

Introduction

One cannot imagine a dynasty without civilization, while a civilization without dynasty and royal authority is impossible, because human beings must by nature co-operate, and that calls for a restraining influence. Political leadership, based either on religious or royal authority, is obligatory . . . This is what is meant by dynasty.

Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, ed. Franz Rosenthal, Book IV, chap. 20, 291.

Kinship to kingship?

Dynasty plays a marginal role in today's world. Most modern political systems define themselves as the antithesis of *ancien régime* monarchy, with election as the prime method of succession to high office and a strong bias against family-based networks of power. Royalty retains a surprising potential to attract crowds and generate veneration, but it is mostly seen as the relic of an earlier and darker age. Such reservations about kingship have a long history. Hippocrates (460–377 BCE) observed that 'where there are kings, there must be the greatest cowards. For [here] men's souls are enslaved, and refuse to run risks readily and recklessly to increase the power of somebody else.'¹ This connection between kingship and servitude has been noted many times since. The Englishman J. Alfred Skertchly, visiting the West African kingdom of Dahomey in the early 1870s, enjoyed the remarkable honour of being proclaimed a prince by the reigning king Glele (?–1858–1889).² Nevertheless, he ridiculed the obligatory ritual greeting performed by all who approached the king:

The . . . salutation consists of a prostration before the monarch with the forehead touching the sand, and afterwards rubbing the cheeks on the earth, leaving a red patch of sand on either side . . . Then follows the dirt bath . . . a series of shovelling

¹ Hippocrates, *Airs, Waters, Places*, in *Hippocrates*, vol. I, trans. W.H.S. Jones, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA, 1923), 133.

² Following the first mention of all rulers in this book, three years are given in parentheses: birth, start of reign, end of reign. Question marks replace uncertain or unknown dates; where the end of the reign did not coincide with the death of the ruler, the last year is followed by an asterisk: *.

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of the earth over the head . . . when receiving or asking any particular favour, the saluter completely smothers himself with the red earth; rubbing it well into the arms and neck until it sticks to the perspiring skin like dough.³

The extreme elevation of one person over others does not conform to modern sensibilities. In 1786, one of Europe's leading monarchs, Habsburg emperor Joseph II (1741–1780–1790), abolished the reverence on bended knee at the Austrian court, arguing that this show of respect 'is unnecessary between humans, and should be reserved for God alone'.⁴ The authority of hereditary princes strikes us as the inverse image of modern egalitarian society: it is often portrayed in contrast to modernity, as the undesirable situation from which we emancipated ourselves. However, almost all peoples across the globe until very recently accepted dynastic rule as a god-given and desirable form of power.

Throughout history, rule by a single male figure has predominated. These men rarely ruled without some guidance from mothers, spouses, and female relatives, yet women rulers holding supreme sovereign power remained the exception, even in societies where royalty was transferred through the female line.⁵ Chiefs, kings, and emperors reigned over most

³ J. Alfred Skertchly, *Dahomey As It Is: Being a Narrative of Eight Months' Residence in that Country* . . . (London, 1874), 143.

⁴ Jeroen Duindam, 'The Burgundian-Spanish legacy in European court life: a brief reassessment and the example of the Austrian Habsburgs', *Publication du Centre européen d'études bourguignonnes*, 46 (2006), 203–220, full quotation at 216 ('weil dieses zwischen Menschen und Menschen keine geziemende Handlung ist die Gott allein vorbehalten bleiben muß').

