2010, 338.

space; *it hops instead*, efficiently connecting the enclaved points in the network while excluding (with equal efficiency) the spaces that lie between the points."[43] Overemphasizing mobility, circulation and flow, therefore, may run the risk of ignoring those places and times where and when people, things and ideas did not and do not move, where and when there were and are encumbrances and stagnation. Furthermore, and equally important, such a view will fail to identify the crucial points in space and time where and when things start (or stop) to hop or jump. What is required in this context is to identify the "jumping off points" in time and space, that is, we need a "*punctum saliens*" perspective on mobility and immobility.

Finally, by adding a maritime and, as it were, more southern perspective to the study of terrestrial Eurasia, it has been possible to re-connect the vast landmass in the north of this part of the globe with the Asian south analytically and empirically, thus acknowledging these two sides of the coin as communicating tubes highly integrated in the past, present and future.[44] Ultimately, the inclusion of the Indian Ocean world into the Eurasian perspective inevitably directs our view to Africa as well. It has long been deplored in "Indian Ocean Studies" that some of its early adherents, such as Chaudhuri,[45] and also the name of the *Indian* Ocean as such, have tended to ignore the crucial role of Africa (or at least of the East African coast) in the history of this ocean.[46] These strong African connections across the Indian Ocean world could readily be extended via the Red Sea to North Africa, linking this region historically with the southwest Indian coast and, from there, with the Malay Archipelago. For the argument propounded here it is not unimportant that this "Saharasian" world, as some call it,[47] came to dominate because of the very act of a terrestrial Eurasian force, namely the Mongol conquest of Baghdad in 1258, which led to vital Indian Ocean trade routes being shifted from the Gulf to the Red Sea.

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43   James Ferguson, Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order, Durham 2006, 47; my emphasis.

44   In more general terms, this perspective also helps us understand and study the complex and dynamic dialectics and interdependencies between land and sea that have been fundamental to human existence. See Hans Blumenberg, Schiffbruch mit Zuschauer: Paradigma einer Daseinsmetapher, Frankfurt am Main 1997; Carl Schmitt, Land und Meer: Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen, Stuttgart 1954.

45   Kirti Narayan Chaudhuri, Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean.

46   Some scholars even felt it called for another name, namely the "Afro-Asian Seas," instead of the "Indian Ocean." See Pearson, The Indian Ocean; Dietmar Rothermund and Susanne Weigelin-Schwiedrzik (eds.), Der Indische Ozean: Das afro-asiatische Mittelmeer als Kultur- und Wirtschaftsraum, Wien 2004.

47   Ravi Arvind Palat, Maritime Trade, Political Relations and Residential Diplomacy in the World of the Indian Ocean, in: The Indian Ocean: Oceanic Connections and the Creation of New Societies, eds. Abdul Sheriff and Engseng Ho, London 2014, 45-68.

Silk Road Connectivities and the Construction of Local History in Eastern Xinjiang[1]

Ildikó Bellér-Hann

ABSTRACTS

Ausgehend von Jack Goodys These von eurasischen Gemeinsamkeiten untersucht dieser Beitrag indigene Perspektiven transregionaler Konnektivität im Uigurischen Autonomen Gebiet Xinjiang (Xinjiang Uyghur) im Nordwesten Chinas, der für die Bildwelt und die zivilisatorischen Begegnungen der Seidenstraße typischen Region schlechthin. Das Thema wird durch eine dichte Lektüre und Analyse ausgewählter Texte erschlossen, die in einem 2012 in uigurischer Sprache erschienenen biografischen Wörterbuch über herausragende Persönlichkeiten, die im späten 19. und 20. Jahrhundert in der Kumul-Oase lebten und arbeiteten, veröffentlicht wurden. Die Biografien von Wissenschaftlern, Pädagogen, religiösen Würdenträgern, Kaufleuten und Handwerkern aus der vorsozialistischen und sozialistischen Ära bilden ein *régime d'historicité*. Dieses *régime* offenbart nicht nur sehr viel über die Darstellung und die Position dieser Personen in der gesamten türkischsprachigen muslimischen Gesellschaft, sondern auch über die multiskalare räumliche Konstruktion der Ethnohistorie. Oberhalb der Ebene der Oase sind die wichtigsten adressierten Maßstäbe die der Region (Xinjiang oder Provinz), des Nationalstaates (China) und des Transnationalen (insbesondere der muslimischen Welt). Diese Vernetzung der Mikroebene mit dem Globalen ermöglicht der Lokalgeschichte die Hinterfragung der Metaerzählungen und erlaubt neue Einblicke in emische Taxonomien sowie in die komplexe Beziehung zwischen Diachronie und Synchronie.

Taking Jack Goody's thesis of Eurasian commonalities as its point of departure, the paper explores indigenous perspectives of transregional connectivities in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in northwest China, a region quintessentially representative of "Silk Road" imagery and civilizational encounters. The subject is approached through a close reading and analysis of selected texts published in 2012 in Uyghur in a biographical dictionary that celebrates outstanding personalities who lived and worked in the oasis of Qumul in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The biographies of scholars, educators, religious dignitaries, merchants and craftsmen that span pre-socialist and socialist eras form a *régime d'historicité*. This *régime* reveals a great deal not only about the representation and position of these individuals in the wider Turkic-speaking Muslim society but also about the multi-scalar spatial construction of ethnohistory. Above the level of the oasis, the most significant scales addressed are those of the region (Xinjiang or province), the nation-state (China), and the transnational (in particular the Muslim world). This integration of the micro-level with the global enables local history to challenge taken for granted meta-narratives. This approach generates new insights into emic taxonomies as well as into the complex relationship between diachrony and synchrony.

Introduction

This paper takes Jack Goody's thesis of the unity of Eurasia as its point of departure.[2] Goody's broad, comparative approach attacks the Eurocentrism still inherent in much Western scholarship. Yet his conceptualization of an East versus West binary as the key to global history is inadequate. One way to move beyond this binary is to zoom in on particular places at particular times and explore the threads linking micro and macro levels. Privileging a local perspective is by no means alien to Goody, himself a dedicated fieldworker in Africa before turning his attention to world history. In this paper I explore biographical narratives used to construct ethno-religious identity by contemporary Uyghur intellectuals, poised between transnational connectivity and the immediate context of reform socialism in the People's Republic of China (PRC).

The Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in China's far north-west is a vast area that formerly constituted the central zone of the overland Silk Routes. The legendary caravan route from the east forked at Dunhuang to skirt the Taklamakan desert north and south, before joining again at Kashgar. Also known to Europeans as Eastern or Chinese Turkestan in the era following its definitive incorporation into the Chinese polity in the mid-eighteenth century, Xinjiang exemplifies transregional connectivities. Many historians have viewed this zone as the interface between two *continents* but Jack Goody takes a different view and (drawing on the work of Peter Golden) insists that

> *Europe and Asia were neither geographically nor culturally distinct. Communication between the two parts was frequent from an early period. Originating in the hinterland*

> *of China,* [the Turks] *not only controlled the Silk Road, which extended as far as Rome, but acted as a channel for the adoption of Near Eastern religions … their activity extended through the Western steppes as far as the Bulgars. They were thus associated with the metal age and linked to both sides of the Eurasian landmass. Those links were strong and preceded what later became the Silk Road.*[3]

Thus Goody's grand vision of Eurasian connectivities attributed a pivotal role to the Turkic speaking populations of central Eurasia, well before the advent of Islam.

Although often dismissed as a romanticizing, Orientalizing misnomer, Ferdinand von Richthofen's metaphor of the Silk Road continues to loom large in academic discussions of the deep history of Eurasia, where the trading cities of the Oxus civilization with links to Mesopotamia, China and northern India constituted a "natural hub for trans-Eurasian exchanges" as early as 2000 BCE.[4] Richthofen opens his first volume on China with a chapter on Central Asia (more specifically East Turkestan), thereby emphasizing the region's centrality in the history of overland connectivities.[5] Xinjiang is often represented as the ultimate "crossroads", both in the pre-modern as well as the modern period.[6] The Silk Road metaphor has been enthusiastically embraced by post-Soviet nation-builders as well as the politicians behind China's *One Belt One Road* initiative, also referred to as the Silk Road Economic Belt, which promotes Xinjiang as a Silk Road hub. One of its aims is to solve "the Xinjiang problem", i.e. the tension between China's fear of Uyghur separatism and the anxiety of the ten million strong Muslim Uyghur minority that their ethnic identity is being eroded by Beijing's heavy-handed policies toward their religion, language and cultural practices.[7] The Initiative lauds Silk Road heritage, emphasizing both its role in enabling commercial connectivities and its impact in promoting peace and tolerance between civilizations.[8]

The dogged persistence of the Silk Road metaphor in diverse discursive fields inside and outside academia raises the question as to what impact it has had on local representations

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3   Jack Goody, Asia and Europe, in: History and Anthropology, 26 (2015) 3: 263-307, here p. 266.
4   David Christian, The Maps of Time. An Introduction to Big History, Berkeley / Los Angeles 2011, pp. 297-98. For the first use of the term see Ferdinand von Richthofen, China. Ergebnisse eigener Reisen und darauf gegründeter Studien, 1, Berlin 1877–1912, pp. 460-62. The global connectivities of Central Eurasia have recently been synthesized by James A. Millward, The Silk Road. A Very Short Introduction, Oxford 2013. For the connections to East Asia see Peter Perdue, East Asia and Central Eurasia, in: The Oxford Handbook of World History, ed. Jerry H. Bentley, Oxford 2011, Oxford Handbooks Online (2012) DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199235810.013.0023
5   Daniel C. Waugh, Richthofen's 'Silk Roads': Toward the Archeology of a Concept, in: The Silk Road 5 (2007) 1: 1-10, here p. 2.
6   James A. Millward, Eurasian Crossroads: A History of Xinjiang, New York 2007.
7   The accelerated development launched in 2000 as part of the "Develop the West" programme reflected the hopes of policy makers that improved economic opportunities would satisfy the Uyghurs and guarantee the stability of the Autonomous Region and the security of its international borders. The repressive policies implemented since the appointment of Chen Quanguo as regional party secretary in August 2016 indicate that economic prosperity is no longer seen as sufficient to ensure long-term stability. See Ondřej Klimeš, Advancing 'Ethnic Unity' and 'De-extremization': Ideational Governance in Xinjiang under 'New Circumstances' (2012–2017), in: Journal of Chinese Political Science (2018) 10.1007/s11366-018-9537-8.
8   "Action plan on the belt and road initiative," The State Council The People's Republic of China, http://english.gov.cn/archive/publications/2015/03/30/content_281475080249035.htm.

within the zone concerned. No populations here can be considered as isolated societies or cultures since all are embedded in wider networks.[9] Local, emic perspectives are shaped by wider discourses, such as that of national identity in conditions of reform socialism, or the ostensible unity of the Muslim world. This recognition raises the question how, if at all, Silk Road imagery has impacted on Uyghur constructions of ethnic and local identity. I address this question by examining the biographies of persons rooted in a particular oasis, whose lives span pre-socialist and socialist histories, to ascertain what these texts reveal about social change and the position of these subjects in the larger scheme of things. I also investigate which social groups are credited with shaping local society and explore the agency attributed to them in creating and maintaining networks on diverse scales. This is a distinctive application of "relational" paradigms such as *connected*, *shared* and *entangled* histories and *histoire croisée*.[10] My study is distinctive in the sense that, rather than stress "horizontal" relations between entities of comparable scale, I place more emphasis on "vertical" or multi-scalar relations from the perspective of one location. Above the level of the locality, the most significant scales in this study are those of the region (Xinjiang), the nation-state (China), and the transnational (in particular the Muslim world). The integration of the micro-level with the global allows us to use local history "to question the trajectory of the often uncritically assumed metanarrative of ever increasing connections and integrations."[11] It generates insights not only into emic taxonomies but also into "the relationship between diachrony and synchrony, and regimes of historicity and reflexivity."[12]

The location is the oasis of Qumul (Chinese: Hami) in eastern Xinjiang, an important trading centre approximately mid-way between Dunhuang and Turpan (see the map of Marie Favereau, this issue, p. 53). The biographies I examine were committed to paper in the reform period, which started in the early 1980s when policies toward the Uyghur as an ethnic group (*minzu*) were gradually relaxed, following repression during the Maoist, collectivized period. During these years, minorities throughout the country benefited from certain privileges and affirmative action policies. Minority languages were supported, as were research and publications in ethnic literature, history and culture. However, from the early 1990s, in the case of the Uyghurs of Xinjiang, these policies were qualified and gradually reversed. The space within which Uyghurs can express their cultural aspirations using their mother tongue in historical and literary publications has become

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9   Eric R. Wolf, Europe and the People without History, Berkeley 1982.

10   Sanjay Subrahmanyam, Connected Histories: Notes Toward a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia, in: Modern Asian Studies 31 (1997) 3: 735-762; Sebastian Conrad and Shalini Randeria (eds.), Jenseits des Eurozentrismus: Postkoloniale Perspektiven in den Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften, Frankfurt am Main 2002; Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, Beyond Comparison: Histoire croisée and the Challenge of Reflexivity, in: History and Theory 45 (2006): 30-50, here pp. 30-32.

11   Anna Gerritsen, Scales of a Local. The Place of Locality in a Globalizing World, in: A Companion to World History, ed. Douglas Northrop, Oxford 2012, 213-26, here p. 219.

12   Werner and Zimmermann, Beyond comparison, 32. See also Anthony G. Hopkins (ed.), Global History: Interactions between the Universal and the Local, Basingstoke 2006; Anna Gerritsen, The Tale of Lady Tan: Negotiating Place between Central and Local in Song-Yuan-Ming China, in: The Medieval History Journal 11 (2008) 2: 161-186.

increasingly circumscribed. In this context, published biographies construct a particular *régime d'historicité*, i.e. a vision of the past with implications for the present (and even the future).[13] As will be shown, the local biographical construction of temporal orders in reform China is a collective exercise that is sensitive to diverse geographical scales; this regime of historicity is necessarily one of careful accommodation to power holders and their policy directives, rather than subversion.

Local History and Temporality

"Local history" is a vague term. It can refer to the history of a specific, sub-national, geographical or administrative locality, or more restrictively to the production of historical knowledge by indigenous authors from and about that locality, in the local language and through the use of a locally salient genre.[14] In this paper the term refers to indigenous renderings of sub-national (regional and sub-regional or oasis-specific) history by members of the Uyghur ethnic group published in the Uyghur language for an Uyghur readership. This kind of knowledge production resembles academic historiography in that its aim is to uncover the past, but methodologically it differs from it in a number of ways, for example in its systematic reliance on oral sources as the primary source of data, and in its "framing".[15]

Sporadic attempts to contest some tenets of national historiography were made during the early years of reform socialism.[16] However, Uyghur voices that deviated from the official narrative were soon silenced and only the latter version of Xinjiang history has been made available for public consumption in the last three decades. All publications concerning indigenous history and culture, and even access to archives, are subject to strict censorship. This is the temporal and political frame in which the biographies to be considered here were planned, written and finally published. The subjects whose lives are presented in terms of a verifiable factuality lived between the late nineteenth and late twentieth centuries, thus spanning the late imperial, Republican and socialist eras of modern Chinese history. Qumul came under Qing control from the middle of the eighteenth century in a system of indirect rule under which the indigenous Muslim ruler collected taxes and governed the local population while paying tribute to the Manchu Emperor. The ruling Muslim dynasty, known as the Wang, survived the end of the Qing Empire in 1911 and retained their power until their final demise in 1930. But the privi-

13   François Hartog, Régimes d'historicité. Présentisme et expériences du temps (Paris: Seuil, 2003).

14   Svetlana Jacquesson and Ildikó Bellér-Hann, Introduction, in: Local History as an Identity Discipline, ed. Svetlana Jacquesson and Ildikó Bellér-Hann, special issue, Central Asian Survey 31 (2012) 3: 239-50, here p. 244.

