

REVIEW ESSAY

Towards the Global Spanish Pacific

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Studies on the Spanish Pacific have been booming during recent years. The field is huge, diverse, and developing at a fast pace. Rather than surveying it as a whole,¹ this review essay addresses selected sets of recent publications (indicated at the beginning of each section) in order to present and discuss three intertwined yet distinct research strategies: the move beyond economy-driven narratives of the Manila Galleon; new perspectives on the trans-Pacific trade, migrations, and cultural exchanges; and the focus on competing visions of the Pacific. The concluding section points to some potentialities and challenges foregrounded by the reviewed publications.

THE GALEÓN DE MANILA AND BEYOND

Un océano de seda y plata. El universo económico del Galeón de Manila. Eds. Salvador Bernabéu Albert y Carlos Martínez Shaw. Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Sevilla 2013. 443 pp. Ill. € 20.00.

La Nao de China, 1565–1815. Navegación, comercio e intercambios culturales. Coord. Salvador Bernabéu Albert. Secretariado de Publicaciones Universidad de Sevilla, Sevilla 2013. 302 pp. € 17.00.

Conocer el Pacífico. Exploraciones, imágenes y formación de sociedades oceánicas. Coords. Salvador Bernabéu Albert, Carmen Mena García, Emilio José Luque Azcona. Editorial Universidad de Sevilla, Sevilla 2015. 459 pp. € 25.00.

1. For broad surveys on the literature published in the past and in more recent decades, see especially Eva Mehl's forthcoming volume, reviewed below in this essay, *Forced Migration in the Spanish Pacific World*, Introduction, pp. 3–10. All translations from Spanish publications are mine.

The fifth centenary of Vasco Nuñez de Balboa's first "discovery" of the Pacific (1513–2013) prompted a considerable number of events in Spain. The most visible among them was the exhibition "Pacífico: España y la aventura de la Mar del Sur", displayed at Seville between September 2013 and April 2014 in the magnificent building of the Archivo General de Indias – the Spanish colonial archive par excellence.² The three volumes reviewed in this section are all related to this anniversary, and their key (co-)editor, Salvador Bernabéu Albert, director of the Seville-based Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos (EEHA), also authored the opening and concluding essays in the exhibition catalogue. Indeed, *Un océano de seda y plata* and *La Nao de China* both appeared in 2013, and *Conocer el Pacífico* features a selected and revised group of the 130 papers originally presented at the conference "El Pacífico, 1513–2013. De la Mar del Sur a la construcción de un nuevo escenario oceánico", held in Seville that year.³

Taken as a whole, these edited volumes include an impressive total of thirty-eight essays and cover a substantial range of topics and approaches: from Varela's "Microhistory of a Galleon" (*Un océano*, pp. 229–246) to Martins Torres's study of New Spain's fashion with Chinese "*quimonos*" and the *criollos*' "*quimones*" (*La Nao de China*, pp. 247–280); from Herrera Reviriego's analysis of a seventeenth-century mutiny (*ibid.*, pp. 25–64) to Gil's enquiry into the representation of Magellan's first circumnavigation in the poetry of the *Siglo de Oro* (Spanish Golden Age) (*Conocer el Pacífico*, pp. 23–56). Explorations, navigations, trade, and cultural exchanges are the main macro-themes, typically accessed through four foci.

First, and especially in *Un Océano* and *La Nao de China*, the main thread is represented by the Manila Galleon, that is, the Spanish fleets that connected Acapulco (New Spain) and Manila (the Philippines) from 1565 to 1815, and carried silver, fruit and other Asian, European, and American products together with free and coerced migrants and multiple ideas. Second, some contributors highlight the process of economic and cultural exchange by addressing the mediating role of New Spain's merchants (Yuste in *Un océano*, p. 85–106) and their *sangleyes* (Chinese) colleagues who lived in the Parián in Manila (Ollé in *Un océano*, pp. 155–178), and by following the traces of

2. For the catalogue of the exhibition, see Antonio Fernández Torres and Antonio Sánchez de Mora (eds), *Pacífico: España y la Aventura de la Mar del Sur* (Madrid, 2013). After Seville, the exhibition moved to Manila, Huelva, Bogotá, Cartagena (Spain), Quito, and Mexico City: <http://ccemx.org/pacifico/> (all links were accessed on 29 June 2015). For a brief comparison between the structure of the exhibition in Seville and the catalogue, see my blog post, *Spanish Pacific: The Exhibition and the Catalogue*: <http://staffblogs.le.ac.uk/carchipelago/2014/06/18/spanish-pacific-the-exhibition-and-the-catalogue/>.

