

THE MARITIME SILK ROAD: HISTORY OF AN IDEA



Kwa Chong Guan

THE MARITIME SILK ROAD: HISTORY OF AN IDEA

Kwa Chong Guan

Kwa Chong Guan is an Honorary Affiliate with the Archaeology Unit of the Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre. He is with the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies at the Nanyang Technological University where he works on a range of regional security issues. He continues to have an honorary affiliation with the History Department of the National University of Singapore, where he is involved in a project to source for archival records on Singapore before 1819. His recent publications include "The challenge of strategic intelligence for the Singapore Armed Forces," in B. Desker & Ang C G, eds., *Perspectives on the Security of Singapore* (2016) and earlier, *Early Southeast Asia Viewed from India: An Anthology of Articles from the Journal of the Greater India Society* (2013) and *Singapore: A 700-Year History; From Early Emporium to World City* (2009). He can be contacted at hiskcg@nus.edu.sg

The NSC Working Paper Series is published electronically by the **Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre** of ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute

© Copyright is held by the author or authors of each Working Paper.

NSC Working Papers cannot be republished, reprinted, or reproduced in any format without the permission of the paper's author or authors.

ISSN:2529-7287

Citations of this electronic publication should be made in the following manner:

Kwa Chong Guan, The Maritime Silk Road: History of an Idea, **Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre** Working Paper No 23 (Oct 2016).

NSC WPS Editors:

Andrea Acri	Helene Njoto
Terence Chong	Joyce Zaide

Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre Editorial Committee:

Andrea Acri	Helene Njoto
Terence Chong	Joyce Zaide
Ten Leu-jiun	

Typesetting and Layout: Andrea Acri and Joyce Zaide

The Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre Working Paper Series has been established to provide an avenue for swift publication and wide dissemination of research conducted or presented within the Centre, and of studies engaging fields of enquiry of relevance to the Centre.

**The Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre
ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute**

30 Heng Mui Keng Terrace
Pasir Panjang, Singapore 119614

TELEPHONE : (+65) 6870 4549

FAX : (+65) 6775 6264

WEB : <http://nsc.iseas.edu.sg>

FACEBOOK : [facebook.com/nalandasriwijayacentre](https://www.facebook.com/nalandasriwijayacentre)

The Maritime Silk Road: History of an Idea

Kwa Chong Guan

ABSTRACT

The idea of a trade route focused on Silk connecting Han China and Rome was first proposed by the German Geographer Ferdinand Freiherr von Richthofen (1833–1905). This Working Paper traces how von Richthofen’s extension of an overland connect between China and Rome to a Maritime Silk Road has shaped the historiography of trade in the Indian Ocean and the historical development of Southeast Asia and the South China Sea. The initial reconstruction in the first half of the twentieth century of how Indian Ocean trade and Indian culture spread east across the Bay of Bengal to secure not only the Silk, but especially the spices to fulfil Roman demand has been revised in the second half of the twentieth century. The emerging reconstruction is of a much deeper and wider connected history of maritime connections across the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea in which Southeast Asia was not a passive transit for these connections, but an active participant shaping the development of a Maritime Silk Road. Today China has appropriated these metaphors of reviving this ancient Maritime Silk Road to project its new foreign policy initiatives and political-economic initiatives, and India has apparently responded with counter-narratives to this Chinese appropriation of metaphors and analogies of the Maritime Silk Road for its policy initiatives. The Working Paper elaborates on the implications of this appropriation of historical imaginations and reconstruction of a Maritime Silk Road for policy initiatives today.

REVIVING AN OLD IDEA

UNESCO launched in 1988 a ten-year project entitled ‘Integral Study of the Silk Roads: Roads of Dialogue’ to ‘highlight the complex cultural interactions arising from the encounters between East and West and helping to shape the rich common heritage of the Eurasian peoples’.¹ However, the focus of the project was more on the overland roads, which four expeditions traced, convening 26 seminars en route. Only one expedition traced the maritime route in an October 1990 voyage from Venice to Osaka on the ship ‘Fulk al-Salamah’ loaned by the Sultan of Oman for the 27,000 kilometres voyage which called at 21 ports on its 154-day trip. Overall, the project highlighted the notion of movement as central to an understanding of the relations between peoples.

In 2013 Chinese President Xi Jinping appropriated this idea of a Maritime Silk Road to frame China’s foreign policy initiatives. The proposal for the creation of a new Maritime Silk Road was made during Xi’s visit to Indonesia in October 2013, and in his

¹ UNESCO’s programme statement and summary of the achievements of this project are available at unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001591/159189E.pdf (accessed 15/2/2016). See Vadime Elisseef (1998) for selection of the papers emerging from this project.

keynote address at the March 2015 Boao Forum² for Asia provided details of China's vision for a new Silk Road Economic Belt and Maritime Silk Road, collectively known as the 'Belt and Road.'³ China's proposal for a new Maritime Silk Road draws on the historical images and metaphors of ancient sea lanes linking Chinese ports with other ports in the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean, which Chinese mariners and traders were assumed to have played a major role in developing. Xi envisaged China today participating in the development of a series of major ports on the Eurasian rim between China and the Mediterranean to promote maritime connectivity.

In appropriating the imagery of a Maritime Silk Road as a symbol for China's new foreign policy initiative, President Xi is, in the argument of Paul A. Cohen, 'mythologising' the past to serve a current policy interest. As Cohen (2007) has argued in his insightful study of *History in Three Keys*, the Boxer uprising of 1898–1900 has been studied as a historical event by historians to reconstruct the past. As a way of knowing the past the narrative of the historian is, however, in constant tension with two other ways of 'knowing' the past. The first is the Boxer uprising as the experience of those who lived through the uprising and their understanding of what was happening to them in a manner fundamentally different from that of the historian. The other way of knowing about the Boxers is as a potent set of myths in the popular imagination of both China and the West. From this key of knowing the past as myth, the Boxers, depending upon the political circumstances of the day, could be cast as irrational, fanatical, and uncivilised xenophobes or as patriots and anti-imperialist.

Within this framework of 'mythologising' the past, it is not only China, but also India which has sought to 'mythologise' the Maritime Silk Road as a 'Transnational Mixed Route' across the Indian Ocean. In 2014 it launched a 'Project Mausam' to revive forgotten memories of 'lost linkages connecting countries along the Indian Ocean', among which India played the role of a central node.⁴

This Working Paper attempts a three keys approach to our understanding of the Maritime Silk Road, namely: 1) how it was constructed as an event by historians in the first half of the twentieth century, 2) how that initial narrative was questioned and deconstructed in the second half of the twentieth century with new readings and understandings of the experiences of those who lived and worked on the Maritime Silk Road, and 3) what is our current reconstruction of that Road. The Paper also attempts to follow Cohen (2013) in 'mediating' between the past of the Maritime Silk Road and its future as mythologised by not only China, but also India, among other countries.

THE IDEA OF *DIE SEIDENSTRASSE*

The 'Silk Road', as UNESCO noted in its write up of its project, 'is in fact a relatively recent term, and for the majority of their long history, these ancient roads had no particular

2 The Boao Forum is a nongovernmental and nonprofit international organisation proposed in 1998 by former Philippines President Fidel V. Ramos, former Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke and former Japanese Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa. The Forum was formally inaugurated on 27 Feb 2001 at Boao in Hainan Province, where it continues to meet annually.

3 China's National Development and Reform Commission, in conjunction with the Chinese Foreign Affairs Ministry and Commerce Ministry has issued an action plan, an English translation of which ('Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road') is available at http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2015-03/28/c_134105858.htm (accessed 2/2/2016).

4 See <http://www.indiaculture.nic.in/project-mausam> (accessed 25/8/2016).

name.⁵ Indeed, the Sogdian traders crossing Inner Asia, or the Persian sailors sailing the Indian Ocean (and whose ventures are perhaps captured in the Sindbad cycle of myths) could not be aware that they were contributing to the making of Silk Roads. Neither could Arab *mu'allim* or the Chinese envoys and monks or port officials know that their jottings and notes would be closely read by 20th century historians for a dense understanding of how they were making sense of their trading worlds constituting a 'Maritime Silk Road'. That understanding of the Maritime Silk Road as a historical event reconstructed from the experiences of those who lived on that 'Road' is an attempt by 20th century historians to achieve a verifiable narrative of what may have been happening on the Indian Ocean and South China Sea in the first millennium C.E. Their research is being appropriated and politicised by others today.

It is to the German founder of modern geography as an academic discipline, Ferdinand Freiherr von Richthofen (1833–1905), that we owe the evocative term 'die Seidenstrasse' to describe the myriad routes crossing Inner Asia linking Han China with the Mediterranean World. Von Richthofen's interest in the history of Han Chinese and Imperial Roman geographical knowledge of the Eurasian Steppe was to understand China's geography, which he approached from its inner Asian frontiers. From this perspective, not only the Chinese, but also the Roman, Byzantine, and Indian empires were peripheral to the centrality of the Eurasian Steppe. The historical development of these empires was a consequence of the historical dynamics of the nomadic empires of the steppe (Beck 2009; Lattimore 1940).

In von Richthofen's view, silk was the one commodity which linked Imperial Rome with Han China and explains their interest in the geography of the Eurasian Steppe (Waugh 2007). For von Richthofen, 'die Seidenstrasse' referred to one very specific period of history, when Imperial Rome and Han China reached out to each other. According to von Richthofen, 'Die Seidenstrasse' fell into disuse with the decline of Imperial Rome and the withdrawal of the Han from central Asia. The Tang did not so much revive the Silk Road as transform it. Their Turkic origins led the Tang emperors to have a rather different geopolitical interest in their Inner Asian frontiers from that of the Han. Also, by then, the technology of sericulture had been transferred to Byzantium, thereby reducing Western demand for Chinese Silk. This shifted Byzantium and medieval European interest in the geography of Inner Asia. With the rise of an Islamic trading world, 'The concept of the transcontinental Silk Roads... lost its meaning', von Richthofen wrote in 1877 (quoted in Waugh 2007: 5).

It was one of von Richthofen's students, the Swede Sven Hedin (1865–1952), who was inspired by his mentor to venture into Inner Asia. In a series of four perilous expeditions carried out between 1893 and 1927 through Inner Asia, Hedin reached the Great Wall of China, identified the sources of the Brahmaputra, Indus, and Sutlej rivers, and discovered the ruins of oasis trading cities and their Buddhist cave temples. He transformed his teacher's evocative, but narrowly interpreted metaphor of a Silk Road (or Silk Roads), into a romantic vision for other explorers to lead long-range archaeological raids to strip the Buddhist cave sites of their paintings, sculptures, and documents. Notable among them were Aurel Stein, Albert von Le Coq, Paul Pelliot, Kozui Otani and belatedly, Langdon Warner, before the Chinese government closed the door to 'foreign devils' stealing its treasures (Hopkirk 1980). It is this romantic imagining of the Silk Road with its visions of cultural interactions which UNESCO focused on.