15   Erving Goffman, Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience, Cambridge, MA 1974).

16   Gardner Bovingdon, The History of the History of Xinjiang, in: Twentieth Century China 26 (2001) 2: 95-139; Gardner Bovingdon with contributions by Nabijan Tursun, Contested Histories, in: Xinjiang, China's Muslim Borderland, ed. S. Frederick Starr, Armonk/New York 2004, 353-374; Gardner Bovingdon, The Uyghurs. Strangers in their Own Land, New York 2010, 23-39; Nabijan Tursun, The formation of Modern Uyghur Historiography and Competing Perspectives toward Uyghur History, in: China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly 6 (2008) 3: 87-100.

leges and social prestige of the traditional elites lingered throughout much of the republican era during which the province was governed by a succession of Chinese warlords. In 1949 Xinjiang became part of the People's Republic of China. Important events in the history of the Qumul oasis included major uprisings in 1907, 1912 and 1931. The most frequently mentioned in the biographies is the last of these, a "peasant rebellion" led by Khoja Niyaz Haji.[17]

A Modern Uyghur Biographical Dictionary

From the large corpus of local, regional and oasis histories published by indigenous history enthusiasts and professional scholars in Qumul since 1980 to the present day, I have selected sections from a biographical dictionary published in 2012 by Äkhmät Hämdulla under the title "[Outstanding] Personalities in the History of Qumul."[18] The volume can be considered representative of recent post-reform Uyghur ethnic publishing. The biographical dictionary derives from the *tazkirah*, a well-known genre in the literary tradition of Persianate societies, which included the sayings or writings of Muslim saints and poets as well as their biographies. It has also been attested in the Central Asian Chaghatay literary tradition, the joint legacy of all Central Asian Turkic Muslims, including the Muslims of Xinjiang.[19] Its modern, secular materialization within the context of Uyghur minority publishing in reform China is best seen as the result of the fusion of local and external (Chinese and western) traditions. The term *täzkirä* is still used in Xinjiang, but not to describe contemporary biographical dictionaries. Rather, it designates government-sponsored handbooks of prefectures containing detailed information about social, economic and cultural conditions.[20] That Hämdulla's compilation was based on earlier, comparable works available in published or manuscript form is indicated by the twenty-one bibliographical entries listed in the end. Indeed the work exudes a sense of collective authorship, since the author lists no fewer than sixty-two persons who provided him with additional relevant information.[21] This is typical of local historians who often take pride in prioritizing oral sources over written ones, based on the tacit assumption that

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17 Although classified by local historians as a peasant rebellion, the uprising of 1931 had complex causes and a broad support base that acquired an inter-ethnic character and province-wide significance (Millward, *Eurasian Crossroads*, 188-201).

18 Äkhmät Hämdulla, Qomul tarikhidä ötkän shäkhslär, Beyjing 2012 (hereafter "HQTÖSH").

19 Johannes Thomas Pieter de Bruijn, Tadhkira, in: The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition, X, Leiden 2000, 53-54; Rian Thum, Modular History: Identity Maintenance before Uyghur Nationalism, in: The Journal of Asian Studies 71 (2012) 3: 627-53, here p. 632; Rian Thum, The Sacred Routes of Uyghur History, Cambridge 2014, 41-51.

20 Typical titles make reference to the historical figures / persons of the geographical entity they cover, such as "Famous Persons in Xinjiang's Recent History," (Shärip Niyaz Khushtar, Shinjang yeqinqi zaman tarikhidä ötkän shäkhslär), Ürümchi 2003; Shärip Khushtar, Shinjang yeqinqi zaman tarikhidiki mäshhur shäkhslär, Ürümchi 2000; or "Historical Figures of Xinjiang," (Adil Muhämmät, Shinjangdiki tarikhi shäkhslär, Ürümchi 2011); sometimes they are confined to a specific historical period, e.g. "Famous Uyghur Persons during the Yuan Dynasty," without naming the genre specifically (Abliz Muhämmäd Sayrami and Abdurazaq Tokhti, Yüän sülalisidä ötkän mäshhur Uyghur shäkhslär, Ürümchi 1991).

21 HQTÖSH, 349-50.

the former are more reliable than the latter.[22] With very few exceptions, the two hundred persons included in Hämdulla's dictionary are considered to be persons of merit. This is underlined by the author's stated intention to inspire young people to dedicate themselves to their homeland (*äl-yurt*) and be worthy descendants (*yaramliq äwlad*).[23]

The great majority of the personalities included are men. They are introduced in ten chapters, each based on a profession and associated public engagement. These comprise: 1. Scholars, literati, calligraphers, translators; 2. Officials/Office-holders; 3. Educators; 4. Distinguished social figures, religious dignitaries; 5. Folk heroes; 6. Healers; 7. Merchants; 8. Craftsmen; 9. Folk artists; 10. Famous people who left Qumul for China's inner provinces and their descendants. The list does not embrace the totality of local society. Its evident gaps, such as the sparsity of women and the exclusion of farmers, transhumant pastoralists and other marginalized groups, are indicative of values that attribute certain professional groups and social categories an agency in shaping local history that is denied to others. In what follows I will focus on the five chapters dealing with scholars, educators, religious dignitaries, merchants and craftsmen. These categories include the local knowledge-elite as well as others perceived to have played a significant role in transmitting local knowledge and tradition and in introducing change and innovation in the context of wider connectivities.

Entries covering persons who lived prior to the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries are short and sketchy, no doubt due at least partly to the limitations of the sources. In general, each entry opens with the date and place of the person's birth and ends with the date and place of his death, and occasionally, the cause of death.[24] The entries thus conform to the requirements of a biographical narrative, which has to have a beginning and an end. Each is ordered chronologically according to events pertaining to the individual's professional and political careers, but personal detail is scarce. Children, parents, siblings and other (male) relatives are only mentioned when they are considered to be important in their own right, in which case they may well be listed separately. Each entry specifies the socio-economic position of the subject's family and outlines his educational attainments before elaborating on his social standing and achievements. All entries follow this structure. They generally fall short of providing comprehensive coverage of the career, let alone of family life, changes in character, views, emotional conflicts and so on, but of course it would be futile to criticize omissions according to the evolving conventions of Western literary biography.[25]

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22   Ildikó Bellér-Hann, Oasis History in Eastern Xinjiang: A Contested Field, in: History Making in Central and Northern Eurasia: Contemporary Actors and Practices, ed. Svetlana Jacquesson, Wiesbaden 2016, 79–99, here p. 91.

23   HQTÖSH, 1.

24   The living are explicitly excluded from this dictionary.

25   Cf. Peter Burke, Individuality and Biography in the Renaissance, in: The European Legacy 2 (1997): 1372-82, here p. 1373.

Scholars, Literary Figures, Calligraphers and Translators (*alimlär, adiblär, khättatlar, tärjimanlar*)

Among the thirty-five persons listed under this category, the earliest are a few famous poets of Qumul whose lives and artistic output cannot be precisely dated. From the second half of the nineteenth century the biographies become longer and more detailed. Many subjects combined a multiplicity of activities (e.g. most calligraphers and translators also pursued scholarly and / or literary activities). A few possessed exceptional skills in different fields. An outstanding example for this is Hapiz Niyaz (1896 / 1898?–1982), an accomplished painter, calligrapher, accountant, master tailor and cobbler, healer and self-taught historian and folklorist. Thanks to his thorough religious education, he was appointed guardian of the saintly tomb of Qays.[26] In the early 1930s, his close association with the rebel leader Khoja Niyaz Haji took him to the provincial capital Ürümchi and he may even have visited Mongolia and the Soviet Union.[27] If he did, his biography does not attribute any relevance to these sojourns outside China either for his personal development or for his communal commitment. Another example is Asim Haji (1865–1940), a poet, calligrapher and architect who also mastered carpentry and studied medicine. He decorated saintly shrines and mosques as well as secular objects such as wooden chests and domestic utensils. He completed the Haj twice and is said to have made substantial contributions to progress (*täräqqiyat*). While the biographical entry refrains from establishing a causal relationship between Asim Haji's travels and his progressive sympathies, some link is implicit in the laconic statement that his travels "opened up his horizon" (*näzär da'irisini kengäytkän*).[28]

Hapiz Haji (1865–1940) was born in rural Qumul, but completed his education in Kashgar in southern Xinjiang. As his name suggests, he too must have had substantial travel experience across Eurasia (to earn the honorific title "haji"). His entry emphasizes his accomplishments as a poet and a commitment to the people that manifested itself in criticisms of secular office-holders and religious dignitaries and exposure of the suffering of ordinary people.[29] Social injustice was also a principal concern of Molla Hämdulla, identified as a healer but also as someone who could recite traditional songs, whose life was firmly rooted in his native village of Lapchuq (1880–1966).[30] Yüsüp Täyjibäg (1864–1940), another member of the Muslim aristocracy, boasted an exceptional education: he studied poetry alongside medicine, calligraphy, mathematics, chemistry and geography, and was well-versed in Arabic and Persian as well as in Chinese. He used his own money and his connections to the centre of power to support religious learning and

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26   HQTÖSH, 23-32.
27   See also Ildikó Bellér-Hann, Hapiz Niyaz: Cadre, Muslim, Historian. A Local Intellectual in Eastern Xinjiang, in: Études orientales 27–28 (2016): 87-115.
28   HQTÖSH,15-16.
29   Ibid., 17.
30   Ibid.,18. This is an interesting example of how the categories used by the author overlap. Molla Hämdulla and Hapiz Niyaz could equally have been listed under "healers".

the training of calligraphers. He himself became an accomplished poet as well as a "progressive intellectual" (*ilghar ziyali*). While performing the Haj in 1937 he also visited the Soviet Union, Greece, Turkey, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Syria, accumulating experiences, which made him knowledgeable about the civilization of the Middle East. In spite of his aristocratic origins, he too is said to have remained "committed to the people" (*khalqpärwär*) as well as to education (*maripätpärwär*). Years after his death in 1940, his poetry was still considered subversive; it was burnt during the Cultural Revolution.[31] Translator-interpreters have long played a key role as mediators between foreign rulers and indigenous subalterns.[32] The task of mediating between two antithetical language communities tied to each other by political necessity was attributed high prestige. Manchu Yüsüp (1867–1930) owed his career as well as his nickname to the mobility made possible by royal patronage: as a young man he had the opportunity to accompany the last Qumul Wang on tribute missions to Beijing, where he was trained for four years as a Manchu interpreter and translator. He continued to serve the Wang in this capacity until the demise of the Muslim dynasty in 1930.[33]

The acquisition of specialized knowledge, including that of the Chinese language, was also possible locally if royal patronage was forthcoming. Several of Qumul's distinguished translators and interpreters were trained in the school known as *Iwirgül Bilim Yurti,* founded by the last Muslim ruler, Shah Mäkhsud Wang in the 1920s. Ishaq Zaqir (1890–1953) Dawutjan Mollam (1895–1968) and Ibrahim Sopi (1896–1970) all attended this school.[34] It was a rare channel for social mobility, e.g. enabling a certain Yaqup Khetip (1890–1962), who hailed from a family of craftsmen, to become a member of the learned elite on the basis of his excellent language skills and calligraphy. Between 1920–1930 he was employed as palace accountant, while continuing the family tradition as a repairer of watches and clocks. In the early decades of socialism he worked as a legal interpreter.[35] But most interpreters and translators had more privileged family backgrounds and worked in close proximity to the Wang court, the centre of power until 1930. The skills of these mediators were still in demand later, following the incorporation of Xinjiang into the People's Republic, but many suffered persecution for their "wrong" class background. Some of those accused of harbouring "anti-revolutionary attitudes" during the 1950s and later during the Cultural Revolution were rehabilitated in the late 1970s. Ibrahim Sopi mentioned above, for example, served as a translator in the administration of the sub-prefecture in the 1930s, later played an active role in the first land reform in the early 1950s, and contributed to the construction of underground irrigation canals and land reclamation. Despite this exemplary record of public service, he was classified as a rich peasant (*bay dikhqan*) and sentenced to three years of forced

31   Ibid., 13-15, 18-19.
32   Ildikó Bellér-Hann, Community Matters in Xinjiang 1880–1949. Towards a Historical Anthropology of the Uyghur, Leiden / Boston 2008, 126-9.
33   HQTÖSH, 17-18.
34   Ibid., 20, 22, 32.
35   Ibid., 19-20.

labour in Nom, Qumul's notorious labour camp.[36] While many subjects treated in this category experienced repeated persecutions, difficulties in publishing, and the trauma of seeing the books they wrote and possessed burned in public, the interpreter Sali Selim (1914–?) had an exceptionally smooth career, probably thanks to his peasant origins. Following a local *madrasa* education, he acquired Chinese and trained approximately fifty interpreters (both minorities and Han) in the course of the 1950s.[37]

In the pre-socialist era, while translators and interpreters mediated between non-Muslim rulers and their Muslim subaltern subjects, the main task of calligraphers was to serve their community by copying the Koran and other books and decorating religious buildings such as mosques, madrasas and saintly shrines. They also composed petitions for ordinary, illiterate people to submit to the Wang, thus playing a key role in ensuring social stability. But the perpetuation of traditional modes of literacy did not exclude social innovation among these literati. The historian and chronicler Älishah Bäg (1887–1953) initiated the recording of births in the old oasis centre and royal residence of Shähärichi in Qumul.[38] More commonly, however, intellectuals are praised for upholding and transmitting traditional cultural practices, as well as for their dogged commitment to serving their people. Ibrahim Khälpä (1850?–1929) exemplified both. Supported by royal patronage, he opened a three-year course for calligraphers in1916, where twenty young people were trained at any one time. Simultaneously he worked as a scribe writing petitions for the illiterate for little or no remuneration, and without the authorization of the Wang. Recognizing his talent, which ordinary people related to the supernatural influence of the Prophet Khizir, the Wang excused his subversive behavior. He was appointed to high office as well as to the position of guardian (*shäykh*) of a saintly shrine, a detail that suggests close associations with Sufism.[39]

Although not professional politicians themselves, many of these literati engaged in political activities. Several sympathized with popular movements and even actively supported the great peasant rebellion of 1931. Ismail Tahir (1922–1949) launched the newspaper *Qumul geziti* in 1946 and served in the regional government, but he was shot by Guomindang soldiers for his communist sympathies just as he was preparing to welcome the People's Liberation Army.[40]

Some biographies attest to passionate dedication to the modernization of education and advancing social change, usually through participation in the activities of local branches of the Association of Uyghur Cultural Enlightenment (*uyghur mädäni aqartish uyushmisi*).[41] By the 1930s these associations were ubiquitous in Xinjiang. They were primarily inspired by Muslim cultural reform in the Russian and the late Ottoman Empire

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36   Ibid., 32-33.
37   Ibid., 35.
38   Ibid., 19.
39   Ibid., 10-12.
40   Ibid., 36-37.
41   Ibid., 21, 36.

and "blended Soviet, Turkic, and Chinese models of cultural progress."[42] They embodied Muslim intellectuals' endeavors to modernize traditional Islamic education and bring about societal changes.[43] The Qumul branch was founded in the 1930s. Involvement with the activities of the Association was important in the biography of Abdulla Ähmidi (1925–1987), an outstanding representative of local historians. He hailed from the family of a religious dignitary. Having completed his madrasa education, he worked as a teacher in different locations of the oasis. In the 1940s he worked for the association for two years, an experience that served him well for his later career following Xinjiang's incorporation into the PRC. During socialism he became an influential cultural cadre and in the early 1960s he was entrusted with compiling a new history of Qumul. This work could not be published due to the Cultural Revolution, during which he suffered personally. Following his rehabilitation, he resumed his historical, archeological, folkloristic and literary studies.[44] His peer and fellow historian Osman Tömür Qumuli (1927–2005) had a comparable career. Osman was born into a farming family. He benefited from education in the Teacher Training College opened by the Qumul branch of the Association. In 1953 he had the opportunity to study museology and archaeology in Xi'an. During the era of collectivization he repeatedly suffered persecution but was rehabilitated in the 1980s.[45]

By far the most famous of Qumul intellectuals included in this section of the dictionary is Abdurehim Ötkür (1923–1995), widely acknowledged to be an outstanding representative of modern Uyghur literature. Having completed his primary education in Qumul and southern Xinjiang, he trained as a teacher and worked both in this capacity and as a journalist, editor and translator. In his poems, epics and dramas he criticized the Japanese aggression as well as the Guomindang. Like many of his contemporaries, he too was subjected to harassment during the Cultural Revolution. During the early reform period he resumed his literary and scholarly activities, the latter focusing on Uyghur literary heritage. His writing is said to display both Soviet and Chinese literary influences, but his best known novels, "Traces" (*Iz,* 1988) and "Awakening Land" (*Oyghanghan zemin*, 1993), were written and published during the years when Uyghur cultural expression was at its apogee and deal with outstanding events of Qumul's early twentieth century history.[46]

Many of these intellectuals were born into families belonging to the traditional political, religious or commercial elites. Some were polymaths, combining a traditional religious education with a good knowledge of Chinese (or in one case Manchu). Some benefited

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42   David Brophy, Uyghur Nation: Reform and Revolution on the Russia-China Frontier, Cambridge, Mass. 2016, 323.

