

**ABSTRACTS**

**Session 1: Introduction**

**Jamie Belich, PI ‘Global Nodes, Global Orders’ network, University of Oxford**  
**A Transformative Connectivity and Recurrent Dynamics: An Approach to Global History**

This paper proposes two practical approaches to global history. The first centres on ‘transformative connectivity’, which substantially affects the societies it links, by enabling hybridizations, such as the Swahili broker culture, and by creating something very like globalization at sub-planetary scales, such as ‘the Indian Ocean World’. Connectivity can spread an expansive or attractive local divergence across or throughout such ‘worlds’. The second approach looks at ‘recurrent dynamics’: similar or functionally equivalent responses to similar circumstances in sharply different times and places. I consider two examples of such dynamics: informal ‘urban colonialism’, in which a great city develops and adapts to a distant ‘virtual hinterland’, and ‘disposable males’, whereby culture groups addicted to violent expansion find a regular stream of socially and economically surplus fighting men. bstract

**Session 2: Pre-modern Globalizations?**

**Martin Pitts, University of Exeter**  
**Deep histories of globalisation. Perspectives from the Roman world**

With a focus on deep historical applications of globalisation concepts, this paper outlines the methodological challenges and pay-offs of putting connectivity at the heart of historical and archaeological analyses, taking the Roman world as a case-study. Does globalisation offer valuable perspectives and does it offer anything new? What new methodological apparatus are required for the concepts to be applied in a practical sense? Since the publication of *Globalisation and the Roman World* (Pitts and Versluys 2015), the debate has moved on considerably, with the benefit of clearer hindsight on the strengths and weaknesses of applications of globalisation, and the appearance of new perspectives in the guise of the ambitious 60+ chapter *Routledge Handbook of Archaeology and Globalization* (Hodos et al. 2017). Globalisation can provide immensely helpful tools for research on the Roman empire, helping to evade methodological nationalism and ‘container thinking’ of past narratives, as well as emphasising the need to de-centre Rome in the writing of history. But arguably the greatest potential of globalisation is as an interpretive framework for *objects* in historical research – the real globetrotters of the connected past.

**Maria Fusaro, University of Exeter**  
**The Global Relevance of the European ‘Ocean’: the Early Modern Mediterranean Legal World**

Focusing especially on two ERC-funded projects - *Sailing into Modernity: Comparative Perspectives on the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century European Economic Transition* (ERC Starting Grant 284340 – PI Maria Fusaro), and *La reconfiguration de l’espace méditerranéen: échanges interculturels et pragmatique du droit en Méditerranée, XVe-début XIXe siècle* (ERC Advanced Grant – PI Wolfgang Kaiser) – this paper reassesses the continuing importance of

the Mediterranean within early modern global history and recent historiography. It does so by discussing these projects within the frame of recent historiographical developments across different sub-disciplines and national historiographies.

**Cátia Antunes, University of Leiden**  
**Economic Networks and the Making of a Global Narrative**

Following up on the conceptual discussions surrounding ‘**transformative connectivity**’, a term coined by James Belich as central to analysis into Global History, I argue in this paper that the most important transformative connectivity in the Early Modern world was the establishment, development and consolidation of **commodity chains**. Commodity chains initiated on the one hand **transformations** in flows, circuits, markets and business practices, whilst **connecting** world systems through the circulation and exchange of peoples, ideas and practices. I will illustrate this complex systemic analysis by illustrating the contribution of slave trade circuits to the making of a global narrative of economic networks.

**Session 3: Horse Nomads in Global History**

**Pekka Hämäläinen, University of Oxford**  
**Nomadic Empires, Kinetic Empires**

This panel provides a wide-ranging reinterpretation of the history of equestrian nomadic empires from the fourth century BCE to the late nineteenth century CE through a series of case studies. The panel has three major objectives that are interrelated. First, it expands the scope of the field by extending it beyond the better known Eurasian nomadic empires into the Americas, where new research has revealed previously unidentified nomadic empires. Second, it seeks to break new methodological ground by showing how innovative and underused approaches—integration of environmental and imperial histories; blending of multiple analytical scales to reveal the socio-political complexity of nomadic societies; and a specific spatial reorientation in which developments are viewed from nomadic domains outward rather than from sedentary frontiers inward—can yield a broader and more nuanced understanding of the emergence, behavior, and historical influences of nomadic empires.

