adults debates and representations of childhood" (7). These sources serve to add children's voices to what is already a wide array of source material, including medical and pedagogical advice literature, novels, newspapers, governmental sources, censuses, photographs and even artworks.

Crucially, Pomfret notes that children in French and British Asia took their own initiatives and that these possibilities were not limited to children of European descent. In Hong Kong, for example, the Ministering Children's League opened space for elite Chinese girls to become involved in charity. These girls raised funds and made handicrafts such as blankets for working-class children in their own city and, tellingly, in metropolitan Britain (109).

For Pomfret, examples such as these "exposed the fragility of supposedly fixed notions of racial hierarchy" (109). Social interactions between French and Vietnamese children in Hanoi and Saigon (68-69) formed another example of how children's agency could be unsettling to adults who fretted over colonial prestige. It is very interesting to note how, contrary to the general image in the literature, childhood could serve not only as a space in which racial boundaries were set: in some cases, these boundaries were blurred by the agency of children. This is perhaps the biggest difference between Pomfret's book and other works, that tend to look at childhood and empire mainly from an angle of colonial anxieties and symbolic circumscribing of difference. Pomfret pays due attention to the ways in which youthful people succeeded in carving out a space of their own.

However, *Youth and Empire* is not free of faults. As the author touches upon many side-themes and on four different geographical contexts in each chapter, the work is very dense, and many of the issues that are now hinted at would have deserved more space. In other cases, Pomfret's conclusions seem somewhat laboured. Can, for example, the fact that European children in Hong Kong dressed up as fairies be read as performing "crossings between the real and the spirit world" and reflecting "adherence to the orthodox elite view of colonial childhood as a kind of limbo before the essential return 'Home'?" (90). Finally, even though Pomfret repeatedly refers to the childhoods produced in colonial Hong Kong, Singapore, Hanoi, and Saigon as "modern", he nowhere particularly engages with this concept. There are hints throughout the book about how this modernity might be defined—in the case of the Singapore baby shows, for example, childhood was starting to become conflated with consumer culture. Still, some theoretical reflexion on the term would have been most helpful.

All in all, *Youth and Empire* can genuinely be said to break new ground. It is hoped that this book will inspire scholars of colonialism to turn to the study of childhood in other geographical contexts. The proximity of the centres that Pomfret focuses on to the Netherlands Indies, for example, may provoke scholars of the Dutch empire in South-East Asia to think about how his approach could be usefully extended to that area, especially in a comparative perspective.

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Comparative and Transregional

Wolfgang Reinhard, ed. *Empires and Encounters, 1350-1750*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press/Harvard University Press, 2015. 1152 pp. ISBN: 9780674047198. $39.95.

This extensively annotated volume—part of the *A History of the World* series of general editors Akira Iriye and Jurgen Osterhammel—attempts to understand global developments in the

formative period of Europe's ascendancy in the world. Translated from the German edition published by C.H. Beck Verlag in 2014 which was titled *Weltreiche und Weltmeere: 1350-1750*, each section of the volume takes the reader to a world region through multiple rotating lenses: of geography, ecology and the environment with cores, borderlands, frontiers and natural hazards; of economy—agriculture, trade and fiscalism—; of politics, challenges to hegemony and relations with conquered peoples; social organisation with the roles of elites and masses; and of the level of development of the arts. Geographical spaces are re-conceptualized: empires, empire-building, contact zones/contact groups and common cultural spaces over large spatial tranches are focal. Continental Eurasia (Russia, China, and Central Asia) occupies a large space in this imaginary. China and Russia are not treated as separate categories as has been the norm; this is refreshingly new. The interplay of multiple factors and agencies is seen through the axes of communication, interaction, connection, and convergence. The connections transcend imperial, national or even trans-regional frames and become truly transnational. Consequently, the volume aims at presenting a global history or even a history of the world to the reader.

The organization of the volume is distinctive. There is a general introduction by the editor setting out the theme and scope of the volume, its objectives, and specific thrust. Thereafter, each world region is introduced by a different author: Continental Eurasia (Peter C. Perdue), Ottoman Empire and the Islamic World (Suraiya Faroqhi), South Asia and the Indian Ocean (Stephan Conermann), Southeast Asia and Oceania (Reinhard Wendt and Jurgen G. Nagel) and Europe and the Atlantic World (Wolfgang Reinhard). The last two are treated together, Reinhard writes, because of the imbalanced state of historical research in the Atlantic World (739), but for this reviewer, at least this strategy does tend to imply that this world was a purely European invention.