3. For the full programme of the conference, see: <http://www.eeha.csic.es/pacifico/congresos.php>. Another volume stemming from the conference, focused on the Philippines, is to be published at the end of 2015.

global commodities such as Spanish-Philippine marble (Ruiz Gutiérrez in *Nao de China*, pp. 183–212). Third, some essays focus on specific places, most obviously Manila for its strategic role within multiple networks,⁴ but also the Californias, the Maria islands, and the Batanes islands (all in *Un océano*: respectively Bernabéu Albert pp. 271–306, Pinzón Ríos, pp. 247–270, and Baudot Monroy pp. 341–380). Finally, cultural representations are investigated through a double strategy: on the one hand, Rodríguez García, and Gullón Abao and Morgado García focus on late eighteenth-century Spanish and French intellectual treatises in their chapters in *Conocer el Pacífico* on, respectively, the “circulation of imperial models through the waters of the Indian and Pacific Ocean”, and the “stereotyped ideas about the inhabitants of the Pacific” (pp. 273–292, and 293–317); on the other hand, in the same volume Mellén Blanco (pp. 217–244), Sánchez Montañez (pp. 245–272), and Jakubowska (pp. 319–338) use eighteenth-century ethnographical records and artefacts in order to shed light on the cultural implications of relatively less well-known intra-colonial expeditions such as those from Lima to Tahiti in 1772–1775 and from California to the Northern Pacific in 1779, and the nineteenth-century expeditions to Easter Island/Rapa Nui.

The scope and quality of the contributions are uneven, especially as far as the combination of empirical research and interpretation is concerned. Within *Conocer el Pacífico*, for example, one can hardly compare the mere chronological listing of explorers from Malaga in Cuevas Góngora’s essay (pp. 79–104) with Nakashima’s sophisticated discussion of four examples of an English presence in the sixteenth-century Pacific, taken as a basis to address both the “spiritual threat” they represented for Spanish Catholicism in America and their legitimating effect vis-à-vis the newly established tribunals of the Inquisition in Lima and Mexico City (pp. 121–148). Similarly, a deep methodological gap divides Baert’s uncomplicated description of Captain Quirós’s religiously driven utopian model of colonization of the Philippines from Bernabéu Albert and García Redondo’s fascinating reconstruction of the Jesuits’ colonization project for that archipelago, framed as part of their truly global and universalistic missionary programme in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (pp. 149–193).

What does this kaleidoscope of themes and approaches suggest about broader conceptualizations of exploration, trade, cultural exchange, the Spanish empire, and, most importantly, the Pacific? For all the significant insights of most of the individual contributions, the fragmented nature of these edited volumes considerably hampers the possibility of enhancing broad interpretations. Moreover, no explicit attempt to suggest wider

4. See also the discussion of four monographs on the topic in the next section. For a collection of essays largely centred on Manila, see Antonio García-Abasolo, *Murallas de piedra y cañones de seda. Chinos en el imperio español (siglos XVI–XVIII)* (Córdoba, 2012).

hypotheses is made in the three introductory chapters, since the editors content themselves with brief surveys of the literature, detailed presentations of each chapter, and general statements about the volumes contributing to “move this field of study, so under-researched in our country, into the focus of attention again” (*Conocer el Pacífico*, p. 21). However, innovative insights do appear from a comparison of these volumes with previous literature, and between themselves.

To begin with, there is a shift from economic analyses of the Spanish impact on the “first globalization” to the integration of economic, political, and cultural factors. In the Introduction to *La Nao de China*, Bernabéu Albert describes the Manila Galleon as a “maritime, commercial, political and geo-strategic endeavour” and as a contribution to “enhance miscenegenation (*mestizaje*) and intercultural processes” (p. 21). More importantly, the volumes feature a striking prevalence of culturally oriented approaches compared to the once hegemonic purely economic ones – the latter having still some weight only in *Un océano* (Álvarez, pp. 25–84; Yuste, pp. 85–106; Mola and Martínez Shaw, pp. 307–340).⁵

Another tendency appears even more significant: Bernabéu Albert writes in his concluding chapter of the exhibition catalogue that “the twenty-first century will be the one of oceanic studies (of the Pacific) in our teaching and research institutions, and this will allow a more consistent focus on themes unrelated to Hispanic studies and more closely linked with the globalization that stemmed from the expedition of Magallanes-Elcano”.⁶ Indeed, *Conocer el Pacífico* already marks an important step in this direction, with its “provincialization” of the Galeón de Manila and the inclusion of contributions by Spanish and non-Spanish researchers on broader, trans-imperial circulations of people, commodities, and ideas.