5 See <https://en.unesco.org/silkroad/about-silk-road> (accessed 25/8/2016).

Von Richthofen, however, recognised that the Roman West and Han China were also reaching out to each other across the Indian Ocean and South China Sea. In the long cycles of history, the maritime trade routes were more significant than the overland roads. As the founding director (1902–5) of the Institut für Meereskunde (Institute for the Study of the Sea) in Berlin, he was well aware of the significance of maritime trade, as indicated in his 1876 lectures to the German Geological Society on the sea shipping to and from China.⁶

But beyond the *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, a 66-paragraph *manual* of navigation and trade in the western half of the Indian Ocean compiled by an anonymous Graeco-Egyptian skipper, and the later mathematical *Geographike Huphegesis* of the Alexandrine Greek astronomer Claudius Ptolemy, von Richthofen had little else to ground his attempt to understand Roman geographical knowledge of the maritime routes to China. He had even fewer Chinese sources to base any understanding of Chinese geographical knowledge of its Southern Seas. The first translation of Chinese records on Sino-Western relations was published only in 1885 by Friedrich Hirth. Von Richthofen could merely infer that just like the land routes, the sea routes across the Indian Ocean were pioneered by shippers and traders responding to an ever-increasing Roman demand for silks and spices.

CONSTRUCTING A MARITIME SILK ROAD

It was to these fragmentary and problematic Graeco-Roman texts that the early 20th century European scholars studying Angkor, Borobudur, and other historical monuments turned to in their attempt to make sense of their history⁷. They inferred from the Graeco-Roman texts that it was a growing Roman demand for exotic and prestigious items of dress and consumption that moved Greek and Egyptian sailors and traders to cross the Arabian Sea and Indian traders to cross the Bay of Bengal to the fabled ‘Land of Gold’, *Suvarṇadvīpa*, which they made ‘Indian’.

The underlying assumption was that an incipient network on the Indian subcontinent was linking growing trade in the urban centres of a number of emerging centralised states, among which were the Kuṣāṇas, the Mauryas, and the Guptas in North India, and the Sātavāhanas in the Deccan with the Cōḷas and the Chēras in South India. The argument was that it was the expansion and connections of these trade networks across the Bay Bengal, in part to fulfil Roman demands for spices and aromatics, which underpinned the transfer of the Buddhist and Hindu theologies and ritual systems that inspired the monuments of Angkor, Campa, Java, and all the other monuments the French and Dutch were seeking to ‘archaeologise’ as colonial heritage.

The search for Sanskrit textual references to seafaring and awareness of the historical geography of the lands across the Bay of Bengal referred to as *Suvarṇadvīpa* (isle of gold) or *Suvarṇabhūmi* (land of gold) has, however, not conclusively verified these arguments for the diffusion of Indic culture across the Bay of Bengal. The references are too elliptical and ambiguous to help reconstruct Indic understandings of their maritime world. Most of the relevant Sanskrit texts are Buddhist and Hindu texts referring to their

6 Von Richthofen, ‘Über den Seeverkehr nach und von China im altertum und mittelalter’, *Verhandlungen der Gesellschaft für Erdkunder zu Berlin*, 1876: 86–97, cited in Waugh 2007: 3.

7 George Coedès, who rose to become the doyen of early Southeast Asian history, evidently thought it necessary, or was persuaded early in his career to compile these Greek and Latin texts (1910).

worlds in theological terms. In comparison, the Arabic and Persian texts, especially their rutters and other navigational texts (studied by G. Ferrand 1913–14, and others), contained more definite information for understanding sailing in the Indian Ocean and its historical geography.

It is however the Chinese records, fragmentary as they often are, which have proved to be the most substantial and valuable corpus of evidence on the historical geography of the Southern Seas compared to the Indian or Arabic texts.⁸ A generation of Sinologists—notable among them was Paul Pelliot and, before him, W.P. Groenveltdt (1880) and Gustav Schegel⁹—combed the Chinese sources for their geographical knowledge of the Southern Seas. Paul Pelliot, who led the 1906 French expedition to Dunhuang, where he removed some of the more valuable manuscripts from Cave 17 (Hopkirk 1980), demonstrated how the Chinese texts can be read for a deeper understanding of the historical geography of their world. He reconstructed from the Chinese texts a lost emporium the Chinese knew as Fu-nan in the Mekong delta, the existence of which was confirmed by archaeological excavations by Louis Malleret (1944). Pelliot also reconstructed the itineraries of two Tang envoys to the south, uncovered what their reports tell about Chinese knowledge of the Southern Seas (1904), and described the Ming voyages to the Western Ocean (1933, 1935). George Coedès collated the elliptical 7th– 8th century Old Malay language inscriptions with fragmentary Chinese texts and Arabic textual references to a *Sribuza* to locate a forgotten trading ‘kingdom of Śrīvijaya’ up the Musi River in South Sumatra (today Palembang). G. Ferrand (1922) has systematically collated the Chinese and especially the Arab and Persian textual references and Old Malay epigraphy to attempt to draw an initial history of Śrīvijaya.

The knowledge accumulated by this pioneering generation of French and Dutch scholars¹⁰ inspired and enabled a group of mainly Bengali historians to establish in 1926 a Greater India Society to ‘organise the study of Indian culture in Greater India’ [i.e. Serindia, India Minor, Indo-China and Insulinia, as they defined it]. As Coedès remarked (1968: 4), with perhaps a note of irony, ‘curiously, India quickly forgot that her culture had spread over such vast domains to the east and southeast. Indian scholars had not been aware of this fact until very recently; it was not until a small group of them, having learned French and Dutch, studied with the professors of the Universities of Paris and Leyden that they discovered, in our works and those of our colleagues in Holland and Java, the history of what they now call, with justifiable pride “Greater India”.’

For these members of the Society, the overarching explanation for the expansion of Indian culture to form a Greater India was an Indian colonisation (and civilising) of the lands the ancient Indians knew as *Suvarṇadvīpa* or *Suvarṇabhūmi*, the Golden Island or peninsula.¹¹ Rabindranath Tagore’s poem *Shribijaylakshmi* composed during his epic 1927 tour from Singapore to Malaya and on to Java and Bali is an allegory of India’s

8 See the 6-volume compilation by Zhang Xinlang, Zhong, *Xi jiaotong shiliao huipian*, published in 1930.

9 See Schegel’s series of 16 ‘Geographical Notes (on Chinese references to various toponyms in the Straits of Melaka)’, published in *T’oung Pao* between 1898 and 1900.

10 Reflected well in two major works, one by the first head of the Dutch East Indies Archaeological Service, N.J. Krom (1931), and the other by George Coedès (1964), the first edition of which was published in 1948, just after his retirement as Director of the EFEO in 1947.

11 See Kwa Chong-Guan (2013: xv–xlvii) for an assessment of the contribution of the Greater India Society to historiography.

millennium-long spiritual relationship with Java, and encapsulates well this vision of a Greater India.

The trade which underpinned the making of a Greater India was, however, disrupted by the rise of the Mongols in central and west Asia, and Islam on the Indian subcontinent. Mongol expansion out of their steppe homeland precipitated a '13th century crisis' as Coedès (1958) described it, in the peripheral empires of Inner Asia's frontiers. Mongol incursions into southwest China ended the Bagan Kingdom and facilitated Thai expansion down the valleys of the Menam River to consolidate a new realm at Sukhothai, while an abortive Mongol expedition to Java enabled a new Majapahit realm to take over from Singhasari. The members of the Greater India Society could well mourn the severing of these trade links and the loss of alleged 'Indian colonies' in Further India. Indian trading links across the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea were further depressed by Vasco da Gama's arrival at Calicut in 1498. K.M. Panikkar (1953) has advanced the argument that da Gama's 'arrival marked a turning-point in the history of India and Europe' in that henceforth a series of European powers controlled the commerce of the Indian Ocean and its rim land, pushing Indian history into a deeper nadir for the next half-millennium.

It was not until the end of World War II and the start of decolonisation that a new India had the opportunity to reassert its influence in the Indian Ocean. It is to revive these 'cultural routes and maritime landscapes that not only linked different parts of the Indian Ocean littoral, but also connected the coastal centres to their hinterland' that India in 2014 launched a major Project Mausam. The Project aims to document the shared knowledge systems and ideas that spread along these routes and impacted both coastal centres, and also large parts of the environs.

DECONSTRUCTING A MARITIME SILK ROAD

Post-World War II research by a new generation of scholars¹² has revised the Euro-centric view of a Maritime Silk Road initiated by Roman demand for silk and other exotica, whereby this Roman initiative changed the nature of early India-Southeast Asia relations. The essentially teleological narrative that unfolds from these Graeco-Roman origins of the Maritime Silk Road, became the vision for 16th century Iberian adventurers venturing into the Indian Ocean to expand into a narrative of competition and conflict between rival Merchant empires, and culminates in 19th century colonisation of Asia, has been interrogated on three counts. The first is the narrative of an inevitable 'European expansion' to dominate Asian trade leading to 19th century European imperialism. The second is the extrapolation of this 19th century colonisation of Asia to explain an earlier Indian expansion and colonisation of Southeast Asia. The third is that the 19th century Western carving up of China was a consequence of China's focus on its inner Asian frontiers as a 'continental' power, and consequent disinterest in its maritime world.

Panikkar's arguments for a 'Vasco da Gama Epoch' disrupting the spice trade in the Indian Ocean remained virtually unchallenged until the 1970s, when a new wave

12 See Wade (2013b) for a comprehensive bibliography of European studies of East Asian nautical technologies, maritime routes, maritime trade, port polities, tribute systems, religious interflow, shipwrecks, trade commodities and classical Asian language texts relating to the maritime realm. An earlier version of this overview is available on-line as an Asia Research Institute Working Paper Series No. 16 at www.ari.nus.edu.sg/pub/wps.htm (accessed 14/10/2016). This online version includes a listing of shipwrecks recovered in the South China and East China Seas.

of post-colonial scholarship, inspired by Fernand Braudel's *longue durée* framing of the past, came to the fore.¹³ Subsequently, the world-systems perspective of historical change associated with a group of north American historical sociologists¹⁴ and the urbanism of port cities (Broeze 1989; Hall 2008) revised and reframed our understanding of early modern maritime trade in the Indian Ocean (Prakash 2012). Within these long cycles of history and their deep structures, the Portuguese and the other European trading states following them were neither as disruptive as Panikkar and other nationalist historians make it out to be, nor as insignificant as other more Asia-centric historians led by the Dutch socio-economic historian J.C. van Leur have argued.

Van Leur led the challenge to an Euro-centric writing of Asian and Indonesian history in particular, interrogating the rise and development of a Dutch colonial state. He argued that Governor-General Cornelius 'Speelman and the Company were rising in the Indonesian world by means of a hard struggle with the existent powers,' and ask 'why, then, does more light not fall on that world? Why is it we are only seen as the antagonists?' Van Leur argued for an autonomous trading world of Southeast Asia in which the Portuguese and the Dutch were peripheral up to 1650. He was preparing to extend that world to the eighteenth century, if he had not been unfortunately killed in action during World War II.¹⁵

The trading world of Asia van Leur (1955: 201) was working towards the reconstruction of included, at one end of the scale, the peddlers and small traders travelling from port to port (as in medieval Europe, where peddlers travelled to weekend fairs in different towns) with their merchandise, and at the other end of the scale, 'merchant gentlemen' with the status and wealth to invest in large scale trading of luxury items and bulk cargoes. Trade statistics not available to van Leur have been compiled from the voluminous archives of the Iberian and North Atlantic trading companies (Bulbeck 1998), and these statistics indicate a vibrant and dynamic early modern Asian trading world which the Portuguese and the Dutch had to break into. A.G. Frank (1998) has marshalled these and other statistics of bullion circulation to demonstrate that the European merchant empires bought their entry into an expanding Asian market with silver extracted from their American colonies.

