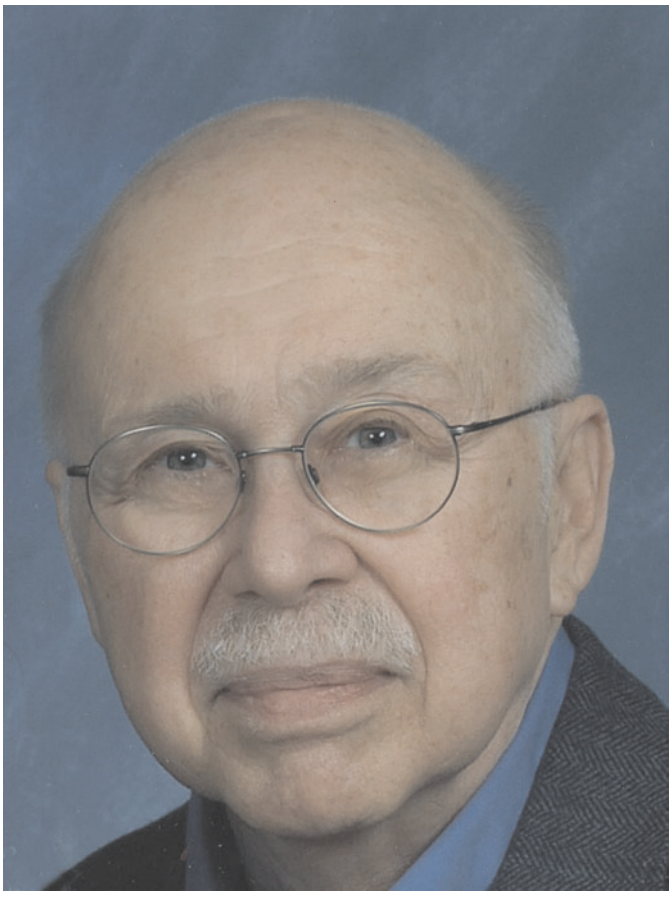

Professor John F. Richards

Expanding Frontiers in South Asian and World History

Essays in Honour of John F. Richards

Edited by
Richard M. Eaton
Munis D. Faruqui
David Gilmartin
Sunil Kumar

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press
4381/4, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, Delhi 110002, India

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York
www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107034280

First published 2013

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library
Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication data

Expanding frontiers in South Asian and world history: essays in honour of John F. Richards/edited by Richard M. Eaton, Munis D. Faruqui, David Gilmartin, Sunil Kumar.

pages cm

Summary: "The essays focus on 'frontiers' in multiple contexts, all relating to John F. Richards's work: frontiers and state building, frontiers and environmental change, cultural frontiers, frontiers and trade and drugs, and frontiers and world history"--Provided by publisher.

Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN: 978-1-107-03428-0 (hardback)

1. South Asia--Boundaries--History. 2. South Asia--Politics and government. 3. South Asia--Relations. 4. Human ecology--South Asia--History. 5. South Asia--Commerce--History. 6. Imperialism--History. 7. World History. I. Eaton, Richard Maxwell. II. Faruqui, Munis Daniyal, 1967- III. Gilmartin, David. IV. Kumar, Sunil, 1956- V. Richards, John F.

DS336.E95 2012
954--dc23 2012029787

ISBN 978-1-107-03428-0 Hardback

Contents

List of Contributors

Muzaffar Alam is George V. Bobrinskoy Professor in South Asian Languages and Civilizations at the University of Chicago, USA. Prior to this, he was Professor of Medieval Indian History at Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi. He has published extensively on history of Indo-Islamic culture, Mughal history, religious and literary cultures in pre-colonial northern India and comparative history of the Islamic world. His publications include *The Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India* (1986); *The Mughal State 1526–1750* (co-edited with Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 1998); *A European Experience of the Mughal Orient* (co-edited with Seema Alavi, 2001); *The Languages of Political Islam in India: c. 1200–1800* (2004); *Indo-Persian Travels in the Age of Discovery: 1400–1800* (co-authored with Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 2007) and *Writing the Mughal World: Studies in Political Culture* (co-authored with Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 2011).