The move away from mere economic narratives, and the opening up towards a global historical approach create a significant convergence with the perspectives of the other volumes under review. I will come back to this point in the concluding section.

NEW PERSPECTIVES ON THE TRANS-PACIFIC TRADE, MIGRATIONS, AND CULTURAL EXCHANGES

BONIALIAN, MARIANO ARDASH. *El Pacífico Hispanoamericano. Política y comercio asiático en el imperio Español (1680–1784)*. El Colegio de México, Mexico 2012. 490 pp. \$36.36.

5. Conversely, the economic focus on the Manila Galleons is central in the recent monograph: Arturo Giraldez, *The Age of Trade: The Manila Galleons and the Dawn of the Global Economy* (Lanham, MD [etc.], 2015).

6. Salvador Bernabéu Albert, “El legado historiográfico del Pacífico”, in Fernández Torres and Sánchez de Mora, *Pacífico*, pp. 325–339, 337.

TREMML-WERNER, BIRGIT. Spain, China, and Japan in Manila, 1571–1644. Local Comparisons and Global Connections. [Emerging Asia.] Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam 2015. 365 pp. Maps. € 119.00.

SEIJAS, TATIANA. Asian Slaves in Colonial Mexico. From Chinos to Indians. [Cambridge Latin American Studies.] Cambridge University Press, Cambridge [etc.] 2014. xiv, 282 pp. Ill. Maps. £65.00; \$99.00. (Paper: £19.99; \$29.99.)

MEHL, EVA M. Forced Migration in the Spanish Pacific World: From Mexico to the Philippines, 1765–1811. Forthcoming publication, accepted by Cambridge University Press.⁷

The four monographs discussed in this section suggest that the interpretation of the Spanish Pacific has much to gain from a double move: on the one hand, Ardash Bonialian's and Tremml-Werner's volumes invite us to frame the Spanish Pacific within connected histories of, respectively, the Spanish Pacific and Atlantic, and the Spanish, Chinese, and Japanese trade networks; on the other hand, Seijas and Mehl use the perspectives of the coerced migration of, respectively, Asian slaves and "Mexican" convicts to provide insightful interpretations of cross-cultural exchanges in the places of departure and destination, and during the voyages.

At first sight, Bonialian's *El Pacífico hispanoamericano* appears relatively traditional vis-à-vis the other three volumes: squarely centred on trade and virtually unconcerned with its cultural dimensions; almost solely preoccupied with dynamics within the Spanish empire, and based on the well-known literature about it; and mainly interested in political and economic elites, rather than in a subaltern perspective, or in social history more generally. These limitations notwithstanding, building on extended archival research in Spain, Mexico, Peru, and Chile, Bonialian makes compelling interventions in three key areas.

First, he constructs a comprehensive view of the Spanish trans-Pacific trade from 1680 to 1784 by bringing together legal and illegal traffic, and by questioning the clear-cut division between the two. Second, the author foregrounds agency at viceregal level and intra-colonial trade and trade routes, namely between Peru, New Spain and the Philippines. Indeed, Bonialian goes so far as to characterize the Pacific in that period as a "fully American Indian", rather than Spanish, "lake" (p. 451). Methodologically, this strongly resonates with the findings of the expanding literature on the Spanish empire as a "polycentric monarchy",⁸ and with the New Imperial

7. The review of Mehl's volume is based on the draft version sent by the author on 12 June 2015, with the consent of Cambridge University Press. Pages in the draft are numbered starting at each chapter.

8. Pedro Cardim, Tamar Herzog, José Javier Ruiz Ibáñez, and Gaetano Sabatini (eds), *Polycentric Monarchies: How did Early Modern Spain and Portugal Achieve and Maintain a Global Hegemony?* (Eastbourne, 2012).

