

## **Crossroads Research Centre – History of Interaction in the East Asian, Eurasian, Indian Ocean & Asia-Pacific Worlds**

Our research focus lies on the investigation of interaction, communication and exchange relations in the macro-region of Eurasia, East Asia, the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Worlds across both land and sea routes, with a main focus on China. Major emphasis is placed on the history of diplomatic relations, the transfer of science and technologies, commodity and product exchange, trade, cultural aspects in their widest interpretation, religions, as well as migration and the organisation and functioning of networks.

We analyse continental and maritime exchange and transfer of knowledge, ideas, products and people, including forms of migration, paying particular attention to unofficial, secret and illegal exchanges and movements. To this end, we will particularly investigate forms of interaction that have been important in both the past and the present, such as military (including geographical knowledge as portrayed in maps, weapons, horses or provisions), medical knowledge and medicinal products, including diseases, aspects of culture (such as food, music and tombs), religion (such as Buddhism, Christianity and Islam), historical naval enterprises and maritime commerce.

A milestone of our research lies in the parallel comparative analysis of both archaeological and textual evidence and a cross-cultural inter-disciplinary approach. The use of a wide range of sources from archaeological findings to texts, documents, and pictorial material, to linguistic evidence, will be a hallmark of the approach. In the sense of Sanjay Subrahmanyam, we would like to speak of "connected histories," "entangled" or "shared" rather than "comparative histories."<sup>1</sup>

Projects:

***I. The East Asian Mediterranean – Team 3 of The Indian Ocean World: The Making of the First Global Economy in the Context of Human-Environment Interaction, cf. [http://indianoceanworldcentre.com/Team\\_3](http://indianoceanworldcentre.com/Team_3)***

This team researches general themes with regard to the 'East Asian Mediterranean' focusing on three aspects of human-environment interaction: (i) East Asian nation states or 'territorial' areas versus the East Asian world, (ii) the nature of exchange relations in the Asian world with a particular emphasis on the roles played by the official Chinese state and private Chinese and foreign merchants trading in the East Asian world, and (iii) the extent of military/political or religious influence on the development of early maritime trade.

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<sup>1</sup> Subrahmanyam, Sanjay, "Connected Histories: Notes Towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia", *Modern Asian Studies* 31.3 (1997), 735-762.

***Ia. China and the Maritime World, 500 BC to 1900[1800]: A Handbook of Chinese Sources on Maritime History***

General Editors: Angela Schottenhammer, Tansen Sen, and Geoffrey Wade

Inspired by Wolfgang Franke's (Fu Wukang 傅吾康, 1912–2007) famous *An Introduction to the Sources of Ming History* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1968), this project aims to provide historians of China and Asia, as well as world historians in general who may not possess Chinese language skills, with an overview of Chinese sources on maritime Asia. This is the reason why we decided to organize the project according to a geographical/regional categorization, providing the reader with information on sources and an English summary/description of the source, including links to other useful websites related to the Asian maritime world.

***Ib. The Indian Ocean on Early Modern World Maps: The Transfer of Geographical Knowledge From Europe via the IOW to China and Japan***

This project seeks to comparatively investigate early modern world maps portraying the Indian Ocean and adjacent regions and to explore how maritime and coastal space, the Indian Ocean and countries and cities located therein, are portrayed on these maps. Our research will start with an analysis of Chinese and Japanese maps in order to show the global dimension of cartography, geographical knowledge and maps in East Asia, which integrated in different ways both Muslim/Islamic<sup>2</sup> and European/Jesuit geographical knowledge into their own geographic traditions.

East Asian cartographic works are by nature closely linked to nautical texts – especially of Chinese origins. Various such works were produced during middle period and early modern times. Few of them, however, have to date been investigated more thoroughly, especially not in Western research.

A comparative analysis of world maps from approximately the eleventh to the seventeenth/eighteenth centuries will provide us with intriguing evidence of that and in which ways already centuries before our modern times, the world was viewed and portrayed from a global perspective. Case studies will concentrate on European, Islamic and Asian maps and cartographic knowledge.