⁵ On women and rule, see Chapter 2 below. On China, see Keith McMahon, *Women Shall Not Rule. Imperial Wives and Concubines in China from Han to Liao* (Lanham, MD, 2013). On Southeast Asia, see Barbara Watson Andaya, *The Flaming Womb: Repositioning Women in Early Modern Southeast Asia* (Honolulu, HI, 2006), 165–96. On Europe, see recently Matthias Schnettger, 'Weibliche Herrschaft in der Frühen Neuzeit: einige Beobachtungen aus verfassungs- und politikgeschichtlicher Sicht', *Zeitenblicke*, 8/2 (2009), www.zeitenblicke.de/2009/2/schnettger/dippArticle.pdf; Ann Lyon, 'The place of women in European royal succession in the Middle Ages', *Liverpool Law Review*, 27/3 (2006), 361–93. On African matrilineal contexts, see Tarikhu Farrar, 'The queenmother, matriarchy, and the question of female political authority in precolonial West African monarchy', *Journal of Black Studies*, 27/5 (1997), 579–97. For a wider overview of female political roles, see Annie M.D. Lebeuf, 'La rôle de la femme dans l'organisation politique des sociétés africaines', in Denise Paulme (ed.), *Femmes d'Afrique noire*, (Paris, 1960), 93–120. For an example of sovereign female rule in southern Africa, see E. Jensen Krige and J.D. Krige, *The Realm of a Rain-Queen: A Study of the Pattern of Lovedu Society* (Oxford, 1943). On double descent or 'dual political systems' with matching leadership roles for women and men, see e.g. Beverly J. Stoeltje, 'Asante queen mothers', *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 810/1 (1997), 41–71; Isabel Yaya, *The Two Faces of Inca History: Dualism in the Narratives and Cosmology of Ancient Cuzco* (Leiden and Boston, MA, 2012). See also Joyce Marcus, 'Breaking the glass ceiling: the strategies of royal women in ancient states', in Cecelia F. Klein (ed.), *Gender in Pre-Hispanic America* (Washington, DC, 2001), 305–40. See in general the volume edited by Anne Walthall, *Servants of the Dynasty: Palace Women in World History* (Berkeley, CA, 2008).

polities across the globe for the last 10,000 years. Around 8000 BCE, the domestication of plant and animal life enabled the emergence of larger-scale settlements, a process which spread from different core areas to envelop the larger part of the world. Small and mobile kinship-based groups ruled by elders or chiefs will have arisen far earlier, but the expanding scale of sedentary settlements and the increased possibility of amassing surplus now stimulated social differentiation, hierarchy, and conquest. In many places ‘stateless’ societies persisted. Almost invariably though, dynastic leaders arose where hierarchy and differentiation developed. In the process, the scale of polities expanded: small groups led by chiefs were brought together under the authority of ‘paramount chiefs’ or kings. In the long run, kingdoms were sometimes absorbed by kings-of-kings or emperors. Royalty often presented itself as originating in conquest, with a stranger subduing the local population and founding a line of kings.⁶ Ruling over an assemblage of groups previously unconnected or even hostile, kings were presented as standing above faction and as safeguarding harmony, both within society and between heaven and earth.

In whichever way royal leaders actually emerged or represented their origins, the dynastic organisation of power lasted. Dynasties could be short-lived or enduring; successful in creating a pacified and coherent polity or prone to violence and catastrophically inept. The dynastic set-up of power, however, proved to be remarkably persistent. The extended overarching polities which emerged in several continents were almost universally headed by dynastic leaders. The *pater familias* was head of his clan or family as well as leader of a polity; a simple mortal glorified as a demigod. The clash of these roles forms one of the themes of this book.

Dynasty persists into the modern world, but it has lost much of its aura during recent centuries. With the emergence of industrialised and urbanised societies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, alternative forms of power have become more prominent. Kingship evolved at a point where societies moved beyond kinship as the key principle of social organisation; it retreated in modern urban and industrial society. Kinship

