

context of Macao, form an inseparable duo, well understood by historians, local players, and those arriving from afar, especially the rich.

To round off my remarks: This book starts out with an early “crossroads image” derived from the elegant words of a colourful individual – Tang Xianzu. There are exotic categories, such as the “upside-hanging-down bird” (later depicted in the *Gugong niao pu* 古宮鳥譜, as a green creature with some red), “painted faces” and rosewater, all of which appear in various Ming descriptions of southern countries, and there is an upward movement through time that ends with a male hero, whose qualities are such that he should survive most future “transformations”. Macao is a world heritage city, as Cheng underlines; the temples and churches, gods and spirits, including Guan Yu and his prestige, all form part of that stage. This stage and the Chinese views on it are as rich as the book itself; hopefully, then, *Tracing Macao* will encourage European sinologists to further explore China’s written monuments on Macao’s past, its many faces and its cultural wealth. <[ptak@lrz.uni-muenchen.de](mailto:ptak@lrz.uni-muenchen.de)>

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ASIAN EXPANSIONS: THE HISTORICAL EXPERIENCES OF POLITY EXPANSION IN ASIA, Edited by GEOFF WADE.  
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While openly acknowledging the effects of European expansion on global structures, Geoff Wade argues that “the assumption that non-European polities were passive” or “non-expansive” should be readdressed. (p. 1) Within this vein, *Asian Expansion* takes up the ambitious task of examining polity expansion, principally in East and Southeast Asia, as a foil to European models. While scrutinising myriad motivations, methods and models for “comparative Asian polity expansion”, the contributors simultaneously demonstrates that Asian polities were equally concerned with the political, economic and strategic advantages of empire. (p. 3)

In addressing the “why” of imperial expansion through the prism of Ming and Qing incorporation of the steppe, Peter C. Perdue contends that frontier interactions between mobile and settled populations were crucial to China’s success in subduing its neighbours. Using “fractal hierarchies” to examine the undulating influences between periphery and metropole, Perdue demonstrates that the general models of geographic determinism, personality theory and the “greedy/needy nomad” are insufficient to fully address the successful integration of Chinese frontier regions. (p. 36) Indeed, the metropolitan adoption of frontier accommodation policy, initially developed by officials in the periphery, proved far more successful in terminating the nomadic “request, refusal, raid” cycle than any military campaign. (p.42)

Tonio Andrade examines the “maritime exceptionist model”, most often applied to European adventurism in the Indian Ocean World, to the experiences of Ming China, Chosun Korea and Tokugawa Japan (1500–1700). (p. 52) Andrade demonstrates that East Asian polities either neglected, or actively suppressed, maritime expansion. Despite the exception of Ming China’s invasion of Dutch Formosa (1664), and limited maritime commercial zones, successful political consolidation led to severe, government-imposed maritime trade restrictions. However, the example of Formosa demonstrates that East Asian *émigrés* found commercial success under foreign sovereignty and, if deemed necessary for security, East Asian powers could readily dislodge European forces from the region.

For Geoff Wade, much of China’s successful expansion can be credited to effective institutional models, particularly the “*tusi*” or “native office” system of indirect administration. (p.74) Likely

founded under the Qin (221–207 BCE) and only expiring in 1949, the *tusi* system empowered frontier elites to rule on behalf of the emperor. These collaborator chieftains, under the ever-present threat of force, provided taxes and troops to support Chinese expansionist ambitions. This allowed Chinese regimes to keep potential enemies politically divided, financially weak and socially dependent on the central government. This system, later adopted by former *tusi* like Dai Viet, was effectively utilised to “dominate, emasculate, exploit and eventually incorporate surrounding polities”. (p. 86)

Exploring polity expansion in Southeast Asia, Victor Lieberman rejects the historical judgment of a “radical disjuncture between Western dynamism and Southeast Asian lethargy”. (p. 92) The accelerating political-cultural-economic integration of mainland Southeast Asia (800–1825), rooted along the Mekong and Irrawaddy rivers, reflected concurrent developments in other Eurasian “protected rimlands”, like Western Europe and Japan. (p. 112) Furthermore, the “three overarching imperial systems” (Burma, Siam and Vietnam) were more influenced by regional commercial, agricultural, demographic and institutional pressures than by any influx in maritime trade with China or Europe.

