independent authority locally. It is hard to see where Bourbon France would fit into the authors' scheme, with nobles who possessed both a local following and a central office; or the Mughal empire, ruled by a corps of men bound together with a highly specialized idiom of statecraft, but who often used their connection to the imperial centre to create autonomous fiefdoms.

Similarly, before the nineteenth century, it is hard to find a stark dichotomy between empires based on the personal relationships of a ruler and rulers who relied on broader social structures and institutions to govern, as Burbank and Cooper propose in Chapter 5. There, the Ottomans are described as ruling through the patrimonial power of the sultan's household, distinct from the rest of society, whereas the empire of Habsburg empire is conceived as having at its core a class alliance between a culturally, religiously homogenous ruling elite. Certainly, the sovereign's household seems to have been managed differently in each case, but both regimes relied on the crown's capacity to grant land to retainers, and in both these retainers sometimes tried to escape and sometimes tried to affiliate themselves with the aristocratic elites.

The greatest, and most problematic, dichotomy is perhaps between empire itself and the nation-state. The difference, for Burbank and Cooper, boils down to regimes that acknowledge and rely on difference, and those which aim to annihilate it. Yet, as the framing Roman case study indicates, empires often aggressively assert homogeneity, at least over some of their subjects. And nation-states may contain within them tendencies towards differentiation. Canada, Germany, and India are now undoubtedly nation-states with ruling national (sometimes nationalist) debates and ideologies. Yet each is constituted through its formal recognition of federated diversity, and through the centre's governance of different people in different ways. In practice, every state creates hierarchies and deals with difference. Does that make every regime an empire?

The point, surely, is that the boundary that marks what is or is not an empire is a matter of political contestation, never agreed at any one moment but subject to massive fluctuations over time and space. Ontologically, every polity (just like every person) is always free and is always bound to others. Autonomy and interconnection, freedom and domination are always relative and always debatable. To understand empire, one needs to think about the relationship between the claims made in political language ('this realm is an empire', 'the nation awakes') and the practical, often material forms of power and types of relationship that bind people at particular moments. After reading *Empires in world history*, one is left wondering whether it is possible to do that over a span of two thousand years.

To give a recent example: the Scottish Nationalist Party is currently trying to establish Scottish independence following (from their perspective) three centuries of English imperial rule. Wanting to retain both the crown and the pound sterling, they propose a kind of national self-determination that anti-colonial nationalists in the 1960s would have seen as the most abject form of imperial subjugation. The point is that the crown's meanings as a signifier of sovereignty and Britishness have vanished, and an independent currency is less valuable within a more globally integrated economy: political idioms and material practices of power have changed. The shift is one that a history of 'nation' and 'empire' would not pick up.

The greatest weakness of *Empires in world history* is the limited attention that it gives to the material idioms and practices of power that connect and divide. There is not enough on the practical operation of tax-collection systems, the everyday working of imperial law courts, or techniques of military recruitment and discipline. But perhaps there could not be in a book with a global, two-thousand-year sweep. My concern is that those contexts are too important to be ignored in such a broad history of empire, whose claims risk not standing up under the scrutiny of particular, often global, historical moments.

The world that trade created: society, culture, and the world economy, 1400 to the present

By Kenneth Pomeranz and Steven Topik. Third edition. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2012. Pp. xiii + 329. Hardback £64.50, ISBN 978-0-7656-2354-6; paperback £21.50, ISBN 978-0-7656-2355-3.

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doi:10.1017/S1740022814000230

In this book two historians offer a lucid account of how trade connected and changed the world over the last few centuries. Avoiding the narrow interpretation of trade by economists and economic historians, the authors attempt to incorporate political, socio-cultural, and environmental implications into the main framework of their discussion. Since its first

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740022814000230 Published online by Cambridge University Press

edition appeared in 1999, the book has been widely used by history teachers. The second (2006) and the third (2012) editions added new essays and increased the coverage of modern and contemporary periods. This latest edition consists of more than eighty short essays with an introduction and epilogue. The essays are organized into seven chapters, each with a more specific introduction to give a theme and context. The chapter introductions allow readers to pick and choose the essays of interest and/or study the text as a whole.

In this review I concentrate on identifying the direction in which the authors try to move the historiography. As the title suggests, the book argues for the centrality of trade as an agent of change in global history. The suggestion that long-distance trade became important by the fifteenth century is not new, but to argue that the character of trade found in the early modern period persisted into the present and created the world is rare. In *Trade and civilization in the Indian Ocean* (1985), K. N. Chaudhuri characterized pre-industrial trade as demand-driven, in a way similar to this book's emphasis on consumption. But then he described the shift to industrial (and colonial) trade in the nineteenth century, in which the rhythm of mass production and its resource needs dominated, and the nature of trade became supply-driven. For this book's authors, in contrast, the themes of consumption changes and cultural interactions embodied in commodity trade are at the heart of the career of globalization down to today. In this sense they cleave to a continuity thesis. Modern international economic history textbooks typically deal with money and capital flows and migration, whereas works on economic globalization in the more recent period discuss the movement of information, technology, and management. In most cases, attention centres on supply-side changes. This book addresses these topics, but the main referent is always the commodity trade, and the dynamics it created – and creates – between production and consumption.

Justifications for this approach are found throughout the book. Not only drugs and violence feature as chapter titles ('immoral trade' is an integral part of the story), but political, socio-cultural, and environmental implications of trade are discussed under the heading of more usual subjects such as market conventions and institutions, and transport. In the authors' words, 'we must take into account *moral economy* – what people perceive to be just, and the cultural orientations that influence the value they assign to goods and labour – as well as *market economy*' (p. 304, emphasis in original). The result is a wide-ranging search for evidence of interactions and conflicts between different cultures through the lens of trade history, which may well have had a deeper impact on global history than quantitatively spectacular changes caused by population growth and industrialization.