Stephen F. Dale is a Professor Emeritus of South Asian and Islamic History at the Ohio State University, USA. He specializes in Indo-Muslim history and the Islamic history of Afghanistan, Iran and Central Asia. He has studied and published on the history of Malabar Muslims of Kerala in Southwest India, the diaspora of Indian merchants in Iran, Central Asia and Russia in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and early modern Muslim Empires of the Ottomans, Safavids and Mughals. His recent publications include *The Garden of the Eight Paradises: Babur and the Culture of Empire in Central Asia, Afghanistan and India* (1483–1530) (2004) and *The Muslim Empires of the Ottomans, Safavids and Mughals* (2009).

Richard M. Eaton is Professor of History at the University of Arizona, USA. He is the author of several monographs and edited volumes

pertaining to the history of medieval and early modern South Asia, including *Sufis of Bijapur, 1300–1700: Social Roles of Sufis in Medieval India* (1978); *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier, 1204–1760* (1993); *Essays on Islam and Indian History* (2000); *India's Islamic Traditions, 711–1750* (edited, 2002); *A Social History of the Deccan, 1300–1761: Eight Indian Lives* (2005); *Slavery and South Asian History* (co-edited with Indrani Chatterjee, 2006) and *Power, Memory, Architecture: Contested Sites in India's Deccan Plateau, 1300–1600* (co-authored with Phillip B. Wagoner, forthcoming).

Munis D. Faruqui is a historian and Associate Professor in the Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, USA. He focuses on the Muslim experience in South Asia, especially Mughal India. His books include *Princes of the Mughal Empire, 1504–1719* (2012) and an edited volume, *Religious Interactions in Mughal India* (co-edited with Vasudha Dalmia, 2013). His various journal articles have interrogated the creation of the Mughal Empire under Emperor Akbar (r. 1556–1605), the founding decades (c. 1720–40) of the princely state of Hyderabad, and the relationship between religion and politics in the life and work of the Mughal prince, Dara Shukoh (1615–59). He is currently working on a book reevaluating the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb (r. 1658–1707).

David Gilmartin is Professor of History at North Carolina State University, USA. His current research focuses on the history of election law in colonial and postcolonial India. His publications include *Empire and Islam: Punjab and the Making of Pakistan* (1988) and an edited volume, *Beyond Turk and Hindu: Rethinking Religious Identities in Islamicate South Asia* (co-edited with Bruce B. Lawrence, 2001).

Sumit Guha is Professor of History at Rutgers University, USA. Prior to this, he has taught at University of Delhi, India. His current research interests centre on the political, cultural and linguistic processes by which identities take historical shape in western and central India. He has published extensively on the economic and social history of medieval and modern South Asia. His publications include *Environment and Ethnicity in India, 1200–1991*(1999) and *Health and Population in South Asia from Earliest Times to the Present* (2001). He is a member of the editorial and advisory board of the journals, *India Review* and *Medieval History Journal*. He is the Review Editor of H-Asia.