⁶ On strangers and conquerors in general, see Marshall Sahlins, ‘The stranger-king or, Elementary forms of the politics of life’, *Indonesia and the Malay World*, 36/105 (2008), 177–99; on the conquest nature of African kingdoms, see Jan Vansina, ‘A comparison of African kingdoms’, *Africa*, 32 (1962), 324–35, at 329. Specific explanations for the repeated story of migration and conquest in an African context can be found in Claude Tardits (ed.), *Princes & serviteurs du royaume: cinq études de monarchies africaines* (Paris, 1987), 20; Aidan Southall, ‘The segmentary state in Africa and Asia’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 30/1 (1988), 52–82, at 61–3; and Lebeuf, ‘La rôle de la femme’, points to women as the mythic partners of stranger-kings, indicating the union of different peoples under one dynasty. See also Jeyamalar Kathirithamby-Wells, ‘“Strangers” and “stranger-kings”: the Sayyid in eighteenth-century maritime Southeast Asia’, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 40, Special Issue 3 (2009), 567–91.

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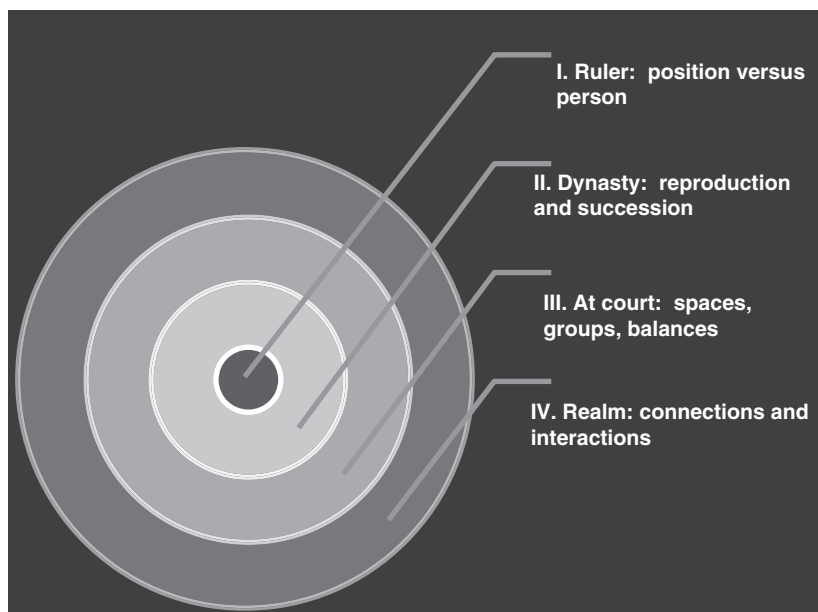
and family, however, remain a force to be reckoned with. Personalised and enduring forms of leadership in politics and in business tend to acquire semi-dynastic traits even in the contemporary world. In autocratic states, the power of modern-day dynasts extends far beyond anything their predecessors could have imagined.⁷

Dynastic power throughout history shares some basic features. Kingship, emerging as an extension of kinship when a clan or lineage imposed its hierarchical supremacy on other descent groups, retains a powerful connection to family and genealogy. Deriving from the ancient Greek term for lordship and sovereignty, ‘dynasty’ is now commonly understood as a ruling family, a line of kings or princes.⁸ While hereditary succession was never a universal aspect of polities governed by kings or emperors across the globe, the ruler’s kin was close to power. The ruler and his relatives were served by a household of retainers and advisors. The material environment of these groups, whether a simple dwelling or a grand palace, structured access to the ruler. A focal point of redistribution and ritual, the dynastic centre interacted in various ways with society at large. This book examines these social patterns around dynastic rulers at four levels, beginning with and moving outwards from the figure in the centre: ruler, dynasty, court, and realm. At each of these levels, certain tensions arose; closer inspection reveals how quite distinct social patterns, which emerged around the world, can be understood as alternative solutions to these tensions (see Figure 1).

