

I

Global migrations

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In the tri-continental African-Asian-European World, three unrelated macro-regional and political developments at mid-fifteenth century were to have major impacts on migration and power relations globally: First, in China, the transoceanic outreach epitomized by Admiral Zheng He's ambassadorial voyages between 1403 and 1433 to the "Western" or Indian Ocean and as far as East Africa's thriving port cities were ended by decree of the Imperial Court. Second, the Crown in Portugal, in contrast, decided to expand outreach by providing state support for merchants venturing southward along Africa's Atlantic coasts. Third, in the Eastern Mediterranean and West Central Asia, the hinge region of trade between China, the Indian Ocean societies and the Mediterranean's city-states, the emerging Ottoman Empire inserted itself between Arab and Venetian merchants. When, in the 1490s, Iberian mariners in search of a westward passage to "the Indies" and its imagined riches hit an unexpected barrier that came to be called the "Americas," a fourth major change resulted, this one demographic: the near-genocide of the population and resettlement. This, for the Europeans, "new world," was a known and lived space to resident peoples; *new* were the in-migrating Iberians' religion and quest for material gain.

The migratory consequences of these developments were many and included six major ones: first, the emergence of the Chinese diaspora in Southeast Asia; second, new patterns of trade and mobility between Iberian and Atlantic Europe and Asia's many regions; third, the importation of bound Africans to Iberia; fourth, a new type of bondage, chattel slavery, with its forced mass migrations in the emerging European-ruled global plantation belt; fifth, population collapse in the Americas brought about by the European intruders' germs, warfare, and exploitation, which emptied the double continent for mass arrival of indentured and free Europeans and enslaved Africans; sixth, the Iberian and Dutch circum-African outreach, which involved few migrants but established a new regime that combined

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mercantile expertise with armed state power and in which private investments and profits were subsidized by public-funded soldiery and administrators. This globalization replaced protocols of unarmed trade that had kept transaction costs low; the new, armed trade induced or enforced labor, refugee, and other migrations across the world.

Wherever voyagers, migrants, refugees, and bound or free laborers arrived, they encountered functioning societies with knowledge of the region's ecology and with societal-political structures. The newcomers from Europe, "explorers" in their self-deceiving master narratives, came with different knowledge acquired in their own socialization. They coveted the riches of "the Indies" and the labor of "the negroes" – both constructs of white ideologues. When they encountered resident societies, they could opt for co-existence, intermingling, or violence. Each group's "funds of knowledge" could be supplementary, contradictory, or parallel to others. Those with more guns and with a more aggressive religious, racial, and mercantile ideology imposed direct rule or indirect hegemony. Unarmed trader cultures and regional merchants became middle "men" or, more correctly, mediating family economies, who, because they were bi- or multi-lingual, could translate exchanges between local producers and visitors, whether long-distance merchants or self-imposing colonizers without knowledge of languages and exchange practices. In-migrating men with long-distance connections often associated with or married local women of rank to access their networks and social capital. Such partnership-families connected the local and the distant. Wealthy Europeans' demand for spices, silver or gold, porcelain or silk, and for plantation-produced sugar stimulated production and the demand for labor, and thus also stimulated labor and expert migrations. Information feedback about the options (seemingly) available in newly connected distant regions induced men and women of the poorer classes, who could hardly feed themselves and their children, to depart. So-called "free migrants" left unsatisfactory "homes" under severe economic constraints and societies that did not permit sustainable lives. Establishing themselves elsewhere involved acculturation, a coming to terms with different agricultural and commercial frames – climatic, geographic, spatial, societal, spiritual. Migrants' cultural métissage and non-migrating people's adjustment to the capabilities and impositions of newcomers are a core element of world history's dynamics.¹

¹ Jerry H. Bentley, *Old World Encounters. Cross-Cultural Contacts and Exchanges in Pre-Modern Times* (New York: Oxford, 1993); Dirk Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact: World Migrations in the Second Millennium* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002).