Gordon Johnson was President of Wolfson College, University of Cambridge from 1993 to 2010. He has served as a Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge and was the first Provost of the Gates Cambridge Trust. He was President of the Royal Asiatic Society from 2009 to 2012. Dr Johnson was Director of the Centre of South Asian Studies at Cambridge for eighteen years, and edited *Modern Asian Studies* from 1971 to 2008. His publications include *Provincial Politics and Indian Nationalism: Bombay and the Indian National Congress 1880–1915* (1973), *University Politics: F. M. Cornford's Cambridge and His Advice of the Young Academic Politician* (1994) and *A Cultural Atlas of India* (1995). He was a Syndic of Cambridge University Press for thirty years and Chairman from 1993 to 2009. He continues as a Fellow of Wolfson College and as the General Editor of *The New Cambridge History of India*. He is currently writing about Cambridge University and its Press in the twentieth century, and researching the relationship between India and Britain in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Sunil Kumar is Professor of Medieval History in the Department of History, University of Delhi, India. He has also taught, most recently (2008–10) at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London University, and earlier at the University of California at Berkeley (2008), the EPHE (2006) and EHESS (2001) in Paris. Other than several articles, his book publications include *The Emergence of the Delhi Sultanate* (2007, 2010); *The Present in Delhi's Pasts* (2002, 2nd ed., 2010) and *Demolishing Myths or Mosques and Temples?* (edited, 2008). He was a member of the editorial collective that produced the current editions of class 7 and class 11 NCERT history textbooks. Prof. Kumar is the joint managing editor of the journal, the *Indian Economic and Social History Review* and editorial advisor to the journal, *South Asia Research*.

Patrick Manning is Andrew W. Mellon Professor of World History and Director of the World History Center at the University of Pittsburgh, USA. His research has focused on demographic history (African slave trade), global migration, the African Diaspora as a dimension of world history, and social and cultural history of francophone Africa. His publications include *The African Diaspora: A History through Culture* (2009); *World History: Global and Local Interactions* (2005); *Migration in World History* (2005); *Slavery, Colonialism and Economic Growth in Dahomey, 1640–1960* (2004) and *Navigating World History: Historians*

Create a Global Past (2003). Prof. Manning also directs the Center for Historical Information and Analysis, a collaborative project to build a world-historical dataset.

Claude Markovits is Emeritus Directeur de Recherche (Senior Research Fellow) at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris. He specializes in the history of colonial India, particularly the Indian mercantile community, and has authored books such as *Indian Business and Nationalist Politics* (1985); *The Global World of Indian Merchants* (2000); *The Un-Gandhian Gandhi: The Life and Afterlife of the Mahatma* (2004); *A History of Modern India 1480–1950* (2002) and *Merchants, Traders, Entrepreneurs: Indian Business in the Colonial Period* (2008).

Peter C. Perdue is Professor of History at Yale University, USA. Prior to this, he has taught for more than two decades at School of Humanities and Social Science, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA. His research interests centre on modern Chinese and Japanese social and economic history, agricultural development and environmental history, history of frontiers and world history. He is the author of *Exhausting the Earth: State and Peasant in Hunan 1500–1850 AD* (1987) and *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (2005).

Velcheru Narayana Rao is Visiting Distinguished Professor of South Asian Studies at Emory University, USA. He has taught Telugu and Indian literature for nearly four decades at University of Wisconsin–Madison, USA. He has been a Visiting Professor at University of Chicago. Professor Rao has written more than fifteen books and some of his recent works include *Symbols of Substance: Court and State in Nāyaka Period Tamilnadu* (co-authored with David Shulman and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 1992); *Textures of Time: Writing History in South India* (co-authored with David Shulman and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 2003), *Girls for Sale, Kanyasulkam: A Play from Colonial India* (2007) and *How Urvasi Was Won,* a translation of Kalidasa's *Vikramorvasiyam* (co-authored with David Shulman, 2009).

George Bryan Souza is Adjunct Associate Professor in the Department of History, University of Texas, San Antonio, USA. His research focuses on global maritime economic history (cross-cultural contacts, European relations with Asia, America and Africa) and early modern European

history and its expansion from about 1600 to 1800. His publications include *The Survival of Empire: Portuguese Trade and Society in China and the South China Sea, 1630–1754* (1986) and numerous articles and essays. He is the General Editor of the Brill EURO series. He was recently appointed a Mercator Guest Professor at Tübingen University, Germany.