Histories focus on intra-colonial, and not exclusively metropole–colony, networks.⁹ From a factual point of view, the history of the Galeón de Manila ceases to be the single thread linking territories on both coasts of the Pacific, and becomes part of more complex trade networks and interests. Consequently, the idea of an effective imperial “monopoly” is contested; French and Peruvian merchants are included in the picture; the mercury of Huancavelica, the cocoa of Guayaquil, and Peruvian wines take centre stage together with Asian silk and American silver; and a shift takes place in the interpretation of major historical processes, such as the crisis of the fair of Portobelo and the impact of the Bourbon “free trade” (*comercio libre*) reforms. Third, these findings push Bonialian to question the traditional thesis of the dependence of the Pacific on the Atlantic, originally put forward by Chaunu in the fifth volume of his *Seville et l’Atlantique*.¹⁰ The author rather proposes to understand “the processes of transformation and continuity in the imperial trade from the maritime perspective of the Pacific” (p. 15), and explicitly points to the “need to address the interconnections of the two maritime spaces that surrounded Spanish America” (p. 16).

In addressing the trans-Pacific trade, Tremml-Werner focuses on a different geographical scope and takes distinct methodological approaches from Bonialian’s. Rather than examining the cargos shipped legally and illegally across the Pacific, Tremml-Werner aims at “integrating the Manila Galleon into South East Asian Trading Networks” (p. 138) and addresses Manila as product and protagonist of the connected histories of the Spanish, Chinese, and Japanese empires within them.¹¹ Indeed, the “Manila system” is the leading concept in her monograph, characterized by “multi-layered connections based on negotiations, a complex market torn between protectionism and free trade, triangular circulations and bi- or multilateral communication involving different parties of the pre-modern states Ming China, Azuchi-Monoyama, and later Tokugawa Japan, and the Spanish Overseas Empire” (pp. 14–15).

Based on impressive multi-lingual research – the sources are in Spanish, Mandarin, and Japanese – the author explores the political and cultural implications of the far-reaching trade exchanges conducted by these three civilizations in the Pacific between 1571 and 1644. She shows how the origins of the Manila system intertwined with distinct processes of “early modern state formation” in each polity and how, in turn, the

9. On the New Imperial Histories: Alan Lester, “Imperial Circuits and Networks: Geographies of the British Empire”, *History Compass*, 4 (2006), pp. 124–141; Stephen Howe (ed.), *The New Imperial Histories Reader* (London, 2009).

10. Pierre Chaunu, *Seville et Atlantique, 1500–1650*, 8 vols (Paris, 1955–1959).

11. For a more limited perspective on the impact of the Galeón de Manila on Tokugawa Japan, see Ubaldo Iaccarino, “El papel del Galeón de Manila en el Japón de Tokugawa Ieyasu (1598–1616)”, in Bernabéu Albert and Martínez Shaw, *Un océano de seda y plata*, pp. 133–154.

connected nature of that system of trade and diplomatic exchanges impacted on all polities. Moreover, Tremml-Werner addresses the conceptual and cultural mediations that were imbricated in that trans-Pacific exchange. At the same time, especially in Parts 3 and 4, she “zooms” in and out in order to address the tensions between local and central levels and understand the dynamics of private and regulated trade. As a result, the question of agency is thoroughly addressed, with Manila’s Asian trading communities described beyond the traditional exclusive focus on the Chinese *sangleyes* of the Parián.

Seijas’s *Asian Slaves in Colonial Mexico* embraces the same conceptual and geographical scope as Tremml-Werner’s work, but looks at the Manila system between the late sixteenth century and 1672 from the perspective of the slave trade that converged in the Manila slave market by means of three networks:¹² the enslavement of native Filipinos, based on the continuation of a pre-contact tributary labour system; the Portuguese slave trade stretching from East Africa to Japan with typical stopovers in Goa, Malacca, and Macau; and the captivity of the prisoners of the Spaniards’ constant war against Muslim chiefdoms in the southern islands of the Philippines. This human trafficking was limited by the size of the Galeón de Manila ships – the author estimates some 60 slaves transported per ship, amounting to a total of approximately 8,100 individuals legally traded between 1565 and 1700 (p. 84).

However, the study of this slave trade provides a vantage point to address major historical issues: First, it raises important questions regarding the legal and moral justification of Asian enslavement, highlighting legal and theological debates on “just war” as well as the dialectics between repeated royal bans on native enslavement and its perpetuation based on local interests and trans-cultural diplomacy. Second, the volume addresses the fluid identities and (self-)representations of the slaves, and, as the subtitle indicates, their transition “from Chinos to Indians”, that is, from being assimilated to enslavable “others”, to members of the protected “Republic of Indians”.¹³ This process emerged at the conjunction of changing official

12. On this topic see also: Edward R. Slack, Jr, “The Chinos in New Spain: A Corrective Lens for a Distorted Image”, *Journal of World History*, 20 (2009), pp. 35–67; Déborah Oropeza Keresey, “La esclavitud asiática en el virreinato de la Nueva España, 1565–1673”, *Historia Mexicana*, 61 (2011), pp. 5–57. The latter is based on Oropeza Keresey’s as yet unpublished dissertation: “Los ‘indios chinos’ en la Nueva España: la inmigración de la Nao de China, 1565–1673” (Ph.D., El Colegio de Mexico, Centro de Estudios Históricos, 2007).

