

colonial period determined the outcome in the post-colonial period. For instance, she shows that the areas which were under landlord based systems (*zamindari system*) performed poorly in post-colonial India as compared to the areas which were under individual cultivator-based systems (*raiyyatwari*). Anand V. Swamy's focus is on contract enforcement, which he argues played a crucial role in the colonial economy. He shows that where the colonial state could successfully enforce contracts with peasants, like in opium cultivation, it brought prosperity to both the parties. Where it failed to do so, like indigo cultivation in Bengal, it turned into a disaster. The last essay, by Prashant Bharadwaj and Kevin Quirolo, studies how migration can shape the economy of a region. In their study of the partition migration, they have come up with interesting findings. For instance, one finding is "the partition resulted in [a] greater concentration of literate migrants in urban areas of Pakistan" (234).

The editors have tried hard to convert this collection into a textbook; for instance, they have introduced text-boxes to explain concepts, provided a chapter-wise and up-to-date bibliography, and kept essays brief in length. But to call it a textbook will be misleading. To understand each essay/chapter a vast amount of prior knowledge is needed and the work lacks coherence. It seems that to turn this collection into a textbook was an afterthought. Even then, the reader will benefit immensely from these essays, many of which carry keen insights. This work will be a handy resource for teachers and researchers.

doi:10.1017/S0165115318000438

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Paul A. Van Dyke. *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Success and Failure in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2016. 532 pp. ISBN: 9789888139323. \$79.00.

Paul van Dyke has written an important book on the Chinese merchants trading with European chartered companies and private merchants in the eighteenth century. In the first volume of this study, Van Dyke focused on the early eighteenth century and the deals made with the European chartered companies. He also pointed to the Co-Hong as an efficient institution in the 1760s, as the organisation mediated between foreigners and the inland producers, making sure that trade continued and that the foreign merchants kept coming. This volume shifts the viewpoint to the second half of the eighteenth century when the importance of the European chartered companies declined and the trade with private merchants increased. Moreover, this volume focuses more decisively on the porcelain and silk trades in China, whereas the first volume mainly focused on the junk and tea trade. Logically, the two volumes are complementary to each other, and as Van Dyke gives a very helpful summary of the first volume in his preface, this book is also fascinating for those who have not extensively studied the first volume.

The book is a significant contribution to the field, drawing on Dutch, English, Flemish, Danish, Portuguese, American, Swedish and French sources: the number of appendices and the information that these contain is impressive, especially since all the appendices have source references. The Chinese perspective, which has been long absent from the literature on the Europe-China trade in the eighteenth century, has recently started to be explored by a flurry of work, not least because of Van Dyke's efforts. However, Van Dyke's work is the most comprehensive book on this subject, spanning the full eighteenth century and taking a political

economy perspective that effectively kills some of the myths surrounding the China trade in the eighteenth century. For example, Van Dyke proves that the Qing had a real trade policy aimed at encouraging growth as well as protecting Imperial revenues, shows that the market in Canton really set prices, despite the considerable influence of the Co-Hong over this process, and points convincingly to the role of political connections that could make or break Chinese merchants. Moreover, the author points to the peculiarities of the Chinese concept of insolvency, which may constitute an exciting starting point for comparative work in the future.

Like the first volume, the book follows several Chinese merchants in their trade, both within the Co-Hong and outside of the institution. After the preface and introduction, which summarize the economic situation and introduce the Chinese framework, the next five chapters follow several merchant families in the second half of the eighteenth century. Especially interesting is the case study of the Chinese merchant Poankeequa in Chapter 3, in which Van Dyke points to the subtle advantages that he had, including his political connections, language skills and his access to silver from Manilla (see below). Other case studies, such as the merchant Swequa and his brothers who later took over his trade, examine the issues that many Chinese merchants had with creditors. The credit issue is rightly seen by Van Dyke as one of the significant problems for Chinese merchants, as the porcelain and silk trades needed especially substantial amounts of credit to operate, something dealt with in Chapters 6 to 10.

Van Dyke links this to his observation that many Chinese merchants diversified their trade, and is thus able to show how many merchant families were able to trade for so long in the eighteenth century, even in the circumstances of tight credit markets. Since scholars have wondered how “inefficient” local institutions in China could have dragged on for so long in the eighteenth century, this book is a step in the right direction of judging China’s institutions on their own merits instead of studying the Chinese economy in the eighteenth century through a European lens of what “efficient institutions” constitute. In this respect, Van Dyke could have even made some stronger and bolder claims on debates such as the Great Divergence, something from which Van Dyke shies away. Especially in the light of New Institutional Economics (NIE), Van Dyke could have stated his conclusions more firmly. These conclusions could have also tackled Eurocentric perceptions of what role “efficient” institutions have in the history of economic development, and how the interactions between Chinese and European merchants shaped institutions in historical spaces, in this case, the port cities of Macao and Canton.