A single figure stood at the heart of the polity, governing as well as representing the realm as a mascot or totem. All kings, talented or inept, were subject to certain structural complications. The more the position of the ruler was elevated to omnipotence or sacrality, the more it tended to circumscribe the person on the throne. Hierarchical pre-eminence and ritual responsibilities severely limited the freedom of incumbent kings,

⁷ Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar* (London, 2007); Russ Baker, *Family of Secrets: The Bush Dynasty, America’s Invisible Government, and the Hidden History of the Last Fifty Years* (New York, 2009); Bradley K. Martin, *Under the Loving Care of the Fatherly Leader: North Korea and the Kim Dynasty* (New York, 2006). Examples from the business world can be found in João de Pina-Cabral and Antónia Pedrosa de Lima (eds.), *Elites: Choice, Leadership and Succession* (Oxford, 2000); see also the thirteen business dynasties in David S. Landes, *Dynasties: Fortunes and Misfortunes of the World’s Great Family Businesses* (New York, 2006); for a typology mixing dynastic empires and modern totalitarian regimes, see Karl Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power* (New Haven, CT, and London, 1957).

⁸ On dynasty and its various meanings in antiquity, see Cinzia Bearzot, ‘Dynasteia, idea of, Greece’, in Roger S. Bagnall et al. (eds.), *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History* (Oxford, 2012), 2240–1; Mischa Meier and Meret Strothmann, ‘Dynasteia’, in Hubert Cancik and Helmut Schneider (eds.), *Brill’s New Pauly: Encyclopedia of the Ancient World*, online edition (Leiden, 2002–) (accessed 9 October 2014); *OED Online* (accessed 6 March 2014).



1 The layout of this book: concentric circles around the ruler.

complicated their personal relationships, and thwarted active political roles. The first chapter of this book examines the tension between position and person, between the ideals of kingship and the lives of the figures actually ruling. Do the expectations and ideas surrounding kingship contain shared or general elements globally? Do we find contrasting templates for rulership? How did youngsters learn to adopt such roles, and how did they cope with their elevated position from adolescence to maturity and old age? For long-living rulers in particular, this was a daunting challenge: where could they seek intimacy and support, whom could they trust without misgivings? Tensions between the unpredictable qualities of the persons ascending to the throne and the variable but consistently heavy demands of the position arose in many forms, and affected strong as well as weak rulers. These epithets – strong and weak, good and bad – need to be placed against the background of the tension between person and position. Strong-willed and intelligent figures, spurred by the demands of government but vexed by the restrictions placed on their shoulders, could respond by turning into archetypically ‘bad’ rulers resorting to violence or retreating into their palaces. Conversely, wholly undistinguished and pliable characters, lucky in

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their choice of advisors and passively following the latter's dictates, were likely to be remembered as good or wise rulers.

Moving one step away from the central figure, close relatives and the spouses or consorts come into view. The dynasty or royal clan around a ruler could be delimited in many ways, a process determined by traditions and choices regarding dynastic reproduction and succession. Women, only in exceptional cases themselves occupying the uppermost position of authority, were sometimes seen as the vehicles of royalty. In matrilineal polities, only sons of royal women could ascend to the throne, whereas the status of the father was irrelevant for succession. Female agency was determined not only by patterns of descent, but also by reproduction: harem-based polygyny dominated dynasties worldwide, whereas monogamous marriage was the rule only in Christian Europe. Numerous offspring safeguarded continuity, but foreboded rivalry. Siring only a few children made it easier to satisfy sibling ambitions, but increased the risk of extinction. All dynasties were concerned about the absence of direct successors and many were forced to seek alternative strategies such as adoption. The second chapter of this book examines the rich variety of arrangements for reproduction and succession – charting the agency of women and the place of royal relatives in dynastic settings. It challenges definitions of dynasty based exclusively on heredity, showing many alternatives to the concentration of power inherent in male primogeniture or eldest-son succession. Rights of succession invariably engendered tensions.⁹ Relatives close to succession and sharing in dynastic prestige could act as powerful supporters, but they were liable to turn into dangerous rivals. How did dynastic rulers and their advisors deal with this challenge? What patterns can be found in the attitudes, functions, and locations of relatives eligible for succession?

