

ASIA & THE PACIFIC

Rainer F. Buschmann. *Iberian Visions of the Pacific Ocean, 1507-1899*. Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. 312 pp. ISBN: 9781137304704. \$90.00.

Iberian Visions, by Rainer F. Buschmann, Professor of History at California State University Channel Islands, USA, is the latest volume in the *Palgrave Studies in Pacific History*. The series, edited by Matt Matsuda, aims to re-envision the history of the Pacific; *Iberian Visions* is a worthy, if uneven, contributor to that goal, challenging traditional historiography on the role of the Spanish in the creation of Pacific history. In the introduction, Buschmann acknowledges the conundrum: how, on the one hand, the Spanish contribution could be seen so clearly, especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, while at the same time, the explorations of the French and particularly the British came to define both the discovery and visions of the Pacific throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Buschmann's perspective could be neatly summed up as a version of "publish or perish" seen through the lens of national history. Through Spain's reluctance and slowness to publish its maritime and political records of the Pacific, Buschmann argues, the country's contribution to the making of the modern Pacific was steadily diminished by more active British and French maritime policies of publication, possession through re-naming (whether earlier names were indigenous or Spanish) and expansion.

Buschmann's approach, like much of the early exploration of the Pacific, is circuitous and goes over the same territory numerous times from different perspectives. Thus, the trajectory of this history is less linear than kaleidoscopic: as similar information is refracted through different lenses (e.g., mapping practices, publication of information from voyages and diplomatic manoeuvring), we gain a deeper knowledge of many of the main actors and their approaches. This accretion, while feeling fragmented at times, highlights the way perspectives, publications, and political intrigue by the Spanish and British in particular and, to a lesser extent by the French and Dutch, conflicted or overlapped. Buschmann argues that an official Spanish sense of historical continuity affected its Pacific presence in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. First, Spanish mariners relied on "received knowledge", that is, maps stored in the archives that comprised centuries of speculation and acquired knowledge as opposed to the extant "encountered knowledge" of the British and French explorers. In addition, Spanish diplomats were guided by historical agreements, such as the Papal *Inter Caetara* (1493) and the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494). As a counterpoint, British diplomats argued that the ocean could "not be entirely closed to a maritime power" (60), building on new ideas of freedom of the sea (*mare liberum*) that narrowed the reach of the Spanish presence in the Pacific.

The author, too briefly, fills in the networks created by Austronesian voyagers throughout the Pacific Ocean before European contact began in the sixteenth century. He reminds us that the Spanish, believing that their interests were protected by earlier treaties, focused on the vast ocean as a corridor between their American and Asian centres and as a barrier to incursion into their landed empire. Despite Iberian history in the Pacific, later European explorers stressed the novelty of their exploration and diminished the Spanish contribution. A renewed focus on the *Leyenda Negra* (the Black Legend), reinforced by Charles des Brosses, also undermined the Spanish reputation in the Pacific by suggesting the continued mistreatment of indigenous peoples by administrators, the military and religious representatives. "Imperial amnesia", as Buschmann calls it (45), on the part of Britain and France actively downplayed the Spanish contribution to the mapping of the Pacific. Publications by northern European mariners

focused on the acquisition of scientific information, informed by Linnaean methodology, which challenged the Spanish knowledge of the vast Pacific. The Spanish, in turn, were afraid that these scientific endeavours disguised imperial expansion. Buschmann highlights the diplomatic efforts of the Spanish, especially the Prince of Masserano, the Spanish Ambassador to Britain during the heyday of James Cook's voyages, to both minimize the damage to Spanish reputation and to maintain control of the ocean routes that were vital to their interests. Masserano urged his superiors to publish Spanish maps of the northern Pacific, saying there was "[n]o better act of possession" (75), but his advice was ignored and the Spanish influence in the Pacific dissipated further.

As printing technologies improved, first-hand accounts of scientific voyages grew steadily more popular and British explorers continued to turn Europe's attention to the Pacific Ocean. The difficulty in verifying Spanish names of islands was compounded by British and French efforts to erase traces of earlier Spanish exploration. In the introduction of the record of Cook's third voyage (posthumously released in 1784), second officer James King undermined the Spanish contribution in two ways: first, he ascribed "to the Dutch the merits of being our harbingers", and then paid scant attention to Spanish exploration except to explain that the British had corrected "former mistakes" (108). Cook, however, was not uniformly revered: the Spanish soldier Máximo Rodríguez, sent to Tahiti by Manuel de Amat y Juniet (Governor of Chile from 1755-1761 and Viceroy of Peru from 1761-1776), lived among the Tahitians for nine months, learned their language and noted that much of British and French ethnographic description was based on limited contact—what Bronwen Douglas has called "seaborne ethnography" (143). Buschmann portrays Amat as a perspicacious caretaker of imperial interests, sponsoring expeditions from his South American base and advocating a stronger presence in the Pacific to establish a perimeter of defence. Amat also prepared a detailed map of the Pacific rim of the Spanish empire to augment his country's intellectual capital; as Buschmann recounts, the map disappeared on its way back to Spain, leaving another gap in the historical record.