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We will approach migrations by first summarizing in broad strokes the continuities and changes by macro-region across the globe from the earlier centuries to about 1500 and in some cases beyond. Next the penetration of heavily armed mobile Europeans into the societies of the Caribbean and South America, West Africa, the Indian Ocean's littorals and Southeast Asian islands will be analyzed in terms of displacement of and dominance over resident settled or mobile peoples. Motivations were economic: demand for northern furs, Southeast Asian spices, Chinese luxury goods, and – in the emerging plantation complex – mass-produced consumables including sugar, tea, and coffee. Since the European, powerful newcomers lacked knowledge of the languages, cultures, and customs of the economically or politically annexed territories and peoples, they required intermediaries – a further category of migrants. The mobility of intrusive investors and supportive state personnel (“colonial administrators”) resulted in vast, mostly forced, migrations of men and women as laborers to produce for the Europeans' demand. The imposed production and labor regimes, in turn, led to depletion of resources and to involuntary departure of original resident peoples deprived of their means to gain their livelihood. In a further section we will discuss the migration of those Europeans who also had difficulty in gaining their livelihood – the ideology of European superiority and whiteness discourses veil the poverty endemic in many regions of Europe, forcing rural and urban underclasses to depart. But once arriving in the Americas, southern Africa, or Australia, supported by powerful colonizer states, migrants established themselves as settlers over resident peoples and imposed “settler regimes.” In conclusion we will offer a comprehensive perspective on migrants and migrations in this period. For a long time historians have paid attention mainly to the long-distance migrations of white men or white women, but we will return to the full complexity of migrations of women and men in almost all societies of the world.

Macro-regional migrations: continuities and changes

Migration and cultural exchange, as constituent processes of societies, are not defined by fixed continents or bounded states. Micro-, meso-, and macro-regions that provide economic and cultural options for life prospects set parameters. They are defined by natural and human-made characteristics: plains, littorals, and mountain valleys, contiguous or connectable by camel or horse, by navigable rivers or seas, or by challenging mountain passes or

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desert-crossing routes. Groups of people, often known by ethno-cultural labeling, developed the knowledge to overcome distances and to use natural resources. By the fifteenth century, all continents had become interconnected spaces. The Indian Ocean's mariners had decoded the monsoon patterns a millennium-and-a-half before this; northern Arab and sub-Saharan black peoples connected along the Nile River valley and across the Sahara. In the sub-Arctic, Norse men and women had migrated in an hemispheric arc westward as far as Vinland and eastward via the Volga River to Byzantium, and had built states in Normandy, Sicily, and Palestine. From mid-thirteenth to mid-fourteenth century, the Mongols, highly mobile horse-borne peoples, expanded by aggression and destruction, then established rule over a trans-steppe realm. Their *pax mongolica* protected the transcontinental "Silk Road" trading. The tri-continental Mediterranean core of the West, after about 1000 CE, was supplemented by connectivity in Europe's land-centered western, central, and eastern sections. In the Americas, the centralized empires of the Aztec and Inca emerged in the central highlands of Mesoamerica and the southwestern Andean slopes in the 1400s. Trade routes radiated northward into the Plains and crossed the Eastern Woodlands.

Asia

Of the "four Asias" – China, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Japan (with Siberia, the fifth, better viewed in connection with the Russian Empire) – the realm of the Ming and Qing dynasties, like all polities, expanded and contracted. From its early Yellow River core, peasant families and urban people had migrated by the millions southward to the fertile Yangtzi Delta and reached what is now Guangdong province in the thirteenth century, while absorbing resident peoples and adapting their techniques for cultivation of specific terrains. The in-migrant Mongol Yuan rulers (1271–1368) were succeeded by the Ming (1368–1644), who came from among the core Chinese ethno-cultural group, the Han; the Ming were in turn replaced by in-migrant Manchu Qing (1644–1912). The empire expanded as far as western Sichuan where resident peoples and mobile armies of Islamic faith from the south stopped further advance. Intensive cultural exchange ensued. Migrating monks from South Asia induced widespread religious change: Buddhism came to co-exist with the indigenous Daoist beliefs and Confucianism. Though continuously incorporating culturally different peoples by annexation and in-migration, the state attempted to exclude northern mobile intruders. The "Great Wall's" construction and maintenance required internal mass migration of workers and soldier-peasant families. The capital,

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Hangzhou, housed some two million people of many cultures and multiple migration trajectories around 1400. Zheng He's fleets, thirty times the size of Columbus's and carrying up to 28,000 men, exchanged Chinese, Arab, and African products. A conservative court bureaucracy, hostile to innovation and "foreign" imports, ended the outreach to focus on the multiple and mobile land-based populations which produced whatever society needed. In defiance of such restrictions, however, entrepreneurs of southern Fujian province continued their relations with peninsular and insular Southeast Asian societies; artisans and laborers followed, and a permanently settled diaspora emerged. Men and local women formed families, and mixed children grew up; other men, "long-term sojourners," returned to fulfill Confucian precepts mandating that sons care for the spirits of ancestors.²