The audacity of the Portuguese attempt to establish an *Estado da Índia* through enforcement of a *cartaz* (safe-conduct) system underestimated the resilience and vibrancy of Asian shipping dominated largely by Arab shipping. Persian and Arab shippers and traders had developed the earlier Graeco-Roman trade routes across the Arabian Sea from the Gulf ports of Basra and Saifra to Sri Lanka and crossing the Bay of Bengal to Śrīvijaya before heading north to Guangzhou (Hourani 1995; Tibbetts 1956, 1957).

These Persian and Arab shippers and traders did not, as the pre-World War II scholars reconstructed, undermine earlier Indian trade with its colonies in the *Suvarṇadvīpa*. Rather, the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea from the 7th to the 17th century was part of a Persian cosmopolis in which Persian was the language of trade

13 K.N. Chaudhuri (1985) is a benchmark application of Braudelian *longue durée* approach to the reconstruction of the Indian Ocean trading world.

14 Among whom will be Thomas Hall, Christopher Chase-Dunn, Andre Gunder Frank and Immanuel Wallerstein; see Stephen K. Sanderson (1995) for their views on world systems.

15 See Van Leur's 1934 doctoral dissertation and his other writings, translated in 1955. Van Leur has ignited a historical controversy among historians of Indonesia (and Malaya, including Singapore) on the possibilities of an Asia-centric historiography of that region, on which see G.J. Resink 1950.

(Eaton 2013). It was a cosmopolis defined in part by the circulation of variant versions of the Persian epic of Alexander the Great as the archetypal Persian king who conquered the world and united east and west. Persian was the lingua franca of both the overland and maritime Silk Roads. By the 13th century Persian was the official language world of the Mongol courts. The Indian Ocean from the 15th to the 18th century was, Subrahmanyam (1999) has argued, a Persian World practicing a variation of ‘mercantilism’.

Recognition of the Persian language as the lingua franca linking both the oasis towns of the overland Silk Road and the ports of the maritime Silk Road into a Persian cosmopolis raises the issue of how this Persian cosmopolis relates to alternate constructions of an Indo-Islamic *al-bahr al-hindi* world from 700 to 1500 CE (Chaudhuri 1985; Wink 1999; Eaton 1993). Is this construct of an ‘Islamic world economy’ too rigid and static compared to a more flexible and evolving Persian order, as Sanjay Subrahmanyam (1999: 51) argues? Or, is there a deeper connected history between *al-bahr al-hindi* and the Persian cosmopolis that incorporated elements and features of an Islamicate trading system, and was able to bring all the ‘classical civilisations’—Graeco-Roman, Sassanid-Sernitic, Sanskritic, and Sinitic—into new relationships with each other? It may not be a coincidence that Borobudur in Java, Angkor in Cambodia, and the Ananda temple at Bagan in Myanmar were all constructed during this era of a Persian cosmopolis.

The advent of a Persian cosmopolis, Richard Eaton (2013) has pointed out, was preceded some 500 years earlier by another cosmopolis defined by the Sanskrit language. Sheldon Pollock has argued that somewhere from the beginning of the Contemporary Era, kings ‘from Kashmir to Kelantan’ (2006: 257) reached out to adopt Sanskrit, hitherto the ‘language of the Gods’, as the language of royal power, thus creating a Sanskrit cosmopolis. The knowledge incorporated within the Sanskritic corpus was appropriated by kings and their royal centres to define their world—from its cosmology and theogony, expressed in architecture and rituals, to the regulation of government, society, and the economy. This attempt to construct social and cultural spaces on the basis of language—Sanskrit and Persian—separate from religion (especially Hinduism and Islam) raises a number of analytical issues.

Southeast Asia’s incorporation into this Sanskrit cosmopolis, Pollock (2006: 528–32) argues, was not a consequence of any Indianisation or Brahmanisation of the region driven by trade. But this attempt to divorce the appropriation of Sanskrit for the aestheticisation of political power from the Brahmanical foundations of Sanskrit as the ‘language of the Gods’ may not be that clear or distinct (Bronkhorst 2011; Ali 2011). Van Leur had made the case against an Indian colonisation of the Southeast Asia when he extrapolated his arguments against a Dutch colonisation of the Indonesian archipelago to argue against an analogous earlier Indian colonisation of the archipelago subscribed to by Dutch historians. Instead of ‘colonisation’, van Leur postulated a ‘Brahmanisation’ of Southeast Asia, as the continuation of the diffusion of Brahmanic culture from North to South India and from there across the Bay of Bengal.¹⁶ Bronkhorst (2011), in disagreement with Pollock, sides with van Leur that Brahmanism is more about social order than soteriology, and cannot be divorced from its Sanskrit vehicle.

The issue is, when and how ports and other sites on the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia first established contact? Field archaeology surveys and excavations have

¹⁶ Van Leur’s argument for a ‘Brahmanisation’ of Southeast Asia is derived from Max Weber, on which see H. Kulke (1986).

confirmed the existence of a number of the early maritime polities mentioned in the Chinese and other texts (Manguin 2004: 282–313). Excavations of these maritime polities and inland trading sites are revealing that the beginnings of these sites predate the earliest supposed Indian contacts, leading Manguin (2011: xxi) to provocatively ask if ‘Southeast Asia was Indianised before Indianisation’. Ethno archaeological and linguistic studies of the vast geographical area known as Monsoon Asia point to a deep cultural unity of shared norms and cultural models crossing the diverse ethnic, linguistic, and socio-cultural landscape to form a unifying cultural matrix. This cultural matrix underpins the Austroasiatic and Austronesian migrations and trading networks connecting Southern China with Southeast and South Asia and eastwards to Africa transcending the ‘Indianisation’ of the region, or its incorporation into a Sanskrit cosmopolis (Aciri, Blench, and Landmann forthcoming).

Compared to the Bay of Bengal, the South China Sea sector of the Maritime Silk Road was not as intensively researched in the first half of the 20th century. This was because there were no driving forces to research the trade of the South China Sea as there were to uncover the trade across the Bay Bengal, in order to understand how trade contributed to the spread of the knowledge that inspired the construction of Borobudur, Angkor Wat, or the Ananda temple. The Chinese texts were researched largely for information on the historical geography of the region.¹⁷ Wang Gungwu (1958) was among the first to study the Nanhai Trade.

More recent studies (Deng 1997) have also documented the development of China’s maritime trade and how China administered foreign trade as offering of tribute to the emperor as part of the *heqin* system of ‘harmonious relationship’, which assumes the superiority of the Chinese emperor and the inferiority of the ruler offering ‘tribute’ (Hamashita 2008). The texts have also been read for what they tell of China’s growing participation in maritime trade from the time of the Song right through the Ming to the Qing, when shifts and changes in the Chinese market increasingly drove Chinese trade with the South Seas (Heng 2009; Ptak 1998, 1999). Regional studies of Fujian’s development have contributed to a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the long cycles of China’s maritime development in relations to developments north of the Yangzi River (So 2000).

Data from archaeological excavation of an increasing number of shipwrecks in the South China Sea and the Java Sea since the 1980’s (Kwa 2012) are raising questions which is also forcing revision of our understanding of the nature and structure of trade in the South China Sea and the ships moving this trade (Brown 2009). The quantity of ceramics and other commodities, notably iron bars, recovered from the 9th to 13th century Java Sea wrecks indicate that Chinese kilns and furnaces were producing massive quantities of ceramics and iron for export at a much earlier date than we understood. This volume

¹⁷ See Wheatley (1961) for an example of a very close reading of not only the Chinese, but the Greco-Roman, Indian and Arabic texts for what these texts can tell us of the historical geography of the Malay Peninsula and the isthmus. O.W. Wolters (1967) is still the benchmark study of what can be inferred from the Chinese texts on not only the historical geography of the region, but also the commodities traded. See also Wolters (1983) and (1986) for another example of what a close reading of the Chinese texts can reveal. Paul Wheatley and others following him had at their disposal an analytical tool denied to Pelliot and his generation: a reconstruction by Bernard Kalgren (1940) of the morphemes of ancient Chinese, which provided a guide to how Chinese scribes would have transliterated Southeast Asian toponyms according to their pronunciation of the language in the Tang era.

of cargoes is not small-scale peddling trade as van Leur and his generation understood pre-modern Asian trade to be largely about, but merchant capitalism with investments to underwrite the production and export of tens of thousands of pieces of ceramics and tons of iron bars (Kwa 2012). How were these merchant capitalist ventures into foreign trade regulated by the *shiboshi*, the Commissioner of Maritime Affairs?

The evidence of the shipwrecks also informs that the ships plying the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean were Arab *dhow*s or Southeast Asian lash-lug vessels. The archaeological evidence is silent on the presence of Indian (Ray 2003, 1999, 1996) and Chinese ships and shipping sailing the South China Sea or Indian Ocean before the 10th century.¹⁸ The emerging evidence from marine archaeological excavation of shipwrecks indicates Southeast Asian sewn-plank and lashed-lug vessels dominating the long-distance maritime trade ventures (Manguin 1993).

Our knowledge of Chinese nautical technology was pioneered by Joseph Needham as part of his *Science and Civilisation in China* project (1971), and by Lo Jung-pang in the 1950's.¹⁹ Lo raised the historiographical issue of whether China was an essentially continental power oriented towards its inner Asian frontiers, or did turn to the oceans on three occasions in its history. In Lo's reconstruction, China's first turn to the sea was during the Qin-Han, when Emperor Wu ordered massive coastal raids against Korea and south to Vietnam. The second turn to the sea was during the Sui-Tang, when naval expeditions were launched against Japan and south to Campa/Linyi. China's third emergence as a sea power was during the Southern Song and early Yuan, when China increasingly turned to maritime commerce. The early Ming was thus able to draw upon some three centuries of nautical infrastructure development to construct the fleets that the eunuch admiral Zheng He led into the Indian Ocean.

The increasingly dense network of criss-crossing sea lanes linking southern China's ports and their hinterlands with ports and hinterlands of the Straits of Melaka, the Java Sea, and the Sulu Sea in the south and the Gulf of Tonkin and Gulf of Siam in the north suggests that the semi-enclosed maritime space of the South China Sea may be defined an "Asian Mediterranean."

This analogy of the South China Sea as an 'Asian Mediterranean' derives from Braudel's work on the sea as a unifying force shaping the history of the Mediterranean world. It is an analogy that, Denys Lombard (1998, 1990, 1995) has argued, may help us understand Southeast Asia and southern China as parts of one region, in the same way Braudel approached the history of the Mediterranean.²⁰

Sixty years of research into the maritime trade of the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean has qualified and challenged the research of the preceding forty years. A new reconstruction of the connected histories of the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean is in the making.

18 See Flecker's (2008, 2015) documentation of China's venture into blue oceans with the development of a South China Sea hybrid vessel type combining structural features of Chinese and South-East Asian origin from only the late 14th to late 16th century.

19 Lo's (2012) work was posthumously edited for publication by Bruce Elleman (Hong Kong: University Press / Singapore: NUS Press, 2012). Lo completed his manuscript in 1957, with some six other articles on these issues of China's maritime development from the Song to the Ming. He also collaborated with Needham during this period.

20 The application of Braudel's *Mediterranean* as an analogy to an understanding of the South China Sea is not without its problems, as Heather Sutherland (2003) has argued.

