

continuum that encompasses Uganda's colonial history and that sees the Ganda partnership with the British as marking one of the kingdom's most successful phases, comparable only to the level of dominance that it had achieved in the 1830s. In this regard, further elaboration of two points is important, also to curtail the risk of downplaying the profoundly unequal power relations of the Anglo-Ganda partnership: how to characterize political and economic hegemony in the absence of sovereignty – which Buganda lost when it signed the 1900 Agreement – and how to tell the history of a polity's loss of sovereignty without the historiographical notion of rupture, to which Reid prefers that of continuity.

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GENERAL

HYUN JIN KIM, FREDERIK JULIAAN VERVAET, and SELIM FERRUH ADALI (eds): *Eurasian Empires in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages: Contact and Exchange between the Graeco-Roman World, Inner Asia and China*.

xvi, 333 pp. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

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Spanning a wide geographical and chronological range, this volume has been constructed with a clear purpose in mind: to make a compelling case for comparative and interdisciplinary approaches to the study of Eurasian empires – approaches which, in the editors' opinion, should replace outmoded studies of such empires in isolation. Not all of the book's 11 essays examine the process of "contact and exchange" mentioned in the title, but each of them works with the others to promote what the editors call a "holistic, truly Eurasian perspective".

The first three papers focus on the interactions of different Eurasian empires. Hyun Jin Kim's article seeks to demonstrate that the Franks borrowed important aspects of their political system from the Inner Asian "quasi-feudal" model of the Huns (and, by extension, other Inner Asian polities such as the Xiongnu empire) rather than from Roman models. This enterprising thesis illustrates Kim's determination to undo the image of Inner Asian polities as politically and culturally "primitive". Jonathan Skaff provides a detailed analysis of the Tang dynasty's horse-breeding system and its relationship to Inner Asian horse supplies. Other scholars have demonstrated the Tang empire's ability to breed significant numbers of horses when it controlled frontier lands that were suitable for pasturage; Skaff adds new factors to this analysis, looking at climate, established patterns of exchange (both peaceful and violent) between China and Inner Asian peoples, and the ethnic diversity of persons staffing Tang horse-breeding farms, all in order to establish a richer picture of his topic. Selim Adali's essay discusses the political and cultural impact of the Cimmerians and Scythians on the Ancient Near East, noting both the spread of new military equipment and equine technologies brought by the Inner Asians as well as the ways in which their presence promoted the emergence of new powers that changed the region's geopolitical makeup.

The next four papers examine comparative topics rather than analyses of "contact and exchange". The first two form a diptych through which one can juxtapose the

concepts of honour and shame in Rome (in Frederik Vervae't's essay) and Han China (in Mark Lewis's). Although it does not seem that the authors sought explicitly to construct their articles in ways that would allow immediate ease of comparison, such comparison is not only possible but compelling as the authors reveal significant differences in the two roughly contemporaneous cultures. In Rome, honour was associated most clearly with aristocratic rank, military success, high office, and wealth; in China, however, the pre-Han period saw the rise of philosophies that distanced honour from military success and wealth, emphasizing instead the importance of moral virtue and service to society as means of achieving honour – which was often regarded as antithetical to personal gain.

Walter Scheidel's "Slavery and forced labour in early China and the Roman world" highlights another important difference. Rome's urban economy relied heavily on slave labour that was primarily applied to the private endeavours of wealthy Roman families. In China, where the power of aristocratic families was comparatively limited, it was the state that depended on forced – convict and conscript (*corvée*) – labour. Scheidel's paper examines the inherent brutality of both systems while considering the reasons for and ramifications of the differences that distinguish them. Alexander Beechcroft's article on Homer and the *Shi jing* as "imperial texts" offers an intriguing look at the development of these canonical works over time, with no "fixed" versions for centuries. Beechcroft demonstrates how these texts ultimately became stabilized as artefacts of imperial regimes and offers specific examples to illustrate a new analytical approach that looks carefully at each text's "commentarial frame" to understand the meanings that became attached to them.