In Southeast Asia, a productive and integrated macro-region, highly skilled seafaring groups connected island peoples with those of the Malay Peninsula. By the fifteenth century, the Straits' port cities accommodated South and East Asian, Persian, and Arab merchants, along with Indonesian island traders. Arab migrants introduced Islam; Javanese trade missions reached China's Imperial Court; refugees from war-ravaged regions founded new urban agglomerations. After the late-thirteenth-century demise of the Srivijaya Empire, non-state-based mobile entrepreneurs recruited themselves from among migrants, fugitives, outlaws, and escaped slaves of Japanese, Chinese, and African background and became "pirates" or "buccaneers."³ To the mid-sixteenth century they rendered port-city-based trade and migration unsafe. Depending on the strength of a particular polity or on investment strategies of specific merchants, whether Gujarati or Fujianese, the regions' migratory and cultural exchanges assumed a distinctive character in particular periods.⁴

Japan's rulers, by 1400, had sent soldiers and migrants to annex Hokkaido with its peoples in the north and the northernmost Ryūkyū Islands to the

² Ping-to Ho, *Studies on the Population of China, 1368–1953* (Cambridge University Press, 1959); Morris Rossabi (ed.), *China Among Equals: The Middle Kingdom and Its Neighbors, 10th–14th Centuries* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983).

³ The term buccaneer, derived from the Arawak word for a wooden frame to smoke meat, originated in the early seventeenth-century Caribbean where highly mobile crews of French, Dutch, English, and probably other men attacked Spanish galleons for private gain (and smoked meat on such frames). The English Crown came to license such crews since piracy was a cheaper way of attacking its rival Spain than outfitting and dispatching the Royal Navy.

⁴ Maria A. P. Meilink-Roelofs, *Asian Trade and European Influence in the Indonesian Archipelago Between 1500 and About 1630* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962), pp. 13–26, 89–115.

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south. They also encouraged internal migrations by urbanization. Although in the early seventeenth century they did invade and annex the southern Ryūkyū Islands, in general and in contrast to the Southeast Asian societies, Japanese development and migrations remained land-based and extended no further than to neighboring islands and peninsulas.

South Asia, internally highly diverse by regions, rule, and cultures, experienced in-migration and cultural métissage from invaders and others crossing the Pamir Mountains. Merchants from Gujarat, the southwestern Malabar and the southeastern Coromandel coasts connected to Arabian, East African, and Southeast Asian ports and peoples. Monsoon-driven long sojourns resulted in community formation. Internally, South Asia's societies were both mobile and immobile. Earlier, armed Islamic migrants had penetrated the Indus Valley; in the early sixteenth century the Mughal rulers (Timurid Mongols) arrived from the north and established a state that lasted until the nineteenth century; itinerant Muslim Sufi Orders proselytized; elites and common urbanites lived a fusion of Indic, Persian, and Turkish cultures. Southward-migrating peasant and warrior families from northwestern Vijayanagara established Telugu-speakers among native southern Tamil-speakers; westward migrations from upper Burma established Ahoms in the Brahmaputra Valley. However, Hinduism's prescriptions for purity in everyday food challenged mobility since travel necessitated impure eating practices. In addition, separation (*purdah*) of women into distinct quarters in a family's dwelling restricted their mobility. On the other hand, widespread if regionally specific views of social relations made inhabitants of one (village) community relatives and, in consequence, at marriage women had to migrate to neighboring communities – a short-distance migration which involved adjustment. On the whole, the mobility of common people distant from the littorals was often short-distance; urban cultural fusion hardly touched them, but in-migration, expansion, and religious conversion did.⁵

Africa

Trade and migration connected South Asia's western with Africa's eastern societies; Madagascar had been settled from both Indonesia and Africa. The several Africas – Egyptian-Nilotic, Mediterranean, the eastern, central, and

⁵ Jagadish N. Sarkar, *Studies in Economic Life in Mughal India* (Delhi: Oriental Publishers, 1975); Kirti N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilization in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge University Press, 1985).