***Ic. The Importance and Specific Integration of Muslim Merchants into the IOW – Interaction between the Persian Gulf, Southeast Asia, China and Japan***

[Western Indian Ocean, South Asia, East Africa etc. should be added later; this is a first outline concentrating still on East and Southeast Asia]

This project intends to investigate the crucial role of Muslim merchants in the IOW, because, in our eyes, they played an essential role in the forming of trading networks, regional societies and state formations in the Eurasian-Indian Ocean macro region. Their involvement in as well as

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<sup>2</sup> Hyunhee Park, *Mapping the Chinese and Islamic Worlds. Cross-cultural Exchange in Pre-modern Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

contribution and impacts on both local developments and supra-regional, global structures were far more important than hitherto assumed, so our hypothesis. And to holistically comprehend the history of the IOW from East Africa to East Asia, a thorough investigation of the specific integration of Islamic and Muslim merchants and actors in the IOW as well as their impact on local/regional and state/governmental structures and state building is essential.

***II. Crossroads - Studies on the History of Exchange Relations in the East Asian World*** (縦横 – 東亞世界交流史研究, クロスロード – 東アジア世界の交流史研究 크로스로드 – 東아시아 세계의 交流史 研究), cf. <http://www.eachr.net/ojs/index.php/crossroads>.

The journal is designed as an international forum for contributions related to the history of exchange relations in the East Asian world. The "East Asian World" in this context comprises geographically speaking the regions of China, Japan, Korea and Taiwan (core region) and their neighbours or regions that were considered their "peripheries" (such as for example Mongolia, Tibet, Vietnam etc.), including relevant predecessors (such as the Ryūkyūs, Bohai or Manchuria). Exchange relations and interaction with countries and regions beyond this East Asian world, like India, Russia and all the countries on the Eurasian continent, continental and insular Southeast Asia, regions around the Persian Gulf and generally the macro-region of what is designated as the "Oriental world" - in contrast to "Occidental Europe" - as well as interaction with for example the American or African continent are also part of the focus, as long as there existed important and/or sustainable contacts to the mentioned regions in East Asia. East Asia is thus treated as an entity made up of different countries and regions with similarities, but also with distinctive differences, concentrating on their interconnectedness and exchange relations, while emphasizing its relations to the macro-regions of Asia, Eurasia and the Orient, but also cross-Pacific interchange.

The focus of contributions are both continental (overland) and maritime (overseas) exchange relations of bilateral and multilateral interaction structures. With regard to contents, major emphasis is placed on the transfer of science and technologies, cultural aspects in their widest interpretation, religions, commodity and product exchange, trade, as well as migration and the organisation of functioning networks.

### ***III. Seafaring, Trade, and Knowledge Transfer: Maritime Politics and Commerce in Early Middle Period to Early Modern China***

The aim of our research project consequently is to investigate the qualitative characteristics and changes of China's maritime commerce and politics over time (c. 9th to 18th centuries) and space (South and Northeast China and its supra-regional, "global" integration), in order to obtain a much more detailed picture of China's maritime politics and commerce. We will apply a comparative chronological and spatial as well as an integrative perspective (China's integration into foreign networks and interaction of Chinese and foreign agents) analysing the practice of local trade and knowledge (science) transfer, the specific inter-relation between seafaring and socio-economic and political-military purposes of Chinese governments and their integration into supra-regional foreign networks during periods of significant changes (transitions). Significant transitions occurred (1) at a time period when maritime commerce experienced a significant up-swing in the course of the late Tang to mid Song (I), (2) during the Southern Song and Yuan, when China rose as a real maritime power (II), (3) during the shift from the Yuan period promotion of maritime trade to the early Ming maritime

trade proscription (III), and (4) eventually during a period when once again a foreign people (Manchus) ruled China, who allegedly concentrated only on continental borders and border security with little to no interest in maritime commerce and defence (IV). As a final step we will comparatively scan and review the particular characteristics of the four major transition periods, subjecting them to the same criteria of analysis, to produce a broader, more integrative and more thorough narrative of the *longue-durée* dynamics of China's historical maritime politics and commerce.

The comparative analysis of recently discovered archaeological (such as shipwrecks with their cargoes, grave objects, tombs and tomb inscriptions) and textual sources from China and her "partner countries" will constitute a milestone of our research. Archaeological sources are relatively well documented and especially from the tenth century onwards we meanwhile possess important sites and recently discovered wrecks to be investigated. The sources to be investigated shall lead us to a better understanding of economic and political-military developments in China's coastal regions, of influences and impacts on China from abroad, as well as the organisation of commercial and human networks in early middle period to early modern China.

### **Periods Investigated**

- (1) Tang-Song transition (c. 850–1200);
- (2) Song-Yuan transition (c. 1200–1350);
- (3) Yuan-Ming transition (c. 1350–1500);
- (4) Ming-Qing transition (c. 1500–1800);