Third, the panel seeks to untangle the study of nomadic empires from normative and mechanistic models by introducing new conceptual avenues that allow us to examine nomadic empires on their own cultural terms. This requires decoupling the definitions and theories of empire from conventional formulations that have privileged sedentary forms of power: direct management of people and resources, relatively static relationships of hierarchy and diversity, fixed points of control, and territoriality. Viewed through a lens calibrated for sedentary societies and empires, nomadic regimes appear organizationally and historically diminished: Nomads are opportunists who prey on agrarian societies and prefer violent exploitation over diplomacy and persuasion; their institutions, like their way of life, are too fluid and ephemeral to sustain robust empire building, forcing them to erect one-dimensional raid- and plunder regimes.

Stepping outside such formulations, this panel focuses on imperial dynamics rather than imperial types. The panelists are concerned with the processes—adaptive, strategic, structural—that have unfolded and intertwined to

form and sustain nomadic empires, and their papers illuminate the vast spectrum of historical nomadic empires. Together, the panelists outline a set of broad analytical approaches that can serve as a guiding framework for future research. These include the possibility that shape-shifting and nodal spatial composition could give nomadic regimes tremendous staying power; testing the hypothesis that some nomadic societies erected empires without any identifiable governing centers while others became partially sedentary and built agricultural enclaves to consolidate their power; shifting attention to nomad-nomad relations that arguably were often more important for nomadic empires than their relations with sedentary societies; and a notion of expansionist nomadic regimes as kinetic empires that turned mobility into an imperial strategy.

The five papers exist in a comparative dialogue with one another. Collectively, they reveal nomadic empires as a multifaceted world-shaping phenomenon and, by doing so, challenge the received views of what empires are, where they can exist, how they exercise power and rule, and how they decline and fall.

**Irina Shingiray, University of Oxford**

**Fluid Nodes, Mobile Sovereignty: The Making of the Khazar Empire in the Sub-Global Islamic World**

Throughout history, many nomadic empires, including the Khazar Empire, grew into polities of immense proportions and power. Wherever they emerged, they created a mobile gravitational pull that attracted diverse people, resources, and ideas and reoriented the world geopolitics around their own nomadic concerns. But what were those forces and strategies that ensured successful unity, rule, and expansion of nomadic empires? How did they achieve their status of superpowers of sub-global proportions? Conventional historical approaches to these questions often suffer from the predicament of Eurocentrism. Concepts such as 'trade-tribute empires' or states with 'itinerant courts,' 'military aristocracies,' and 'warbands' do not do justice to nomadic empires. They do not account for political, cultural, technological, and economic strategies of these highly mobile societies and ignore their particular worldviews and notions of sovereignty, rule, trust, relatedness, and political action. Moreover, conventional historical approaches to nomadic empires disregard variations in the representational value of many of these processes. Hence, there are difficulties associated with locating nomadic polities and interpreting their imperial practices especially in the contexts of mobility, organization, trans-regional exchange, and representational modalities of power. I use the case of the nomadic Khazar Empire to explore the concepts and strategies of mobile sovereignty, authority, kinship politics, fluid nodes of exchange and reciprocity, mobile body technologies, and the paradigms of political action among the imperial nomads. My aim is to demonstrate how the nomadic Khazars created and maintained their mobile superpower in the north of the sub-global Islamic World in the Early Middle Ages.