13. Seijas’s study of the constructed nature of the term “*chinos*” stands in striking contrast with the standard use of other authors who simply equate “*chinos*” with “native Filipinos”; see Garcia-Abasolo, *Murallas de piedra*, p. 85; Matt K. Matsuda, *Pacific Worlds: A History of Seas, Peoples, and Cultures* (Cambridge, 2012), p. 119. Consequently, Seijas is also able to provide a more complex interpretation of the tradition of the *China poblana* (ch. 1) than, for example, Mayabel Ranero Castro in Bernabéu Albert, *La Nao de China*, pp. 281–302; Matsuda, *Pacific Worlds*, pp. 124–125. *China poblana* refers both to the legend of a woman brought to Mexico from the Philippines in the sixteenth century and to a type of “traditional” dress in central Mexico.

policies, the enslaved *chinos*' agency, and sustained mediation and conflict with the "Mexican" communities of free *chinos* and native Indians, and ultimately led to the emancipation of the *chinos* in the early 1670s. Third, from the perspective of the practice of enslavement, Seijas challenges standard assumptions "about the uniformity of the slave experience in the Americas" (p. 1), and addresses the connected histories of the Atlantic and Pacific slave trade. In particular, the author shows how the rise of the Atlantic monopoly companies (*asientos*) speeded the process of abolition of Asian enslavement, which the *asientistas* saw as potentially competitive, notwithstanding the Crown's attempts to keep the two circuits separate (chapter 3). At the same time, the end of the *chinos*' enslavement brought about a "critical shift" (p. 75) from a multi-ethnic to an African-only slave trade at the end of the seventeenth century. In turn, this "Africanization of slavery" turned pre-existing racial hierarchies among slaves – *chinos* slaves in Mexico were mainly involved in textile work (*obrajes*) and domestic service, whereas African slaves were employed in hard-labour agricultural production – into fully fledged racialized slavery. In the same years, the author rightly notes, a similar process took place in the British colonies.

The structures of Seijas's and Mehl's volumes are similar in that they ideally follow the paths of coerced migrants from their original homes, on their journeys, and at their destinations. By doing so, they document and discuss the impact of cross-cultural connections between the Philippines and New Spain. However, while Seijas writes the history of the Asian slaves' "complex journey from the slave market in Manila to the streets of Mexico City" (p. 1), Mehl focuses on 3,999 civil and military convicts transported from 1761 to 1811 in the reverse direction of the Manila Galleon, that is, from Acapulco to Manila. Her research, originally stemming from a Ph.D. dissertation, stands in the tradition of García de los Arcos's pioneering volume on penal transportation to the Philippines;¹⁴ however, like Bonialian, Mehl places more emphasis on the "horizontal relationships between colonies" (p. 10) and their "potential to shape metropolitan policies and steer Spain's relationship with its domains in directions not always foreseen by Madrid" (p. 12).

The author makes this important point concrete by investigating key processes behind penal transportation to the Philippines. To begin with, Mehl addresses military impressment, for which she highlights the Asian archipelago as an important destination within a "broad, flexible, and keenly competitive network of penal institutions that linked all corners of the Spanish empire" (chapter 2, p. 8). Furthermore, she discusses anti-vagrancy

14. María Fernanda García de los Arcos, *Forzados y reclutas: los criollos novohispano en Asia, 1756–1808* (Mexico, 1996); Beatriz Cáceres Menéndez and Robert W. Patch, "Gente de Mal Vivir: Families and Incurable Sons in New Spain, 1721–1729", *Revista de Indias*, 66:237 (2006), pp. 363–392.

policies, which entailed the construction of the “umbrella category” of *vagos* at the confluence of legal, cultural, social, political, and economic reasons, and its matching with distinct destinations within the empire (chapter 4). Finally, she analyses the quantitatively more limited, but very interesting cases of those convicts “presented” (*presentados*) to the colonial authorities by their own relatives and other community members, revealing the degree of consensus that the banishment of “Mexicans” to the Philippines enjoyed among a number of families with different social and ethnic backgrounds.