THE MARITIME SILK ROAD RECONSTRUCTED

The emerging reconstruction of a Maritime Silk Road goes beyond von Richthofen's strictures on understanding 'die Seidenstrasse' to refer to only sea shipping between Roman and China to a wider understanding of maritime links between the Persian Gulf/Red Sea and the Indian Ocean and South China Sea within the long cycles and connected histories of the region.

Austronesian Connections (prior to 500 BCE to 2nd century BCE)

It was an Austronesian-speaking people migration out of a homeland in the region of southern China to Kalimantan, Java, Sumatra and the Malay peninsula by the second or first millennium BCE, and moved eastwards to Hawai'i and the Easter Islands and westwards to Madagascar that first connected the coastal regions of southern China with south Asia (Solheim 2006; Bellwood *et al.* 1996; Glover and Bellwood 2004). The distribution of their ceremonial Dong Son bronze drums throughout mainland and island Southeast Asia is evidence of long-distance exchange networks, transfer of technology, and hierarchies of political and religious power (Calo 2014).

Excavations at Ban Don Ta Phet, Kanchanaburi, in west-central Thailand between 1975 and 1985 have recovered a variety of semiprecious stone and glass beads, stamped and moulded ceramics and bronze vessels showing northern Indian influence or, perhaps, manufacture. This archaeological evidence suggests that that by the 4th century BCE mainland Southeast Asia was part of a trading system linking Han China with Indian subcontinent and westwards to the civilisations of the Mediterranean Basin (Glove 1989; Bellina and Glover 2004).

Linking Emerging Chiefdoms (c. 2nd century BCE–3rd century CE)

The manufacture and exchange of ceremonial Dong Son bronze drums is the most significant evidence of an increasingly dense exchange network evolving in island Southeast Asia around two millennia ago. This development of exchange and trade networks was a consequence of growing political centralisation and concurrent social stratification of Austronesian communities as they evolved from the last stages of prehistoric tribal societies into chiefdoms. In northeast Thailand, on the Irrawaddy valley and the Mekong a similar transition to chiefdoms can be reconstructed from the archaeology of moated settlements.

Concurrently, a new series of trading networks were connecting the emerging urban centres of the kingdom of the Kuṣāṇas and their successors on the Indian subcontinent. Ports and towns such as Amarāvati and Arikamedu, Kāñcīpuram, and Salihundam developed trade links with Persian Gulf ports and across the Bay of Bengal. Invariably, Indian coastal shippers and traders and Austronesian-language speaking seafarers met and exchanged not only things, but also ideas and norms on how they could relate to each other and conduct their trade and other exchanges.

Archaeological excavations have confirmed the locations of a number of coastal polities mentioned in the Chinese records in the environs of the Melaka and Bangka Straits, the Malay Peninsula and isthmus and the Mekong delta (Manguin 2004). Funan, the existence of which Pelliot reconstructed from Chinese texts, appears in the archaeological record as the preferred emporium for exchange of goods from the Graeco-Roman West,

the Indian Subcontinent, and China from the first to the seventh century.²¹ The Chinese records ascribing an Indian origin to the rulers of Funan has been interpreted as an indication of the Indianisation of Southeast Asia by an earlier generation of scholars. But this adoption of Indic symbols and narratives to establish a political genealogy and moral authority to rule is today viewed as a strategy by Funan's rulers to establish their political status vis-a-vis the Indian traders and rulers they were interacting with.

The Maritime Links of a Pan-Asian Buddhist World (4th century CE–10th century CE)

The oasis cities of central Asia and their Buddhist cave monasteries, especially at Dunhuang, suggest a close and complex relationship between commerce and Buddhism. A similar relationship can be reconstructed between Graeco-Roman trade on the Malabar Coast and the development of Buddhist cave monasteries along the mountainous roads linking the seaports of Muziris and Calicut with urban centres on the Deccan under Śātavahana rule. Likewise in island Southeast Asia Buddhism had a close and complex relationship with trade across the Bay of Bengal.²² Sanskrit, originally the language of the Gods, transformed around the beginning of the Common Era to become the language of kings from Sind to Bali, and became the homogenising influence shaping this Indic world into a 'Sanskrit cosmopolis' (Pollock 2006). It was Buddhism, in both its Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna forms, which facilitated these maritime links between South and Southeast Asia and shaped intra-Asian connectivity (Acri 2016).

Tang China emerged as the centre of a Pan-Asian Buddhist World. Streams of Buddhist monks crossed central Asia or the South China Sea to study and collect scriptures. Among the latter was Yijing (635–713 CE), who left a detailed record of the coastal city-states he visited, in particular Śrīvijaya, where he spent six months studying Sanskrit before proceeding on to India, where he stayed for eleven years at Nalanda before returning to Śrīvijaya for a further two years to study and translate the scriptures he had collected. The archaeological and epigraphic records confirm the centre of Śrīvijaya at Palembang and its founding in 682 CE. Śrīvijaya, as the Tang records indicate, rose to dominance as the pre-eminent South China Sea emporium by controlling the trade in things Buddhist and the luxury aromatics from West Asia to a growing Tang market and successfully substituted, as Wolters (1967) reconstructed, their local products for the high value Persian originals.

This *nan-hai* trade was, as the evidence from shipwrecks recovered from the Java Sea—the Belitung Wreck dated to c. 826 (Krahl 2010), the 10th century Intan Wreck, and the Cirebon wreck (Kwa 2010) dated to the end of the 10th century—was not only a high value-low volume peddling trade in silks, spices, and aromatics as an earlier generation of historians had assumed, but was merchant capitalism with the investments and funds to mass produce ceramics for export. It was a trade shipped in Arab *dhow*s (Hourani 1995; Agius 2008).

21 See Malleret (1959) for the archaeology supporting the reconstruction of Funan. For the isthmus, see M. Jacq-Hergoualc'h (2001) detailed correlation of the archaeological discoveries, objects, remains and statuary of the various isthmus and peninsula sites with the textual records.

22 The French Orientalist Sylvain Lévi, who tutored not only the founding cohort of EFEO scholars, but also the Bengali historians who founded the Greater India Society, made this link between Buddhism and maritime trade in (1929). See for more recent studies, Ray (1994) and Sen (2014).

Persian Trading Worlds (7th–17th century)

Arab seafarers and traders venturing into the Indian Ocean from the 7th century onwards on routes pioneered by earlier Persian traders to Sri Lanka and across the Bay of Bengal to Śrīvijaya before sailing north to Guangzhou, laid the foundations of an Islamicated trading world within a Persian cosmopolis. A ‘new’ Persian language, *fārsī*, became the lingua franca of both the overland and the maritime Silk Roads. It was a language nurtured in the Samanid court of Khorasan by a Persian diaspora out of the Iranian plateau after the Arab conquest of Persia. Persian seafarers and traders crossed the Indian Ocean to reach Guangzhou where they were known to the Chinese as *bosi*²³ traders of much desired West Asian aromata and especially pharmaceuticals critical for the Chinese pharmacopeia.

This Persian cosmopolis incorporated the techniques, provisions and norms of trade of an Islamicated trading world. It was a world based on a monetised and commercialised economy underwriting the raising of capital and formation of partnerships in the wide comprehensive form of *mufawada* or the *commenda* contract to finance trade (Udovitch 1970). This Islamicate trading world, as André Winks (1990-) reconstructed, stretched in time from its beginnings in the Abbasids to end with the Safavids, Mughals and the Ottomans, and in space from al-Andalus to Quanzhou and the Swahili coast. The Moroccan Ibn Battuta spent thirty years (1325–1354) travelling through this Indo-Islamic world, and apparently, could spend every night in the familiarity of a mosque. There were, within this millennium long linear history of an Islamicate trading world, a number of cyclic trajectories on the maritime routes.

An ‘Asian Sea Trade Boom’ (10th–13th century)

Growing Arab and increasingly assertive Tamil trade through the Melaka Straits to the Southern Chinese ports of Guangzhou and Quanzhou laid the foundations of an ‘Asian Sea Trade Boom’ (Wisseman-Christie 1998, 1999) or an ‘Asian Commercial Ecumene’ (Wade 2013) after the decline of the Tang. It may have been to support the Tamil trade guilds whose access to Chinese ports may have been regulated or blocked by Śrīvijaya that lead the Cōla king Rājendra I to launch an unprecedented major naval expedition against a series of Śrīvijaya’s Melaka Straits ports (Kulke *et al.*, eds. 2009).

However, the main driver of this Asian Trade Boom was a medieval economic revolution in the Song. China, despite its Confucian disdain for trade, became more commercialised, monetised and urbanised under the Song than it had ever been in the past. When Song China lost control of the overland routes, it turned to the *Nan hai* trade for connections to overseas markets. China, which hitherto waited for foreign traders to bring tribute to Guangzhou, now started building ships to venture into the *Nan hai* to source for the products they desired.²⁴ The Song laid the foundations of China as a sea power, which the Yuan built upon, and made possible the great Ming naval expeditions (Lo 2012).

A new series of ports on the north coast of Java and on the east coast of Sumatra (Heng 2009) emerged to serve Chinese traders venturing into the *Nan hai* searching for the ‘dragon’s brain perfume’ or camphor, and other exotica for the Song market. Chinese

23 *Bosi* was the Chinese name for the Sasanian Empire (224–651 CE), on which see Salmon (2004) and Wolters (1967) on the *bosi* trade and traders in Indonesian waters.

24 See abstracted translation by Mark Elvin of Yoshinobu 1970.

traders also ventured into the Sulu Sea and the Celebes Sea. Quanzhou emerged as the 'emporium of the world' (Schottenhammer, ed. 2001) and with the old port of Guangzhou, both were tightly linked with their Southeast Asian counterparts. The South China Sea arguably became a 'Chinese Mediterranean', connecting the Sulu Sea and the Java Sea ports with the South China Sea.

The South China Sea formed a distinct trading circuit in the larger Islamicate trading world. The Bay of Bengal ports formed another network, and were linked by the Straits of Melaka to those of the South China Sea. Sri Lanka was the intersection of the Bay of Bengal circuits with the western Indian Ocean/Arabian Sea circuits. Cairo under the Fatimid dynasty emerged as the new centre of West Asian trade, replacing Baghdad. The integration of these three maritime trading networks created in effect a world system that could have been a precursor of the capitalist world economy eventually established by the West, except for a 14th century crisis (Abu-Lughod 1993).

14th Century Crisis

A series of environmental crises and cycles of climate change in the 14th century forced both China and West Asia to turn inwards. Episodes of climate change wrought drought and famine accompanied by plagues of locusts on Yuan China from 1324 to 1330, and again from 1339. According to the Chinese records, a series of 'dragons' brought floods, then drought and famine accompanied by extremely cold winters amounting to a minor ice age. A plague pandemic finally ended the Yuan dynasty in 1367 (Brook 2010). Concurrently, another plague pandemic, which killed an estimated 30 percent or more of Europe's population in a 'Black Death' and spread to West Asia slumped trade on the Maritime Silk Road.