I have some issues with the organization of the volume. For one, it is very comprehensiveness makes it somewhat unwieldy for the reader to access, particularly regarding the notes which are placed right at the end of this very large and heavy volume. Two, it would also have been helpful if a separate table of contents had been made for the maps, illustrations, and tables in the volume. This reviewer had considerable trouble locating them and may indeed have missed some. Three, since empires and empire-building, are focal, why did Byzantium not merit a section of its own since that empire continued, nominally at least, until 1453? Its demise suggests the fragility of Eastern Christendom, which was a post-imperial construct. It might have been useful to study a "western" imperial region that was both a religious construct and a political space, which is what Byzantium eventually transformed into. Four, it might have been useful for the reader if a separate section had been devoted to Europe, as was done for the other world regions. And, it would also have been handy if the distinctiveness of West European developments was enumerated and compared to other world regions to explain the rise of the West and the decline of the rest from the volume's perspective.

These generalities aside, this reviewer also has problems with the way information is sometimes presented in the book. I will confine my comments to the section on South Asia and the Indian Ocean and question some of the nomenclatures used. The Persian terms "mansabdaran" (Conermann, 440, 441, 443, 449 as used in plural for the Mughal term *mansabdar*) and similarly jagirdaran" for *jagirdar* (Conermann, 443), although undoubtedly correct, are not usually used in South Asian history-writing. Likewise, the term zamindaran" for *zamindar* which also occurs frequently (Conermann, 434, 442, 444, 445-7, 449-51). But these are minor quibbles.

More surprisingly, Conermann references the "merchants of Calcutta" in the matter of receiving Rasulid patronage in 1393 (505). Since Calcutta did not exist at the time, this reviewer was baffled and searched for an alternate explanation which was readily available in the document "Lettre des marchands de Calicut au sultan rasūlide al-Ašraf Ismāʿīl (795)" referenced by himself in EN 108 (994). The article in which this letter appears is "Les sultans Rasūlides du Yémen: Protcteurs des communautun musulmanes de l'Inde VIIe-VIIIe/ XIIIe-XIVe siècles" by Eric Vallet. It as published in *Annales Islamologiques* 41 in 2007 and is cited by Conermann in the bibliography (1090).

Here is what the letter says: "… la communauté (*ǧamāʿa*) de la cité de Calicut, en particulier les nobles marchands et les éminentes personnalités qui la composent, a exprimé le souhait que la chaire (*minbar*) [de Calicut] soit honorée par la mention des titres (*alqāb*) de notre maître le très grand sultan, le très haut calife, libérateur (*muḥarrir*) des royaumes des Arabes et des Persans, maître des sultans du nord et du sud (*al-šām wa-l-yaman*), le sultan, l'illustre seigneur al-Malik al-Ašraf – que Dieu rende son règne éternel" (Vallet, 2007: 170). Reading the letter, this reviewer naturally thought "Calcutta" in the volume under review was a typographic error for Calicut—an understandable error since the two names are somewhat similar—although its presence in the volume would also suggest hasty proof-correction. However, "Calcutta" is explained as "Kolkata" (Conermann 504, line 5) which shows that such was not the case. The identification with of Calicut with Calcutta is clear—a serious gaffe and the identification with Calcutta is repeated in lines 16-17, second paragraph (504). Elizabeth Lambourn's excellent works on Rasulid engagements in the Indian Ocean realm ("India from Aden: *Khutba* and Muslim Urban Networks in Late Thirteenth-Century India", in Kenneth R. Hall, ed. *Secondary Cities and Urban Networking in the Indian Ocean Realm, c. 1400-1800*, 2008; "Khutba and Muslim Networks in the Indian Ocean (Part II)—Timurid and Ottoman Engagements", in Kenneth R. Hall, ed., *The Growth of Non-Western Cities: Primary and Secondary Urban Networking, c. 900-1900*, 2011) could have been referenced along with Vallet's work; this would have made it clear that Rasulid patronage never reached as far east as Bengal, which is where Calcutta—an eighteenth century port-city—is situated.

These quibbles aside, the volume is a welcome addition to the growing body of literature on world history and the editor is to be congratulated for undertaking such an enormous task. The bibliography for each section is impressive, if sometimes a bit dated and often heavily weighted in favour of western scholars—particularly for South Asia—and the translation is very readable. The result is a meticulously presented, somewhat alternate history of world empires and their many encounters from 1350 to 1750.

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Jonathan Curry-Machado, ed. *Global Histories, Imperial Commodities, Local Interactions*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. 286 pp. ISBN: 9781137283597. $100.00.

Commodities have recently attracted a good deal of scholarly attention. Thus, historical trajectories of a range of commodities have been explored by scholars, mostly economic historians, from various regional and global perspectives. In the literature that has emerged over the last two decades, there are two main strands of scholarship, which use variants of the two major analytical frameworks—global commodity chains and imperial commodities.