At the junction of these distinct, but connected processes, penal transportation to the Philippines emerges as an instrument of empire-building, coerced labour commodification, and colonial encounter, as the burgeoning literature on the topic regarding other empires has similarly shown.¹⁵ Mehl acknowledges that these men’s unruliness, escapes, and low productivity made their presence in the Philippines “unquestionably detrimental to the aspirations of the Spanish Empire” (chapter 6, p. 28). In the final chapter of the volume, the author convincingly argues that, their behaviours notwithstanding, these “Mexican” (and Spanish) coerced migrants made a significant contribution in geographical contexts where tiny “white” communities existed and where the infrastructures the impressed convicts were forced to build were the most visible symbols of the Spanish presence. Future research might fruitfully add other dimensions to this history by proceeding in a different direction, namely by framing what the authorities termed convicts’ “unruliness” as a manifestation of subaltern agency and of the limits of colonization.

Each of the four volumes reviewed in this section offers convincing interpretative frames to address the Spanish Pacific, and beyond. However, their joint reading raises two orders of problems and calls for future research to address them explicitly. Firstly, the empirical bases of these studies do not entirely overlap, leaving room for even more comprehensive accounts of the complex trans-Pacific networks and exchanges. For example, since Mehl (and Stephanie Mawson¹⁶) inform us about the long-lasting importance of convict transportation from Spain and New Spain in the Crown’s strategy of colonization of the Philippines, one wonders why sentenced criminals and impressed soldiers are virtually never mentioned in the other essays. Similarly, the Portuguese trade networks on the Indian

15. See especially: Clare Anderson, *Convicts in the Indian Ocean: Transportation from South Asia to Mauritius, 1815–53* (London, 2000); Timothy J. Coates, *Convicts and Orphans. Forced and State-Sponsored Colonizers in the Portuguese Empire, 1550–1755* (Stanford, CA, 2001); Kerry Ward, *Networks of Empire: Forced Migration in the Dutch East India Company* (Cambridge, 2008); Timothy J. Coates, *Convict Labor in the Portuguese Empire, 1740–1932: Redefining the Empire with Forced Labor and New Imperialism* (Leiden [etc.], 2014).

16. Stephanie Mawson, “Unruly Plebeians and the *Forzado* System: Convict Transportation between New Spain and the Philippines during the Seventeenth Century”, *Revista de Indias*, 73:259 (2013), pp. 693–730.

Ocean and the Pacific are a fundamental component of Seijas's reconstruction of Manila's slave market, but are only randomly mentioned as part of the "Manila trade" reconstructed in detail by Tremml-Werner. Even more strikingly, Bonialian's painstaking reconstruction of the illicit (*intérlope*) trade spanning the Pacific and the Atlantic fails to include the slave trade, that is, the subject on which Seijas convincingly argues for a similar need to integrate the hitherto disconnected narratives of the two oceans. More generally, the focus of these volumes on Manila marginalizes the distinct cultural and trade exchanges experienced in and around the fragile Spanish military outposts in the southern islands of Mindanao and Palawan (Zamboanga, Misamis, and Calamianes);¹⁷ possibly for the same reason, the role of the Islamic merchants in the south-east Asian trade networks appears less important in these volumes than in the survey of the "Pacific in the History of Islam" proposed by Donoso Jiménez in his contribution to *Conocer el Pacífico*.¹⁸

Secondly, the joint reading of these monographs opens the theoretical problem of whether, how, and how far the interpretations proposed by their authors can be integrated. Indeed, these volumes provide two distinct visions of trans-Pacific trade and trans-cultural exchanges: on the one hand, Bonialian and Mehl foreground the agency of the viceroyalties of Peru and New Spain in their relationships with the Philippines; on the other hand, Tremml-Werner and Seijas focus on Manila as a contact zone between the trans-Pacific and the South China Sea (and beyond) networks of trade and forced migrations. The point is to determine whether or not these views exclude each other. Tremml-Werner, for example, explicitly downplays the idea of the Philippines as a "colony of a colony" (p. 21), which appears to be central to Mehl's empirical research and to Bonialian's theoretical vision. In my opinion, the two perspectives might complement each other within the frame of a global history that integrates the protagonism of the Spanish American viceroyalties in the complexity of the Manila system.