Buschmann rightly highlights the growing strength of British sea power during the late eighteenth century. The emergence of Greenwich as the prime meridian aroused Spanish ire while also demonstrating their relative inability to halt British advances, technological and naval. The Pacific Ocean became less a barrier to incursion and more a "hostile body of water beyond Spanish control" (165). The author also offers an alternative interpretation to Alejandro Malaspina's expeditions; he does not see them as mere echoes of British and French exploration. Instead, he argues that Malaspina's careful hydrographic charting was an attempt to find navigational corridors that the Spanish could use within a more occupied Pacific Ocean. The penultimate chapter focuses on the explorations of Alexander von Humboldt as he attempted to unite the archival knowledge so treasured by the Spanish with the encountered scientific and ethnographic knowledge favoured by the British and the French. Buschmann convincingly illuminates Humboldt's push to create continuity between the Spanish (and Portuguese, too rarely mentioned overall) and the later French and British explorers.

Despite its many intriguing perspectives, *Iberian Visions* has a number of minor weaknesses that could have been addressed with closer editorial attention. A short list of examples includes the images, which lack clear referencing in the text and would benefit from dates and more specific labelling. An important concept, the "tyranny of distance", is mentioned more than once without a reference to Geoffrey Blainey's 1966 book whose title is the original use of the term. In addition, proofing oversights that are trivial but nonetheless confusing (a reference to

“the United States and America,” for example [223]) undermine the final polish of the book. However, these shortcomings do not diminish Buschmann’s intellectual achievement; in the epilogue, he cites Spanish geographer Ricardo Beltán y Rózpide, who was pained “that the Pacific endeavours of our navigators are much less known than those of other nations who merely followed in [their] wake” (217). A century after Beltán’s plaintive comment, Buschmann has ameliorated this pain, bringing the varied European visions of the Pacific Ocean into focus by linking islands of knowledge into a more compelling whole.

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Robert Thomas Tierney. *Monster of the Twentieth Century: Kōtoku Shūsui and Japan’s First Anti-Imperialist Movement*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015. 280 pp. ISBN: 9780520286344. \$70.00.

Experts on Japanese imperialism have long decried the marginalization of the Japanese Empire in non-East Asian scholarship on modern colonialism but, in practice, have often done little to lower the barriers to non-specialists presented by unfamiliar names, events and difficult-to-translate terminology. Going beyond mere appeals for change, in *Monster of the Twentieth Century*, Robert Tierney has performed an important service to the field of comparative imperial history by making Japanese anti-imperialist leader Kōtoku Shūsui’s seminal work *Imperialism: Monster of the Twentieth Century* (1901) accessible to a non-Japanese-speaking audience.¹ As Tierney demonstrates, Kōtoku’s work both engaged in a transnational dialogue with other important anti-imperialist thinkers of the era and made a significant intellectual contribution from a Japanese perspective. *Imperialism* draws heavily on J.M. Robertson’s 1899 *Patriotism and Empire*, but also builds upon on a creative synthesis of Confucian and socialist thought.² Its emphasis on the political (as opposed to economic) causes of imperialism distinguishes it from Vladimir Lenin’s later treatise on the subject.³ In addition to a skilful English translation of Kōtoku’s seminal book, *Monster of the Twentieth Century* provides readers with an extensive essay in which Tierney explains the historical context in which Kōtoku wrote, his philosophical influences and other information that is necessary for the non-specialist to get the most out of Kōtoku’s text.

As if this is not enough justification for his book, Tierney explains in the introduction that Japanese Marxist scholarship has tended to dismiss Kōtoku’s anti-imperialism as both misguided (for not adhering to Lenin’s later analysis) and secondary in significance to his socialist and later anarchist writings. Tierney aspires to rehabilitate *Imperialism* and demonstrate that Kōtoku’s anti-imperialist philosophy should in fact be considered one of his greatest legacies. As becomes apparent throughout Tierney’s essay, socialism and anti-imperialism were inextricably linked in Kōtoku’s thought. Furthermore, according to Tierney, there is surprisingly no overarching study of Japan’s early anti-imperial movement. He attempts to fill this lacuna in the second section of his essay and presents a good summary, although his strong

¹ Kōtoku Shūsui, *Teikokushugi: Nijūseiki no kaibutsu* (Tokyo: Keiseisha Shoten, 1901).

² J. M. Robertson, *Patriotism and Empire* (London: Grant Richards, 1899).

³ Vladimir Lenin, *Империализм как высшая стадия капитализма [Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism]* (Petrograd: Zhizn’i znanie, 1917).