Servants form the third concentric circle around the dynastic ruler: the household or court. Rulers and their relatives were served by an establishment catering for their daily needs as well as for the government of the realm. Who served the ruler in these different capacities? From which status groups in society were these servants drawn? Courts have traditionally been seen as arenas of conflict, the preservation of royal power as contingent upon exploiting rivalries among groups at court: *divide et impera*.¹⁰ Some rulers were able to manipulate conflict, others were

⁹ Jack Goody (ed.), *Succession to High Office* (Cambridge, 1966).

¹⁰ Norbert Elias, *The Court Society* (Oxford, 1983), elaborates on Max Weber's typology of power, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft: Grundriss der verstehenden Soziologie* (Tübingen, 1972 [1921]); see the discussion and bibliography in Jeroen Duindam, *Myths of Power: Norbert Elias and the Early Modern European Court* (Amsterdam, 1995).

undermined by it, yet beyond these individual variations, some recurring patterns of conflict can be established. Tensions between ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ court staffs can be found in many places, pitting lesser-ranking confidants who were constantly in the ruler’s proximity against prestigious state dignitaries whose connections with the ruler remained more distanced. Rulers themselves could seek support in inner court circles against overbearing relatives, nobles, or advisors. At most courts, as in most houses, some areas were easily accessible whereas others were more restricted. Palace layouts can be found for many courts in history. A comparative examination of these materials makes it possible to link status, functions, and gender to palace topography and to the issue of access to the ruler.

Finally, this aggregate of groups around the ruler as a whole was expected to engage in exchanges with its wider social environment. How did the dynastic court, a household inflated to extraordinary proportions, cultivate its relationship with the territories under its control? The court accumulated wealth through taxes, tribute, or gift-giving; it distributed offices, ranks, and honours. More often than not, it served as a centre of redistribution, as a source of rewards and punishments, as a locus of conspicuous hospitality, as the highest court of appeal, and as the key venue of ritual celebration. Courts connected numerous groups to their own expanded services, on a permanent or temporary basis, or through a system of ranks and rewards. In addition, they attracted state servants, soldiers, petitioners, litigants, purveyors, artists, and fortune-seekers in all guises. Great rituals drew participants and spectators to the court, to experience at first hand the spectacle of dynastic supremacy. Depending on individual temperament and regional traditions, rulers could adopt extroverted or withdrawn styles of representation. Whether or not rulers personally engaged with their subjects, all courts sought to convince wider audiences that their power could not be challenged. These audiences, however, were not always favourably impressed by the show of power at the centre. How did they view the principle of dynastic rule and its main protagonists?

Scope: time and place

A systematic and global examination of these four dimensions of dynastic rule demands a wide scope based on numerous examples. This can be achieved only by leaving aside the wider ecological, social, economic, and cultural contexts of the selected examples. Although regional traditions of rulership are discussed at some length in the first chapter, the historic roots, the ideals, and the sacral nature of kingship are given less

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prominence in this book than the social context of dynastic rule.¹¹ Rightly or wrongly, I assume that differences in the cultural representation and understanding of rulership do not diminish the universality of the four domains singled out here for further scrutiny. The impact of different traditions will become clear in the examination of dynastic practice. A focus on the breadth and variety of the examples uncovers patterns that remain hidden in detailed studies of single dynasties in their specific cultural settings. My comparison provides an open and dynamic model of dynastic power that cannot be obtained by concentration on any single case, or even by in-depth comparison of a few selected cases.

