

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 However, I am not fully persuaded by his argument that exotic 'difference' superseded an earlier focus on the 'familiar' non-European world.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

By Peo Hansen and Stefan Jonsson. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014. Pp. xxii + 316. Hardback £50.00, ISBN 978-1-7809-3000-8.

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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

idea of Eurafrika is that Europe and Africa are interdependent and complementary continents, and can therefore only reach their full potential through cooperation. The authors argue that Eurafrika was ‘constitutive both of the European integration project ... and of the foundation of postcolonial Africa’ (p. 8). They state that there is a profound continuity in Europe–Africa relations, and stress ‘the necessity of perceiving Europe and Africa from the perspective of a theory of globality and international relations unconstrained by national, continental and Eurocentric categories’ (p. 10). In the introduction they develop these themes further, drawing on their backgrounds in critical cultural theory and EU studies.

Chapter 2 describes Eurafrikan initiatives in the interwar period, when the impact of the First World War had put plans for European cooperation on the agenda. The authors draw on Charles-Robert Ageron’s seminal article on Eurafrika¹ and, perhaps more surprisingly, on the work of Walter Lipgens, the doyen of European integration history. While justly criticizing Lipgens, they nonetheless follow his overly optimistic appraisal of the influence of Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi and his Paneuropean Union. The statement that ‘for a brief period, then, Eurafrika became an official foreign policy doctrine’ (p. 54) is not entirely warranted from the material presented. This does not mean, however, that these interwar plans do not merit attention even if they were ‘often too utopian to attract serious attention from politicians. ... [T]hese blueprints merit serious study because they illustrate the Eurafrikan project and its underpinnings in its boldest version, and partly also because they are precursors of what was to come’ (p. 57).

1 Charles-Robert Ageron, ‘L’idée d’Eurafrique et le débat colonial franco-allemand del l’entre-deux-guerres’, *Revue d’histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 22, 1975, pp. 446–75.

Chapter 3 describes the period from the end of the Second World War to 1954. It starts with a global *tour d’horizon* of events after the end of the war, particularly in Asia, and discusses the impact of these upon relations between Europe and Africa. (The previous chapter would have benefitted from a similar inclusion of Asia. For example, a reference to the Asian background of Albert Sarraut as the former governor general of Indochina and his apprehension about the rise of Asia would have explained his – and others’ – thinking about the relationship between France, Europe, and Africa.) Subsequently, chapter 3 summarizes the literature on Franco-British colonial cooperation initiatives and concludes with an account of the role of colonialism in some of the initiatives for European cooperation in the late 1940s and 1950s, such as the Council of Europe, the Schuman declaration, and the European Defence Community.

Chapter 4 is the central chapter of the book, and deals with the negotiations of the Treaty of Rome that led to the creation of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957. The authors usefully situate the Rome Treaty negotiations in the wider geopolitical context of NATO, Bandung, Suez, and the Algerian war. They push the centrality of Africa to the negotiations for the Treaty of Rome and the importance of associating the overseas countries and territories with the EEC that was being created. By doing so, they provide an effective critique of the ‘pure’ and benign foundation myth of the European Union. The focus on Algeria is necessary and instructive. However, Hansen and Jonsson’s extrapolation of the importance of the Algerian position and experience to the rest of Africa in the conclusion (p. 249) is less convincing. This chapter is the only one that rests to some extent on archival research, in the Historical Archives of the European Union in Florence. While ‘the archive’ is invoked throughout the book, a discussion

on the sources used would have been useful. This could have shed light on the sources used to substantiate the French and German perspectives, which figure prominently in this chapter. It could also have situated the extensive use of the *New York Times* and the one reference from the German Politischen Archivs des Auswärtigen Amts.

In the conclusion, Hansen and Jonsson introduce Frederic Jameson's 'concept of "vanishing mediator": a historical catalyst that ensures a smooth passage from one historical period or paradigm of thought to its different successor' (p. 255). They argue that Eurafrica was a necessary, temporary, vehicle to facilitate the continuation of domination of Europe over Africa, even if officially colonialism was coming to an end.

While this book convincingly shows the importance of colonial questions to the European project, a lack of precision undermines the broader argument put forward. Given the plethora of Eurafrica projects, some delimitation of what might still be understood as a Eurafrican project and what might simply be at the juncture of European and colonial history would have been helpful in order to conceptualize the various episodes discussed. Instead, Hansen and Jonsson have adopted a very inclusive approach. Though this shows the importance of colonialism to European cooperation history, it diminishes the conceptual usefulness of Eurafrica. Another example of this lack of precision is the statement that Eurafrica was an antidote

to, say, Panafricanism. But the authors do not go into detail and African actors only figure very briefly. Given that they extend their argument to the contemporary era, one might also have expected a discussion of the influence of the Economic Partnership Agreements between the EU and various African states, and their prohibitive impact on regional African initiatives.

The reduction of European cooperation history to EU studies and the works of Walter Lipgens and Andrew Moravcsik passes over developments that the authors have themselves showcased. The field of European cooperation history has been moving on, even if slowly, and in the framework of transnational and global history increasing attention is being paid to the role of colonies in the thinking about Europe. Finally, though the colonial foundations of European cooperation need to be part of the European integration story, this does not mean that its European foundations, including a wariness of nationalism and support for (con)federation and interdependence, should drop out of the picture. The challenge is to build a narrative on both foundations.

Despite these reservations, *Eurafrica* is a very timely book on an important topic. While stressing continuity across the twentieth century and cataloguing Eurafrican projects in an accessible and useful manner, it shows that colonies played a much more important role in the thinking about European cooperation than is generally acknowledged.