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western sub-Saharan regions, the southern segment – evidenced high levels of mobility. The Mediterranean littoral had been settled from the east by Arab-speaking peoples; in the Nile River valley northern Egyptian and southern (dark) Nubian peoples interacted; agricultural Bantu-speakers of many language variants moved southward and came in contact with the Khoisan. East African trading societies with sedentary urbanites and mobile merchants, using Swahili as *lingua franca*, reached their height in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The savannah's westbound migrating groups brought Islam, and elites of Muslim faith interacted with pastoralists and agriculturalists of animist persuasion. Complex, competing states had emerged before 1400. Each change of rule and societal structures changed opportunities and constraints and induced or forced families and groups to migrate. Muslims' *hajj* to Mecca, extending over years and funded by trading activities along the routes, resembled temporary migrations. Swahili and Hausa speakers established commercial diasporas. In size and sophistication, cities from the East African Coast to the Niger River compared with European ones. Along its Atlantic Coast, from Senegal to Nigeria (modern terms), numerous peoples speaking hundreds of languages moved and mingled; the Kru emerged as a coastal seafaring people.

Various types of bondage were common in Africa. Rights-in-persons practices bound poorer relatives or debtors to wealthier men. Women, knowledgeable agriculturalists, were particularly valued as a rural labor force. In contrast, male war captives were traded over long distances as far as the Mediterranean Arab world. Thus categories of bondage were fluid, ranging from rights-in-persons and short-distance moves to long-distance trade – some 10,000 men were force-migrated northward annually by the fourteenth century. Free, regionally specific migrations included iron- and gold-working craftsmen and women in West Africa and Zimbabwe, service personnel in urban centers, and students and scholars heading for Timbuktu, which from 1400 to 1600 was the most important Islamic center of learning. Portuguese, arriving from the mid-1430s, established fortified trading posts along the Guinea coast to acquire gold, cloth, slaves, and other valuables. Around 1500 some 10 percent of Lisbon's population was of African origin. Initially such slaves remained persons and could intermarry with Iberians. Migrants carried beliefs: Christian missionaries moved south, others adopted veneration of Black Madonnas originating in West African fertility cults or the Egyptian worship of Isis. As everywhere, the designation of peoples as, for example, Fulbe, Wolof, or Bantu, hid the constant reconstitution of groups through migration,

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expulsion, flight, and incorporation of male strangers through community-sanctioned marriage with local women.⁶

The Mediterranean World

In the Mediterranean world, Africa's Arab northern littoral connected via the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean and via the Black Sea and Persia to the trans-Asian Silk Road. Through the economic power of Genoa and Venice but also Amalfi and Greek-founded Neapolis, the European littoral attracted as well as shipped migrants. Their trading colonies, like Kaffa, became nodes of migration and exchange. Seaborne connections to Asia were mediated by Arab, Gujarati, and Turkish merchants. As a center of trade and culture, Alexandria housed Egyptian citizens of standing, in-migrant rural Egyptians, Arabs from many origins, Ottoman administrators and soldiers, Gujarati and Istanbul merchants, Jewish traders and intellectuals, and, among Christians, Sicilian Normans, traders from Pisa, Palermo, Naples, Livorno, Genoa, and Venice, as well as residents of Frankish and English origin. The "Frankish" crusaders' eastbound warrior migrations had been replaced by pilgrim tourism with package tours organized from Venice. Like the *hajj*, such traveling, though not migration *strictu sensu*, involved cultural interaction and could last for years. Regardless of their faith, pilgrims returned with new experiences and with new images of the Eastern Mediterranean cultures.

In this West Asian Levant-Anatolia-Byzantium/Constantinople/Istanbul contact zone, in-migrating Turkic-speaking pastoralists and warriors had transformed their mobile societies into the settled and powerful Ottoman Empire from about 1280. Arriving from Central Asia, the founding migrants adopted Islam and adapted Byzantine Christian institutions. By 1400, the empire was expanding into Southeastern Europe's wooded "Balkans" and into Egypt. The Ottomans had to struggle with state-building Mongol warrior-migrants and confront or cohabit with Venetian and Genoese colonizer-migrants. The empire's leadership designed non-ethnic structures,

⁶ Toyin Falola and Okpè Ochayi Okpè, Jr. (eds.), *Population Movements, Conflicts and Displacement in Nigeria* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2008); J. F. A. Ajayi and Michael Crowder (eds.), *History of West Africa*, 2 vols. (1st edn., 1974; London: Longman, 1987); George E. Brooks, *Landlords and Strangers. Ecology, Society, and Trade in Western Africa, 1000–1630* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1993); Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact*, chaps. 5.3 and 6; Bartolomé Bennassar and Pierre Chaunu (eds.), *L'ouverture du Monde, xive–xvii Siècles* (Paris: Colin, 1977), 76–84.