An 'Age of Commerce' (1450–1680)

The Ming, more than the Yuan and perhaps even the Song, was locked into the *Nan hai* trade. They were increasingly dependent upon a South China Sea maritime world and its trade to finance its demand for conspicuous consumption of exotics as a display of status. In contrast to the Yuan, the Ming reemphasised the Confucian rhetoric of a Sinocentric world with its state monopoly of trade and consequent conduct of trade as tribute. It was to re-establish the prestige and cosmological centrality of China that the Yongle emperor (r. 1403–1424) launched seven naval expeditions led by the eunuch Admiral Zheng He into the Western (Indian) Ocean to encourage the 'barbarian kings' to resume the sending of tribute to the central kingdom (Pelliot 1933, 1935; Dreyer 2006).

The voyages lead by Zheng He were, in this context, successful in stimulating Southeast Asia polities to offer more tribute to the Ming court. Melaka emerged at the beginning of the 15th century to successfully claim the legacy of Śrīvijaya as the premier emporium for the South China Sea and Bay of Bengal trade. It established itself as the preferred hub (together with the Ryukyu kingdom) of the Ming tribute trade network. The West Asia terminus of Zheng He's voyages was recovering from the Black Death while the Mamluk rulers at Cairo were consolidating their control of the caravan routes and links with Venice as the leading emporium for Europe's trade with the Indian Ocean and beyond. Southeast Asia entered into an 'Age of Commerce' which Anthony Reid (1993) reconstructed as an era of unprecedented prosperity from 1460–1680.

The Portuguese capture of Melaka in 1511 did not so much disrupt Asian trade as it redistributed it to the emerging sultanates of Aceh and Johor. Portuguese demand for spices and aromatics, combined with that of the Dutch from the beginning of the 17th century, created a century-long economic boom in Southeast Asia. The advent of the Portuguese and Dutch merchant empires created new markets for Indian textiles not only in East Asia, but also Southeast Asia and Europe. Between 1500 and 1850 Indian textiles ‘clothed the world’ (Riello and Roy, eds. 2009; Guy 1998). The Indian merchant communities of Gujarat, Malabar and Coromandel were able to establish a dominant presence in the early modern trading world of the Indian Ocean (Prakash, ed. 2012).

Ming China by the time of the Wan-li emperor was firmly locked into a global economy. Chinese products, notably porcelains, enjoyed a resurgent market. The cargoes of the 17th century excavated shipwrecks are evidence of a major surge in the production of porcelains not only for the *Nan hai* ports, but also for the European markets. Introduced by the Spanish and the Portuguese, payments for Chinese exports were in silver. It was the Asian silver market, more than the Euro-American market, that shaped world financial flows. But whether this influx of silver undermined China’s traditional copper coinage, eventually precipitating a ‘monetary crisis’ which eventually led to the collapse of the Ming, continues to be debated.

The succeeding Qing continued the Ming system of tribute trade. But the attractions of, and dependence on maritime trade as well as increasing contradictions of the tribute trade system forced a major rethinking of Qing maritime policies. In 1684 the Kangxi emperor lifted the three-hundred-year-old embargo on private trade, allowing Manchu and Chinese traders to travel overseas and foreign traders to enter Chinese ports freely (Zhao 2013).

The increasing density and scale of trade from the 16th to the 18th century fragmented the spaces of the South China Sea, which was divided and contested between not only Qing China and Tokugawa Japan, but also between pirate and smuggler groups, with some of them, such as the Zheng regime, rising to be formidable maritime forces. ‘Private’ traders like the Hokkiens and their trading networks also claimed their space in the South China Sea.²⁵ The extraordinary map of the South China Sea found in 2009 in the collection of John Selden, which was gifted to the Bodleian Library of Oxford University in 1659, may be a map of these Hokkien trading networks (Jiao, ed. 2015)²⁶.

Rise of a (Western) Capitalist Economy and Modernity (18th century onwards)

The 18th century is a turning point in the reconstruction of a Maritime Silk Road. Up to that point of time, none of the Asian trading communities and their guilds perceived the need to occupy ports and control sea-lanes. The sea was a great void crossed at great

25 On the contradictory and contested multiple political, legal and commercial jurisdictions of the South China Sea claimed by formal government structures, bureaucratised merchant organisations and illegal criminal networks, see (Andrade and Hang 2016)

26 Jiao (2015) is a catalogue of a June 2014 exhibition of the Seldern and other maps and documents from Oxford University, and an accompanying volume of the papers from an international symposium. The Chinese contributions to this symposium framed the Seldern map within a Chinese historical framework. In contrast, Brook (2013) looks at the Seldern map from the perspective of cartographic historiography while Batchelor (2014) interprets the Seldern map within a narrative of London’s rise within a 17th century global context.

risks. With the exception of the Cōla raids and the Ming voyages, the spaces of the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea were immune to assertions of power and attempts to control sea-lanes. The Portuguese attempt to establish an *Estado da Índia*, a 'State of India' based on armed shipping, control of a chain of fortresses and trading posts in the Indian Ocean to control trade through enforcement of a *cartaz* (safe conduct) system was therefore unprecedented.²⁷ But the Asian trading communities were sufficiently resilient and resourceful to flow around the *cartaz* system to compete with the emerging European merchant empires and where necessary, collaborate with them.²⁸

The north Atlantic merchant adventurers and their trading companies followed the Portuguese in establishing a series of forts on the Coromandel and Malabar coasts of India and in island Southeast Asia in their attempts to control trade. By the 18th century, these North Atlantic trading companies were transformed into rival merchant empires competing for control of the seas and its trade (Tracy 1991). From the establishment of forts to control the sea and its trade to the annexation of territories for the security and provision of the fort was a small step. This annexation and occupation of territories, once initiated, developed a momentum of its own, and interventions into the hinterlands of their ports became the basis of European colonial empires in the 19th century.

THE MYTHS AND METAPHORS OF A MARITIME SILK ROAD

A century ago there was no public awareness or social memories of the complex networks of caravan and sea routes across the deserts and steppes of inner Asia and the Indian Ocean and South China Sea constituting Silk Roads. There was no appreciation of the significance of the Mugao Grottos outside the ancient caravan town of Dun huang. Abbot Wang Yanlu could without difficulty sell off parts of the contents of Cave 17 to Aurel Stein and Paul Pelliot. The pilgrimage of Xuanzang and the travels of Marco Polo and Ibn Battuta were more myths in our deep social memories than evidence and facts about a Silk Road. The voyages of the Three-Jewel Eunuch admiral were recalled only in shrines dedicated to him by local communities along the Straits of Melaka and Java. His tomb on the southern outskirts of Niushou in Nanjing was forgotten until it was restored in 1985, for the 580th anniversary of his first voyage.

A century of scholarship has helped to transform our imaginings and social memories of the achievements of the Sogdian traders, the Austronesian-speaking sailors, and the Persian and Arab traders who constructed the Silk Roads we celebrate today. The commemorations and celebrations of the 600th anniversary of the launch of Zheng He's voyages in 2005 have enlarged our social memories of the Eunuch Admiral. Earlier, in 1998, we were reminded of the exploits of Vasco da Gama on the 500th anniversary of his arrival at Calicut. Our social memories of these Silk Roads will continue to evolve and deepen as we continue to identify and commemorate locations along these Silk roads as significant sites of our social memories helping to shape our identities.²⁹

27 The Portuguese (and Spanish) venture to control shipping and trade was arguably an attempt to extend their understanding of the Mediterranean as a closed sea over which Rome claimed jurisdiction or *imperium*. However, Roman *imperium* over the seas did not, as Hugo Grotius argued, amount to a claim to *dominium* or ownership of the seas, which Grotius charged: the Portuguese were attempting to exclude the Dutch from the trade of the Indian Ocean, on which see Borschberg (2011: 78–105).

28 As argued for by the contributors in Chaudhury and Morineau (1999).

29 The connection and significance of space and time in the making of our collective memories which

UNESCO could in 1988 draw upon these deepening social memories underpinned by extensive research reconstructing a Silk Road overland and by sea to facilitate its mission of promoting cultural exchange and empathy among its member states. According to then UNESCO Director General Federico Mayer, the ‘Silk Roads have highlighted the fruitful dialectic and give-and-take in the unending dialogue between civilisations and cultures. They show how the movement of people, and the flow of ideas and values have served to transform cultures and even civilisations...’. UNESCO’s intent of its decade-long project was that the fabled Silk Roads, far from being mere trade routes, were cultural highways that played a pivotal role in linking East and West, intermittently bringing together nomads and city dwellers, pastoral peoples and farmers, merchants and monks, soldiers and pilgrims.

Museums and others, including the cellist Yo-Yo Ma, have drawn on the Silk Road metaphor to promote cultural dialogues and the preservation of the Roads’ tangible and intangible heritage. In 1998 Yo-Yo Ma founded the Silk Road Project Inc. as a non-profit foundation to work with museums in promoting the living arts of the people of the Silk Road lands (Grotenhuis, 2002; Manchester, 2007). Earlier, Japan’s public broadcaster Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai (NHK) undertook a seventeen-year project to document the Silk Road and its impact on Japan. The series was first aired on 7 April 1980, with sequels broadcast over the following decade, and has become a milestone in Japanese television broadcasting history.³⁰

Chinese President Xi however appears to have a rather different understanding of what defines these two Silk Roads as ‘One Belt, One Road’. In Xi’s vision reviving these two Silk roads are geo-economic and geo-strategic initiatives to restructure not only China’s Eurasian frontiers up to the Ural Mountains (and beyond), but also the Indian Ocean littoral of the Eurasian rim land. This vision of ‘One Belt, One Road’ reconnecting China to Asia is a consequence of China’s 21st century peaceful rise to great power status and is underpinned by China’s understanding that it was the driver of earlier constructions of the two Silk Roads.³¹ In the emerging historical narrative China was not only a continental power preoccupied with securing its Inner Asian frontiers, but also a maritime power with the maritime economy and technology to maintain China’s naval dominance of the

define our individual memories of our identity was argued for by Maurice Halbwachs (1980) and more recently, Pierre Nora’s large project exploring *Les lieux de mémoire* (1997).

30 NHK’s record of its programme is at https://www.nhk.or.jp/digitalmuseum/nhk50years_en/history/p20 (retrieved 26/8/2016). The music for the programmes by Kintarō, which gave the programmes a sense of timelessness, has also achieved classic status and can be downloaded at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mOtwSirCTHo> (accessed 26/8/2016).

31 See for example, the large catalogue *Haishang sichou zhi lu* published by the Fujian Provincial Museum and the Beijing Capital Museum of their exhibition on the Maritime Silk Road in 2014. The section headings of the catalogue outlines China’s narrative of the Maritime Silk Road: Riding the Great Waves and Exploring the Open Sea (Prehistory-Qin dynasty, Han dynasty and the Three Kingdoms period); Prosperous Ports and Extended Sea routes (from Jin to Tang and the Five dynasties); Clouds of Sails in the Sea and Thousands of Countries to Trade (Song and Yuan Dynasties); Global Voyaging and the Decline of the Maritime Silk Road (Ming and Qing Dynasties). Note also the earlier 1996 Hong Kong Museum of History link up with the Guangzhou Museum and the Guangdong Provincial Museum to mount an exhibition on ‘The Maritime Silk Route, 2000 Years of Trade on the South China Sea’ to claim their place in the development of this Maritime Silk Road from its beginnings during the Spring and Autumn Period of Chinese history (770–475 BCE) to the Qing Dynasty. See Joseph S.P. Ting, ed. (1996) for the catalogue of the exhibition.