This integration, and subsequent expansion, often combined foreign and indigenous institutions. The increasingly aggressive nature of Dai Viet’s relationship with Champa, was intimately tied with the incorporation of Ming bureaucratic models and the rejection of the decentralised *Mandala* system. John K. Whitmore illustrates that the expansion of Dai Viet’s “literati-officials” usurped the power of the semi-feudal Dao lords by 1466, consolidating political and economic power within the metropole. (p. 129) Despite Dai Viet’s expulsion of the Ming in 1427, the polity absorbed their former ruler’s bureaucratic model and ideological *raison d’être* of civilising neighbours, successfully conquering Champa in the process. Furthermore, while examining the expansion of Vietnamese polities (980–1840), Momoki Shiro demonstrates that Vietnamese potentates adopted other cultural, political and bureaucratic ideas from the Chinese. Although a socioeconomic and ideological divide did develop between the Lê dynasty of the Sino-centric, collectivist Tongking in the North and the *Nguyễn* lords of commercialist Cochina in the South, the eventual unification of the country under the *Nguyễn* created an “empire that belonged to the Sinic world” but retained its own culture, territory and imperial power. (p. 150)

Additionally, increasing centralisation and integration bolstered the resilience of regional polities, as the exceptional re-emergence of the Kingdom of Siam following the conquest of Ayutthaya by the Burmese in 1767 demonstrates. While the *corvée* conscripted labour system and the *suai* commodities tax are often cited as the main impetuses for this revival, Koizumi Junko argues that Siamese participation in regional “market exchanges” provided the wealth, manpower and material to successfully expand. (p. 168) Siamese shipments of raw materials to China provided the silver necessary to purchase modern European firearms from British India and the loyalty of local groups. Armed with modern arms and human capital, Siam was able to rapidly expand into Cambodia, Laos, Burma and Malaya.

Yet, expansion was not a “homogenous one-way process”, as Jacques P. Leider’s examination of the Burmese conquest and administration of Arakan (1785–1825) illustrates. (p. 202) Indeed, while the Burmese overthrew the Arakanese kingdom in a matter of weeks, a nascent native insurgency supported by the British East India Company in Bengal took decades to quell, ultimately heralding the First Anglo-Burmese War (1824–1826) and the permanent loss of Arakan to Britain. However, the Burmese confiscation of the Mahamuni bronze statue, the resettlement of Arakanese refugees in Burma and Burmese immigration to Arakan, created a cultural bond between the two polities which continued despite political separation.

Nor was metropolitan political centralisation always necessary for polity expansion, as William Cummings investigation of sixteenth and seventeenth century Gowa, in Southern Sulawesi, highlights. A pattern of military victory, political submission, and vassal incorporation allowed Gowa to expand its *imperium* throughout Makassar via intermarriage with former adversaries, eventually developing a successful system of one kingdom, two kings with its ancient rival Talloq. Yet this “personalised form

of empire” proved far more fragile than its mainland contemporaries, ultimately collapsing in the face of an alliance of local *Bugis* and the Dutch East India Company in 1669. (p. 228)

Although the contributors admit that they “can do no more than hint at possible comparisons” with other areas, the scholar of European imperial history can readily elucidate useful associations. (p. 22) Moreover, this confession illuminates the current disjointed state of imperial history as a methodology for more global comparative analysis. The absence of linkages between the well-developed historiography of British imperial expansion and Asian polities is readily apparent in this work. The formal versus informal empire debate, famously initiated by Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher in 1953<sup>1</sup>, resonates in the narratives of Gowa and the Chinese frontier. Furthermore, the *tusi* system reflects methods of British governance in India via native collaboration and the “indirect rule” espoused by Frederick Lugard in Nigeria (1914–1919). Finally, examples such as the influence of Chinese settler interests on stimulating Chinese intervention in Dutch Formosa, would benefit tremendously from the settler causality theories developed by British imperial historians like John Seeley and James Belich.<sup>2</sup>

Despite this chasm between scholarly interpretations of European and Asian imperial expansion, this work lays the foundation for more comparative studies of the Eastern and Western “rimlands” of Eurasia. Furthermore, in a contemporary age of increasingly rampant revisionist history in the region, the volume warns that Asian polities were consistently “engaged in expansionist aggression” against their neighbours. (p. 25) Examining the intellectual, political, cultural, institutional and economic histories of polity expansion within Asia, particularly from a transnational perspective, demonstrates that colonialism in the region was not simply an Occidental phenomenon. ([vs385@cam.ac.uk](mailto:vs385@cam.ac.uk))

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THE EARLIEST EXTANT BIRD LIST OF HAINAN: AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION OF THE AVIAN SECTION IN *QIONGTAI ZHI*. By RODERICH PTAK and BAOZHU HU. pp. 156. (*Maritime Asia* 28) Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 2015.

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The authors of this book set themselves a very difficult task: “to identify the ancient bird names [in a local gazetteer of Hainan] in the light of modern taxonomy”. This is stated to be one of the two major aims of the book, the other being to comment on the cultural dimension of some of the entries in the bird list (p. 13). Unfortunately, it must be said that, in respect of the first aim, the book is not entirely successful. The identifications made are often questionable, and sometimes certainly wrong. Indeed, it appears that the authors, although clearly highly accomplished scholars of Chinese studies, are somewhat out of their depth as far as ornithology is concerned. I cannot imagine that they have spent very much time observing birds in the field. Their grasp of “modern taxonomy” also seems to be less than firm.

<sup>1</sup>John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, “The Imperialism of Free Trade”, *The Economic History Review*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (1953), pp. 1–15.

<sup>2</sup>See: John Seeley, *The Expansion of England: Two Courses of Lectures* (London, 1883); James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783–1939* (Oxford, 2009).