43   Ildikó Bellér-Hann, Die Reform des traditionellen islamischen Bildungssystems in Ost-Türkistan, NW China (Ende 19. und Anfang 20. Jahrhundert), in: Bildungsformen und Bildungsträger zwischen Tradition und Moderne, eds. Stefan Leder and Hanne Schönig, special issue, Orientwissenschaftliche Hefte 22 (2007), 17-36.

44   HQTÖS, 40-42.

45   Ibid., 45-47. Others who contributed to the educational and cultural activities of the Association included Naman Qari Mömin, Ismail Tahir and Abdulla Ähmidi.

46   HQTÖSH, 37-39; Bovingdon, Contested histories, 365-66. Official recognition of his works has faded, probably as a consequence of his unwavering popularity.

from exposure to modernizing currents through education in the "scientific schools" (*pänni mäktäp*) that emerged under the influence of Muslim cultural reform currents emanating from the Islamic West, more specifically from the Russian and Ottoman Empires. Travel to Mecca along the established pilgrimage routes, mixing religious devotion with commercial enterprise, was both a source of inspiration and a conduit for the transmission of new ideas. The related institutions of the new schools and the Association of Uyghur Cultural Enlightenment owed much to such transnational connectivities, even if direct causal links are typically implied rather than clearly articulated in the biographies. While religious and commercial travel to the Middle East contributed to the re-constitution of knowledge among Xinjiang's Muslims, national integration was also furthered through trade with other parts of China, and the training of Chinese language interpreters and translators who mediated between the non-Muslim rulers and the indigenous subalterns. But not all biographies are situated in the context of supraregional connectivities. Some remain exclusively oasis-centred, and all are embedded in oasis history, some through close proximity to the palace and the Wang dynasty, others through association with social movements and local social institutions, be they traditional Islamic, reform Islamic, or socialist.

Educators (*maripchi*)

Chapter Three is devoted to teachers (educators) and contains twenty-four entries. Many of those included hailed from a relatively privileged social background. But training as a teacher could also be a vehicle of social mobility, as demonstrated by those individuals who originated from families of farmers or pastoralists. Ma'azi Qari, the first listed, was active in the early twentieth century. He is credited with introducing the "progressive scientific civilization of neighbouring Central Asian peoples" to his locality, although the entry gives no hint as to where he acquired his broad knowledge.[47] Respected teachers usually combined a traditional religious education in the religious primary school (*mäktäp*) with secular training. The latter was pioneered in Qumul in 1936 by the Association of Uyghur Cultural Enlightenment mentioned above. The biographies invariably refer to its graduates as "progressive-minded intellectuals" (*ilghar pikirlik ziyali*). Ämät Qari Sämiri (1906–1964), for example, was born into a family of religious dignitaries in the community of Lapchuq and attended the religious school founded there by Abdurusul Qari, an immigrant from the Ottoman Empire. Ämät Qari Sämiri later helped found a new state primary school in his native Lapchuq. In the 1940s he was imprisoned for five years by the Chinese warlord Sheng Shicai, after which he seems to have abandoned his educational activities: his later jobs included working as a clerk in a coalmine, then as an accountant, followed by farming.[48] Sawur Akhunum (1907–1939), another native of

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47   Ibid., 95.
48   Ibid.

Lapchuq, was educated in a madrasa in the neighbouring oasis of Turpan and trained a number of religious students (*talip*) in the early part of his career. After completing the six months crash course organized by the Association of Uyghur Cultural Enlightenment in 1936, he too participated in the founding of the first modern school in Lapchuq and became a committed advocate of the "new education". He, too, fell victim to Sheng's policies and died in prison.[49]

Abdulla Tursun (1907–1988) came from a pastoralist family and as a child received informal religious education from a neighbor. In 1933 he joined the rebels of Khoja Niyaz Haji, but the following year found him already enrolled at the Faculty of Civil Law at the Central Asian State University in Tashkent, capital of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic.[50] Later he capitalized on his connections with the Soviet Union. As headmaster of a primary school, between 1942 and 1944 he had school books imported from the Soviet Union. Abdulla continued his career as a teacher until 1958.[51] Born into a farming family in the mountain village of Tarati, Tahir Bosuq (1914–1986) also graduated from the Faculty of Civil Law at the Tashkent State University. For a while he worked as a Russian interpreter and spent half a year in Sheng's prison. Having held a number of teaching positions in various locations in Qumul in the 1950s, he studied for two years at the Northwest People's Revolutionary University in Lanzhou before accepting a position at the Qumul Teachers Training College. Between 1956 and 1983 he held a number of political offices at the level of the prefecture, but his career was severely interrupted by the Cultural Revolution. He is said to have contributed significantly to the spread of modern education in Qumul.[52]

Like Tahir Bosuq, Yunus Iminof (1916–1992) also benefited from repeated enrollments at higher education institutions outside Xinjiang. After five years of religious education, he worked as a farmer for six years. After graduating from the Faculty of Civil Law at Tashkent State University, he started teaching in Qumul. He soon fell victim to Sheng Shicai's notorious purges but survived prison and went on to complete his education in the 1950s at the Beijing Central Nationalities Institute. This led to a high-level administrative job in Qumul Prefecture, but he too suffered persecution during the Cultural Revolution and spent fourteen years as a farmer before being rehabilitated in old age.[53]

From a well-to-do family, Abliz Qadiri (1917–1976) attended a religious school for five years before proceeding to study at the first modern, "scientific" school in Qumul. He obtained higher degrees from Tashkent State University and from the Xinjiang Language Institute in Ürümchi before starting to work as a school teacher in Chöchäk. He was instrumental in setting up the first secondary school for national minorities in Qumul

49   Ibid., 98.
50   Ibid., 96.
51   Ibid., 97.
52   Ibid., 99-100.
53   Ibid., 100-101.

in 1946. He was persecuted twice, first for his opposition to Guomindang policies in the 1940s and later during the Cultural Revolution.[54]

Transregional connectivities also furthered the career of Mähmud Ähädi (1921–1994). Having acquired both religious and scientific qualifications, in the 1940s he gave up a teaching job in the Qumul region in order to trade with China's internal provinces. He settled in Shanghai where he successfully accommodated to the new political situation of the PRC and served in various important state-led business and political organizations involved with the management of the religious affairs of minorities. During the liberal atmosphere of the 1980s he educated a total of 32 religious personnel and performed the Haj in 1989. Whereas in his youth he had contributed to the educational development of his native oasis, in his later years he rendered comparable service in Shanghai, but with an emphasis on Islamic education controlled by the state.[55]

Many individuals benefited from the educational opportunities provided for training minority cadres. Such training often built on attainments of the "scientific" schools of the republican era. Eli Hamut (1929–1975) was born into a family of merchants. He was trained initially at the Qumul Teachers Training College in the 1940s and received a further two years of education at the Beijing Central Nationalities Institute between 1961 and 1963. Following persecution during the Cultural Revolution, he died shortly after his rehabilitation. His contemporary Dawut Tahir (1929–2010) combined basic religious and "scientific" education before the onset of socialism. After working for many years as a teacher and school director, in the early 1960s he enrolled at the Xi'an Physical Education Institute in Shaanxi Province: He went on to become a physical education teacher in Ürümchi, but his career too suffered major setbacks during the Cultural Revolution.[56]

By no means all of the teachers included in the dictionary had experience outside their region. Many moved around between schools on a more local scale, as teachers and head teachers. Yunus Baqi (1921–2009) completed his schooling in the city of Qumul and then taught at primary schools in Astana, Toghuchi, Shähärichi, Lapchuq, Rahätbagh, Baghdash, and Qaradöwä. He spent the last 22 years of his working life as the head teacher of Khotuntam school.[57] Abliz Qurban (?–1993) came from a teaching dynasty of three generations and campaigned relentlessly against illiteracy.[58] Overall, the local educators' biographies again demonstrate the problems of taxonomy faced by the compiler of the dictionary. Some individuals included here could just as easily fit into the sections devoted to merchants, or religious dignitaries, or scholars. Pedagogical careers were built on a combination of traditional religious education and exposure to "scientific" subjects. The biographies of those who profited from transregional mobilities diverge from this generic pattern in that their protagonists had an opportunity to obtain degrees from

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54   Ibid., 104-106.
55   Ibid., 108-109.
56   Ibid., 124-25.
57   Ibid., 111-12.
58   Ibid., 112-13.

modern higher education facilities. As we have seen, in the republican era some benefited from the close ties of the Chinese warlords of Xinjiang to the Soviet Union, which allowed further education at Tashkent's modern Soviet-style university. This qualification became particularly useful during the early socialist decades where the same individuals were sent on to Chinese higher education institutions. Transnational mobility throughout the late republican and early socialist decades was a necessary precondition for obtaining qualifications at institutions of higher education, given the absence of such facilities in Xinjiang at this time. Sending minority cadres to Chinese cities for further education (rather than Soviet universities) reflected the PRC's attempts to integrate Xinjiang more closely into national space. But the lives of individuals with such exceptional transnational educational attainments were also punctuated by persecution (a fate they shared with numerous other intellectuals across China during the political excesses of the collectivized era).

Religious Dignitaries (*dinî zatlar*) and Outstanding Social Personalities (*jäma'ät ärbabliri*)

This chapter comprises the life histories of eighteen persons. Mäktäp Yunus Äläm Akhunum (1868–1940) was the son of a religious dignitary who acquired his religious knowledge initially from his father, whom he accompanied on the pilgrimage to Mecca, and then in the local madrasa. Later he served as *imam* in the mosque of the Wang palace. He lost this prestigious position after criticizing the bloody suppression of the 1907 peasant rebellion. He only escaped physical punishment when a Muslim cleric pronounced that such an act would amount to a sin (*gunah*). Mäktäp Yunus then worked for two years as a scribe, helping ordinary people to write their petitions. After being pardoned by the Wang, he opened a private school where he educated many students. His educational activities were disrupted for the second time in 1931 when he was accused by the Chinese warlord, Jin Shuren, of incitement in support of the rebellion led by Khoja Niyaz Haji.[59] As in other chapters dealing with literati, certain themes and topoi recur: devotion to the people and to education, performing the Haj, proximity to the centre of power in the pre-modern era, and major ruptures caused by political circumstances. The majority of religious dignitaries were born into such families and carried on this legacy. Those attracted to the new, "scientific" education model were often members of the Association of Uyghur Cultural Enlightenment of Qumul Prefecture.[60] Ablimit Haji was its deputy president between 1938–1944.[61] Abduwahit Äläm Akhunum served as its president in the mid-1940s.[62] Hapiz Salman (1903–1995) was president of the organization's branch

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59   Ibid., 128-29.
60   For example, it is noted that Khoshur Qari Akhunum paid his religious tax (*öshrä-zakat*) to the Association. Ibid., 133.
61   Ibid., 140.
62   Ibid., 136.

in Astana (a peripheral settlement of the oasis of Qumul).[63] Members of the younger generation, such as Pars Mäkhsum (1909–1972), son of the famous Mäktäp Yunus Äläm Akhunum, and Osmanshah Haji (1915–1996) attended teacher training courses organized by the Association.[64] Religious knowledge was acquired both in the domestic sphere and in Islamic schools. As elsewhere in Muslim Central Asia, in Xinjiang too mystical currents blended seamlessly into scriptural Orthodoxy and permeated everyday religious practice. This is exemplified by the biography of Ismail Ishan (1870–1958), who received traditional religious education and gained fame by his ability to recite epics (*dastan*) and wise sayings (*hökmät*) by heart. This gained him royal patronage and an appointment to the coveted position of guardian (*shäykh*) of Altunluq, the prestigious cemetery where the royal tombs of the Muslim Wang were located; he was entrusted with leading the Sufi ceremonies (*zikir-söhbät*) regularly held there.[65]

Support for one or more of the three peasant rebellions, which shook Qumul in the first half of the twentieth century (in 1907, 1912 and 1931) is a recurrent theme. Upon his return from the Haj, Abduwahit Äläm Akhunum (1892–1993) was a close associate of the rebel leader Khoja Niyaz Haji, for which he was later punished by the Chinese warlord Sheng Shicai.[66] Following the incorporation of Xinjiang into the People's Republic in 1949, most of these persons supported the democratic reforms and the religious policies of the new government, serving on important political and religious committees. A few fell victim to the purges of the late 1950s and the Cultural Revolution. They were rehabilitated in the 1970s and some (their age and health permitted) were belatedly elevated to even more senior political positions. Naman Qazi Akhunum (1878–1954) completed his religious education at the age of 18. He then went to Mecca, where he stayed for fourteen years. Upon his return to Qumul he was quickly promoted from being a mosque *imam* to the ranks of Islamic legal arbiter (*mufti*) and finally Muslim judge (*qazi*) of the oasis. In 1953 he was sent to Beijing to participate in the activities of the National Islam Association as well as provincial and national level political associations.[67] Naman Qazi's meteoric career and mobility are not unusual. Brief references to the disturbances caused by political events, such as accusations of rightist leanings during the late 1950s and unjust treatment during the Cultural Revolution, are also typical. Among the meritorious deeds of such persons, their contribution to social stability is mentioned repeatedly, usually in combination with their distinctive ways of serving their local community, predicated on their full conformity with the rapidly evolving political conditions.