East and South China Sea.³² Zheng He's voyages were the zenith of China's third turn to the sea to promote a peaceful and stable Western (Indian) Ocean.³³

As President Xi has appropriated images of an ancient Maritime Silk Road as a metaphor for China's twenty-first geo-economic and geo-political strategies, so too will the countries on the littoral and rime land of China's 'Western Ocean' resort to historical analogies and conjectures in deciding their responses to President Xi's initiatives.³⁴ For the countries of Southeast Asia, their deep social memories as southern neighbours of Imperial China will underpin their understanding and perceptions of the economic and political implications of China's invitation to join this New Silk Road (Zhao 2015, 2016).

Complicating Southeast Asian responses to Chinese invitations to join its New Silk Road are Chinese assertions of historic rights and claims to much of the South China Sea (Wu 2013). For the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), China's disregard of conflicting Southeast Asian narratives and claims is perceived to undermine the regionalisation of maritime security for a more stable South China Sea which the Association has been attempting to put in place since the end of the Cold War (Kwa 2007). The concerns of the United States and other powers over China's assertions to influence and control in the South China Sea further complicates Southeast Asian and Chinese actions and reactions towards each other's moves in the South China Sea (Storey and Lin 2016). Current thinking³⁵ about how a tribute system based on hierarchy, status and hegemony underpinned a stable international system in East Asia for the past half millennium, in contrast to Europe's 'Westphalian' system of equality of states in an unstable balance-of-power system, are reshaping Chinese and Southeast Asian social memories (Goh 2013) of the future international order in the Asia Pacific.

India too has been ambivalent in its response to China's New Silk road initiative. Its dilemma is, like Southeast Asia's, whether to perceive China's proposals for its New Maritime Silk Road as a geo-strategic challenge to India or presenting new opportunities for economic cooperation. In June 2014 the Indian government launched the project

32 Following von Richthofen's arguments for the centrality of the Eurasian steppe in the historical development of both Rome and China, then the imperative to ensure the security and stability of its inner Asian frontiers makes China through much of its history a continental power. See Ooi Kee Beng's (2015: 6–18, 213–227) dialogues with Wang Gungwu on the historiography of the Eurasian core in world history, the decline of this Eurasian core in the 20th century and consequent need today to combine continental with maritime power. Can China make this transformation to becoming a maritime power? Hailong Ju (2012) thinks so, and outlines the lessons of maritime history/power which China must learn to understand the reason it has to develop its sea power and focus on the South China Sea as a strategic concern. For an analysis of whether China will successfully effect this maritime transformation compared to other modern continental powers including France, Germany and Imperial Russia and its Soviet successor, see the essays edited by Erickson (2009) and his co-editors.

33 Fang and Li (2005) reflect on Chinese perceptions of Zheng He's voyages as 'peace missions on a grand scale'. But for how Zheng He's voyages have been fictionalised and politicised, see the essays in Salmon and Ptak (2005).

34 See Abalahin (2015) for an examination of the historical assumptions and analogies pre-modern Southeast Asian polities and also Japan and Korea brought to bear on their thinking of how to relate to Imperial China.

35 David Kang (2010) leads the arguments for the analogy of early modern trade and tribute relations in understanding debates about East Asia's future international order. There is also a growing discussion in the pages of the *Chinese Journal of International Politics* among Chinese scholars attempting to broaden the conceptual horizon of the tribute system within a (Western) realist school of international relations, see for example Zhang (2009), also Su-Yan Pan and Joe Tin-Yau Lo (2015).

Mausam to revive forgotten memories of the Indian Ocean 'world' as a 'Transnational Mixed Route' along which not only rare and exotic commodities were shipped and traded, but also ideas and religions seeped to create a distinctive Indian Ocean 'world'. Project Mausam's goals, according to India's Ministry of Culture, are to revive the 'lost linkages countries along the Indian Ocean shared with each other for millennia' and 'creating links connecting discrete Cultural and Natural World heritage sites across this Indian Ocean 'world' via a 'cross-cultural transnational narrative' to promote World Heritage.³⁶ The timing of the launch of this project suggests that it is India's ambivalent response to China's revival of a New Silk road.

India's ambivalent response to China's initiatives for a New Silk Road are shaped in large part by its collective memories of China as a strategic challenge from their 1962 war which continues today in skirmishing over territorial disputes on their land borders. The deeper and wider historical assumptions framing India's perceptions of China as a geopolitical threat to India are embedded in its inheritance of British imperial understandings enunciated by Viceroy Lord George Curzon at the beginning of the 20th century that the security of its Indian Empire depended on pro-active engagement with the Eurasia rim land, into which Russia was threatening to expand, and control of the Indian Ocean seen as a 'British Lake'. K.M. Panikkar (1945) extended this neo-Curzonian strategy to argue that an independent India should build a naval capability to make the Indian Ocean once again India, as it was before Vasco da Gama's intervention. Admiral Arun Prakash and his successors as Chiefs of Staff of the Indian Navy have embraced and moved to implement this Panikkar vision of the Indian Ocean as an 'Indian Lake' (Scott 2006). China's and India's 21st century turn to the ocean therefore foretells an emerging Sino-Indian rivalry in not only the Indian, but also the Pacific, or Indo-Pacific Oceans (Mohan 2012).

Project Mausam may be read as yet another attempt to mythologise the Maritime Silk Road as not only about commerce, as China is projecting, but equally, if not more, about cultural and religious interactions creating a multi-faceted Indian Ocean 'world' in which India was perceived to be central. It is a centrality derived from visions of a 'Greater India' which have become mythologised and an integral part of India's social memories. This underpins its 'Look East' with, more recently, Prime Minister N. Modi's 'Act East' policies and perceptions of Southeast Asia today.

CONCLUSION

Von Richthofen, with the evidence in his hands, could only point to Graeco-Roman beginnings of a Maritime Silk Road. The evidence reviewed in this paper points to prehistoric origins for this Silk Road and its complex historical development over the following two millennia. The Road as reconstructed in this paper is about the connections and interactions of three different trading worlds. The first is the Arabian Sea core of an Islamicated trading world, with the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea as the gateways to the West Asian and European terminals and markets of the Silk Road. The second is a Bay of Bengal world linking the Indian subcontinent across the Bay of Bengal to the emporia

36 The Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts has been designated the nodal coordinating agency for the project, see their <http://www.indiaculture.nic.in/project-mausam>. Himanshu P. Ray (2015) outlines the historical vision underlying this project.

and polities of Southeast Asia. The third trading world is the South China Sea trading world structured around tribute trade imposed by China alternating with the cycles of the Chinese market to which its southern ports of Guangzhou and Quanzhou were the entry points.

As van Leur has argued, the history of the Dutch East Indies (and wider Asia) looks different, depending upon whether that history is viewed from the decks of the Dutch galleon or the interior of the Asian *bazaar*. So too the history of the Maritime Silk Road. The history of the Maritime Silk Road seen from the Arabian Sea port-city of Siraf on the Persian Gulf is about the Silk Road as part of a larger Indo-Islamic World during the millennium from the 7th to the 17th century. It was a world defined by the use of the Persian language as its lingua franca, Islamicate trading techniques and institutions, and Persian-Arab navigation and shipping. But viewed from Nākappaṭṭinam, the Bay of Bengal was the centre of the Maritime Silk Road. The Bay of Bengal was the centre of a network of trade routes linking the ports of the Arabian Sea with those on the east coast of the subcontinent, and eastwards to the ports of Yavadvīpa, the isle of gold and silver. India was also the civilisational heartland of the diverse cultures of the Bay of Bengal littoral, which the Sanskrit language linked. However, the Maritime Silk Road examined from Guangzhou or Quanzhou was about imperial management of foreign trade to China. Offering of tribute to the emperor was part of the *heqin* system of ‘harmonious relationship’ between Imperial China and its southern neighbours in the Xiyang or Western Ocean, which encompassed the Nanyang or South China Sea and westwards to include the Indian Ocean.

The perspective of this Working Paper on the Maritime Silk Road is from the Straits of Melaka, the intersection of the Bay of Bengal and South China Sea trading worlds. From this position, Yavadvīpa or *Zīrbādāt*, the ‘lands below the winds’, was not only the source of spices, aromata and pharmaceuticals to the Chinese markets, and to South and West Asian *bazaars*. The Straits of Melaka was the funnel through which small volume but high value West and South Asian aromata, pharmaceuticals and other exotic items flowed to China and Chinese silks and ceramics flowed into the Bay of Bengal to the Persian Gulf. But the Melaka Straits ports were not so much entrepôts through which commodities were transhipped. They functioned more as emporiums, controlling the flow of commodities between the South China Sea and the Bay of Bengal trading networks.³⁷ As the crossroads of the Maritime Silk Road, Southeast Asia drew upon, transformed and reworked the flows and seepage of peoples, ideas and things from China, India, West Asia and Europe.

The narrative emerging from this reconstruction of a Maritime Silk Road is that the Arabian Sea, the Bay of Bengal and the South China Sea are spaces of circulation and networks along which peoples travelled, goods traded and ideas and technologies seeped. An earlier generation of scholars attempted to construct a linear historical trajectory for a Maritime Silk Road beginning with the Roman West reaching out to Han China some two millennium ago and teleological progresses to a series of European merchant empires disrupting and dominating this Maritime Silk Road some five hundred years ago. This paper has argued for a more decentred and connected history of the Maritime Silk Road within the long cycles of historical development in which global tendencies and universal forces are not mutually exclusive, but overlays one another and co-exist with the local, the historical and each other.

³⁷ An argument also made by Tansen Sen (2014).

How we perceive the Maritime Silk Road today and its future depends upon how we are remembering and reflecting on the history of the Road. Remembering and emphasising specific universal forces, especially religion, or capitalism as a global tendency writes the history of the Silk Road as a linear historical narrative leading to teleological end-of-history in either the 13th century when Islam undermined an Indianised trading world, or in the 16th century when the Portuguese attempted to disrupt and dominate the trade on the Maritime Road. This end-of-history narrative of the Maritime Silk Road leads to the rise of capitalism as the globalising force creating the modern world in the 19th century. This linear narrative of the Maritime Silk Road underpins and shapes emerging alternative and counter narratives of India as the heir to Western imperial domination of the Indian Ocean, or Chinese narratives of reviving Imperial China's management and control of the South China Sea.

Alternatively, the history of the Maritime Silk Road can be remembered as a decentred and polycentric world connected by Arab *dhow*s, Southeast Asian lash-lugged vessels and, from the 2nd millennium, Chinese junks and ships of the European merchant empires in the early modern era moving not only traders and their goods, but also monks, priests and pilgrims, marines and troops. The spaces of the sea through which high value and low bulk exotic and luxury commodities were traded and smuggled, bulk cargoes carried, knowledge and ideas seeped or religions spread would be open and porous. This would be done in such a remembering of the Maritime Silk Road as a densely compressed space that state authorities, trading communities and pirates and other illegal groups contested for. Such a remembering of the Maritime Silk Road would make for a more connected and open-ended history of the Indian Ocean and South China Sea.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abalahin, A.J.

2015 'Realms within realms of radiance, or, can Heaven have two sons? Imperial China as *primus inter pares* among the Sino-Pacific mandala polities', in V.C. Mair and L.C. Kelley (eds.), *Imperial China and its southern neighbours*, pp. 338–370. Singapore: ISEAS Publishing

Abu-Lughod, J.L.

1993 'The world system in the thirteenth century: Dead-end or precursor?', in M. Adas (ed.), *Islamic and European expansion: The forging of a global order*, pp. 75–102. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Acri, A.