**Bryan K. Miller, University of Oxford**

**Empires of Mobilities**

Mobile pastoral lifeways have been regarded as constituting a critical weakness of nomadic empires, hindering governance and hampering economic growth. This paper, and the associated panel, argues the opposite – that the mobilities entwined in the social and economic practices of nomadic groups provided resilient elasticity to the institutions and structures of empires. Just as the so-called 'mobilities turn' in sociology has drawn our attention to the importance of the flows of goods, people, and information in solidifying social and economic systems, so may we further emphasize how the mobilities of whole communities, entire surpluses, and administrative infrastructure

promote social, economic, and political coalescence in nomadic empires. Mass mobility of subsistence sources and raw materials in a primarily pastoral economy engender broader networks of staple and wealth distribution, as well as intricate matrices of inter-community socioeconomic interdependence. Periodic instances of propinquity in the circuits of nomadic communities also provide essential moments of social reification, as well as economic interaction, between numerous groups and across large territories. If we accept the notion of space as constructed through relations, then empires may be envisioned less as contiguous integrated territories and more as a complex network of integration for the extraction of resources and the assertion of authority. This propels our discussion of empires into realms of social rather than spatial centrality and cohesion, one which is more apt for investigations of nomadic regimes. Through a brief survey of the world's first known nomadic empire – the Xiongnu of Inner Asia – this paper outlines the notion of nomadic regimes as *empires of mobilities* – i.e. entailing not merely 'mobile' spatial constructs but, more precisely, multiple mobilities that comprise institutions of governance, performance, surplus, distribution, and exchange in continual motion rather than permanently fixed to singular territorial nodes.

**Maya Petrovitch, University of Oxford**

**Sheep, Tigers and Horses: Writing Histories of Nomads and Mercenaries**

In popular imagination, the entrance of Oghuz peoples in Anatolia in 1071 unleashed an inexorable Turkish march westwards, culminating in the destruction of the Byzantine world and the conquest of the imperial city of Constantinople in 1453. Henceforth, the Ottoman house ruled across the area uncontested, expanding onto three continents until it entered a long-lasting decay.

In reality, Ottoman rise to power represented only one example among many of the Turkic beyliks. The dynasty was almost extinguished after a crushing defeat by the central Asian warlord Timur in 1402, and it took over a century until Ottomans ruled over entire Anatolia, with a pronounced mistrust of heterodox pastoralism, which represented a powerful political force in the borderlands between eastern Anatolia and western Iran, including parts of Iraq and the Caucasus. The fifteenth century was marked by internecine struggles between the tribal federations of Qaraqoyunlu and Aqqoyunlu, with repercussions even in Europe.

The core of the presentation will analyze a side effect of the persistent violence in the region. Having been shaped by their pastoralist surroundings, many young men left as mercenaries to rise to positions of power and prestige across the Indian Ocean, in lands which were hungry for expert horsemen. In the conclusion, some salient features of their experiences will be explored in order to suggest ways of writing histories of non-state actors and military diasporas across the early modern world.

**Marie Favereau, University of Oxford**

**The Horde and the Mongol Peace**

The Horde, commonly called the Golden Horde, rose in the north-western part of the Mongol empire after the fall of Baghdad in 1258. It was part of a global world that integrated Eurasia and the Middle East on a scale that was unseen before. Like most empires, the Horde was multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural. What makes it nonstandard is that the nomads controlled the imperial centre. During three centuries, they held an empire in which the cooperation between nomadic and sedentary communities was key to the social balance. In this presentation, I intend to show how the nomads fashioned their own imperial entity, how they developed long-term

strategies to control the nodes- here defined as access-point to the natural resources, trade routes and market places. I will focus on the period of the Mongol Peace (1260s-1360s).

*Pax Mongolica* is an old paradigm originally modelled on the notion of *Pax Romana*. It refers to the post-conquest stability of the Mongol dominions and supposedly peaceful relationships between the descendants of Chinggis Khan. During the Mongol Peace a commercial boom transformed the human landscape in Eurasia, connecting the Mediterranean Sea to India and China. The Mongols stimulated new forms of long-distance trade by concluding agreements with the Mamluks, the Byzantines, the Italians, and others. A new economic order emerged, which cannot be seen as the mere revival of the continental silk roads of the ancient world.

Scholarship has established that the Mongol Peace was a continent-scale phenomenon. But what did 'peace' mean for the Mongols? It meant to submit to a new economic order, which was supple, mobile, and organized. This presentation reinstates the concept of Mongol Peace by examining the economic hardware the Mongols created to dominate.