The contribution of religious personalities to the flow of ideas is manifested in their participation in the Haj, in their acquisition of Arabic and Persian (no matter how rudimentary), and more generally in their transmission of Islamic knowledge. Their madrasa

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63   Ibid., 144.
64   Ibid., 146-47.
65   Ibid., 131.
66   Ibid., 135-38.
67   Ibid., 132.

education equipped some with a measure of familiarity with the classics of Central Asian Islamic literature (especially Chaghatay and Persian poetry). They contributed to their communities primarily through their commitment to both religious and modern, "scientific" education, and their support for popular movements in the republican / warlord period. In the socialist era some used their high rank in the community to ensure that local religious traditions would be respected in practical ways, even under the most dire circumstances. For example, when ten workers died in 1980 due to an explosion during road construction work, Abduwahit Äläm Akhunum was instrumental in securing the recovery and release of their bodies to their families, enabling them to bury their dead quickly in accordance with Islamic traditions. Four years later he rendered a similar service to the families of four miners who died during a tragic accident in the Qumul coal mines.[68]

Craftsmen (*hünärwän-käsiplär*)

The first entry in Chapter 8. is devoted to Mollamät Dihqan whose life must have spanned the last decades of Wang rule over Qumul. Characterized as a resolute person with a vision of the future, with hindsight he is not an unambiguously positive figure. He was instrumental in designing and building a long irrigation canal across several settlements of the oasis of Qumul, with the support of royal patronage. This entailed the use of forced labour and the enlisting of the intercession of religious dignitaries in the form of legal opinions (*patiwä*) in order to gain access to scarce water ahead of a rival engineer. The biography refers to the long-term benefits of large-scale land reclamation, but notes that this was predicated on the ruthless exploitation of local people.[69]

Several entries praise the achievements of those who contributed to the religious architecture of the oasis, either as architects or as carpenters or painters. Special attention is paid to the activities of Abdulbasit Haji (1848–1916) and Abdulhapiz Haji (1854–1931), two brothers born into a craftsman's family. Abdulbasit displayed multiple talents as architect, carpenter, smith and painter and also taught himself calligraphy and folk medicine. His experiences during the pilgrimage to Mecca served as an inspiration for his religious and secular architectural plans, but also for technical innovation, since he brought back new tools and instruments. He manufactured a wide range of agricultural tools, cut mirrors, repaired watches and sewing machines. In cooperation with the famous calligrapher Molla Märup, the brothers copied and bound more than a hundred books, predominantly the Koran and popular religious literature. Abdulbasit was instrumental in opening a new school where children were taught religion, morality but also some scientific subjects.[70] His brother Abdulhapiz's life followed a very similar pattern

guided by diligence and natural dexterity, greatly stimulated by travel experiences in the Islamic West. Abdulbasit trained a new generation of craftsmen within the traditional semi-institutionalized framework of master-apprenticeship relations. One of his best students was Abdulhimit Ustam, who died in southern Xinjiang after being forced to leave Qumul due to his involvement in the 1912 peasant rebellion. Abdurehim Khäzinichi (1876–1928), another apprentice of Abdulbasit, later rose to the rank of Palace treasurer and trained the calligrapher and jack-of-all-trades Hapiz Niyaz (discussed above). Having completed the Haj, Sopa Haji (1878–1962), the son of Abdulbasit, besides engaging in bridge and road construction as well as the building and repair of religious buildings, also participated in the management of pious foundations and water distribution. He contributed to managing the financial affairs of the Association of Uyghur Cultural Enlightenment, as well as to the activities of the first modern, "scientific" school of the oasis.[71] Imin Qari (1900–1994) studied in the new school in Lapchuq (established by Abdurusul Qari) and specialized as a tailor, learning some techniques while working for the Soviet garrison stationed in Qumul in the republican era.[72] During the collectivized period he worked both as a tailor and as an imam. In the first decade of reform socialism (1980–1992) he served the Friday mosque of Qumul and practised circumcision. That the Soviet garrison must have generated work for numerous craftsmen is suggested by the fact that in 1941 the shoemaker Ghojamniyaz invited Qasim Haji, originally from the oasis of Kucha, at the time active in Ürümchi, to come and join his workshop.[73] Some craftsmen were educated in Qumul's Chinese school: this was the case of the goldsmith Niyaz Altunchi (1858–1954) and the prominent engineer Nurullakhun (1900–1985).[74] The goldsmith Imin (1908–1986) seems to have benefited from his Chinese language education the most because in 1950 he moved to Lanzhou, where he started a business trading goods between Shanghai and Qumul.[75]

Prominent craftsmen in Qumul history include architects, engineers and other men with practical skills and talents. They constructed religious buildings but also roads, bridges, and irrigation canals. Some of them also engaged in more scholarly activities, such as calligraphy, while others served their communities as shoemakers, tailors, goldsmiths, clockmakers, successful melon cultivators, cooks, felt-makers, leather workers and barbers. A few were close to the Wang Palace. Only one, the above-mentioned Sopa Haji, worked actively for the Association of Uyghur Cultural Enlightenment and was involved in the modernization of local education. Some were inspired by their travels to the Middle East while performing the Haj, and some were educated in the Chinese school in Qumul, while a few benefited from Soviet presence in the province. Few craftsmen participated in the peasant rebellions and their biographies rarely make reference to political victimization, either during the late 1950s or during the Cultural Revolution.

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71   Ibid., 271-72.
72   Ibid., 281.
73   Ibid., 291.
74   Ibid.
75   Ibid., 289-90.

Overall, this chapter paints a very different picture from that outlined by the polymath historian Hapiz Niyaz in his description of "Qumul civilization," an account built around the activities of Abdulbasit, his brother Abdulhapiz, their children and pupils. Hapiz Niyaz stresses religious knowledge, artistic engagement and the ethical and social responsibility that motivated the most notable craftsmen to set up schools and engage in charitable activities.[76] He demonstrates the successful integration of some members of this technical elite into the young socialist state, which badly needed their expertise. Their contributions to progress and innovation were inspired by travel abroad as well as intimate links at home in Qumul (including fictive kinship and apprenticeship). Hapiz Niyaz saw himself as the culmination of this distinguished genealogical lineage. In contrast, Hämdulla's compilation provides a much broader, richer panorama of craftsmen in Qumul, and places less emphasis on travel as a source of inspiration. He extends this lineage by covering a diverse range of crafts – perhaps to counteract the self-perception one often hears in this oasis even in the twenty-first century, according to which crafts and trade were underdeveloped in comparison to southern Xinjiang, the reason being Wang rule and its repressive monopolies.[77]

Merchants (*sodigärlär*)

Chapter 7 of Hämdulla's biographical dictionary comprises twenty-two entries devoted to merchants, the quintessential agents of transregional and transnational connectivities. Many listed in this category were not natives of Qumul. Qasim Haji Sähärchi (1852–1915) who originally hailed from Atush in southern Xinjiang, arrived in Qumul as a young man with a trading caravan and settled permanently. He had profitable trade relations with Chinese cities such as Lanzhou and Chengdu, but also with Muslims in Central Asia. According to his biography, he exercised fair trade, kept his promises and often displayed generosity. His charitable distributions of food and clothing to the poor and needy as well as to homeless strangers were admired, as were his regular donations toward a communal meal (*näzir*) every Friday to benefit his mosque community. His diligence and hard-work were informed by his firm religious faith, but this was not incompatible with a progressive mindset. He subsidized both traditional religious and modern (Muslim reformist) schools. Like others, Qasim Haji combined long-distance trade with the pilgrimage to Mecca, which underscored his religious authority. A prominent, rich trader of Qumul, he was widely respected for both his personal qualities and communal devotion.[78]

Häsän Bala Haji (1866–1931) also originated from Atush and completed the Haj as a child. He came to Qumul with business, where he married and settled down. He owned

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76   Bellér-Hann, Hapiz Niyaz, 103-4.
77   It is unclear whether Hämdulla had access to Hapiz Niyaz's unpublished manuscript. It is not included in his bibliography.
78   HQTÖSH, 233-34.

arable land and animals in the countryside, shops and houses in urban areas, in addition to a wool factory and a mill He traded in partnership with his sister's children and on occasion even with Shah Mäkhsud, the last Wang of Qumul. His camel caravans carried goods to and from Russia and Russian Central Asia as well as China proper. His biography emphasizes his generosity and affable, kind nature. During the uprisings of 1912 and 1931 he acted as representative of the local government in negotiations with the rebels.[79]

Shüychi Mollakhun (1875–1935) was born in Qumul and received a thorough religious education thanks to his brother's efforts who was a distinguished religious notable. Then he attended the Chinese school, and his familiarity with the Chinese language gave him a huge advantage in his later business ventures. Under Shah Mäkhsud Wang he was in charge of the tax affairs of the Palace, and acted also as Palace interpreter. He accompanied Shah Mäkhsud to Beijing on one of his official visits and relentlessly continued his business ventures, often in partnership with Chinese merchants, trading, among other things, in silk.

Yarmuhämmät Dorgha (1880s–1931) was the son of high-ranking official under Shah Mäkhsud Wang. His Chinese language education prepared him for his office in the Palace, but he also served as tax-collector and landlord in Töwäntur, where he promoted land-reclamation, owned a mill, had several mosques and schools built and donated seed gratis to poor farmers in the spring. His political sympathies with the rebels of Khoja Niyaz Haji cost him his life in 1931.[80] Others who fell victim to Sheng's purges included Ismail Sidiq Haji (1890–1931) and Ismail Haji (1880–1935).[81] Merchants were also persecuted during the collectivized period. Yüsüpjanbay (1898–1972), who mostly traded within Xinjiang (notably Ghulja, Ürümchi, Altay and Turpan), was branded a "landowner" (*pomeshchik*) during the first land reform in the 1950s. Another successful merchant, Niyaz Khuyzhang (1906–1969), was beaten during the Cultural Revolution. Ghopur Haji (1897–1992) and Ibrahim Tokhtiyaz (1906–1991) had their property confiscated.[82]

The biographies give relatively little insight into what was actually traded. Seyitakhun (1880–1956), who descended from a family of traders, imported silk cloth and velvet from Shanghai and Hangzhou, while from the Xinjiang oasis of Kucha he bought fur hats and furcoats. Ibrahim Qutlugh (1880–1957) traded in animal products, especially wool, moving between Qumul, the nearby oasis of Turpan, the provincial capital of Ürümchi and China proper.[83] Dölätbay Qurban (1887–1957), whose family originated in Atush, exported dried fruit and homespun clothes to Lanzhou and Tienjin and imported tea and silk. [84]

79   Ibid., 236.
80   Ibid., 239-41.
81   Ibid., 248, 249.
82   Ibid., 253-57.
83   Ibid., 243-44.
84   Ibid., 246-47.

It would seem that most successful merchants originated from well-to-do trading families, or from families of secular or religious office holders. Trading was not a prime channel for social mobility, although it usually entailed considerable geographical mobility. Five of the traders included originated from families who had come to Qumul from southern Xinjiang (three from Atush, one from Kashgar and one from Khotan). Most, however, were locally born and bred in Qumul.

Knowledge of Chinese among the traders was a huge asset in cultivating transregional exchanges, which extended from the interior provinces of China to Mongolia, Tashkent, Kashmir, the Ottoman Empire / Turkey and the Middle East. Some careers blossomed after the individual had been appointed to high office at the royal court, an engagement that proved to be fully compatible with the pursuit of long distance caravan trade. It is frequently noted that the caravan trade "opened their eyes [to the world]" (*közi echilgan*) and caused them to become "progressive-minded" (*ilghar pikirlik*). In the case of at least five individuals, this open-mindedness led to membership of the Qumul branch of the Association of Uyghur Cultural Enlightenment and to philanthropic deeds. Significantly, there is no mention of money-lending, usury or any other potentially exploitative activity. On the contrary, the merchants are repeatedly praised for their selfless service of their communities. Although the inclusion of merchants is fully in line with the market principles of post-reform China, it is not their profit-making activities but their dedication to their local community and their personal qualities which are emphasized. Pursuit of trade (*tijarät*) and religious devotion (*ibadät*) were predicated upon each other.

Summary and Analysis

All the personages discussed above are deeply embedded in local social relationships. In spite of Hämdulla's classifications, they have a number of general characteristics in common: personal talent, communal commitment and adherence to modernization and progress. Religious devotion is as important in these accounts as materializations of generosity in support of the needy. This suggests values still rooted in customary practice to reproduce societal stability, but at the same time those selected for inclusion in this dictionary were not adverse to social change. All groups were open to reform and featured numerous members of the Association of Uyghur Cultural Enlightenment. While Muslim cultural reform, especially in the field of education, evidently had foreign origins, the schools and Associations that disseminated these reforms are depicted as home-grown, autochthonous achievements. International networks were important for all: people in all categories went on the Haj, traders engaged in long distance business in both directions of the Silk Road, educators studied in Tashkent or (especially interpreters) in the interior Chinese provinces. Almost all the members of these elites had some basic informal or institutionalized religious education and as a result were immersed in what might be termed the civilization of Islamic Central Asia. The representation of craftsmen in a separate text by the polymath Hapiz Niyaz provides a parallel account. Hämdulla opts to

present a broader panorama of local skills, perhaps in an effort to counter locally upheld stereotypes of the underdevelopment of crafts in Qumul. The biographies present the craftsmen as a technical intelligentsia, serving their communities through their innovations but also through contributing to social stability, with little emphasis on individuals' political or institutional embeddedness.

The protagonists' participation in public life is narrated without value judgments or emotions. It is not their actions but their characters that are described using a limited pool of adjectives and recurring phrases. External political events are presented as contingencies over which the protagonists have little or no control. They serve as "historical glue", while the subjects' pragmatic communal agency on the micro-level contributes to narrative coherence.[85] The scholars, teachers and religious dignitaries comprise the local knowledge elite. By virtue of their exceptional education and talents, they gravitated toward high offices, a fact which later rendered them vulnerable to political upheavals. The religious elite is highly praised for its high level of integration into the socialist state. By comparison, craftsmen and especially merchants were further away from the centre of power. Yet these groups were not immune to political changes either, while their commitment to social progress was just as impressive as that of the literati. The dictionary entries leave the impression that craftsmen and merchants provided a broader range of services to their community than the literati, whose contributions were overwhelmingly linked to educational initiatives. The repeated references to the redistribution of resources by rich merchants are striking, since this is a function conventionally associated with the ruling Muslim dynasty. One suspects a deliberate strategy to counteract their profit-making activities in market exchange. All groups are rooted in local tradition and all are open to innovation and new impulses from multiple directions. The agency they display while navigating between tradition and social and political change is celebrated; yet many protagonists also fall victim, if only temporarily, to political circumstances.

The biographies can be read simultaneously as the "materiality of the socio-historical process", in other words lived and experienced history (historicity I.) and as "sociopolitical management" of the former, as its representation that needs ordering, sequencing and narrating (historicity II.).[86] This narrating, "as either an explicit ideology or as tailored by unconscious political dispositions, can distort, mystify, and inevitably 'silence' certain aspects of past events and processes."[87] Since we postulate collective authorship to the biographies under scrutiny, a degree of narrative intervention must be attributed to all those who participated in their construction. The protagonists themselves may have played an important part, either directly when interviewed, or indirectly, when their life story was mediated through their family members, friends, colleagues, thus uniting the

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85   Kenneth Pomeranz, Social History and World History: From Daily Life to Patterns of Change, in: Journal of World History 18 (2007) 1: 69-98, here p. 72.

86   Michel R. Trouillot, Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History, Boston 1995, pp. 29, 106.

87   Edward Swenson and Andrew P. Roddick, Introduction: Rethinking Temporality and Historicity from the Perspective of Andean Archaeology, in: Constructions of Time and History in the Pre-Columbian Andes, eds. Edward Swenson and Andrew P. Roddick, Boulder 2018, 3-43, here p. 12.

conceptually separate figures of the historical actor and the narrator. The author / editor then acts as yet another filter whose primary role was the selection of certain narratives for inclusion and exclusion of others.

As is the case with other local histories produced by the Uyghur in the era of reform socialism, the local relevance of this biographical dictionary is manifested in diverse ways: by the language of publication, by the choice of topic and geographical focus, by the ethnicity of the protagonists and by the cursory manner in which national, regional, local political histories are treated. Historical events are implicitly connected to nested geographical entities. Individual lives are summarized against the backdrop of often dramatic events including rebellions, major social and political upheavals, waves of persecution and repression; these are referred to in a perfunctory way with no explanation provided, assuming that the reader will know what needs to be known about the given period, event or historical figure. References to the notorious events of national history abound, among them the first land reform and the anti-rightist campaign in the 1950s, the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s and early 1970s and the subsequent waves of persecution followed by rehabilitation. The republican period is presented within the framework of provincial history, marked by the frequent reference to the warlord Sheng Shicai, who is repeatedly mentioned as the person responsible for the imprisonment and even the death of numerous protagonists throughout the 1940s. History becomes even more local in connection with the three major peasant uprisings that shook the oasis of Qumul in 1907, 1912 and 1931 respectively, even if the last one led by Khoja Niyaz Haji had important repercussions for the whole province. The frequent references to the Wang, the Turkic speaking Muslim rulers governing the oasis of Qumul from the late seventeenth century to 1930, represent another important point of local significance. The smaller the scale, the more detailed the knowledge expected of the reader.

