

the mainland northern coasts of the Mediterranean, rather than arriving fully formed from the north. This precocious maritime activity underscores the importance of sea-faring in the most recent human colonization of the Mediterranean area.

While it is true that Parzinger records an ‘8000-year-old boat’ (p. 338) in slowly developing Africa and describes ‘waterborne movement for the first time’ in the Baltic in roughly the same era (p. 229), he neglects the broader significance of these discoveries. So, when discussing the Americas, he dismisses the relevance of Japanese Jomon pottery to the earliest pottery in the Valdivia culture of Ecuador (p. 644). This is despite the fact that this Valdivia material is older than the Colombian pottery to which Parzinger refers (and probably older than any other native American pottery). Significantly, Parzinger’s map of the distribution of prehistoric Jomon pottery-making culture in Japan (p. 476) wrongly fails to indicate that the Jomon extended to Kyushu – which is where Japanese fishermen who reached Latin America came from, according to archaeologists’ claims. This potentially Japanese-influenced pottery, which is the earliest to have been found in the Americas, greatly increases the importance of navigation in influencing cultural developments, thereby significantly extending the chronological scope of our concept of globalization. Furthermore, running counter to the assumption that pottery is a technology of sedentary Neolithic peoples, this example supports the probability that hunter-gatherers (as the Jomon fishermen were) contributed to the invention and diffusion of pottery around the globe. Although quite aware of the importance of navigation in prehistory (e.g., maps pp. 22, 530, 534, 539), Parzinger hardly stresses it, dwelling instead on the horses that allowed the peoples of the Eurasian steppe to achieve ‘a hitherto unknown degree of

mobility’ in the late fourth and early third millennia BC (pp. 395–6) – although this actually belongs in the historical era. Thus, it is unfortunate that Parzinger marginalizes the importance of navigation in prehistory.

By conceiving of his subject positivistically, as a research challenge to be solved with more data rather than a great unfolding narrative, Parzinger fails to perceive the overall success of human cultures in colonizing the globe. Instead, he appears to be mesmerized by the successive failure of individual human societies. More importantly, this book shows, despite itself, that human collectives cannot be understood solely in economic terms; although inefficient, rigid economies can doom societies facing direct competition, people frequently manage to muddle along. This points to a paradox at the heart of Parzinger’s work: only archaeologists are able to study what happened in the very distant past, yet their fixation on the material dimensions of life prevents many of them from understanding it.

Inventing exoticism: geography, globalism, and Europe’s early modern world

By Benjamin Schmidt. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015. Pp. xx + 412. Hardback £55.50, ISBN 978-0-8122-4646-9.

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Benjamin Schmidt’s elegantly written and beautifully produced new book argues that ‘a new conception of the world and of Europe’s relationship to it’ developed in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries

(p. 3). Previously, Europeans had comprehended the non-European world in terms of 'national, confessional, colonial, [and] imperial' contestation, an emphasis which familiarized distant lands by inserting them into Eurocentric narratives of conquest and rivalry (p. 9). Columbus, for instance, described the New World in terms which explicitly evoked Castile's victories against the Moors. From 1650, however, Europeans became more interested in the distinctiveness of spaces outside Europe. These regions became 'agreeable', exotic 'products', represented as alluring and aestheticized realms in a burgeoning consumer culture of books, prints, maps, and other material objects (p. 5). Despite its apparent attention to non-European particularity, exoticism homogenized the non-European world into a single, interchangeable space defined by oft-repeated tropes: strange creatures, resplendent emperors, abundant natural resources, and so on. Crucially, too, the exotic helped shape new ideas about Europe's post-Westphalian identity. It allowed Europeans to see themselves as secular, acquisitive, and commercial aesthetes, rather than as violent religious belligerents. The evidence for this argument is drawn mainly from Dutch materials, though Schmidt argues persuasively that they were aimed at – and succeeded in reaching – a purposely 'European' audience.