#### **Session 4: Globalising Africa**

##### **Toby Green, King's College, London** **The Challenges of Globalising African History in the Atlantic Age**

The rise of global history has transformed the historical field, yet historians of Africa have perhaps been slower than many to engage with this change of direction. The reasons for this are historical and contextual: the desire to emphasise the distinctiveness of African cultures and societies in the face of so many ill-informed generalisations being pre-eminent.

This paper explores how historians of Africa should respond to the global turn whilst not losing the distinctiveness of African history. A key element it argues is in the balance of source and discourse. This requires time and immersion in both traditional archival settings and in Africa itself. Through 2 microstudies the paper explores future possibilities for developing wider understanding of Africa's global role in the era of Atlantic history.

##### **Margret Frenz, University of Bayreuth** **Thinking Globally, Researching Locally. The Practice of Global History in Africa and Beyond**

This paper explores migration movements to Africa in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and analyses how those were remembered. I argue that employing the practice of global history requires developing and reflecting on a specifically calibrated methodology, combining archival research with oral history and direct observation. Ideally, this creates a dialogue between different sets of data to arrive at a more complete reconstruction of the past and to access different voices and perspectives of the same historical – here, the migration – experience and memories thereof. The 'global' is embedded in local histories that inform the wider world.

**Miles Larmer, University of Oxford**  
**Global-local dynamics in late Twentieth Century Africa**

This paper explores the challenges for approaching African history as global history, with specific reference to the second half of the twentieth century. The paper first considers the conceptualisation of Africa's place in the global economic and political order in this period, and discusses the terminology used (and misused) to understand African elites.

The paper then considers three subjects of African/global history to consider how historians have understood these dynamics during this period: Africa's 'cold war'; histories of mineral extraction; and the history of African nationalism.

**Session 5: Asian Globalities**

**Kojiro Taguchi, Osaka University**  
**Early-modern globalization and de-globalization of Ming China: a case of Zheng He's expeditions and their legacies after the fifteenth century**

The expeditions of Zheng He are often seen to be one of the milestones, which glorify China's maritime expansion during the imperial past slightly prior to the European age of exploration. Whereas detailed evidences on the expeditions have not been fully available due to scarce historical documents, recent scholarship has been developing elaborate exploration for new source materials including personnel records and biographical entries of Ming's military officers and eunuchs, both of whom took part in each of the campaigns. In this paper, the author will scrutinize the multifaceted characterization of the campaigns, became obvious exactly by the immediate aftermath.

Literatures as to Zheng He's adventures all presume that the close of the project signals a shift from an expansive and extroverted policy to an introverted one in overall China, which was entirely different from the trajectory of the European world. However, seen from the troop deployment before and after the last expedition during the mid-fifteenth century, of which information is accessible only by personnel records of the Guard officers (*wei wuzhi xuanbu*), the expedition was in nature came at a great price. Aside from the entire cost for building ships, prolonged mobilization of soldiers onto the maritime campaign in a large scale was compensated for by ill-built quartermaster corps, which was essential for the grain supply to the garrison troops of the new capital, Beijing. Meanwhile, the transportation was carried out by vessels and workforce collected as compulsory impressment.

In a sense or another, especially in the perspectives of the scholar officials after the mid- fifteenth century, Zheng He's expedition was conducted in the form of the imperial household's 'private' enterprise, which may have been rooted in imperial trade activities during the Mongol period. The Ming as a sort of the 'shadow empire', had to get rid of the Mongol factors, officially at least, thus the consolidation of the imperial logistical system in between the capital zone and the Yangzi valley took priority over inviting tributes from maritime polities and enhancing imperial trade along with numerous sideline business of military officers and eunuchs. The Ming government tried carefully to separate imperial affairs from maritime activities, as well as trade with the inner Asia, both of which subsequently conducted within the private sector. Surely, China may have become introverted after the fifteenth

century, but it tried to behave that way, as is found in ostensible appeals for de-/anti-globalization today. The relationship between profit-seeking in the official realm and that in the private sector is still to be seen, even in the contemporary China, and thus Zheng He has become all the more an icon of complexity.