The chapters are organized in a loosely chronological manner, so that the emergence of modern markets and industrialization, and the changes they brought with them, are described in the latter part of the book. This generates tension with the continuity thesis in interesting ways. Coming from the author of *The Great Divergence*, emphasis on contingency (such as the discovery of resources or disasters) is not surprising. Keen attention is paid to colonialism, exploitation, and war-making, as well as to de-industrialization, though in relation to the broader theme of cultural negotiations and changes in social values. The authors suggest that the diffusion of technological and institutional innovations does not occur automatically. It occurs as a result of successful negotiations between different values. Thus the growth of world trade was a result not of convergence to the dominant culture but of multi-headed regional changes in diverse directions. The two authors specialize in China and Latin America respectively, so their coverage is complementary. As US-based global historians, they do their best to reach out to other regions, while holding to an integrated perspective.

I think that it is possible to go further. In this book the relative weight is heavily in favour of European-dominated long-distance trade (and territorial expansion). Non-European merchants and producers often appear as passive movers or the exploited. But if we go by the number of people and the size of the economy, non-European economies, especially Asian ones, ought to figure much more than this book allows. It is not clear how important Asian trade was relative to world trade before about 1800, but one-half to two-thirds of the world population, industrial production, and GDP was probably in Asia at the beginning of the nineteenth century. We also have a reasonably hard set of trade data to show how this Asian dominance was replaced by the Western one during the long nineteenth century. In the early modern period both China-centred trade in East and Southeast Asia and Indian Ocean trade spanned large regional areas, and Asian (especially Chinese and Indian) merchants engaging in regional trade influenced regional paths of development. The size of the population under the influence of each trading area was probably larger

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740022814000230 Published online by Cambridge University Press

than that of Atlantic trade. Outside the European trading posts, Asian peoples who were actively engaged in local trade were loosely connected to, and affected by, European trade (an extreme but not exceptional example of this is the merchants of Tokugawa Japan). It is implausible that the terms of cross-civilizational interactions – especially intra-Asian ones – were dominated by European agency. If we are to describe the growth of world trade – by which we mean all cross-cultural trade – we need to bring in much more fully local and regional trade carried out by Asian and other non-European merchants, as well as their political counterparts, and discuss the nature of the world that diverse trade networks created.

Asian and other non-European trading activities continued into the era of industrialization, even under colonial rule. A greater recognition of the influences of local and regional networks and their two-way relationships with Western-dominated long-distance trade would further enhance our understanding of the significance of the history of cultural interactions on a global scale. Furthermore, this would help explain the resurgence of Asia in the second half of the twentieth century, particularly as high-speed economic growth has derived from massive interactions between Western technology and institutions on the one hand and Asian languages and cultures on the other. Again, key intermediaries were often Asian merchants, who once again feature prominently in world trade, in the field of computers and automobiles, of course, but no less so in the 'immoral trade' of arms and endangered species.

Cosmopolitan Africa, 1700–1875

By Trevor R. Getz. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. v + 106. Paperback £10.99, ISBN 978-0-19-976470-9.

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doi:10.1017/S1740022814000242

History scholars and teachers alike are sure to value this brief but significant introduction to the 1700–1875 period of African history. Trevor Getz, a historian of Africa, knows all too well that the period comprising the final full century of the transatlantic slave trade and the onset of European occupation of Africa in the late nineteenth century is commonly glossed as one in which the former seamlessly gave way to the latter. The result is that the majority of mainstream audiences hold on to erroneous notions of Africa as forever primitive and lacking the ability to solve its own predicament. Connected to this, West Africa and West Central Africa are often generalized as representing the entire African continent's history in the period. Getz recognizes the importance of disrupting such misguided impressions with bold counter-examples that are sure to shake up normalized sensibilities about Africa and its people. This book will help readers understand that Africa was of central importance to global history in this period.

To begin dismantling the ubiquitous trope that rests on an entrenched idea of a primitive Africa, Getz cleverly uses the word 'cosmopolitan' in the book's title. For many readers, the juxtaposition of 'cosmopolitan' with 'Africa' will immediately generate a state of cognitive dissonance. His tactic rightly makes readers ask, just what does he mean? But he helps them quickly regain their footing with his early and clear definition. He explains that Africa is cosmopolitan because its peoples 'were connected to each other and to other parts of the world by trade, the exchange of ideas, and the migration of people', both within the continent and across the oceans and seas that surround it. What is more, he says, their 'societies were flexible and complex enough to deal with the influx of new ideas and movement of peoples that these networks necessitated' (p. xiv). In other words, readers learn that Africa, like everywhere else in the world, was a dynamic place with dynamic people doing dynamic things.

Getz's framing of the book and of the period allows him to introduce readers to concrete examples of economic networks, political systems, sociocultural ways, and knowledge-based industries. Through these he demonstrates that diverse populations of African people innovated and elaborated across large regions of the continent and beyond. Chapter 1 shows us that elaborate relationships and networks were the social glue that sustained societies. Getz's example of the centrality and deeply rooted place of matriclans in Asante society (pp. 10–11) is especially telling, as it underscores the relevance and status of women in early times and the ways in which increased complexity in trade ties and migration can instigate changes in political organizing and social positioning. Chapter 2 shines a light on the transoceanic connections forged

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740022814000230 Published online by Cambridge University Press