Scales of place are inextricably intertwined with temporal nodes creating time-space configurations reminiscent of Bakhtin's concept of the "chronotope".[88] However, the references made to events and actors of these histories remain brief and cursory. They are rarely explanatory. They function as props holding together the scaffolding upon which the biographies rest, without which the life stories would remain incomprehensible. The biographies' reliance on a comprehensive background familiarity with oasis and a basic knowledge of national and even transnational history implies that the collectively constructed biographies and their intended oasis-based readership together constitute not only a speech community but a tight- knit knowledge community. This lends the entries an underlying coherence that demonstrates local society's keen awareness of its own history as well as the latter's role in building and further strengthening group identity on both the oasis and the regional levels.[89]

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88   Mikhail Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination, Austin 1981, 84-258.
89   Romila Thapar, The Past Before Us: Historical Traditions of Early North India, Cambridge 2013, 6-7. In view of this it is tempting to characterize the whole book as an elite or intellectual history, but this would amount to an unwarranted imposition of etic classificatory categories. "Ziyali", the Uyghur term for intellectual, is frequently used in connection with certain groups of people but not others.

The matter-of-fact, prosaic representation of the life stories against this "scaffolding" suggests that the stories are intended to be read as true stories, as historicity I. in Trouillot's formulation, as opposed to literary renderings. It has been noted that the genre of biography continues to represent an epistemological challenge partly because it is built on a "metaleptic relationship between fictionality and historicity."[90] It is a branch of fiction that is grounded in history in a particular way.[91] The biographies constitute chronologically ordered curricula vitae that include frequent references to other individuals who figure under separate headings or who are known from other genres of local history. They are embedded in a web of social relations, institutions and specific historical contexts. Nevertheless, several of the personages mentioned straddle the boundaries of conceptual scales. Abdurehim Ötkür, perhaps the most famous modern Uyghur writer, enjoys fame and recognition throughout Xinjiang. Hapiz Niyaz's name is also well-known in intellectual circles throughout the region, while the historian and archeologist Osman Tömür Qumuli's scholarly articles have been published in widely circulating historical journals throughout the reform era. The inclusion of such persons who have achieved fame beyond the oasis level underlines the factual nature of all the narratives included in the volume.

Although the biographies are presented as historical, the frequent shibboleths as moral judgements render them metaleptic.[92] Most display a conspicuous absence of interpretation and causality. Taken together with the lack of psychological characterization typical of literary biographies, these gaps can be construed as manifestations of a minimalist approach to both literary style and interpretation, and further emphasize the factual nature of the entries, the "silences" that allow the reader to make connections based on implicit local knowledge. Using the conceptual tools of the Russian formalists, one could say that the fictional sequence (*fabula*) and spatial-causal-temporal sequence (*sjuzhet*) of the narrative are collapsed precisely through the sparseness of causality and interpretation.[93] But, since both the leaving and the filling of the gaps are prescribed and constrained by parameters set jointly by the state's regime of historicity and tacitly accepted and respected by local historians, this narrative strategy corresponds more closely to Trouillot's concept of historicity II.

In summary, the biographies present local, embedded, situated knowledge, *metis*, which may fall short of scientific standards but offers extensive detail not usually found in scientific investigations.[94] The salience of this *metis* for time-space configurations which feed into local (Qumul) and regional (Xinjiang-wide) Uyghur identities turn them into

90   Edward Saunders, Introduction: Theory of Biography or Biography in Theory?, in: Biography in Theory, Key Texts with Commentaries, ed. Wilhelm W. Hemecker and Edward Saunders, Berlin / Boston 2017, p. 4.
91   Michael Benton, Towards a Poetics of Literary Biography, in: Journal of Aesthetic Education 45 (2011) 3: 67-87.
92   Gérard Genette, Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method, Ithaca [1972] 1980, 234-35.
93   Leona Toker, Eloquent Reticence: Withholding Information in Fictional Narrative, Kentucky 1993, 5.
94   James C. Scott, Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed, New Haven 1998, 309-41.

"ethnobiographies."[95] For all their sparseness, they are sufficiently detailed to reveal ethnically relevant patterns of cultural expectations. Such works enable a deeper insight into Uyghur discursive strategies to construct exemplariness, a topic that cannot be pursued further here.[96] But they also have other uses. Biographies as a genre constitute one of many possible forms that such reflection can assume. They can be used to gauge indigenous perceptions of social taxonomies in a given period, the projected relationship of local people to the traditions they identify with, social change and progress. To the extent that they are rooted in a specific social context, they reflect, along with other genres, the indigenous elite's self-positioning in networks of connectivities of varying scales, both in space and through time.

Returning to Goody

In spite of the inevitable selectivity and silencing that inform any narrative enterprise, the ways in which the biographies I have discussed above are embedded in historical events and social practices enhance their credibility and *legitimate* them. The main recurring topoi drive home the fact that local societies have been influenced by transnational encounters and exchanges. Impulses for change came from the West (not western Europe), primarily in the form of Muslim reformism emanating from the Russian and Ottoman Empires. China provided the political framework throughout the late imperial, republican and socialist periods and continued to remain a significant trading partner. The prestige and tangible advantages attached to knowing Chinese are a clear sign of the province's further integration into the Chinese polity.

While these biographies derive as much from oral transmission as from written sources, similar messages can be found in recent international scholarship based on archival sources. It has been established that Uyghur nationhood had its roots in multiple sources, ranging from local Islamic tradition to transnational pan-Turkic ideologies and foreign Orientalism. While Russian empire building was crucial, Muslim reformist discourse could not have flourished as it did but for the Qing Empire's relative indifference towards religion. The Western historian's narrative that envisages Xinjiang as a multiple imperial periphery is entirely compatible with Hämdulla's depiction of influences emanating from multiple geographical directions through diverse forms of encounters and exchanges. David Brophy and other contributors to the so-called New Qing History consciously distance themselves from the Sino-centric approaches of earlier schol-

95   James Clifford, 2011 [1978]. "Hanging up Looking-Glasses at Odd Corners": Ethnobiographical Prospects, in: Biography in Theory, pp. 186–97, here p. 186.
96   Ildikó Bellér-Hann, Setting an Example: Narrative Strategies and Values in the Shaping of Local History in Xinjiang, in: Aus den tiefen Schichten der Texte, eds. Nader Purnaqcheband and Florian Saalfeld, Wiesbaden (forthcoming).

arship. Kwangmin Kim's recent study has a similar goal.[97] Taking the Qing expansion into Xinjiang in the middle of the eighteenth century as his point of departure, Kim argues that the indigenous elites' collaboration with the Qing in oases such as Qumul has been, by and large, ignored or deliberately overlooked both by contemporary Uyghur elites and by scholarship focusing on Uyghur ethno-nationalism. Even if Turkic speaking Muslim begs are the principal agents in Kim's narrative, their collaboration undermines the dominant contemporary narrative of the "Xinjiang problem," which presents the Uyghurs as victims and the Han, represented by party and government leaders, as perpetrators. Kim, drawing on archival materials, argues that the Muslim headmen of sedentary farming communities supported the Qing in order to pursue their own economic interests, thereby contributing to the capitalist transformation of the political economy of Xinjiang's oases. They did this through developing and commercializing agriculture, controlling human labor, organizing capital, and moving goods. These developments are interpreted as part of the global expansion of commerce, a phenomenon which international scholarship has tended to attribute to the exceptional developmental path taken by Europe. Challenging the narrative of European exceptionalism, Kim argues that Europe and China followed comparable paths of capitalist and imperialist development in their colonies and borderlands respectively, and that in the case of China the oasis economies of Xinjiang played a pivotal role.[98]

In his later writings about East-West connectivities, Jack Goody frequently referred to merchant cultures, emphasizing the importance of trade for the flow of goods, and ideas, and even for the development of cognitive capacities. Goody would probably approve of Kim's critique of European exceptionalism and his assumptions of comparable, parallel capitalist developments in East Asia. At the same time, he might be suspicious of a thesis that reeks of "Xinjiang exceptionalism," because this is at odds with Goody's basic assumption that mercantile capitalism was omnipresent. Though they explore different historical periods, Kim's focus on the economic activities of the local elite and Hämdulla's biographies reinforce each other at the point where both attribute to trade and travel an important role in local development. Both reject (explicitly in the case of Kim and implicitly in the case of Hämdulla) stereotypical projections of Xinjiang as backward vis-à-vis either China or western Europe. This would surely be congenial to Jack Goody.

Conclusion

Using selected materials from a recently published Uyghur biographical dictionary, I have demonstrated that indigenous perspectives on the local can reveal a great deal about connectivities, exchanges and entanglements across time and space, in addition to self-

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97   Kwangmin Kim, Borderland Capitalism, Turkestan Produce, Qing Silver, and the Birth of an Eastern Market, Stanford 2016.
98   See Ildikó Bellér-Hann, Xinjiang Close-up (Review article), in: The Journal of Asian Studies 76 (2017) 44: 1092–1100, here 1092-94.

identifications and accommodation to politically dominant forces. While the materials considered generally provide support for Jack Goody's critique of "the European miracle", they also point to the need to be more attentive than he is to the role of the state. In Qumul there can be little doubt that the Wangs' efforts to control oasis trade exerted a negative influence, while the thesis of Kwangmin Kim is that the commercial enterprise of the Uyghur elite in Eastern Xinjiang was stimulated by the post-conquest Qing political constellation. The dictionary suggests that commerce (and by extension the economy in general) was thoroughly embedded into the political, social and religious contexts. Traders were both rooted in their local communities and acted as agents of progress comparable to categories of the knowledge elite.

Despite omissions and limitations due to political and narrative constraints, the dictionary succeeds in presenting an integrative vision of a localized ethnohistory.[99] The biographies represent a careful balancing act between the typical / exemplary and the individually specific.[100] They are valuable historical sources on account of their embeddedness in local society, but at the same time they challenge western assumptions that define biography in terms of individual subjectivity. My analysis of the Qumul dictionary suggests that locals have been fully aware of their oasis society's multiple linkages both to East and West, although the extent to which they emphasize some connections over others was always a delicate political decision. But their self-perception cannot be grasped with the metaphors I discussed in the introduction, those of Silk Roads and crossroads, implying incessant transregional flows. Nor do they fully correspond to scholarly analyses of multiple imperial peripheries. Rather, Qumul itself is placed at the centre and perceived as being the target and beneficiary (and sometimes the victim) of movements, flows and connectivities. Positive influences such as intellectual innovation, spiritual inspiration, and technological modernization are hailed as contributions to the progress and development of the local community, local efforts are foregrounded and integration into the Chinese polity is readily acknowledged. Negative occurrences such as persecutions are mentioned as facts, without broader contextualization or causal analysis. The biographical entries, in spite of their brevity and the emphasis on facticity, constitute a nuanced self-historicization that connects local lives to national and regional historical events, revealing significant incidence of social and spatial mobilities. An excessive emphasis on movement, on flows and exchange, would run the risk of failing to recognize local societies' integrity, reducing their inhabitants to middlemen, the hyperactive agents of material and cultural transmission. Such a view would not do justice to self-representations. It can be corrected by taking seriously the work of indigenous historians and tradition bearers and integrating their work at the micro-level into national and global narratives.

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99   Pomeranz, Social history, 70.
100   Cf. James Clifford: "In a complex sense, every possible subject for a biography is both typical and extraordinary." Clifford, "Hanging up looking-glasses", 195.

The Once and Future Middle Kingdom: China's Return to Dominance in the Global Economy[1]

Jack A. Goldstone

ABSTRACTS

Im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert führten alle Wege nach China. Die Nachfrage Europas nach chinesischer Seide, Keramik und Tee führte die europäischen Kaufleute in den Orient. Als Europa industrialisiert war, dominierten die Europäer den Welthandel, indem sie eine Reihe von Stützpunkten und Kolonien in Afrika, im Indischen Ozean und in China errichteten. Heute versucht China, diesen „devianten" Trend umzukehren und China wieder zu seiner „normalen" Position als führende Wirtschaftsmacht zu verhelfen. China strebt nach einer Führungsrolle in den Bereichen Wind- und Sonnenenergie, künstlicher Intelligenz, Elektromobilität und Quantencomputer, um die beherrschende Macht unter den Volkswirtschaften des 21. Jahrhunderts zu werden. Außerdem errichtet China eigene Stützpunkte quer durch den Indischen Ozean und nach Südeuropa, um seine Kontrolle über diese Handelsrouten wiederherzustellen. Wenn China Erfolg hat, wird es die letzten zweihundert Jahre der Weltwirtschaftsgeschichte umkehren und seine frühere Rolle als Hauptakteur in der globalen Wirtschaft wiederherstellen.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, all roads led to China. Europe's demand for Chinese silks, ceramics, and tea led European traders to the Orient. Then as Europe industrialized, Europeans came to dominate world trade, building a string of bases and colonies around Africa, across the Indian Ocean, and in China. Today, China is seeking to reverse this "deviant" trend and restore China to its "normal" position as the world's dominant economy. Seeking leader-

ship in wind and solar power, artificial intelligence, electric vehicles, and quantum computing to become the dominant power among twenty-first century economies, China is also building its own set of bases across the Indian Ocean and into southern Europe to reassert its control of these trade routes. If China succeeds, it will reverse the last two hundred years of world economic history and reassert its earlier role as the core actor in the global economy.

Prologue

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, all roads led to China. European powers developed their colonies in the Western Hemisphere mainly to obtain silver and gold, which was then traded to the Orient for high-value imports. These included cotton textiles and pepper from India; silk, ceramics and tea from China; and a variety of other spices and dyes from Southeast Asia. These trade routes passed through the South China Sea, across the Indian Ocean, and into Europe. Europe spent the next two centuries developing "import substitution;" creating its own methods to manufacture cotton, dyes, ceramics, and creating new energy sources and technologies to drive them. This success led Europe to dominate and control world trade, building a string of bases and colonies around Africa, across the Indian Ocean, and in China.[2]

Today, instead of merely accepting a larger role within the Western-developed global trading framework, China is aiming to reverse the last two hundred years of Western economic dominance in Eurasia and restore its once-central role. Investing in key sectors, China hopes to take the lead in key energy, communications, transportation, and computing fields, such as wind and solar power, electric vehicles, artificial intelligence, quantum computing and cryptography. China is also building its own set of ports and bases across the Indian Ocean and into southern Europe to reassert its control of these trade routes. If China succeeds, it will return Eurasian trade to a system where China plays the lead role in exporting high-value manufactures and where major trading routes are anchored in China. Moreover, through its new development and investment banks, and its purchase and construction of ports and rail facilities, China plans to mirror the success of Europe's sixteenth and seventeenth century trading companies in controlling the capital flows and overseas investments and bases that gave rise to Europe's empires in Asia. In the latter half of the twenty-first century, it will be Chinese capital, overseas investments, and ports that shape Europe-China trade.

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2   On the European development of forts and colonies around the Indian Ocean to link Europe to trade with India and China, see the essay by Burkhard Schnepel in this issue. On import substitution, see Giorgio Riello, Cotton: The Fabric that Made the Modern World, Cambridge 2015.