**Shigeru Akita, Osaka University**

**From Empires to Development Aid - International Economic Order of Asia in the 1950s-60s in Global History**

This paper presents an Asian perspective on post-colonial globalization in the 1950s and 1960s in the context of global history. Usually the period of the 1950s and 1960s is interpreted and symbolized by two subjects--the formation and development of the Cold War regime (East-West divide) and the progress of decolonization in Asia and Africa (South-North divide). However, from Asian perspectives, economic development of newly independent countries, led by so-called “developmentalism”, was more important than cold war and decolonization. This paper presents historical origins of industrialization in South Asia (India) and East Asia from comparative and relational perspectives.

Independent India under J. Nehru administration played important roles in the Commonwealth as well as in the Colombo Plan in the 1950s and early 1960s. Indian development policies were closely linked with her holding of the sterling balances and economic aid from various countries and the institutions, including the World Bank. On the other hand, East Asian economic development through industrialization was related to the Cold War regime and US economic aid. These developing countries adopted developmental policies by their own initiatives and carried out “developmentalism”. By using multi-archival documents, this paper reconsiders international economic order of Asia in the 1950s-1960s in the context of global history.

**Session 6: Great Divergences**

**Linda Colley, Princeton University**

**Other Great Divergences: A maritime argument**

We have been asked to consider issues of *practice* – the ways in which doing global history can add value to scholarship. One way is surely by bringing into the same frame of enquiry not just different parts of the world, but also different modes of historical enquiry. Taking off from Ken Pomeranz’s well-known work *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World* (2000) this paper brings the history of war and especially naval history to bear on issues of economic development over time. I look first at a Great Convergence: the parallel indulgence on the part both of the Ching Empire and some Western powers in unprecedentedly wide wars of imperial conquest in the 1750s and ‘60s. I then explore some of the paradoxical consequences of a vital divergence: that between the Ching Empire’s overwhelming focus on overland warfare and expansion and Western powers’ investment in hybrid warfare, fighting on water as well as land. What long term impact did *this* mode of hybrid warfare have on industrial and economic development, and also on levels of political stability?

**Session 7: Science and Technology in Global History**

**Going Global in the History of Science and Technology:**

**Maxine Berg, University of Warwick**

**Can there be a Global History of Technology?: Tacit Knowledge in Local Context**

My brief talk will respond to the recent challenge of Jeremy Adelman's 'What is Global History Now': 'Historians and their reader-citizens are also going to have to re-signify the place of local attachments and meanings.' I will raise the problems of the older diffusionist paradigms of histories of technologies and of recent large-scale global comparisons of technologies, based mainly on wage differences. I will explore the local frameworks of tacit knowledge and skill in three examples drawn from the 17thC. Walloon region of the Southern Netherlands, from the 18thC. Kutch region of Gujarat, and from 18thC. Nootka Sound on the Northwest Pacific Coast of North America.

**Michael Bycroft, University of Warwick**

**Testing gems in the early modern world**

Where do new ideas come from in global history? Partly from new empirical research by historians, from new theories about globalisation put forward by social scientists, and from new forms of globalisation in the present. But we should not forget another source, namely new findings by historians who are not global historians. This certainly holds for the historiography of science and technology, where global histories have been enriched by concepts and sources that came to prominence in studies that had nothing global about them. Testing—the process of determining the identity or quality of a material object—is an emerging concept in the historiography of science and technology in early modern Europe. A review of primary and secondary literature on early modern gems shows that this concept is ripe for integration with global history.

**Rohan Deb Roy, University of Reading**

**Vectors of Empire: Mosquitoes in British India and Beyond**

The identification of anopheles mosquitoes as vectors of diseases such as malaria in the 1890s and 1900s significantly shaped the history of twentieth-century global public health. Painstaking Nobel-prize winning research carried out by Sir Ronald Ross in colonial laboratories across British India was crucial to the discovery that mosquitoes transmit disease-causing parasites between human bodies. This paper begins by exploring the cultural and political context in which the medicalization of mosquitoes was achieved and sustained. Indeed, towards the end of the nineteenth century, the impression that mosquitoes represented ominous beings circulated widely in British India as well as in the wider trans-colonial world. In different ways, this impression was articulated in the fields of laboratory medicine, plantation economy, sanitary governance and newspaper reports. Section two hints at some of the ways in which the new status of mosquitoes (as vectors of diseases) was appropriated for political purposes in the first half of the twentieth century across the British imperial world and beyond. I suggest here that mosquitoes were entangled in late imperial civilising networks in the interwar period. By focussing on sources in Bengali, one of the major non-European languages in the colonial world, the final section outlines how colonized intellectuals critiqued as well as internalized the medicalization of mosquitoes during this period.