2016 'Introduction: Esoteric Buddhist Networks along the Maritime Silk Routes, 7th–13th Century AD', in A. Acri (ed.), *Esoteric Buddhism in Mediaeval Maritime Asia; Networks of Masters, Texts, Icons*, pp. 1–25. Singapore: ISEAS Publishing.

Acri, A., R. Blench, and A. Landmann

forthcoming 'Introduction: Re-connecting Histories across the Indo-Pacific', in A. Acri, R. Blench, and A. Landmann (eds.), *Spirits and Ships; Cultural Transfers in Early Monsoon Asia*. Singapore: ISEAS Publishing.

Agius, D. A.

2008 *Classic ships of Islam; From Mesopotamia to the Indian Ocean*. Leiden: Brill.

Ali, D.

2011 'The early inscriptions of Indonesia and the problem of the Sanskrit Cosmopolis', in P-Y.

- Manguin, A. Mani and G. Wade (eds.), *Early interactions between South and Southeast Asia*, pp. 276–297. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies/New Delhi: Manohar.
- Andrade, T. and X. Han
- 2016 *Sea rovers, silver and samurai; Maritime East Asia in global history, 1550–1700*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Batchelor, R.K.
- 2014 *London; The Selden map and the making of a global city, 1549–1689*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Beck, C.I.
- 2009 *Empires of the Silk Road; A history of Central Eurasia from the Bronze Age to the Present*. Princeton: University Press.
- Bellina, B. and I. Glover
- 2004 'The archaeology of early contact with India and the Mediterranean world, from the fourth century BC to the fourth century AD', in I. Glover and P. Bellwood (eds.), *Southeast Asia: From prehistory to history*, pp. 68–88. London: RoutledgeCurzon.
- Bellwood, P., J.J. Fox, and D. Tryon (eds.)
- 1995 *The Austronesians: Historical and comparative perspectives*. Canberra: Australian National University, Dept. of Anthropology.
- Borschberg, P.
- 2011 *Hugo Grotius, the Portuguese and free trade in the East Indies*. Singapore: NUS Press.
- Broeze, F. (ed.)
- 1989 *Brides of the sea: Port cities of Asia from the 16th–20th centuries*. Kensington, NSW Australia: New South Wales University Press.
- Bronkhorst, J.
- 2011 'The spread of Sanskrit in Southeast Asia', in P-Y. Manguin, A. Mani, and G. Wade (eds.), *Early interactions between South and Southeast Asia*, pp. 263–275. Singapore: ISEAS Publishing/New Delhi: Manohar.
- Brook, T.
- 2010 *The troubled empire: China in the Yuan and Ming dynasties*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, Harvard University.
- 2013 *Mr. Seldern's map of China; Decoding the secrets of a vanished cartographer*. New York: Bloomsbury Press.
- Brown, R.M.
- 2009 *The Ming gap and shipwreck ceramics in Southeast Asia: Towards a chronology of Thai trade ware*. Bangkok: Siam Society.
- Bulbeck, D., et al.
- 1998 *Southeast Asian exports since the 14th century; Cloves, Pepper, coffee, and Sugar*, Data Paper Series, Sources for the Economic History of Southeast Asia No. 4. Leiden: KITLV Press; Canberra: Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, ANU; Singapore: ISEAS Publishing.
- Calo, A.
- 2014 *Trails of bronze drums across early Southeast Asia: Exchange routes and connected cultural spheres*. Singapore: ISEAS Publishing.
- Chaudhuri, K.N.
- 1885 *Trade and civilization in the Indian Ocean: An economic history from the rise of Islam to 1750*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Chaudhury, S., and M. Morineau (eds.)
 1999 *Merchants, companies and trade; Europe and Asia in the early modern era*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Coclanis, P.
 2006 *Time's arrow: Time's cycle: Globalization in Southeast Asia over la longue durée*. Singapore: ISEAS Publishing.
- Coedès, G.
 1910 *Textes d'auteurs grecs et latins relatifs à l'Extrême-Orient depuis le IVe s. av. J.-C. jusqu'au XIVE siècle*. Paris: Leroux.
- 1918 'Le royaume de Çrivijaya', *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* 18:1–36
- 1958 'Une période critique dans l'Asie du Sud-Est: le XIIIe siècle', *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*. N.S. 33/4:387–400.
- 1964 *Les États hindouisés d'Indochine et d'Indonésie*. Paris: E. de Boccard.
- 1968 *The Indianized states of Southeast Asia*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Cohen, P.
 1997 *History in three keys: The Boxers as event, experience, and myth*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- 2013 'Three ways of knowing the past', in P. Cohen (ed.), *China Unbound: Evolving perspectives on the Chinese past*, pp. 200–212. London/New York: RoutledgeCurzon.
- Deng, G.
 1997 *Chinese maritime activities and socioeconomic development, c. 2100 B.C.–1900 A.D.* Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press.
- Dreyer, E. L.
 2006 *Zheng He; China and the Oceans in the early Ming dynasty, 1405–1433*. New York: Pearson Longman.
- Eaton, R.M.
 1993 'Islamic history as Global history', in M. Adas (ed.), *Islamic & European expansion: The forging of a global order*, pp. 1–36. Philadelphia: Temple University.
- 2013 'Revisiting the Persian Cosmopolis', *Asia Times*, 19 July 2013. www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/SOU-01-190713.html (accessed 11/9/2016).
- Elisseef, V. (ed.)
 1998 *The silk roads: Highways of culture and commerce*. New York: Berghahan Books.
- Elvin, M. (trans.)
 1970 *Commerce and society in Sung China*, Michigan Abstracts of Chinese and Japanese Works on Chinese History, no. 2. Abstracted translation of Shiba Yoshinobu, *Sōdai shōgyō-shi kenkyū*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Centre for Chinese Studies, The University of Michigan.
- Erickson, A. S et al.
 2009 *China goes to sea; Maritime transformation in comparative historical perspective*. Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press.
- Fang, Z. and E. Li
 2005 *Peace missions on a grand scale; Admiral Zheng He's seven epic voyages to the Western Ocean*. Beijing: Foreign Language Press.
- Ferrand, G.
 1913–1914 *Relations des voyages et textes géographiques arabes, persans et turks, relatifs à l'Extrême-Orient du VIIIe au XVIIIe Siècle; Documents historiques et géographiques relatifs à*

- l'Indochine*, 2 vols. Paris: E. Leroux.
- 1922 'L'Empire sumatranais de Çrivijaya'. Paris: Paul Geuthner.
- Flecker, M.
- 2015 'Early voyaging in the South China Sea: Implications on territorial claims', Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre Working Paper Series No. 19 (August 2015) http://www.iseas.edu.sg/images/pdf/nscwps19_early_voyaging_south_china_sea_implications_territorial_claims.pdf.
- 2008 'The South-China-Ship tradition: The hybrid hulls of South-East Asia', *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 37/2:75–90.
- Frank, A.G.
- 1998 *ReORIENT; Global economy in the Asian Age*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Gipouloux, F.
- 2009 *La Méditerranée asiatique: Villes portuaires et réseaux marchands en Chine, au Japon et en Asie du Sud-est, XVIe–XXI siècle*. Paris: CNRS Editions.
- Glover, I.
- 1989 *Early trade between India and Southeast Asia: A link in the development of a world trading system*, Occasional Papers No. 16. Hull: University of Hull, Centre for South-East Asian Studies.
- Glover, I. and P. Bellwood (eds.)
- 2004 *Southeast Asia: From prehistory to history*. London: RoutledgeCurzon.
- Goh, E.
- 2013 *The struggle for order: Hegemony, hierarchy and transition in Post-Cold War East Asia*. Oxford: University Press.
- Groeneveldt, W.P.
- 1880 'Notes on the Malay archipelago and Malacca compiled from Chinese sources', *Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen* 39:1–144.
- Grotenhuis, E.T. (ed.)
- 2002 *Along the Silk Road*. Washington, D.C.: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery in association with Silk Road Project, Inc. and University of Washington Press, Seattle.
- Guy, J.
- 1998 *Woven cargoes: Indian textiles in the East*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Halbwachs, M.
- 1980 *The collective memory*. Transl. F.J. Ditter, Jr and V.Y. Ditter. New York: Harper Colophon Books.
- Hall, K.R. (ed.)
- 2008 *Secondary cities and urban networking in the Indian Ocean realm, c. 1400–1800*. Lanham: Lexington Books/Rowman and Littlefield.
- Hamashita, T.
- 2008 'The tribute trade system and modern Asia', in T. Hamashita, L. Grove, and M. Selden (eds.), *China, East Asia and the Global Economy: Regional and historical perspectives*, pp. 12–26. London/New York: Routledge.
- Heng, D.
- 2009 *Sino-Malay trade and diplomacy: From the tenth through the fourteenth century*. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Hirth, F.

- 1885 *China and Roman Orient: Researches into their ancient and medieval relations as represented in old Chinese records*. Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh.
- Hopkirk, P.
- 1980 *Foreign devils on the Silk Road: The search for the lost treasures of central Asia*. London: John Murray.
- Hourani, G.F.
- 1995 *Arab seafaring in the Indian Ocean in ancient and early medieval times*, Revised and Expanded by J. Carswell. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Jacq-Hergoualc'h, M.
- 2001 *The Malay peninsula: Crossroads of the Maritime Silk Road (100 BC–1300 AD)*. Translated by V. Hobson. Leiden: Brill.
- Jiao, T. (ed.)
- 2014 *Mapping Ming China's maritime world; The Selden map and other treasures from the University of Oxford*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Maritime Museum.
- 2014 *New research into the maritime trades, seafaring and underwater archaeology of the Ming dynasty International Symposium*. Hong Kong: Maritime Museum.
- Ju, H.
- 2012 *Zhongguo hai quan lue can zhao ti xi*. Beijing: China Social Science Press. [2015 English transl.: *China's maritime power and strategy: History, national security and geopolitics*. Singapore: World Scientific Publ. Co.]
- Kang, D.
- 2010 *East Asia before the West: Five centuries of trade and tribute*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Krahl, R., J. Guy, J. Raby, and J.K. Wilson (eds)
- 2010 *Shipwrecked: Tang treasures and monsoon winds*. Washington D.C.: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution/Singapore: National Heritage Board and Singapore Tourism Board.
- Karlgren, B.
- 1940 'Grammata Serica; Script and phonetics in Chinese and Sino-Japanese', *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 12/1:1–472.
- Krom, N.J.
- 1931 *Hindoe-Javaansche geschiedenis*, 2nd revised edition. 's-Gravenhage: M. Nijhoff.
- Kulke, H., K. Kesavapany, and V. Sakhuja (eds.)
- 2009 *Nagapattinam to Suvarnadwipa: Reflections on the Chola naval expeditions to Southeast Asia*. Singapore: ISEAS Publishing/New Delhi: Manohar.
- 1986 'Max Weber's contribution to the study of "Hinduization" in India and "Indianization" in Southeast Asia', in D. Kantowsky (ed.), *Recent research on Max Weber's studies on Hinduism*, pp. 97–116. Munich: Weltforum-Verlag.
- Kwa, C.G.
- 2007 'Reflections on the changing maritime security environment', in C.G. Kwa and J.K. Skogan (eds.), *Maritime security in Southeast Asia*. London: Routledge.
- 2012 *Locating Singapore on the Maritime Silk Road: Evidence from Maritime Archaeology, ninth to early nineteenth centuries*, Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre Working Paper Series No. 10 (Jan 2012) http://nsc.iseas.edu.sg/documents/working_papers/nscwps010.pdf.
- 2013 *Early Southeast Asia Viewed from India; An anthology of articles from the Journal of the*