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developing a culturally pluralist polity of multi-religious and many-cultured peoples through free and, on occasion, involuntary migrations.⁷

To the east, the Venice/Genoa–Trebizond–Samarkand–China route, the trans-Caucasian routes to Russia and Poland–Lithuania, and the cross-Pamir passes to Mughal India, intersected in Safavid Persia (1502–1736), which was powerful economically, culturally, and militarily. Most of its soldiery came from Turkish-speaking groups. Georgians were deported and resettled, and urban Armenians, at immense population loss, were resettled in New Julfa (1605), close to the capital Isfahan. Entrusted with Persia’s trans-European silk trade, Armenian migrant families settled in Venice and other centers of commerce. Urban expansion – accommodation for in-migrants, infra-structures, mosques and palaces – required sizable in-migration of specialized craftsmen, often from other societies. The Safavid court recruited artisans and artists in the luxury trades; scholars, calligraphers, and painters were invited or transported to the capital from recently annexed cities. A new porcelain industry – to reduce imports from China – required skilled workers, while silk and carpet production for export to Europe led to a concentration of silk producing and weaving families. European visitors came, and Christian monks and artillery technicians settled. Migrations were fundamental to innovation of local arts, to military expansion, and to long-distance trade.⁸

In the western Mediterranean, the African-Arab and Kabyl littoral was dotted with highly developed cities experiencing frequent population recomposition, providing a home to Jewish communities and to Muslim urban craftsmen who often produced for Ottoman (formerly Byzantine) and European markets. These cities were the terminal of caravan traders and attracted migrants from the sub-Saharan savannah like Mande leatherworking craft families. Each increase or decline in demand, each change of rule and establishment of a new court, each new trading connection to Europe initiated in-migration of skilled artisan families or forced underemployed ones to seek their livelihood elsewhere. From the Christian–Frankish conquest of Muslim Iberia refugee communities emerged, who – though impoverished – came with skills and long-distance networks. The expulsion of Muslims after the annexation of Granada in 1492 and the expulsion of all Jews from Spain and Portugal in 1492 and 1498 brought masses of refugees to the

⁷ Reşat Kasaba, *A Moveable Empire: Ottoman Nomads, Migrants, and Refugees* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington, 2009).

⁸ Francis Richard, *Le Siècle d’Ispahan* (Paris: Gallimard, 2007), pp. 31–59.

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vibrant Maghreb and Egyptian cities. The Ottoman Empire actively recruited Jewish refugees to utilize their human and social capital. In Iberia the economic damage caused by Christian fundamentalist persecutions was partly offset by shifting seafaring and economic activities to the Atlantic ports. This is epitomized by the migration of an underemployed Genoese Mediterranean mariner seeking work in the expanding Atlantic seafaring. His name was Columbus. Tiny Portugal, unable to feed its population, combined stateside resources with mercantile profit strategies: Its vessels traded along the West African coast from the 1430s; merchant migrants established fortified trading centers; the Crown forced families of Jewish faith to colonize São Tomé by establishing plantations and trans-shipment centers for the slave trade.⁹

Europe and Russia

By the 1400s, the intra-European balance of political and economic power had shifted from the Mediterranean to the northwestern seafaring states. By 1492 the Atlantic was being crossed (though Arab sources indicate earlier crossings from Africa) and the Atlantic economies emerged with their intensive Atlantic settlement and worldwide colonizing migrations. Research and public memory have overemphasized these developments, while underemphasizing the high level of medieval Europe's internal migrations and cultural exchanges. From medieval mobilities the Renaissance and Early Modern periods emerged, but in these centuries the directions and, to some degree, the character of migrations changed.¹⁰

In Eastern Europe, including the regions of Russia, Poland–Lithuania, and Hungary, several distinct long-distance migrations had subsided by the end of the fifteenth century: the Norse expansion, colony-building, and immersion into local populations; the eastward migrations of German-language peasants into neighboring, more thinly settled lands with Slavic-speakers; the expulsion of German- and Yiddish-speaking Jews, who created the Ashkenazi community's culture. In East Central Europe, the enserfed peasantry belonged to the nobility; thus sovereigns had little revenue and could not encourage craft and mercantile activities because the nobility prevented the emergence of an urban bourgeoisie. To address both problems, rulers

⁹ Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact*, chaps. 5–7.

¹⁰ Michael Borgolte, "Migrationen als transkulturelle Verflechtungen im mittelalterlichen Europa. Ein neuer Pflug für alte Forschungsfelder," *Historische Zeitschrift* 289 (2009): 261–85, and Borgolte, *Europa Entdeckt Seine Vielfalt: 1050 – 1250* (Stuttgart: Ulmer, 2002).