Sanjay Subrahmanyam is Professor and Doshi Chair of Indian History at the University of California, Los Angeles, USA and has taught at Delhi, Paris and Oxford. He is the joint Managing Editor of the *Indian Economic and Social History Review*. Prof. Subrahmanyam has authored and edited more than twenty books; some of his recent publications include *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500–1700: A Political and Economic History* (2nd edn, 2012); *Textures of Time: Writing History in South India, 1600–1800* (co-authored with Velcheru Narayana Rao and David Shulman, 2001); *Explorations in Connected History*, 2 Vols (2004); *Writing the Mughal World* (co-authored with Muzaffar Alam, 2011) and *Three Ways to be Alien: Travails and Encounters in the Early Modern World* (2011).

Cynthia Talbot is Associate Professor of History and Asian Studies at the University of Texas at Austin, USA. Her publications include *Precolonial India in Practice: Society, Region and Identity in Medieval Andhra* (2001); *India before Europe* (co-authored with Catherine B. Asher, 2006) and *Knowing India: Colonial and Modern Constructions of the Past* (edited, 2011). Her current research project explores historical traditions and memories relating to King Prithviraj Chauhan from the twelfth century to the present day, and asks how he came to be a national hero.

Carl A. Trocki is an independent scholar based in Queensland. He was formerly the Professor of Asian Studies at the Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane, Australia. He specializes in the history of the Chinese migration to Southeast Asia and Australia and the history and politics of Asia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. His publications include *Opium and Empire: Chinese Society in Colonial Singapore, 1800–1910* (1990); *Opium, Empire and the Global Political Economy: A History of the Asian Opium Trade, 1750–1950* (1999) and *Singapore: Wealth, Power and the Culture of Control* (2006).

Foreword

Gordon Johnson

The essays published here celebrate the work of Professor John F. Richards, a historian who significantly changed our understanding of Mughal history, and who, long before it became fashionable, argued the case for tackling certain historical problems from a global perspective. A list of his publications appears at the end of this volume and it is, by any measure, an impressive contribution to knowledge and understanding.

He was born on 3 November 1938 in Exeter, New Hampshire, USA and was the first of his family to go into higher education. They were happy to support him in this venture, since, whatever his undoubted intellectual prowess, he demonstrated from an early age an amazing lack of practical ability when it came to tasks like changing light bulbs or mowing grass. (Later in life he would, with a twinkle in the eye, rather trade on these shortcomings, despite the fact that they sat rather uneasily against his mastery of difficult languages and complex financial spread-sheets.) In 1961, he graduated Valedictorian of his class at the University of New Hampshire, marrying his childhood sweetheart, Ann Berry, on the same day. After Ann had completed her own Bachelor's degree, the couple moved to the West coast where John pursued a doctorate at the University of California, Berkeley.

Working under the supervision of Professor Tom Metcalf, John took as his subject Mughal rule in south India in the first part of the eighteenth century—a topic of considerable importance and one that required exceptional linguistic and technical skills to pursue successfully. The resulting book, *Mughal Administration in Golconda*, published by Oxford

University Press in 1975, is an outstanding monograph. Firmly based on original archival material, it broke new ground in its clear analysis of institutional and financial structures, and of the political policies that were deployed by the intruding Mughal state as it attempted to assert control over a large part of the Deccan. The study showed how deeper knowledge of the component parts of the Mughal empire—particularly the constitutional arrangements and finding where wealth and power actually lay—contributed to a better understanding of both the successes and limitations of imperial systems. This would lead in future to an assessment of the Mughal enterprise, and of the challenges it faced as the eighteenth century progressed, as being not dissimilar to state-building efforts in other parts of the world. India was not, therefore, to be seen as somehow exotic or 'medieval', but a participant in some more general move of the time to create coherent, centralizing and financially robust states that were in every sense of the word 'modern'.

From Berkeley John moved in 1968 to the University of Wisconsin in Madison, where he proved an effective and stimulating teacher of undergraduates and graduate students alike, a reputation that was to follow him when he was lured to a senior Professorship at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina in 1977, and was undiminished at his untimely death on 23 August 2007. Moreover, he never shirked administrative or other collegial responsibilities and displayed a remarkable degree of academic entrepreneurialism. John was an inveterate arranger of meetings and conferences, and an increasingly effective promoter of his subject within a history establishment dominated by American and European topics.