This examination of the social setting of dynastic rulers at the apex of society deserves a truly world-historical scale, accepting no limitations in time or place. Such an all-encompassing comparative effort, however, can hardly be achieved by a single individual. My examination is limited to the period between the end of the Mongol conquests and the rise of unchallenged European hegemony, from around 1300 to the early decades of the nineteenth century. It includes examples from the entire period, but focuses on the years after 1550.¹² In this phase of increasingly dense global contact, dynastic power and courtly splendour reached their apex in Europe as well as in Asia, from Versailles via Topkapı, Delhi, and Isfahan to the Forbidden City.¹³ In Africa, too, spectacular examples of court culture appear in these centuries. Trade with Europe loomed large in the make-up of kingdoms along Africa's western coast: the growth of dynastic power and luxury here was contingent on slavery.¹⁴ Only in the nineteenth century, however, did European colonial governance move

¹¹ See the classic works by J.G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* (London, 1987 [1922]); Arthur M. Hocart, *Kingship* (London, 1927); and Hocart, *Kings and Councillors: An Essay in the Comparative Anatomy of Human Society* (Chicago, 1970 [1936]). For recent discussions and bibliographies, see Declan Quigley (ed.), *The Character of Kingship* (Oxford, 2005); W.M. Spellman, *Monarchies 1000–2000* (London, 2001); Francis Oakley, *Kingship: The Politics of Enchantment* (Oxford, 2008).

¹² On parallel developments in Europe and Asia, see Victor Lieberman, *Strange Parallels: Southeast Asia in Global Context, c. 800–1830*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 2003–9), and Jack Goldstone's review of this work, 'New patterns in global history: a review essay on *Strange Parallels* by Victor Lieberman', *Clodynamics*, 1/1 (2010), 92–102; and Goldstone, 'The problem of the "early modern" world', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 41/3 (1998), 249–84.

¹³ Japan seems to be the exception here, with the classic age of imperial court splendour in the Heian period (794–1185) outshining the military and political consolidation under the Tokugawa shoguns, at least in terms of the scholarly attention it has received. Possibly the same can be said about Majapahit in relation to the early modern sultanates in the archipelago, where the Dutch East India Company soon became a force to be reckoned with.

¹⁴ John K. Thornton, *A Cultural History of the Atlantic World, 1250–1820* (Cambridge, 2012), 82, explicitly relates the rise of relatively centralised kingdoms in West Africa to their slavery-based income, which allowed the build-up of military power and courtly

older political structures into the margins. Change came more rapidly and destructively in the Americas after 1492. The Spanish conquest ended the relatively recent Aztec and Inka imperial ventures, instituting European-style viceregal regimes. My comparison necessarily ends where European hegemony became so consolidated that local regimes were subjugated or adopted European-style reforms.

Few dynasties lasted throughout the five centuries following 1300, and even in these cases continuity usually was a mixture of demographic reality, haphazard improvisation, and genealogical make-believe. The period roughly corresponds to the time-span of the Ottoman dynasty (1299–1922), the two ‘Late Imperial’ Chinese dynasties, Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1912), and the period of Muslim rule in northern India from the Delhi sultanate dynasties (1206–1526) to the Mughals (1526–1857). The Tokugawa *shoguns* ruled from 1600 onwards, while the imperial dynasty, thanks to several unobtrusive reparations of demographic mishaps, could boast a remarkable longevity from early into modern Japan. The Javanese sultans of Mataram, who started their rule in the late sixteenth and continued into the eighteenth century, claimed a link with the preceding house of Majapahit (1293–1527).¹⁵ Other dynasties in the archipelago and on the Southeast Asian mainland likewise construed genealogical continuity, but none actually seems to have lasted throughout these centuries. In Europe, the same period comprises the rise and fall of numerous dynasties and the persistence of others, such as the Habsburgs. Only a few African dynasties lasted throughout this period. The Sefuwa dynasty of Kanem-Bornu around Lake Chad, which converted to Islam in the eleventh century, lasted into the nineteenth century. Its remarkable record was matched by the Christian ‘Solomonic’ dynasty in Ethiopia, which gained power in the thirteenth century while posing as successor to an earlier Solomonic tradition. The power of the Solomonids