Although Van Dyke himself points to some nine areas of possible further research, there are indeed still some gaps that remain after having read this study. Van Dyke touches upon the subject of silver payments, one of the major issues in the historiography of the eighteenth-century Chinese trade. Although his example of the merchant Poankeequa proves the importance of the access to silver from Manilla, the introduction of the book only very briefly pays attention to the role of the financial environment and the Manilla and Cádiz links. Some more analysis of this historiographical problem would have illuminated this study even further, making it even more interesting for global economic historians. However, this small omission should not make one wary of praising this book, as the massive number of sources that have been consulted by Van Dyke makes this an impressive book, especially given the amount of information with which the appendices provide us. Van Dyke’s monumental work has the merit that it puts the China trade forward as one of the central elements in eighteenth-century trade, explaining all the factors in political economy and trade that have often been overlooked by scholars, without putting too much emphasis on the uniqueness of the Chinese situation. The book will most likely be, together with its accompanying first volume, the primary source

from which scholars of the China trade will draw information from and take inspiration for work on Chinese, comparative and global economic history.

doi:10.1017/S016511531800044X

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Hayden J.A. Bellenoit. *The Formation of the Colonial State in India: Scribes, Paper, and Taxes, 1760-1860*. London: Routledge, 2017. 219 pp. ISBN: 9780415704472. \$160.00.

In *The formation of the colonial state in India*, Hayden J. Bellenoit invokes three crucial, previously overlooked elements in imperial state formation that compose his subtitle: scribes, paper, and taxes. That these are intimately related is well explained in this thought-provoking monograph. Bellenoit identifies larger fiscal trends which he uses to shed new light on colonial state building. His main argument is that both precolonial rulers and the British Raj in Awadh and Bengal, North India, primarily relied on the existent fiscal knowledge and vocational abilities of Hindustan's scribes and pensmen (chiefly the lower ranking scribing officials of the *Kayastha* scribe caste). The British started using these scribes and their monopoly on fiscal knowledge to connect to the local agrarian economies and tax "deeper into the countryside" (58). According to Bellenoit, this process constituted the British colonial fiscal state.

Bellenoit disposes of archaic interpretations of the Mughal state as a "patrimonial bureaucracy", showing that fiscal management in India rested on a paper-based revenue administration of thorough record keeping by indigenous scribes and pensmen, the "powerful agents of historical change" essential to "revenue hungry states" (5-6). Bellenoit reveals that the fiscal priorities of the Mughal administration were "paper-infused and materially shaped" (16). Simultaneously, Mughal India "might have appeared centralized, but upon closer inspection was locally flexible" as enforcement happened "not through law codes, but through local coercive power of community and relationships" (22). This situation changed when the British East India Company adopted the paper administration of the most critical local scribing revenue chiefs (the *qanungo* and *patwari*), during the early colonizing process. These chiefs became essential middlemen in revenue collection and fiscal documentation, bringing in crucial information on paper and feeding the British appetite for financial knowledge and revenue.

Of great importance is Bellenoit's analysis of colonial knowledge production. The relentless British drive to produce averages and statistics to measure welfare in quantified data created a "despotism of paperwork" that marginalized individuals (138) and restyled the system into a depersonalized, procedural, law-bound tax administration. By putting fiscal documentation central, Bellenoit reinterprets how we understand colonial knowledge production. Whereas Bernard Cohn and Nicholas Dirks have respectively emphasized colonial ethnography and social categorization, Bellenoit argues that financial documentation prompted colonial bureaucracy, knowledge production, and state building, as testified by the hundreds of thousands of rent-rolls, papers and statistics on agrarian wealth and the taxonomy of soil and land. According to Bellenoit, Cohn's "investigative modalities" and Dirks' "castes of mind" were rather a result or by-product of fiscal documentation. Hindu scribes helped to unlock the taxonomy of Indian agriculture (130). The origins of colonial knowledge and archives laid in the "desire to harness India's agrarian wealth" to "account for every grain ... rather than in caste taxonomy, cartography or quantification" (118-119). Cohn indeed included quantifiable reports and statistical returns in his definition of investigative modality, but by understanding