THE "CONCEPTUAL SPANISH LAKE"

BUSCHMANN, RAINER F., EDWARD R. SLACK JR., [and] JAMES B. TUELLER. Navigating the Spanish Lake. The Pacific in the Iberian World, 1521–1898. [Perspectives on the Global Past.] University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu 2014. xii, 182 pp. \$47.00.

17. For important insights, see James Francis Warren, "Ransom, Escape and Debt Repayment in the Sulu Zone, 1750–1898", in Gwyn Campbell and Alessandro Stanziani (eds), *Bonded Labour and Debt in the Indian Ocean World* (London, 2013), pp. 87–101.

18. Isaac Donoso Jiménez, "El Pacífico en la historia del islam", in Bernabéu Albert, Mena García, and Luque Azcona, *Conocer el Pacífico*, pp. 57–78.

BUSCHMANN, RAINER F. *Iberian Visions of the Pacific Ocean, 1507–1899*. [Palgrave Studies in Pacific History.] Palgrave MacMillan, New York (NY) [etc.] 2014. xi, 292 p. £60.00.

Navigating the Spanish Lake is a co-authored volume stemming from originally separate papers presented at an American Historical Association meeting (San Diego, 2010) (p. ix). Its general goals largely resonate with those of the volumes reviewed in earlier sections: the need to go beyond the mere economic dimension of the Spanish Pacific, and to reconceptualize it not just “as a linear crossing with the Manila Galleon’s flow of commodities, but also as an area governed by the circulation of peoples and their histories” (p. 3); the reminder that “for the Spanish empire, the Pacific should not be arbitrarily separated from the Atlantic Ocean”, and therefore the imperative to overcome “the Eurocentrism of the Atlantic World paradigm” (pp. 3 and 5); the awareness of the fact that “New Spain was not simply a dependency of its Iberian namesake; economically, politically, and culturally it behaved as a metropole itself” (p. 5); and the dialectics between “global” processes and “local” mediations, thence the focus on multi-sited agency and trans-local connections.

Empirical research presented in the various chapters corroborates these broad theoretical claims. Chapter 3 highlights another side of Manila’s complex ethnical and political balances by addressing the history of the Real Príncipe militia regiment which was created by Chinese Catholic immigrant Antonio Tuason on the eve of the British occupation of the city (1762–1764), and which later became a fundamental supplement to the largely impressed Spanish troops in the islands (as Mehl also notes in chapter 6, pp. 13–14 of her volume) and held a key place in the strategy of Chinese *mestizo* social mobility. Chapter 4 presents a long-term survey of the Spanish colonization of the Marianas islands (1521–1898) from the perspective of the dialectics between “comprehensive changes” and “continuities of local life and human relationships”, and therefore of “the stable yet dynamic nature of both individual and group identity” (p. 98).

These chapters make a significant contribution in complementing and strengthening existing research and approaches. However, the originality of the volume lies in its focus on the “conceptual Spanish lake”, explained in the Introduction and presented in chapter 2 (“Defending the Lake”). This approach is also central to Buschmann’s and Gómez Bote’s contribution to *Conocer el Pacífico* (pp. 195–215) and, most importantly, is fully developed in Buschmann’s *Iberian Visions*. Instead of taking the traditional route of investigating the Pacific as a mere administrative extension of the Spanish empire (the “literal” Spanish lake), the focus on the “conceptual” (or “imaginary”) dimension implies seeing the Pacific as an “artefact” and exploring the visions and representations that

constructed it.¹⁹ Buschmann primarily applies this perspective to the Pacific world after the Seven Years' War (1754–1763), when especially British explorers, settlers, and diplomats questioned Spanish sovereignty over the “Spanish lake”, and turned it into a space of fierce inter-imperial conflicts. This produced distinct narratives and representations of the Pacific: in the case of the British, they were based on the “encountered knowledge” of the explorers, circulated through best-selling volumes and articles and translated into politically driven cartography; conversely, the Spaniards stressed the “revealed knowledge” of their archival sources, and implemented a policy of secrecy and then (from the 1790s) of progressive openness regarding publications on the Pacific, in order to downplay the alleged novelty of the British “discoveries” and reaffirm their sovereignty over the whole Pacific as “an extension of the Americas” (p. 48).

