

Third, the GMS countries should adopt constructive and innovative approaches in strengthening their respective power vis-à-vis China, avoiding an over-reliance on its economic wealth and political power. The so-called free-ride on the 'Chinese economic express' (p. 47) will not work for the GMS countries if they are not ready for internal restructuring, transformation and integration, as empirically evidenced in the case of Vietnam with regard to China's capital inflows in dealing with poverty reduction and rising unemployment (pp. 75–6). The impacts of economic flows from China on Vietnam's development are quite limited, especially in light of heightened tensions over the former's assertiveness in disputed seas and possible tit-for-tat scenarios.

This book presents timely and important research on China and the mainland Southeast Asian countries as they advance to a new stage of a deepening strategic partnership, offering insightful perspectives of scholars from different countries and disciplines in Asia.

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*Empires and encounters 1350–1750*

Edited by WOLFGANG REINHARD

Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2015.

Pp. 1152. Maps, Plates, Notes, Bibliography, Index.

doi:10.1017/S0022463417000388

This formidable volume is the third in the six-volume series *A history of the world*, edited by Akira Iriye and Jürgen Osterhammel. The format is as refreshing as the interpretations, for such an ambitious project. Rather than encyclopedic broad but light coverage, the editors commissioned a team of authors to produce substantial interpretive essays, each tasked to 'explore developments and trends within a global historical framework'. This presents as an effort to combine the strengths of regional and chronological depth with a coherent global canvas for reinterpretation of contacts, connections, movements, encounters, and trajectories. This volume presents five such essays, divided by regions defined by geography, culture, politics, economy and society. The overarching thesis of the volume is that during this era, loosely defined at both ends, the world 'reached a tipping point of global connectedness'. This thesis is developed by examining empire-building, and interactions of multiple types, in Continental Eurasia, the Ottoman Empire and the Islamic World, South Asia and the Indian Ocean, Europe and the Atlantic World, and Southeast Asia and Oceania.

There is obvious value to students of Southeast Asian history in engaging an ambitious reinterpretation of global history that takes pains to embed the region within a wider spatial and thematic study, but does so by treating it as a distinct sub-story in its own right. Part Four in this volume, it is the only co-authored section, presented by Reinhardt Wendt and Jürgen G. Nagel. That allowed the authors to combine an analysis of the region we customarily see as Southeast Asia with one of

the wider Oceanic, Australian, and Pacific worlds that, they argue, were so deeply connected to it in so many ways. This is also of course an interesting period of time about which to attempt a global reinterpretation of Southeast Asian history, spanning as it does the ebbing of Indian influence, the growth of a Chinese diaspora, the emergence of dynamic commerce and potent statelets in both island and mainland zones, and above all the penetration of Islam, followed by European commerce and power. Even specialists on the region will find useful things to consider in this well-crafted study.

Peter Perdue launches the volume with a section on Continental Eurasia that attracts our attention immediately by including Vietnam within its purview. His concluding thoughts on comparisons, connections and convergences lays out the Sinic and East Asian cultural and political basis for this choice, along with fresh comments on Chinese diaspora. Suraiya Faroqi on the Ottoman Empire, and Stephan Connerman on South Asia and the Indian Ocean, revisit stories of the transmission of Islam into Southeast Asia along channels of trade, political power, and cultural influence, and the latter discusses the nuanced experience of Indian cultural and political influence on the region. Wolfgang Reinhard evaluates the 'Pacific Exchange' that brought Southeast Asia into the much wider network of economic exchange fuelled by New World silver. But it is of course the German academics Wendt and Nagel who make this volume's principal arguments about an 'early modern' and 'global' Southeast Asia.

Wendt and Nagel divide their section into chapters examining Space and Culture, Contacts and Interactions, Mainland and Maritime Southeast Asia, Connections to Japan and China, and Oceania. The latter is not merely an add-on; the whole section begins by declaring 'Together, Southeast Asia and Oceania form an extremely heterogeneous region', and reminding us that this mega-region is defined above all, geographically, by water. Membership in the contemporary concept of the Pacific Rim only underlines this shaping feature. Wendt and Nagel do us a favour by drawing so extensively on German scholarship, thereby bringing it into our English-language discussion. But the canonical English-language studies are all here, as are the most familiar themes: monarchy and identity, religion and culture, settlement and cities, commerce as a defining theme, and of course the controversies surrounding Islamic and European penetration. This early modern Southeast Asia is seen as a region which, while very open to external influences of many types, gave as good as it got in influencing ideas, operations, and agendas. The point is perhaps best put on page 612: 'Southeast Asia and to a lesser extent Oceania did not constitute hermetically sealed regions. Rather, they represented points of departure, transit zones, and objectives for supra-regional and even intercontinental contacts.'

The region developed a dynamic and volatile array of political powers and expanding polities, experienced frequent military conflict, and saw changing patterns of trade and commerce. Europeans spent a very long time seeking ways to fit into existing regional arrangements for economy and politics, and were not by any means a defining force during this period; indeed, Southeast Asia is one region where the chosen periodisation makes a rather loose fit, whether one examines this from the geopolitical vantage point or from other perspectives such as the movement of ideas, faiths, and cultural influence. It is fair to say there is nothing herein that even reasonably well-informed students of Southeast Asian history will find strikingly new, or revisionist, or unusual. The point, rather, is the volume itself: the ambitious reassessment and survey of the

region, along multiple themes, as a deeply interwoven component of much larger stories — and through encounters, interactions, and influences, that were far from linear, or one way, or predictable. This is a useful perspective for all regional students to bear in mind, and the inclusion of Southeast Asia in its own right marks both its impact on this period of world history and the maturing of the literature that, over the last half century, has done so much to place it on this largest of maps. Students of Southeast Asian history can read this volume with profit.

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*Under bright lights: Gay Manila and the global scene*

By BOBBY BENEDICTO

Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014. Pp. 248. Notes, Bibliography, Index.

*There goes the gayborhood?*

By AMIN GHAZIANI

Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014. Pp. 350. Appendix, Notes, Works cited, Index.

*Sex and sexualities in contemporary Indonesia: Sexual politics, health, diversity, and representations*

Edited by LINDA RAE BENNETT and SHARYN GRAHAM DAVIES

New York: Routledge, 2015. Pp. 346. Index.

doi:10.1017/S002246341700039X

One of the effects of globalisation on LGBT identities is the compression of queer space and time, and of the mental proximity of the queer here and there. Globalisation also throws into sharp relief the starkness of inequalities that polarises LGBT struggles here in the global south and the provision of Western-style gay rights over there. Three new books illuminate this unevenness created by globalisation and the transient quality of lesbian and gay spaces of belonging while at the same time remap the theoretical terrain of sexuality studies and its political potential. Bobby Benedicto offers a thrilling account of nighttime Manila in search of gay clubs and party circuits in *Under bright lights*, an anthropological study of the gay nightlife and desires for approximations to Western-style LGBT rights and freedoms. *Under bright lights* is sumptuous in its evocation of the sweaty sensuality, hopes and despair from the margins of a liberal metropole. Based on a discontinuous study across ten years, the author examines the development and decline of a gay collective imaginary bound by space and time. With great skill and sensitivity, Benedicto captures how 'gay life in a city like Manila bridges the near and far; how gay space is carved out at the interstices of the city and the world, producing ironic juxtapositions