In 1971 he spent a sabbatical term in Cambridge and was co-opted as a founding editor of the *New Cambridge History of India*, a project then newly approved for development by Cambridge University Press. Out of the thirty-odd volumes planned for that series, nearly half owe their inspiration to him and more than half of those published at the time of his death bear his editorial imprint. His own volume in the *New Cambridge History of India* is a masterly synthesis of contemporary historical knowledge about Mughal India. It steered its way brilliantly between different interpretations of the nature of the Mughal Empire, and did so without offending unduly any of the competing schools of thought. The book has been reissued in paperback, continues to sell well, and deservedly remains the first port of call for anyone with a

serious interest in the history of India from Babur's invasion to the end of the eighteenth century.

John had a wide range of intellectual interests and as he matured as a historian he contributed not just to the study of the Mughal Empire but to economic history and comparative world history. John perceived very early that a critical understanding of the impact of the movement of bullion, or of the effect of deforestation, climate change, and other things affecting the relationship between people and the environment, could often be understood only within the broadest international setting. To some this may now seem obvious, but John pioneered a more comprehensive approach to this type of study. From the late 1990s, he sought to understand the financial underpinnings of the British Empire in its Asian context. He gave a preliminary report of his findings in his 2001 Cambridge Kingsley Martin Memorial lecture (revised and expanded in *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 36, 2002, pp. 375–420) and in the *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, (Dharma Kumar Special Issue, 2002, pp. 149–80). His major contribution to environmental history was the ground-breaking *The Unending Frontier: Environmental History of the Early Modern World*, published by California University Press in 2003.

After the turn of the century much of John's managerial energies went into arguing for and then establishing the American Institute of Afghanistan Studies—an attempt (still much needed) to support research in the history and culture of Afghanistan, and to promote scholarly ties between the United States and that country. He was a trenchant critic, but a valiant advocate of new work that was soundly based on archival research and made good use of demanding techniques (such as foreign languages or financial expertise). He was particularly supportive of younger scholars in fields of global significance that universities in the West have persistently ignored or undervalued. John also maintained an impressive network of colleagues and friends, was good at keeping in touch with them, exchanging news and gossip, or prodding them to get on with some project or other, promised but long overdue.

Sanjay Subrahmanyam, in a tribute in the *Economic and Political Weekly* (15 September 2007), wrote appreciatively of John's many and varied scholarly achievements. He also captures well John's essential character:

> But behind all that organization and productivity, there was both a mischievous and a tempestuous side. I have seen John lose his temper

> rarely, but it was quite a sight. Rather like one of those British summer storms, there would be a thunderclap, a sharp shower (of words), and then all of a sudden the clouds would clear and all would be forgiven. As for the mischief, I can remember him shocking a leading historian … by holding forth at great length on the need to legalise drugs. Was he serious, the historian asked me in puzzlement? Well, at least half-serious. The other half was done for effect, for John certainly liked to provoke at times. It is that provocation and humour, as much as the energy and productivity, and the capacity to keep track of everybody with a singular personal touch that we will all miss.

The essays in this book, which were first presented at a conference in John's honour at Duke University in September 2006, and originally published in a special issue of *Modern Asian Studies* (Vol. 43, no.1, 2009), are testimony to John's far-reaching intellectual interests and to the affection in which he was held by students, colleagues and friends. It is also fitting that the American Historical Association has established an annual prize named in his honour. The publication of this volume brings to new readers a reminder of the important histories that continue, and need, to be written; and serve in turn as homage to an outstanding historian who led the field.

Introduction

David Gilmartin

These essays were originally presented at the retirement conference for Professor John F. Richards, which was held at Duke University on 29–30 September 2006. The conference, entitled 'Expanding Frontiers in South Asian and World History', brought together students, colleagues and associates of Prof. Richards to discuss themes that have marked Richards' work as a historian in an academic career of almost 40 years. These themes focused on 'frontiers' in multiple contexts, all relating to Richards' work: frontiers and state building; frontiers and environmental change; cultural frontiers; frontiers, trade and drugs; and frontiers and world history.