**Moritz von Brescius, Konstanz University**

**Beyond 'British' India: Foreign Recruitment and Transnational Science in South Asia**

With the rise of global history, research on empires has undergone significant change. In recent years, attention has turned to the remarkable permeability and openness of imperial systems for indigenous and other groups of actors, who originated from beyond the boundaries of the respective imperial motherland. This contrasts with earlier assumptions of neatly separate national imperialisms, believed to be internally homogenous and externally competitive. However, empires were always embedded in larger, complex environments. Many were unable, or indeed unwilling, to shield themselves from external ideological, commercial, or scientific influences. This paper argues that 'British' India experienced an exceptionally high exposure to scientific influences and personnel from beyond British domestic society. It analyses the global attraction of India's vast social, natural and cultural landscapes for various engagements by imperial outsiders – surveyors, naturalists, and technical advisors. That way the paper argues that their considerable presence in the ranks of the East India Company and later the Raj points to the fact that imperialism became, to a degree, a shared European project. Yet, foreign influences on British rule in South Asia never went uncontested. It rather provoked a fierce debate linked to the rhetorical nationalization of empire even at a time of actually increased expert mobility.

**Rob Iliffe, University of Oxford**

**Recent approaches to the global history of science**

In this talk I examine the history of efforts to write globally situated histories of science, and I examine how recent globally-oriented history of science has both informed and benefitted from more general approaches in global history. I suggest that while history of science and technology has lately embraced a global perspective, works in global history need to embed the history of science, medicine and technology more firmly in their narratives.

**Session 8: Imperialising the Global?**

**John Darwin, University of Oxford**

**Globalizing Empire History**

There are at least four ways in which global history can enhance empire history. The fourth, on which this paper will concentrate, requires us to take the slightly bolder step of pressing the case for seeing empire as a universal phenomenon, setting aside the Eurocentric fallacy in which empire has been first an achievement and then a crime unique to Europeans. This is not just a matter of acknowledging a handful of non-Western exemplars – Ming, Mughal, Ottoman, Aztec and Inca – but of recognising that world history is littered with states (some very small by our standards) whose essential characteristics were imperial or empire-like, and that this tendency persists into our own times. This requires us to acknowledge that empires are 'normal', not abnormal or pathological excrescences to be denounced by the right-minded. It also requires us to strip away the baroque ornamentation with which theorists have festooned the basic structure of empire – to the delight of TV producers and Hollywood historians. What is left is the essential characteristic of empire – the dominance exerted by a ruler or people of one ethnicity

**The Practice of Global History**  
29-30 September 2017  
Nuffield College, University of Oxford

---

over one or more different ethnic groups. In many cases, of course, such dominance is expressed through spatial or functional differentiation to subserve the imagined interests of the imperial centre. But we should not expect empires to conform to one model – any more than nation-states will do.

But how will widening the concept of empire assist our understanding of imperial and global history? In three ways perhaps. It ought to remind us that European imperialism did not crash into so many pre-colonial Edens, even if its impact sometimes proved grosser and crueller than that of indigenous empires. That may help to explain why in so many cases European domination was secured through the willing collaboration of locals eager to throw off their most immediate oppressors. Secondly, it will allow us to see that nineteenth-century globalisation created opportunities (and threats) for both European and Afro-Asian empires, and that it was quite often the collision of two imperial drives that triggered what turned into the European advance. Finally, by remembering that European empires, like so many in world history, were erected on the ruins of previous imperialisms, we may find it easier to understand the travails of Afro-Asian nation-building and the unfinished business of decolonization – to which innumerable civil wars, far-flung diasporas and 65 million refugees bear painful witness.