When China was the Middle Kingdom

China's name for itself, *Zhongguo* in Mandarin, originally referred to the region of the capital city, and later to the core cultural region of Han China. It was only under the Manchus, and not commonly until the nineteenth century, that the term was used to denote all the territory ruled by the Chinese emperor.[3] In 1911, when native Han Chinese overthrew the Manchu dynasty and established the Republic of China, *Zhongguo* was adopted as part of the official title of the Republic of China. That usage has been continued under the People's Republic of China since 1949.

The English translation of *Zhongguo* as "Middle Kingdom," drawn from the Portuguese, reflected European traders' view of China as the central entity in Asia in terms of both political power (controlling the core land area of East Asia, with India, Indonesia, Southeast Asia, the Philippines and Japan all being arrayed around China) and economic power, with Chinese merchants controlling much of the trade in East Asia and Southeast Asia. While the Chinese had used the term *Zhongguo* mainly as a geographic reference, by the twentieth century it had become a term of pride, used both to denote the unity of China and the centrality of Chinese culture to East Asia, with Japan, Korea and Vietnam all having drawn linguistic, political, and cultural models from China. Of course, in fact India's influence in Asia was equal to or even greater than that of China, if only thanks to the spread of Buddhism. Nonetheless, for today's Chinese, the notion of China as the "Middle Kingdom" expresses the image of a civilization and nation-state that naturally occupies the leading place in Asia, and arguably should hold the leading place in all of Eurasia.

One could argue that for most of its history, China *was* the central and leading society of the Eurasian continent. Though repeatedly split and conquered by central and north Asian nomadic peoples, Chinese modes of political organization and moral discourse managed to absorb these invasions, as well as Buddhist, Muslim and Christian missionaries, to survive and continuously shape the Chinese state and society.[4] Many of the key inventions that transformed Eurasian economies and trade – the compass, gunpowder, printing, paper, sternpost rudders and compartmented hulls – as well as several of the key products that fueled Eurasian trade, such as silk, tea, opium, porcelain, and cast iron, originated in China.[5]

Perhaps more important, the routes used by all Eurasian traders: Italians, Armenians, Russians, Persians, Indians, Ottomans, Arabs, whether by land or sea, were anchored at one end in China. From Roman times onwards, Europeans looked East for the source of luxury goods and advanced technologies, from gems, exotic spices and dyes, to superior steel, paper, and elegant textiles and porcelains. Later coffee, tea and cotton became bulk

3   Mark Elliott, The Limits of Tartary: Manchuria in Imperial and National Geographies, in: Journal of Asian Studies 59 (2000): 603-646.
4   Dingxin Zhao, The Confucian-Legalist State: A New Theory of Chinese History, New York 2015.
5   John Hobson, The Eastern Origins of Western Civilization, Cambridge 2004.

imports. While some of these products originated in India, or Indonesia, or Arabia, European merchants obtained them by inserting themselves in the long-standing Eurasian trade between China and other Asian societies.[6]

Until the sixteenth century, Asian goods reached Europe mainly through the Middle East. Although some Roman and Italian traders had reached China before then, the merchants of Western Europe mainly plied trade routes with Asia that terminated in the Mediterranean and Black Seas. From those points, whether connecting with China by land across Central Asia or through the Red Sea, Persian Gulf, Indian Ocean and South China Sea, trade was managed by Armenian, Arab, Persian, Central Asian, Indian, and Chinese merchants. The varied land and sea routes were collectively labeled the "Silk Roads" after the most notable luxury product that flowed from China to the rest of Eurasia.[7] When in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, European merchants sought to become direct carriers of goods from China and India to Europe, they pioneered new routes around the Cape of Good Hope to enter the Indian Ocean. Once there, in order to acquire valuable cargoes to take to Europe, they had to become active participants in the Indian Ocean and South China Sea trade that brought goods from China to Japan, Southeast Asia, and India.[8]

To secure their entry into Asian trade, and provide bases for their merchants and depots for their goods, European powers invested in establishing a series of forts and ports across the Asian littoral, ringing the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea. The Portuguese were first, with outposts in Mozambique, Mombasa and Hormuz in Africa and the Persian Gulf, and at Goa, Ceylon, Malacca, and Macau. The Dutch then established bases in South Africa, Ceylon, Dhaka, Malacca, Indonesia and Taiwan, while the British, French, and Spanish set up outposts in India, Indochina, and the Philippines. By 1800, virtually all sea routes from Nagasaki in Japan to Canton in China, throughout Indonesia and along the Indian Ocean on both sides of the Indian Peninsula, Ceylon, and the East African coast had European settlements.

Yet up until the early 1800s, the Europeans maintained a marginal role in relation to China. Despite having conquered most of India and all of Indonesia and Taiwan, Europeans had only limited access and no control in China. As late as the French Revolution, Europeans viewed China as the richest society in Asia, and one whose political system (a bureaucracy chosen by merit on examinations) and technology (which produced textiles and porcelains of unrivalled quality) were worthy of emulation.[9]

6   Janet L. Abu-Lughod, Before European Hegemony: The World System, 125–1350 A.D., New York 1989.

7   Christopher Beckwith, Empires of the Silk Road: A History of Central Eurasia from the Bronze Age to the Present, Princeton, NJ 2011; Peter Frankopan, The Silk Roads: A New History of the World, London 2016; essays by Kumar and by Schnepel in this issue.

8   Jack A. Goldstone, Why Europe?, New York 2008; Emily Erikson, Between Monopoly and Free Trade: The English East India Company, 1600– 1757, Princeton 2014.

9   D.E. Mungello, The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500–1800, 4th ed., Lanham, MD 2013; Maxine Berg, Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain, Oxford 2005.

The Century of National Humiliation

From the early 1800s onwards, China's position was continually degraded. From the Opium Wars of the 1840s to the European intervention in the Taiping Rebellion in the 1850s – which may have saved Qing rule but at the cost of a greatly weakened central power – up through the Boxer Rebellion and its aftermath, during which Western powers occupied Beijing, the Chinese state found itself increasingly beaten down and ever more indebted to Western governments. Western governments took more control of their trading enclaves, especially in Guangzhou and Shanghai, and imposed harsh conditions on China's imperial regime. Even more agonizing, not only Western powers but also Japan dethroned China from its central place in Asia. Between the 1890s and the 1930s, Japan defeated China in a series of wars, seizing control of Taiwan, then Manchuria, then most of northern and coast China. Even after being expelled from China by a coalition of Communist and Nationalist forces, Japan's economic recovery after World War II dwarfed that of China, so that by 1980 Japan was the world's second largest economy, with a GDP five times the size of China.[10]

Not only was China militarily defeated and occupied on multiple fronts, its centuries-long leadership in manufacturing technology was also eroded and overturned. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Europe developed its own technology for cast iron, porcelain, and cotton production. It also developed new technologies, from steam power to iron-clad ships, railroads, and chemical dyes that leap-frogged anything China could produce. The changes ruined many of China's traditional exports, while pushing living standards in Europe up to levels that far surpassed China's.

In 1911, the Chinese overthrew their imperial government, and began a long effort to emulate and learn from the West. These efforts included republican forms of government and a turning away from Confucianism to adopt Western science and ideas ranging from modern physics and chemistry to democracy and Marxism. By the late 1920s, China's new Nationalist government seemed on its way to building a modern, Western-style nation-state using Western military technology and tactics and promoting Western education, technology, and capitalist economic organization. Yet the Japanese invasion and occupation of China in the 1930s and 1940s undermined the Nationalist regime and gave China's struggling Communist Party an opportunity to mobilize in China's interior. In 1949, after defeating the Nationalists, China's Communist Party came to power and broke off all relations with Western powers, excepting only its fellow communist power in Asia, the USSR. Yet even that relationship was short lived, as in 1962 China broke with the Soviet Union, and resolved to make its way forward in isolation.

There followed twenty years of disastrous economic and political policies under Mao Zedong, with frantic zigzags in policy that included the Great Leap Forward of 1958–62, which resulted in mass famine in rural areas, and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of 1966–76, which created political chaos and destroyed an entire generation of

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educated professionals. By 1978, when Deng Xiaoping came to power, China had sunk far from its heyday as the "Central Kingdom" of Eurasia. Its GDP was about the same as that of India, and less than 10% of that Japan.[11]

In an ultimate humiliation, which the anthropologist Jack Goody has labelled the "Theft of History," China found its millennia-long rich artistic, technological, and political history belittled by the West. From the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, in a view adopted even by many Chinese scholars, China's Imperial history was portrayed as a long period of feudal stagnation, and its Confucian culture treated as an obstacle to progress that had condemned China to lag behind the modern West.[12]

China Rejoins the World

Under Deng, China began a remarkable recovery. Deng ended Mao's stifling policies of isolation, collectivization, and ideological rigidity. Although China's economy was ravaged, it had three huge advantages that could be converted to opportunities. First, the communist regime had provided a basic education for the entire population, while limiting urban migration. This meant that China had the largest pool of literate but under-utilized rural labor in the world. Second, China had numerous middle to high-income industrialized neighbors – Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan – with surplus capital to invest, who needed low-cost labor to expand their manufacturing output while keeping prices in check. Third, consumer markets in the United States and Europe were emerging from a recession and about to embark on the longest sustained economic expansion in their history, creating a near insatiable market for low-cost manufactured goods.

Deng saw the potential of these factors to generate Chinese economic growth. He began by decollectivizing agriculture, setting farmers free to use their land as they saw fit to produce crops they could market. The most fertile areas increased their production of wheat, rice and soybeans, while areas close to cities could focus on higher-value fruits and vegetables. He then set up special economic zones to encourage foreign investment and allowed private factories to be set up; these early successes were followed by the expansion of such zones and eventually the opening up of the entire country for foreign investment. Producers in Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea and Japan moved their low-wage manufacturing work to mainland China, while keeping their higher-wage design, marketing, finance, and service jobs at home. As China's rural workers moved to urban factories, their output multiplied. Major cities like Shanghai, Chongqing, Beijing, Guangzhou and Tianjin became mega-cities, while a hundred others grew to a million or more.

At the same time, provincial townships were encouraged to promote businesses to serve local customers. From restaurants and service shops to construction of bicycles and elec-

11   Ibid.
12   Jack Goody, The Theft of History, Cambridge 2012.

tric fans, small entrepreneurial businesses requiring little capital sprang up all across the country.[13] Such businesses eventually expanded to include higher value electric appliances, furniture, and large-scale construction. In collaboration with Hong Kong, Taiwanese and overseas partners, China built new urban centers, shopping malls, cinemas, and golf courses all over China.

Meanwhile, in order to ensure the swift passage of goods to foreign markets, China's government made massive investments in roads, railways, and ports. Chinese-speaking partners from Taiwan and Hong Kong were especially valuable sources of financing and expertise for private investments: Hong Kong's stock market and enviable "rule of law" environment facilitated contracting, project finance, and investments in Chinese companies, while Taiwanese and Hong Kong businessmen provided manufacturing know-how. Investment from European, Japanese, Korean and American companies followed, allowing a rapid expansion of China's productive capacity.

In 2001, China joined the World Trade Organization, the international treaty organization that regulated global trade. WTO membership demonstrated China's desire to be formally recognized as a player in the global economy. By 2015, virtually all Chinese had been freed from poverty, and most Chinese, especially the 60% who lived in cities, had achieved what was, by global standards, a middle level of income.[14] After three and a half decades of rapid economic growth, built on putting China's one billion workers to productive work, China had surpassed Japan in economic output, rising to become the world's second largest economy.

Nonetheless, throughout the period of its re-integration into Eurasian and global trade from 1980 to 2015, China presented itself as a developing country, eager to learn from others and aiming to engage in a "peaceful rise" in a "harmonious world." Under President Hu Jintao, China's leader from 2002 to 2012, this was China's official policy for its engagement with the wider world.[15] Aside from a few border disputes with India, Vietnam, and Japan, China presented itself as a country that did not have ambitions to expand its influence or territory beyond its borders, and which did not seek to compete with either the U.S. or the U.S.S.R. in contests for global power or ideological competition. Especially after the end of the Cold War in 1991, China assiduously avoided conflict with the "sole superpower" and focused on growing its economy and trade links, while letting the U.S. pursue its policies in Afghanistan, the Middle East and elsewhere. Despite their rapid growth in this period, most of China's companies kept a low profile. Many still depended on foreign companies for capital, technology, and marketing of their products, usually assembling or finishing products for sale by non-Chinese firms. They also increasingly depended on imports of raw materials, including iron ore and

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13   Victor Nee and Sonja Opper, Capitalism from Below, Cambridge, MA 2012.
14   World Bank, China: Systematic Country Diagnostic. Report No. 113092-CN. Washington, DC: World Bank Group, p. 45.
15   Zheng Bijian, China's 'Peaceful Rise' to Great Power Status, in: Foreign Affairs 84 (2005): 18-24; Richard Poole, China's 'Harmonious World' in the Era of the Rising East, in: Inquiries: Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities 6 (2014): 1-4.

other metals, oil and gas, and animal feed from other countries as essential supports for China's continued growth.

By 2012, China had re-established itself as the "Central Kingdom" in at least one sense: that year China bypassed the United States to become *the* largest international trading economy in the world, with total imports plus exports reaching $3.87 trillion US dollars.[16]

China's New Goal: A Return to Being the "Central Nation" of Eurasia

Since 2013, under its new President Xi Jinping, China has started to shed the mantle of a mere developing country and instead assert the prerogatives of what it had become: a major global power. Militarily, economically, and geographically, China has embarked on a program to fully reverse the "century of national humiliation" and to restore its historically leading role in Eurasia.[17] This program has six distinct components: (1) regain control of investment in Asia; (2) reassert national unity and sovereignty; (3) re-establish "silk routes" of Eurasian trade under China's geopolitical control; (4) dominate production of advanced technologies; (5) promote Chinese culture and politics as a source of national pride and unity and as an alternative model to Western models for emulation; and (6) establish a world-class military power.

(1) Regaining control of Asian investment. For decades after World War II, the international system has had several multi-lateral investment vehicles designed to promote growth in developing countries, and to assist such countries in fiscal crises and in developing sound fiscal plans. These institutions – the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund IMF), and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) – operate by rules developed mainly by Western powers, and by convention, are led by an American, a European, and a Japanese, respectively. Though China participated in all of these institutions, it was excluded from a leading role, and even as a participant its role did not reflect its new importance as the world's second largest economy. For example, in the IMF, where countries are assigned voting shares in Fund decisions, the United States has by far the leading voting share of 16.52%; Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom together have a combined voting share of 16.4%, but China has a voting share of only 6.09%, disproportionate to its role as the world's second largest economy and largest trading country.[18]

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16   Statista, 2018. https://www.statista.com/topics/1471/imports-to-china/.

17   For how the "century of humiliation" has driven China's foreign policy, see Zheng Wang, Never Forget National Humiliation: Historical Memory in Chinese Politics and Foreign Relations, New York 2010. Xi Jinping's plan for China's "National Rejuvenation" was laid out in his 2017 Political Report to the 19th Party Congress; see Rush Doshi, Xi Jinping just made it clear where Chinas foreign policy is headed, in: Washington Post, October 25, 2017; Minxin Pei, A Play for Global Leadership, in: Journal of Democracy 29 (2018): 37-51; and Oriana Skylar Mastro, The Stealth Superpower: How China Hid Its Global Ambitions, in: Foreign Affairs 98 (2019): 31-39.

18   International Monetary Fund (IMF). "IMF Members' Quotas and Voting Power, and IMF Board of Governors," 2018, http://www.imf.org/external/np/sec/memdir/members.aspx.