splendour without increased taxation. The same point is made by Emmanuel Terray, ‘L’économie politique du royaume Abron du Gyaman’, *Cahiers d’études africaines*, 22 (1982), 251–75. More generally on the role of slavery in the rise of West African kingdoms, see Robin Law, ‘Dahomey and the slave trade: reflections on the historiography of the rise of Dahomey’, *Journal of African History*, 27 (1986), 237–67; Anne Caroline Bailey, *African Voices of the Atlantic Slave Trade: Beyond the Silence and the Shame* (Boston, MA, 2005), chap. 3, on African agency including Dahomey and Asante; and most recently, Sean Stilwell, *Slavery and Slaving in African History* (Cambridge, 2014).

¹⁵ Soemarsaid Moertono, *State and Statecraft in Old Java: A Study of the Later Mataram Period, 16th to 19th Century* (Ithaca, NY, 1963), 7–9, also 53 on the Yogyakarta and Surakarta prolonging the Mataram legacy after 1755 under Dutch overlordship; see the genealogy in J.W. Winter, ‘Beknopte beschrijving van het Hof Soerakarta in 1824’, in G.P. Rouffaer (ed.), *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, 54 (1902), 15–172, at 26–7.

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was eroded in the later eighteenth century but re-emerged in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is more difficult to situate historically the Ogois kings of Benin, who, according to early sources, ruled 'in the olden days before there was any Moon or Sun'. The precise starting point of their Eweka successors, who ruled Benin as 'Obas' (kings) from the early thirteenth century into the modern age, cannot be established with much accuracy.¹⁶

There is a sound practical reason for choosing this period, one which witnessed the emergence of global networks, the expansion of literacy, and the large-scale production of printed books. Numerous texts written by missionaries, diplomats, merchants, soldiers, and travellers make it possible to include regions that generated few indigenous written sources, notably Africa and the Americas. Lacking the abundant written records of polities in Asia and Europe, the history of these territories has been painstakingly reconstructed on the basis of archaeological finds, indigenous scripts, and oral traditions. European travellers' reports offer invaluable supplementary material. The authors of these reports inevitably perceived the peoples and lands they encountered through the lens of European preoccupations. However, given that there are few alternative written sources, the problems involved in using them are outweighed by the benefit of including otherwise inaccessible territories in the following account. One of the questions raised by European sources of this period is that of 'commensurability': visitors straightforwardly translated their observations into European terminology. This draws attention to the way in which they recognised certain aspects, without necessarily proving actual similarities.¹⁷ Modern researchers must therefore verify whether terms such as 'courtier' or 'noble' used in these texts correspond to the social categories of distant worlds. While I use sources generated by the global encounter, mutual perceptions and the transfer of peoples and artefacts between courts do not appear in my comparison.¹⁸

¹⁶ See Dierk Lange, 'The kingdoms and peoples of Chad', in D.T. Niane (ed.), *General History of Africa*, vol. IV: *Africa from the Twelfth to the Sixteenth Century* (Berkeley, CA, 1984), 238–65; Donald E. Crummey, 'Ethiopia in the early modern period: Solomonic monarchy and Christianity', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 8/3 (2004), 191–209, and the literature cited there; Stefan Eisenhofer, 'The Benin kinglist/s: some questions of chronology', *History in Africa*, 24 (1997), 139–56.

¹⁷ On encounters, translation, and 'commensurability', see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Courtly Encounters: Translating Courtliness and Violence in Early Modern Eurasia* (Cambridge, MA, 2012).

¹⁸ I leave aside here the rich literature on the movement of people, ideas, artefacts, and germs, and the processes of cultural transfer; see e.g. Bhaswati Bhattacharya, Gita Dharampal-Frick, and Jos Gommans, 'Spatial and temporal continuities of merchant networks in South Asia and the Indian Ocean (1500–2000)', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 50/2–3 (2007), 91–105;