Inventing exoticism's opening chapter discusses the emergence of a new type of geographical text in the late seventeenth century. Physically large and lavishly illustrated, these books shaped and disseminated ideas about the exotic for transnational audiences. Schmidt makes a number of important methodological observations here: he is excellent on the material aspects of book production, and suggests that we need to interpret these volumes using the strategies of the book historian as well as the textual critic. For instance, the notion of a presiding 'author' is often unhelpful for works which

were compiled by editors, or pieced together from multiple extant sources. By attending to such issues, Schmidt shows how wider contexts of production, audience, and paratext (e.g. frontispieces, dedications, and so on) helped shape and disseminate ideas in early modern culture.

The second chapter concentrates on the visual exotic, analysing the different types of illustration which together created an exotic aesthetic: maps, cityscapes, ethnographic vignettes, pictures of animals, plants, and objects. The emphasis here is on the exotic as something easily apportioned, displayed, and sold; but it also shows the importance of spectacle in the early modern geographical gaze – a relationship which has endured in contemporary magazines such as *National Geographic*. Furthermore, there is a productive tension in how these illustrations functioned in wider cultural discourse. The images were partly designed as 'truth statements' intended to record and present a supposedly objective idea of real places. But they were also conventionalized, stereotypical devices, recycled across formats, and therefore concerned with standardizing ideas about exoticism. In this way, exotic imagery served a double function: aestheticizing the non-European world while reifying that aesthetic as an objective description.

Chapter three discusses 'exotic corporality', specifically the way in which exoticism was associated with violence and dangerous sexuality. For Schmidt, this represents a 'shift in the geography of violence': aggressive personal conduct, oppressive political systems, and sexual deviance were 'banished from the boundaries of Europe', allowing Europeans to imagine themselves as inhabitants of a civilized space (p. 221). The non-European world was thus configured in erotic and despotic terms from the very start of the early modern period. This is significant because the heyday of Orientalism is usually dated to the

nineteenth century thanks to Edward Said's influential analysis (*Orientalism*, 1978).

The final chapter concentrates on consumer goods. 'Exotic' became 'a linguistic means to identify a range of material objects, particularly ... consumable luxury items' (p. 227). By discussing a wide range of two- and three-dimensional objects, Schmidt shows how they imbricate 'decoration' and 'narrative'. Early modern geographical ideas were often expressed decoratively in beautiful and desirable objects; similarly, those physical objects, both individually and collectively, constructed narratives about how to see and interpret the world.

Inventing exoticism is an inventive and perceptive book. It lucidly combines detailed analysis of specific texts and objects with discussion of larger themes invaluable for any reader interested in early modern European identities and perceptions. Crucially, too, with his thorough accounts of particular objects and their wider intellectual implications, Schmidt provides an important historiographical service in showing how concepts and materiality can intersect. However, I am not fully persuaded by his argument that exotic 'difference' superseded an earlier focus on the 'familiar' non-European world. In my view, later eighteenth- and nineteenth-century geographical works often continued to comprehend distant places in terms of their correspondence to 'home'. In that respect, 'exoticism' may be embroiled in broader tensions about how to interpret the non-European world, with particular places often being understood simultaneously both as strange and unknowable and also as fully exploitable commodities. Seen through another lens, exoticism might be a way of making otherness comfortably familiar by constructing a set of easily recognizable Eurocentric stereotypes. Conversely, Schmidt is perhaps too modest in suggesting that exotic geography declined after the early eighteenth century. For instance,

geographical works with the characteristics he identifies – lavish illustration, an unsystematic structure – were still being produced in the 1790s.

I must end by noting that, appropriately for a work about luxury objects, *Inventing exoticism* is a beautiful book. Printed on acid-free paper, and with 24 colour plates and no fewer than 179 figures, no expense has been spared in producing this work, something for which the author and publisher deserve much praise. It is doubtful whether a project so reliant on visual material could have been realized so successfully without a publisher fully committed to the art of fine book production. *Inventing exoticism* is consequently a double pleasure to read, not just because of its lively and rigorous intellectual content but also because of its sumptuous physical form.

Eurafrica: the untold history of European integration and colonialism

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In this book, Peo Hansen and Stefan Jonsson draw attention to the relationship between European cooperation and colonialism. Their focus is on a particular expression of this very important relationship, namely Eurafrican projects. The book synthesizes most of the available scholarship on Eurafrica and thus promotes it beyond specialists working in the field. As the authors demonstrate, Eurafrican projects have come in many guises from the early twentieth century onwards. The basic