To gain more leverage in international lending, China therefore has initiated several new multi-lateral institutions in which it has a leading role. In 2014 China led the group of BRICS nations – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – in creating the New Development Bank (NDB), for the purpose of funding development in emerging markets. The following year, China initiated the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to fund infrastructure projects across Eurasia. China induced more than 50 other nations to sign on as founding members of the AIIB, including France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom. The US chose not to join, leaving China as the economic leader of the AIIB. China also has created two unilateral lending programs: China's South-South Cooperation Fund, and the China Silk Road Fund, both aimed at channeling capital into developing economies.

The four new Chinese-led lending organizations will have capital reserves of several hundred billion US dollars, on a par with the World Bank and ADB. Their arrival means that "The U.S.-dominated World Bank and the Asian Development Bank – in which the United States is the first and second largest shareholder, respectively – will no longer be the biggest lending game in town, particularly in the broader Asia-Pacific region. From a Chinese perspective, challenging U.S. dominance is exactly the point."[19]

No doubt the infrastructure and borrowing needs of emerging Asian economies are massive, and loans from the new, Chinese-led lending institutions will be a useful complement to the funds available through older financial institutions. Yet China's new engagement in international lending is not unfettered generosity for emerging nations. Chinese lending comes with geopolitical and economic strings.

China is funding many projects that may turn out to be uneconomic, which have been turned down by other private and multi-lateral lenders. It does this for various reasons: to employ its own workers (many Chinese overseas investments require Chinese firms and workers to carry out the bulk of the work); to acquire access to valued resources; and to subject foreign nations to a degree of debt-dependency on China, which gives China diplomatic influence over those countries.

For example, in Ecuador, where China is financing a range of projects, including a hydropower dam, bridges, and an oil refinery, "China has a lock on close to 90 percent of Ecuador's oil exports, which mostly goes to paying off its loans."[20] When the Sri Lankan government turned over to China control of its strategically located Hambantota port – one of the best deep-water ports in the Indian Ocean – it did so because it had become a victim of what the *Economic Times* labeled China's "debt-trap diplomacy." Having accepted massive Chinese loans to construct the port, to build the Mattala Airport (now known as the "world's emptiest international airport"), and to create a "Port City

19   Molly Elgin-Cossart and Melanie Hart, China's New Financing Institutions, Center for American Progress website, 2015, https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/reports/2015/09/22/121668/chinas-new-international-financing-institutions/.

20   Clifford Kraus and Keith Bradsher, China's Global Ambitions: Cash and Strings Attached, in: The New York Times, 2015, https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/26/business/international/chinas-global-ambitions-with-loans-and-strings-attached.html.

Colombo" on reclaimed land in Sri Lanka's capital, Sri Lanka found itself unable to pay the interest it owed to China. Sri Lanka thus gave China a 99-year lease on the port (not accidentally, the same arrangement China was once forced to concede to Britain in the case of Hong Kong) in exchange for a US $1.1 billion reduction of its debts.[21]

Thanks to its accumulated reserves, China can afford to take the long view. It often targets strategically important sites (like the Hambantota port in Sri Lanka, or the Gwadar port in Pakistan) where short-term returns are unlikely to be large. China then offers huge loans to poor countries desperate for development funds with little transparency and at market interest rates, leaving those countries at high risk of default. The Center for Global Development has identified at least eight countries "that are at particular risk of debt distress based on an identified pipeline of projects lending" from China – Pakistan, the Maldives, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Mongolia, Montenegro, Laos, and Djibouti – as well as sixteen additional countries that are at "significant risk."[22]

Formally communist China thus has come to recognize that control of international capital flows remains a key to international influence, and is seeking to become the major player in those flows in Eurasia. Indeed, it has already begun using its capital reserves and lending capacity to extend its influence and displace the influence of Western powers in key countries in the region.

(2) Reasserting national unity and sovereignty. While Westerners tend to think of China as a society that has been united for millennia, ruled by a distinctive Confucian culture, in fact it was often invaded and dominated by foreigners and divided by conflicts. China's cultural and political foundations were established during the "Warring States Period," when opposing states fought over control of the Yellow River basin. The Qin and Han dynasties created political unity in the core Chinese territories of the Yellow, Yangzi and Pearl river basins (excepting modern Fujian); but when the Han collapsed in 220 AD, China was divided for almost four hundred years during the Six Dynasties period from 220 to 589 AD. The Sui and Tang dynasties reunited China and extended Chinese influence deep into Central and East Asia. But the Tang was also the period of the greatest influence of the foreign Buddhist religion, with imperial support for shrines and temples that spread across the country.

After the Tang collapsed in 907 AD, China fell into another long period of division, followed by frequent foreign domination. From 907 to 960, China was ruled by the "Five Dynasties." Then from 960 to 1127, the Northern Song controlled most of the core areas of China, but the Liao dynasty controlled the far North (including the Beijing area) while the western regions (including modern day Sichuan, Yunnan, Qinghai and Gansu) were controlled by various Central Asian powers. In 1127, the Jurchen drove the Song

21   Economic Times, BRI Initiative hits roadblock in 7 countries: Report, 2018, https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/chinas-bri-initiative-hits-roadblock-in-7-countries-report-article-show/63771550.cms; Brahma Chellaney, Sri Lanka the Latest Victim of China's Debt-Trip Diplomacy, in: Asian Times, 2017, http://www.atimes.com/article/sri-lanka-latest-victim-chinas-debt-trap-diplomacy/.

22   John Hurley, Scott Morris, and Gailyn Portelance, Examining the Debt Implications of the Belt and Road Initiative from a Policy Perspective, CGD Policy Paper 121, Washington, DC 2018.

out of north China and established their non-Chinese Jin dynasty in the north, while the Song re-established their rule in Southern China. Then from 1279 to 1368 China was ruled by the invading Mongols, who established the Yuan dynasty, and again from 1644 to 1918 by the invading Manchus, who established the Qing dynasty. Only in the intervening Ming dynasty, for the first time since the fall of the Han in 220 AD, were all the core areas of China united under a native, predominantly Confucian, rulership. In 1911, the Chinese threw off Manchu rule, but this freedom from foreign control lasted barely two decades before the Japanese (who had already taken control of Taiwan and Korea in the first Sino-Japanese War in 1895) invaded Manchuria, setting up a puppet regime there, followed by an invasion and occupation of much of northeast China from 1937 to 1945. China was then divided into spheres of control under the Nationalists and Communists, until the Communist victory in 1949 gave the new regime control over almost all of China, leaving the Nationalists only in control of the island of Taiwan. Despite the myth of China's imperial unity, in reality China has only been united under the rule of an orthodox Confucian and ethnic Han government for a minority of its history. Given its long history of foreign incursions and divisions, Chinese unity and sovereignty is a major issue for China's leadership, and has become especially important for the current Communist Party regime, as nationalism has succeeded devotion to communism as its most powerful legitimating factor.

As part of its assertion of greater international status, maintaining China's internal unity and sovereignty has thus become increasingly significant, and an issue of great sensitivity for China's leaders. This is evident in China's attitudes toward Tibet, Xinjiang, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. In recent years, efforts to "colonize" Tibet and Xinjiang with Han Chinese migrants and officials, and to undermine efforts at independence for these regions, have intensified.[23]

China has also grown extremely assertive to counter any foreign support for greater autonomy for these regions. China has been aggressively punitive toward any government or organization showing support for Tibet's exiled Dalai Lama.[24] In regard to Hong Kong, China has celebrated the return of the former British possession to full Chinese sovereignty, and has increasingly intervened in the region's courts and government in order to ensure political alignment with mainland Chinese policies. Not content with disqualifying several anti-Beijing legislators, the Communist Party's official paper has claimed that "Those who advocate 'Hong Kong independence' must be severely punished through law-based, powerful and effective means."[25]

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23   Liselotte Odgaard and Thomas Galasz Nielsen, China's Counterinsurgency Strategy in Tibet and Xinjiang, in: Journal of Contemporary China 23 (2014): 535-555.

24   China steps up warning to Botswana over Dalai Lama visit, Reuters World News, 2017, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-botswana-dalailama/china-steps-up-warning-to-botswana-over-dalai-lama-visit-idUSK-BN1AB14Y; Rohan Grover, China Cuts Funding for Visiting Scholars after Dalai Lama Visit, in: The Triton, 2017, http://triton.news/2017/09/china-cuts-funding-visiting-scholars-dalai-lama-visit/.

25   Chinadailyasia.com, People's Daily urges punishment for separatist professor, China Daily, 2018, https://www.chinadailyhk.com/articles/196/47/161/1523286474823.html.

China has also become more aggressive in enforcing observation of the one-China policy vis-à-vis Taiwan. Although business ties continue, China has stepped up its pressure on Taiwan's few remaining international partners to follow the "general and irresistible trend" of cutting ties to Taiwan. Taiwan has complained that "during the past two years, mainland China has continued to maliciously manipulate its 'one China' policy in the international community and squeeze Taiwan's international space."[26]

Xi Jinping has also cracked down on foreign ideas and culture within China, and on any criticism of the Communist Party. In Xinjiang, authorities have banned the use of several Islamic names for newborn children. Throughout China, Christian Churches have been demolished by government order. Chinese schools and universities have been told to remove materials that disseminate Western values, by which is meant mainly constraints on government power, democracy, political competition, and personal and religious freedom. Xi's goal is clearly to achieve a united China, animated by distinctively Chinese culture and practices, and under the total control of a Han Chinese regime – something that has been absent in China since the Ming dynasty.

(3) Establishing new "silk routes" of Eurasian trade under China's geopolitical control. As noted by Krishan Kumar in this issue, Western power has stretched into Asia since the time of Alexander. Both Roman and Asian leaders have dreamed of dominating the entirety of Eurasia. With much fanfare, China has unveiled plans to support development of new land and sea routes to connect Chinese factories with European markets, the "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI). Projecting investments of up to one trillion dollars to create a series of ports, rail links, and commercial facilities stretching all across Eurasia and Eastern Africa, China has promoted these projects as ways to assist developing countries to advance their economies. Yet behind the BRI is a drive to ensure that China controls its vital supply and trading routes, and is immune to pressure from Western powers that could harm its own economy.

These objectives are clearest in the "Maritime Silk Road" projects. China's economy at present is highly dependent on an easily interrupted set of supply lines and trade routes. Seven of the world's ten busiest container ports, and eight of the world's thirteen busiest cargo ports, are in China.[27] Whether it is obtaining vital raw materials from Australia, Africa, and the Middle East, or exporting products to Europe, Africa, the Americas, and South Asia, the bulk of China's maritime trade (over 60%) flows through the South China Sea and Indian Ocean (with a potential choke point at the Malacca Strait). Further links to Europe, if not passing around Africa, go through the Horn of Africa and the Suez Canal, while links to the Middle East go through the Persian Gulf.

China's first objective has thus been to secure its control of the South China Sea. This has involved aggressive claims to control the entire region, particularly to atolls and islands

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26   China urges Taiwan's few allies to follow 'irresistible trend' of recognizing Beijing, Reuters World News, 2018, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-parliament-taiwan/china-urges-taiwans-few-allies-to-follow-irresistible-trend-of-recognizing-beijing-idUSKCN1GK0KR.

27   China Power Team, How much trade transits the South China Sea?, in: China Power, 2017, https://chinapower.csis.org/much-trade-transits-south-china-sea/.

on which China has constructed advanced military facilities. The second portion of the plan is to secure an alternative path to the Indian Ocean to avoid reliance on the Malacca Strait. This involves building a railway through Laos from southern China to new deep-water port facilities at Koh Kong in Cambodia, and a canal though the nearby Thai Isthmus (the Kra canal) that would connect directly to the Indian Ocean. All of these projects are under construction or planning to be built with Chinese funds. This would give China a privileged path to the Indian Ocean through facilities that it controls.

A third element is to build major facilities that ring the Indian Ocean. As noted above, China has already completed and taken possession of the new deep-water port facility at Hambantota in Sri Lanka that stands athwart the Indian Ocean. In addition, on the Ocean's western shores, China has deepened its influence in the Maldives, is building facilities at the Kenyan port of Mombasa, and is making huge infrastructure investments in Ethiopia and Yemen. Even the traditional Indian Ocean hub society of Mauritius, described in this issue by Schnepel, has become a target of Chinese trade diplomacy, with China already becoming its number one source of imports.[28]

The fourth objective includes bases at the mouth of the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. The latter would be established by constructing a major port at the Pakistani fishing village of Gwadar, adjacent to Iran. The former is already present in Djibouti, where China has built its first military base and a commercial port.

Finally, the fifth component of the BRI is the "Europe" in Eurasia. In 2017, Xi Jinping travelled to Serbia to announce that China will fund and build a transport corridor for Chinese goods to flow to West European markets from the Mediterranean port of Piraeus in Greece (which China purchased in 2016), through the Balkans via Albania, Montenegro and Serbia and on to Germany.[29] Chinese owned port operators have also purchased terminals in Zeebrugge, Belgium's second largest port, Noatum in Spain, and Liguria in Italy. At some point in the future, China will be able to conduct its trade with Europe entirely through Chinese owned ships, ports, and transport facilities all the way from China to Europe.

Once all these projects are completed, China will control a series of corridors that will connect China's Pacific coast to Chinese-owned ports and bases all the way to the heart of Western Europe. It will be almost a mirror of the ports and bases that the European powers established across the Indian Ocean, in Southeast Asia and in the South China Sea during Europe's age of imperialist expansion.

In sum, China is completing a virtual time-travel journey in reverse. Prior to 1500, Chinese merchants, in partnership with Indian and Aran merchants, controlled the

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28   In making its investments in East Africa, President Xi Jinping explicitly harks back to China's Ming-era voyages of discovery, when Chinese trade routes linked Eurasia, and Admiral Zheng He, "sailing treasure-loaded ships … built a bridge for peace and East-West cooperation." See "Full test of President Xi's speech at opening of Belt and Road Forum," Xinhua, 2018, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-05/14/c_136282982.htm.

29   On the importance of Serbia in China's BRI, see Zoltán Vörös, Who Benefits from the Chinese-Built Hungary-Serbia Railway?, in: The Diplomat, 2018, https://thediplomat.com/2018/01/who-benefits-from-the-chinese-built-hungary-serbia-railway/.

trade across Eurasia, with their Indian Ocean trade routes mainly carrying expensive manufactures from Asia to Europe. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, European merchants started building a series of ports and bases across the Indian Ocean to control and profit from that trade. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Western Powers started dictating terms to Asian nations and dominating trade by producing more advanced and high-tech products than Asia. By the late nineteenth century, China's once world-leading economy and sunk into backwardness and insignificance. Yet in the late twentieth and early twentieth-first century, China's economy has been rebuilt into the world's largest trading entity.

(4) Dominating production of advanced technologies. China is well aware that it cannot achieve its goal of growing as rich as Western countries by continuing to be a low-wage producer of mass market commodities. It has thus embarked on an ambitious project to attract and retain intellectual and entrepreneurial talent, and to encourage next frontier technologies.

In 2008, China launched a program, since expanded, to attract top scholars from abroad. The "Thousand Talents Plan" offers bonuses to young and mid-career scientists, research money, and university appointments to scholars willing to move to Chinese institutions to conduct their research.

In addition, the Ministry of Industry and Information has announced sweeping schemes to foster the development of artificial intelligence, robotics, quantum computing, and advanced energy technologies. All this might seem like "pie in the sky" aspirations, but much is already being realized. China consumer drones, manufactured by DJI, outperform their Western counterparts. China leads the world in the production of solar panels, and is already the world's largest producer of electric vehicles.[30] China is ahead of any Western country in autopayments, operates the world's largest radio-telescope (FAST) and the world's fastest supercomputer, the Sunway TaihuLight.[31]

It remains to be seen if China can overtake the U.S. and Europe in producing a broad array of the next generation consumer goods, given Chinese President Xi Jinping's increasing insistence on loyalty to the Party, and new, stricter controls on accessing external information, both of which may discourage creative leaders from staying in, or moving to, China. Yet the comprehensive plan for advanced manufacturing, known as "Made in China 2025," put together with input from 150 professionals in China's Academy of Engineering, is a thoughtful strategic plan.[32] China's advantages of scale in its internal market, its, its large investments in higher education and university research, and its determined and generous government are reminiscent of America's situation during the

30 Bloomberg News, China's Drive to become the Detroit of Electric Cars, Bloomberg Technology, 2018, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-02-27/china-s-drive-to-become-the-detroit-of-electric-cars-quick-take.