Richards' academic work began with his study of Mughal administration on the Deccan frontier in Golconda in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. His first book, *Mughal Administration in Golconda* (1975), which grew out of his doctoral dissertation, introduced two themes that were to run through much of his later work. The first was a focus on the frontier as a key arena for understanding the processes of state building. Relations between state bureaucracy and local actors, including regional warrior elites, were central to Richards' story. Second, and perhaps even more important for the long-term trajectory of his interests, Richards emphasized the importance of state institutions and finance to the Mughal system. State institutions were something that Richards took very seriously, and if these ultimately failed to cement Mughal rule in Golconda, he attributed the fault to various failed policies pursued by individual Mughal rulers.

Richards later developed this view of the Mughal Empire more fully in numerous essays, and perhaps most importantly, in his synthesis of Mughal history written for the New Cambridge History of India series, of which he was an editor (*The Mughal Empire*, 1993). In debates between those who have emphasized the negotiated patrimonial form of the Mughal empire and those who have stressed its relatively centralized bureaucratic and fiscal institutions, Richards has tended to be a strong advocate of the latter position. Although recognizing the older roots of Mughal forms of cultural authority and loyalty—and the empire's decentralized and patrimonial elements—Richards has been a leader in emphasizing the importance of new forms of state institutions as the defining feature of the Mughal polity. A concern with state finance and administration during the Mughal era (and most recently during the British colonial period as well) has thus been an ongoing preoccupation of his scholarly work.

Perhaps most importantly, however, Richards has seen these new forms as not simply South Asian, but as evidence of South Asia's participation in the broader, worldwide processes of transformation marking the early modern period. He has been forceful in rejecting the common Indian periodization that consigns Mughal history to a 'medieval' past contrasted with the 'modern' colonial period. As Richards argued most persuasively in a 1997 article in the *Journal of World History*, the early modern period was one marked by rapid changes on a worldwide scale, and in these changes, Mughal India fully shared. Many of these changes were products of an expanding global economy. But as Richards emphasized, these were not a product simply of expanding global interconnections (or of European-based capitalism), but of the deployments of new forms of state power on a worldwide scale, producing new forms of exploitation of land and nature in this period. Richards' emphasis in his earlier work on the importance of Mughal state institutions thus led in his later work to a broader emphasis on the importance of new forms of state authority in defining more generally the worldwide transformations of the early modern era.

These emphases were most evident in Richards' massive study of the environmental transformations of the early modern world, *The Unending Frontier* (2003). Here we can see most clearly Richards' concern for placing the development of the state in a world historical context. The expansion of early modern capitalist societies in Europe is a critical

element in Richards' story, an expansion that led to unprecedented levels of demand for commodities and pressures on the natural environment. But central to Richards' argument is his connecting this to new forms of state power that had emerged from a 'shared evolutionary progress in human organization' and had pushed state capacities in multiple areas of the world to new thresholds of growth. Critical institutions in Richards' story, such as the triumph of new forms of property rights, were thus a product not only of new economic pressures, but also of new technologies of state power.

The effects of these early modern transformations were, of course, nowhere more visible than on multiple frontiers—frontiers of state power, frontiers of expanding settlement, frontiers of cultural and ethnic interaction, and frontiers of trade. As in much of Richards' work, whether on bandits or drugs, the frontier was a critical arena in which the transformations marking new forms of economic organization, commodity trade, land settlement and state authority intersected. Central to these processes, of course, were the specificities of the varying milieus in which they occurred. Richards' work has, from the beginning, been marked by a combination of concern for large-scale global processes, and for the detailed specificities of each historical case. The essays that follow have attempted to capture the range of interests and approaches that have marked John Richards' career.