- Greater India Society. New Delhi: Manohar.
- Lattimore, O.
- 1940 *Inner Asian Frontiers of China*. New York: American Geographical Society.
- Lévi, S.
- 1929 'Les marchands de mer et leur rôle dans le bouddhisme primitif', *Bulletin de l'Association Française des Amis de l'Orient* 3:19–30.
- Lo, J.-P.
- 2012 *China as a sea power 1127–1368: A preliminary survey of the maritime expansion and naval exploits of the Chinese people during the Southern Song and Yuan periods*. Edited by Bruce Elleman. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press/Singapore: NUS Press.
- Lombard, D.
- 1990 *Le carrefour javanais. Essai d'histoire globale*, vol. II: *Les réseaux asiatiques*. Paris: Éditions de l'École des Hautes Études en Science Sociales.
- 1995 'Networks and synchronisms in Southeast Asian history', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 26/1:10–16
- 1998 'Une autre 'Méditerranée' dans le Sud-Est asiatique', *Hérodote* 88/1:184–193.
- Malleret, L.
- 1959 *L'archéologie du delta du Mékong; I, L'exploration archéologique et les fouilles d'Oc-Éo* (2 vol). Paris: EFEO.
- Manchester, K. (ed.)
- 2007 *The Silk Road and beyond: Travel, trade, and transformation*. Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago.
- Manguin, P.-Y.
- 1993 'Trading ships of the South China Sea: Shipbuilding techniques and their role in the history of the development of Asian trade networks', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 36/3:253–280.
- 2004 'The archaeology of early maritime polities of Southeast Asia', in I. Glover and P. Bellwood (eds.), *Southeast Asia: From prehistory to history*, pp. 282–313. London: RoutledgeCurzon.
- Manguin, P.-Y., A. Mani, and G. Wade (eds.)
- 2011 *Early interactions between South and Southeast Asia: Reflections on cross-cultural exchange*. Singapore: ISEAS Publishing/New Delhi: Manohar.
- Mohan, C.R.
- 2012 *Samudra Manthan: Sino-Indian rivalry in the Indo-Pacific*. Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
- Needham, J., L. Wang, and G-D. Lu
- 1971 *Science and Civilization in China, vol. 4, part III: Civil Engineering and Nautics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nora, P.
- 1997 *Les lieux de mémoire*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Ooi, K.B.
- 2015 *The Eurasian Core and its Edges: Dialogues with Wang Gungwu on the History of the World*. Singapore: ISEAS Publishing.
- Pan, S.-Y. and J.T.-Y Lo
- 2015 'Re-conceptualising China's rise as a global power: A neo-tributary perspective', *The Pacific Review*, DOI: 10.1080/09512748.2015.1075578.

- Panikkar, K.M.
- 1945 *India and the Indian Ocean; An essay on the influence of sea power on Indian history*. London: Allen and Unwin.
- 1953 *Asian and Western Dominance; A survey of the Vasco da Gama epoch of Asian history, 1598-1945*. London: Allen and Unwin.
- Pelliot, P.
- 1903 'Le Fou-nan', *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* 3:248–330.
- 1904 'Deux itinéraires de Chine en Inde à la fin du VIIIe siècle', *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* 4:131–413.
- 1933 'Les grands voyages maritimes chinois au début du XVe siècle' *T'oung Pao* 30:237–452.
- 1935 'Notes additionnelles sur Tcheng Houo et sur son voyages', *T'oung Pao* 31:274–314.
- Pollock, S.
- 2006 *The language of the Gods in the world of men: Sanskrit, culture and power in premodern India*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Prakash, O. (ed.)
- 2012 *The trading world of the Indian Ocean, 1500–1800, History of Science, Philosophy and Culture in Indian Civilization, vol. III, Pt 7*. Delhi: Pearson/Centre for Studies in Civilizations.
- Ptak, R.
- 1998 *China and the Asian Seas: Trade, Travel and Visions of Others (1400–1750)*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd.
- 1999 *China's seaborne trade with South and Southeast Asia (1200–1750)*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd.
- Ray, H.P.
- 1994 *The Winds of Change; Buddhism and the maritime links of early South Asia*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- 1999 (ed.), *Archaeology of seafaring; The Indian Ocean in the ancient period*, Indian Council of Historical Research Monograph Series 1. Delhi: Pragati Publications.
- 2003 *The archaeology of seafaring in ancient South Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 2015 *Beyond trade; Cultural roots of India's Ocean*. New Delhi: Aryan Books.
- Ray, H.P. and J.-F. Salles (eds.)
- 1996 *Tradition and archaeology: Early maritime contacts in the Indian Ocean*. New Delhi: Manohar.
- Reid, A. (ed.)
- 1993 *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce 1450–1680, vol. 2: Expansion and Crisis*. New York: Cornell University Press.
- 1997 *The last stand of Asian autonomies; Responses to modernity in the diverse states of Southeast Asia and Korea, 1750–1900*. Houndmills, Hampshire: Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Resink, G.J.
- 1950 'Tets over europacentrische, regiocentrische en indocentrische geschiedschrijving', *Oriëntatie* 37:22–30.
- Riello, G. and Roy, T. (eds.)
- 2009 *How India clothed the World: The world of South Asian textiles, 1500–1850*. Leiden: Brill.
- Salmon, C.

- 2004 'Les Persans à l'extrémité orientale de la route maritime (IIe A.E.–XVIIe siècle)', *Archipel* 68:23–58.
- Salmon, C. and R. Ptak (eds.)
- 2005 *Zheng He, Image & Perceptions, Bilder & Wahrnehmungen*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz.
- Sanderson, S.K. (ed.)
- 1995 *Civilizations and world systems: Studying world-historical change*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press/Sage Publications.
- Scott, D.A.
- 2006 'India's 'Grand strategy' for the Indian Ocean: Mahanian visions', *Asia-Pacific Review* 13/2:97–129.
- Schottenhammer, A. (ed.)
- 2011 *The emporium of the world: Maritime Quanzhou, 1000–1400*. Leiden: Brill.
- Sen, T.
- 2014a 'Buddhism and the maritime crossings', in D.C. Wong and G. Heldt (eds.), *China and beyond in the medieval period: Cultural crossings and inter-regional connections*, pp. 39–62. Amherst: Cambria Press/New Delhi: Manohar Publishers.
- 2014b 'Maritime Southeast Asia between South Asia and China to the sixteenth century', *TRANS: Trans-Regional and -National Studies of Southeast Asia* 2/1:31–59.
- So, B.K.L.
- 2000 *Prosperity, region, and institutions in maritime China: The south Fukien pattern, 946–1368*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Centre.
- Solheim II, W.G.
- 2006 *Archaeology and culture in Southeast Asia: Unravelling the Nusantao*. Diliman, Quezon City: University of Philippines Press.
- Storey, I. and C. Lin (eds.)
- 2016 *The South China Sea dispute; Navigating diplomatic and strategic tensions*. Singapore: ISEAS Publishing.
- Subrahmanyam, S.
- 1999 'Persianization and mercantilism: Two themes in Bay of Bengal history, 1400–1700', in D. Lombard and O. Prakash (eds.), *Commerce and culture in the Bay of Bengal, 1500–1800*, pp. 47–85. New Delhi: Manohar.
- Sutherland, H.
- 2003 'Southeast Asian history and the Mediterranean analogy', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 34/1:1–20.
- Tibbetts, G.R.
- 1956 'Pre-Islamic Arabia and South-East Asia', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 29/3:182–208.
- 1957 'Early Muslim traders in South-East Asia', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 30/1:1–44.
- Ting, J.S.P. (ed.)
- 1996 *The Maritime Silk Route: 2000 years of trade on the South China Sea*. Hong Kong: Urban Council.
- Tracy, J.D. (ed.)
- 1991 *The political economy of merchant empires, state power and world trade, 1350–1750*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Udovitch, A.L.
1970 *Partnership and profit in medieval Islam*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Van Leur, J.
1955 *Indonesian trade and society: Essays in Asian social and economic history*. Hague/Bandung: W. van Hoeve.
- Wade, G.
2013a 'An Asian economic ecumene, 900–1300 CE', in F. Kayoko, M. Shiro, and A. Reid (eds.), *Offshore Asia; Maritime interactions in Eastern Asia before steamships*, pp. 76–111. Singapore: ISEAS Publishing.
2013b 'The pre-modern East Asian maritime realm: An overview of European-language studies', in S. Chandra and H.P. Ray (eds.), *The sea, identity and history: From the Bay of Bengal to the South China Sea*, pp. 93–136. Singapore: ISEAS Publishing/New Delhi: Manohar.
- Wang, G.
1958 'The Nanhai Trade : A study of the early history of Chinese trade in the South China Sea', *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 31/2:1–135.
- Waugh, D.C.
2007 'Richthofen's "Silk Roads": Towards the Archaeology of a Concept', *The Silk Road* 5/I (Summer 2007), available at <http://www.silkroadfoundation.org/toc/newsletter.html> (retrieved 7/8/2015).
- Wheatley, P.
1961 *The Golden Khersonese: Studies in the historical geography of the Malay Peninsula before A.D. 1500*. Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press.
- Winks, A.
1990 *Al-Hind: The making of the Indo-Islamic World*, 3 volumes. Leiden: Brill.
- Wisseman-Christie, J.
1998 'Javanese markets and the Asian Sea Trade Book of the tenth to thirteenth centuries A.D.', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 41:344–381.
1999 'Asian sea trade between the tenth and thirteenth centuries and its impact on the states of Java and Bali', in H.P. Ray. (ed.), *Archaeology of seafaring: The Indian Ocean in the ancient period*, pp. 221–270. Delhi: Pragati Publications/Indian Council of Historical Research.
- Wolters, O.W.
1967 *Early Indonesian commerce: A study of the origins of Śrīvijaya*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
1983 'A few and miscellaneous *pi-chi* jottings on early Indonesia', *Indonesia* 36:49–46.
1986 'Restudying some Chinese writings on Sriwijaya', *Indonesia* 32:1–41.
- Wu, S.
2013 *Solving disputes for regional cooperation and development in the South China Sea: A Chinese perspective*. Oxford: Chandos Publishing.
- Yoshinobu, S.
1970 *Sōdai shōgyō-shi kenkyū* [Abstracted translation by Mark Elvin, *Commerce and society in Song China*, Michigan Abstracts of Chinese and Japanese Works on Chinese History, no. 2. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Centre for Chinese Studies, The University of Michigan.]
- Zhang, F.
2009 'Rethinking the "Tribute system": Broadening the conceptual horizon of historical east Asian politics', *Chinese Journal of International Politics* 2/4:545–574.

Zhao, G.

2013 *The Qing opening to the Ocean: Chinese maritime policies, 1684–1757*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Zhao, H.

2015 *China's new Maritime Silk Road: Implications and opportunities for Southeast Asia*, Trends in Southeast Asia no. 3. Singapore: ISEAS Publishing.

2016 *China's One Belt One Road; An overview of the debate*, Trends in Southeast Asia 6. Singapore: ISEAS Publishing.