31 David Dodwell, Be Afraid: China is on the path to global technology dominance, in: South China Morning Post, 2017, http://www.scmp.com/business/global-economy/article/2081771/be-afraid-china-path-global-technology-dominance.

32 Scott Kennedy, Made in China 2025, in: CSIS Critical Questions online, 2015, https://www.csis.org/analysis/made-china-2025.

Space Race and Germany's recent drive to computer-aided manufacturing. If China can develop manufacturers that can command both domestic and global market share, and use its Belt and Road network to oversee the movement of its advanced products to markets in Europe, it will have retraced its journey from global economic leader to marginal economy and then back to global leadership.

(5) Promoting Chinese culture and politics as a source of national pride and unity, and as a model for emulation. Western analysts commonly presumed that as China grew richer, more engaged in global trade, and participated more deeply in multilateral institutions, its society would change. Much as Britain during its period of economic leadership in the nineteenth century, America during its period of leadership in the twentieth century, and Germany and Japan as they became major global economies in the late twentieth century, it was assumed that China would become more open, more liberal and democratic, and supportive of the Western-designed liberal global order.[33] Yet this has not been the case. Rather, China has reached into its own culture and history to develop an alternative economic/political framework that it is offering as an alternative to Western norms. In the nineteenth century, China sought to learn from the West, but mainly in the areas of military and civil engineering.[34] It was only after its failures in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–95), against a Japanese state that had more whole-heartedly absorbed Western economic, educational, and political models after the Meiji Restoration of 1868, and in the Boxer Rebellion (1899–1901) against a coalition of Western Powers, that Chinese intellectuals began to doubt the merits of their millennia-long traditions of Confucian knowledge and social organization. By the early twentieth century, Chinese military, political, and intellectual elites were looking to Japan, Europe, and the United States for inspiration as to how to create a modern national state. When the Communist Party triumphed under Mao, he denounced all traditional Confucian beliefs as "superstitions" and sought to build his People's Republic of China under the ideological banner of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist scientific socialism.

After the disasters of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, Deng's market reforms led to several decades of double-digit GDP growth. Yet even as China enjoyed the benefits of freer markets, adopted elements of Western legal and business practices in order to facilitate participation in the international economy, and eagerly absorbed Western engineering and scientific research, Chinese leaders remained skeptical of Western political ideas of competitive parties, democratic government, and constraints on executive authority. In 1989, when a widespread student-led movement calling for democracy arose, it was harshly crushed by Deng using military force, including a violent attack against student demonstrators in Beijing's Tiananmen Square. The wisdom of this action was driven home for Chinese leaders when they saw the communist regimes of Eastern

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33   Kurt M. Campbell and Ely Ratner, The China Reckoning: How Beijing Defied American Expectations, in: Foreign Affairs 97 (2018): 60-70.

34   Tonio Andrade, The Gunpowder Age China, Military Innovation, and the Rise of the West in World History, Princeton 2016.

Europe and the Soviet Union crumble under the reform efforts of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, who had tried to use elections and greater openness to overcome the corruption and rigidity of the Soviet Communist Party, but only hastened its destruction. Starting in the early 2000s, Chinese leaders sought to develop a more authentically Chinese basis for Chinese identity and leadership, and began to examine the utility of classical Confucian culture. From 2004, China began sponsoring Confucius Institutes in foreign countries to promote the study of Chinese language and culture. In 2007, for the first time since the Communist Revolution, China's government officially sponsored the celebration of Confucius's birthday, with a nationwide television broadcast. In 2014, President Xi Jinping delivered a keynote speech at the Fifth Congress of the International Confucian Association in which he stated that the "values and spiritual world of the Chinese people have always been deeply rooted in the fertile soil of China's traditional culture" and that "the Chinese Communist Party is the successor to and promoter of fine traditional Chinese culture."[35] In 2018, the Chinese scholar Jiang Shigong published an authoritative analysis of Xi Jinping's speech at the 2017 Party Congress, in which he argues that "Marxism must … be merged with Chinese traditional culture."[36]

Why has the Communist leadership returned to the promotion of Confucian thought? It is insufficient to diagnose this simply as a rejection of Western cultural models as alien. Rather, China's leadership has blended certain Confucian precepts with ideas from Marxist-Leninist-Maoist thought to create something new and uniquely Chinese: what is awkwardly called in English "Socialism with Chinese Characteristics" and "Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Characteristics for a New Era." China's classical tradition of Confucian-Legalist thought is an ideal framework for a meritocratic, authoritarian state.[37] Confucianism preaches loyalty to the absolute authority of the state, indeed a loyalty of identification analogous to the loyalty of a child to a parent. The obligation of state leaders is to be virtuous, in the Confucian sense of having a practical, educated and well-informed commitment to the public good, but *not* to be subject to constraints or direction from the populace. For a Communist Party leadership that wishes to be viewed as wise and responsible leaders, Confucianism offers an ideology that justifies their complete control of decision making and public welfare. Confucianism also stresses the importance of peace and harmony, making it an attractive face for China to present to the world.

In classical China, the state largely relied on Confucian thought for legitimacy because it could not reach directly into each village to control economic life. Confucian rule thus co-existed with extensive markets, light central taxation, and an emphasis on the state's role in providing public goods such as water control, transportation, famine relief, and

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35   Jin Kai. The Chinese Communist Party's Confucian Revival, in: The Diplomat, 2014, https://thediplomat.com/2014/09/the-chinese-communist-partys-confucian-revival/.

36   Jiang Shigong, Philosophy and History: Intepreting the 'Xi Jinping Era' through Xi's Report to the Ninetneeth Nationa Congress of the CCP. Translated by David Ownby, in: The China Story, May 11, 2018.

37   Zhao, The Confucian-Legalist State.

defense.[38] However, in twenty-first century China, the tradition of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist thought provides support for a much more pervasive role of the state in the economy. In Marxist-Leninist-Maoist thought, the state has the right, in the name of the people, to manage all the major levers of economic power, and in particular to exercise state ownership and direction of major sectors of industry and finance, which should be under state and not private direction.

The combination of Confucian thought with Marxist-Leninist-Maoist thought thus legitimates free markets in local property, farming, local land development, small business and labor-intensive manufacturing and service industries; state control of critical energy, transport, industrial, and financial enterprises; and an authoritarian meritocratic state and bureaucracy wholly free of such Western notions as constitutions, competitive parties, free elections, popular sovereignty, and civil liberties.

To Western eyes, accustomed to the combination of free markets with political liberties as "natural,"[39] this mix of institutions may seem odd, and surely just a transitional stage on the way to the full Western complement of free markets and free political institutions. Yet to China's leaders, this mixture – under the label of "Socialism with Chinese Characteristics" and "Xi Jinping Thought for the New Era" – is not just a way-station *en route* to Western-style institutions. It is rather something that has been enormously successful in promoting China's economic growth and internal political stability; and it is viewed as a uniquely Chinese creation, a successful and stable alternative to Western political and economic institutions.[40] China's confidence in this unique system is shown in "Xi Jinping Thought" being written into the Chinese Constitution in 2018. This confidence is also shown in Xi Jinping's recent speech at the World Economic Forum in Davos, in which, as stated in an article in the official *China Daily*, "Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era is a combination of Marxism and cosmopolitan ideas for solutions to global problems."[41] China resists the idea that it is trying to export a "Chinese model," in the manner that Western countries have tried to install Western institutions in other countries. Yet China nonetheless seeks to offer Xi Jinping Thought as a set of ideas that offers "solutions" to many state and global needs. That is, as China invests in Belt and Road projects around the world, it will suggest that the combination of limited free markets, state-directed investment, and authoritarian political control can solve the most urgent problems of conflict and poverty.

(6) Establishing China as a world-class military power. China's leaders recognize that their efforts to acquire trade routes, protect China's unity and sovereignty, build an advanced

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38   Kenneth Pomeranz, The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy, Princeton 2001; Richard von Glahn, The Economic History of China: From Antiquity to the Nineteenth Century, Cambridge 2016.

39   Milton Friedman, Capitalism as Freedom, Chicago 2002.

40   Elizabeth Economy describes this new vision as China's "Third Revolution," after the Maoist Communist Revolution of 1949 and Deng's radical economic reforms in 1978, in: The Third Revolution, New York 2018.

41   Jia Wenshan, Xi's inclusive thought offers China solution to the world, in: China Daily, 2018, http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201801/30/WS5a6fb50ba3106e7dcc1377af.html.

economy, and develop ideological "soft power" will not guarantee China's security unless China has the military power to defend its sea-lanes and borders, support its allies and overseas investments, and counter efforts by other powers to project force against China's interests. China has thus embarked on a massive program to expand and upgrade its military. It realizes that it cannot match America's global air and naval forces. Yet by acquiring advanced missile capabilities, submarine and aircraft platforms (carriers and island bases), and combat ships and aircraft, China believes it can match and overwhelm any foreign forces in its immediate vicinity.

In 2018, Xi Jinping donned a military uniform to preside over China's largest naval review of the Communist era. 48 warships, 76 aircraft and 10,000 sailors assembled in the South China Sea to celebrate "the coming of age of China as a maritime power."[42] This display reflects a radical modernization drive, planned to continue through 2020, that reflects a greater external orientation of China's forces. China's ground troops will be reduced by about 300,000, while more investment will be made in air and naval forces and improving theatre-level command and control structures. Whereas up through 2000 China's military was mainly concerned with domestic control and defending China's land borders with India and Russia, the new plan is to create a modern war-fighting and offensive-oriented force capable of safeguarding and repelling any threats to China's free operations in the Indo-Pacific region. Already, China is estimated to be spending over $200 billion on its military each year.[43] As China's economy grows, China's leadership has made clear it will devote even greater resources to giving China a fully modernized military capable of operating everywhere China has critical interests.

Will China Succeed?

If China succeeds, it will link over two-thirds of the world's population via trade routes that it controls, which will take advanced Chinese manufactures to markets throughout Eurasia. Governments in Africa and Eurasia will look to China for leadership and "solutions" with regard to their political institutions. The Chinese language will replace English as the dominant language of trade, and the *renminbi* will replace the dollar as the main international currency. In sum, the world c. 2050 will look like the mirror image of the world c. 1950. In other words, where by 1950 Western nations had established their dominance in Eurasian trade and the primacy of Western power and Western-run global political and economic institutions, by 2050 all of this will be reversed and Chinese technology, trade and Chinese-led institutions will dominate Eurasia.

China's success, however, is not assured. China's stock markets and currency are still not regarded as reliable by global investors, and further government control will not instill

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42   Manoj Joshi, China's coming of Age as a Maritime Power, in: The Wire, 2018, https://thewire.in/world/china-navy-maritime-power.

43   Dhruva Jaishankar, China's Military Spending, 2018, https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/chinas-military-spending/.

confidence. These flaws will hinder China's emergence as a global financial center, and leave it dependent on Hong Kong, Singapore, and London for financing its international operations. Tibet, Xinjiang, Hong Kong and Taiwan all remain restive, and to various degrees resentful of the heavy hand of control from Beijing. Any of these regions could be a future site of conflicts that absorb the energies of China's regime and expose the lack of "harmony" in the Chinese realm.

The Belt and Road Initiative is running into resistance, as countries recognize the risks of taking on vast debts owed to the aspiring regional hegemon. Resentment against use of Chinese workers, concerns raised by Sri Lanka's loss of its Hambantota port, and delays in construction already plague BRI projects. Malaysia's new government has cancelled three major Belt and Road projects, due to concerns about debt financing, and "More countries are taking Malaysia's cue in reconsidering projects involving Chinese firms, as concerns grow over the ominous nature of Beijing's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)."[44]

It is still not clear where the vast amount of capital necessary for all the anticipated Belt and Road projects will be raised. The BRI could end up exhausting China's capital reserves while producing a string of white elephants and partially completed projects. China's efforts to master next generation technologies are impressive, but still must deal with the realities of a predominantly blue-collar, low-tech economy. China still has not mastered the art of producing world-class semi-conductors; how then can it expect to dominate quantum computing? China's military, advanced production, and research are all still dependent on imported high-tech components made to specifications that China cannot yet match. China may yet find itself stuck in a "middle income" trap, unable to advance more than a fraction of its population to high level living standards.

These risks are all the greater in that China is facing a rapid aging of its population and shrinkage of its young workforce. In the thirty years from 2015 to 2045, China's 15-59 year old work force will shrink from 944 to 726 million, while the population over 60 will more than double from 200 million to 450 million.[45] It is unlikely that China will be rich enough to switch easily to a robot-driven work-force and capital-intensive domestic economy while generating the resources to support its fast-expanding elderly population. China's authoritarian, rapid economic growth model may have global appeal now, in the wake of the Great Recession that afflicted Western countries in 2007–2009 and the decade of austerity that followed. Yet if China's economy should falter, while those of the West enjoy a surge of technology-driven growth, the appeal of Chinese "solutions" will fade, and China's leaders may find their own legitimacy come into question. Finally, China's military expansion and modernization has a long way to go to catch up with those of NATO and above all the United States. If China's aging population or capital

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44   Justin Ong, Malaysia's rejection of China projects emboldens others against BRI, in: Malaymail September 26, 2018.

45   United Nations Population Division, World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision, 2018, http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/DVD/.

wastage limit its ability to invest in its naval and air forces, it will continue to lag behind the West in its ability to compete militarily.

Perhaps the greatest aid to China's efforts to dominate Eurasia has been the shift in U.S. foreign policy by President Donald Trump. Trump's disengagement from multi-lateral Eurasian institutions, such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership; his desire to reduce US defense commitments across Eurasia – in South Korea, Afghanistan, and the Middle East; his efforts to soften US policy toward Russia and pick trade fights with European allies; and his efforts to "bring home" US manufacturing and curtail global supply chains, all create space for China to readily expand its influence throughout Eurasia. Yet if U.S. policy shifts in the future, and seeks to invest major resources to build a strong alliance of states to promote a liberal democratic framework for Eurasian trade and politics, uniting the US with Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia, the Philippines, and possibly India, Malaysia, and Singapore, then China would find it difficult to ever attain the dominance it seeks.

In sum, China's effort to reverse the last two hundred years of Eurasian economic and political patterns faces significant hurdles, and may well fall short. Yet it would be wrong to assume that republican forms of government are somehow "natural" and that the shifting global balance of the centuries since 1800 represents an inevitable long-term trend, and not a temporary cycle. After all, the Greek democracies and the Roman Republic seemed dominant for several centuries, but both gave way to empires, the first to Alexander and the second to Caesar; and those imperial forms proved more prosperous and enduring than the republics. The city-state republics of medieval Italy and the medieval estates of most European powers faded before the majesty of the absolute monarchies of Louis XIV, Philip IV, and Frederick the Great. Might it be that the current republics of the Americas and Europe are doomed to fall into partisan rancor, debilitating divisions, and energy-sapping inequality, while authoritarian states such as China and Russia grow in capability and prestige?

The answers will not be clear until perhaps 2050. If China has its way, it will be the Eastern leader of Eurasia that reasserts its former dominance. In the long course of history, the period of Western intrusion and domination will then be just another of the many episodes of weakness and foreign intrusion that recur in Chinese history, to be followed by the reassertion of Han Chinese unity, sovereignty, and traditional Chinese culture.

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