The book's last four articles return to the concept of "contact and exchange". Samuel Lieu's examination of Manichaeism in Rome and China emphasizes recent archaeological discoveries to examine a number of issues. One of his significant contributions here is new evidence from South China that demonstrates the centrality of the Parthian language in the transmission of Manichaean texts from Iran to China. The final three papers are even more strongly focused on archaeology. "Alans in the South Caucasus?" by Antonio Sagona, Claudia Sagona, and Aleksandra Michalewicz looks at mortuary remains to see if Alanic cultural markers known north of the Caucasus can also be found to the south of the mountain range – specifically at the important cemetery of Samtavro near modern Tblisi. This richly illustrated essay notes the challenges of linking material remains to "ethnicity" and ultimately builds a fascinating if complex picture. The authors conclude that there are indeed some similarities north and south of the mountains such as skulls revealing the cranial manipulation of infants, evidence of post-mortuary tomb disturbances, and the use of intentionally broken bronze mirrors; but there are also significant differences such as Samtavro's general lack of burials with weapons and horse gear or metal cauldrons.

Osmund Bopparachchi considers the archaeological evidence for cultural interactions between Greeks, Scythians, Parthians, and Kushans in Central Asia and India in the second to fourth centuries ce. He seeks to incorporate recent findings to take a fresh look at familiar topics such as artistic influences and chronological uncertainties. The book's final essay, Michele Negus Cleary's "Enclosure sites, non-nucleated settlement strategies and political capitals in ancient Eurasia" is an absorbing study that encourages new concepts of "urbanization". She demonstrates that walled enclosure sites of the Khorezmian oasis region (particularly Akchakhan-kala, occupied at various times from the third century BCE to the second century CE) were not conventional urban settlements but "key nodes in non-nucleated, low-density, agro-pastoral settlement systems associated with mobile, agro-pastoral polities and empires". These "nodes" served not only as dwelling sites (not used continually, but most likely

seasonally or in times of special need) but also as political and ceremonial sites for elites that helped them establish and maintain their political legitimacy.

Although this book's articles cover a broad range of topics, geographical regions, and historical eras, they are effectively united in their use of new approaches, methods, and interpretations in the study of Eurasian empires. The editors and contributors have created an engaging and insightful volume that deserves the attention of a wide spectrum of scholars and will, it is to be hoped, stimulate further research.

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KENNETH REHG and LYLE CAMPBELL (eds):

The Oxford Handbook of Endangered Languages.

xxvii, 946 pp. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018. £115.

ISBN 978 0 190 61002 9.

LYLE CAMPBELL and ANNA BELEW (eds):

Cataloguing the World's Endangered Languages.

viii, 308 pp. London and New York: Routledge, 2018. £100 (hbk);

£31.99 (ebk). ISBN 978 1 138 92208 2 (hbk); 978 1 315 68602 8 (ebk).

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These two books deal with the same profound statistic – that approximately half of the world's languages are currently endangered. Running through both volumes is a tension in how we think about this fact – whether it is a technical, or a political, issue. The choice of broad approach is significant for how we understand the causes and significance of language endangerment, and what actions we take in response to it.

A technical approach, most evident in *Cataloguing*, but also present in the *Handbook*, tends to see language endangerment as a global crisis akin to biodiversity loss or climate change, threatening all of humanity if not existentially, then at least metaphysically. According to this view, the drivers of language endangerment are typically vague “forces”: political domination, globalization, modernization. The consequences of language endangerment and loss focus on our collective diminishment as a species, primarily the loss of knowledge, but also the loss of diversity itself. The proposed solution to this problem is, first, more and better data, and second, targeted interventions, often technological, that are primarily aimed at capturing what is being lost, rather than preventing that loss.

A political approach, by contrast, looks at language endangerment and loss more as a human problem than a problem of humanity. Rather than an issue of general concern for all people everywhere, it sees language endangerment as a challenge facing specific populations, but repeated multiple times across a globally uneven political landscape. It examines the ways in which language endangerment comes about through specific historical events and particular political arrangements, rather than generic forces. And instead of prioritizing technical and technological interventions (though these are used), this approach centres people in addressing language endangerment: through empowerment, education, and activism. This approach is most evident in the *Handbook* in the many excellent contributions on revitalization, rights, collaboration, and the politics of languages. It is also used in *Cataloguing* in a chapter that looks at how the book can be used by communities whose languages are at risk.