Whereas chapter 2 of *Navigating the Spanish Lake* and the contribution in *Conocer el Pacífico* summarize the theoretical dimension and provide selected examples of this approach, *Iberian Visions* is a fascinating fresco where well-known expeditions – such as those by Anson, Byron, Bougainville, Cook, Rodríguez, Malaspina, and Humboldt – are finally retold as connected endeavours against the background of the diplomatic, military, and scientific strategies of multiple empires. The outcome is convincing, and one wonders whether the study of the conceptual dimension might not provide a more comprehensive frame also for the usually scattered narratives of pre-mid-eighteenth-century cross-cultural encounters, long- and short-distance explorations, and ethnographic knowledge.

CONCLUDING REMARKS: THE “GLOBAL” PACIFIC

The nine publications reviewed in the previous sections are different in form, content, and methodology. However, they present a striking degree of convergence at least on the following issues: first, an awareness of the heterogeneity of the Spanish empire and of the importance of intra-colonial connections together with, and sometimes against, metropole–colonial vertical hierarchies; second, a conceptualization of the “Spanish” Pacific at the crossroads of multiple networks both within and beyond the Spanish empire, and therefore its necessary integration with the Atlantic, on the one hand, and with non-Spanish trans-Pacific networks on the other; third, a view of each node of the network, e.g. Manila, Acapulco, Mexico City etc., as a contact zone that shaped and was produced by connected histories.

19. This approach partly follows Oskar Spate, *The Pacific since Magellan*, 3 vols (Minneapolis, MN, 1979–1988); see also Buschmann, Slack, and Tueller, *Navigating the Spanish Lake*, p. 10.

This convergence originates from the common quest for narratives of the Spanish Pacific that exceed Eurocentric and Spanish-centred visions. Indeed, references to “connected” or “intertwined” histories on the one hand, and an awareness of the interplay between the “global” and the “local” scales are ubiquitous in the essays. In other words, the global historical approach is the lingua franca of these publications, no matter whether it has been learnt from direct contact with world-history founders and institutions, from exchanges in international conferences, or in the process of building up professional biographies shaped by (inter-)continental mobility.

Speaking the common language of global history allows the authors of these volumes to converse with recent world-histories of the Pacific that do not take the Spanish Pacific as their starting point. With the Introduction of Matsuda’s *Pacific Worlds*,²⁰ for example, they share the perspective of a “translocal” history that emphasizes the “interconnectedness of different worlds”.²¹ At the same time, I would like to contend that the studies under review embody a more sophisticated form of global/world history than Matsuda’s (or others’) bird’s-eye views: because they engage critically with available specialized studies on the Spanish empire and single localities, these volumes are more sensitive to the specificities of contexts and concepts; and so far as they weave together the findings of multi-lingual sources and secondary literature, as well as distinct academic traditions, they are richer than standard master narratives based exclusively on secondary literature in English.²²

At the same time, a connected reading of these volumes reveals some of the challenges awaiting global-historical-minded studies of the Spanish Pacific. The most important concerns the possible ways of synthesizing interpretative insights on major historical issues, such as the process of empire-building, the link between trade and migration networks, and the very conceptualization of the Pacific. Another challenge relates to the difficulty of constructing long-term periodizations starting from research which, even when it covers multiple decades, as in the case of each volume reviewed here, can hardly compete with the multi-century narratives of sweeping world-historical surveys. The essays and volumes addressed in the previous sections collectively span a period from the sixteenth to the

20. Matsuda, *Pacific Worlds*.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 5–6. Matsuda’s volume is explicitly discussed, for example, in Buschmann, Slack, and Tueller, *Navigating the Spanish Lake*, p. 15, and in Mehl, *Forced Migration in the Spanish Pacific World*, Introduction, p. 7.

22. See Birgit Tremml-Werner’s appreciative critique in *Spain, China and Japan in Manila*, pp. 21–23: “Spanish scholarship has carried out outstanding research in the field [...]. It is unfortunate that academic exchange between Spanish and Anglophone researchers is still limited in this way, to the effect that the archipelago is often only relegated to a footnote in English monographs on the Spanish empire.”

twentieth centuries – some essays on the last two centuries being included in *Conocer el Pacífico*²³ – but each of them typically covers a period of one century. Major issues of continuity and rupture in both the “literal” and “conceptualized” Pacific are therefore rarely discussed. Indeed, the only attempt at a comprehensive periodization (in the Introduction to *Navigating the Spanish Lake*, pp. 7–13) is based on macro-political and military events, rather than on any of the bottom-up processes and horizontal connections foregrounded in the reviewed volumes.

23. See the following contributions in Bernabéu Albert, Mena García, and Luque Azcona, *Conocer el Pacífico*: Manzano Cosano and Degado Sánchez, pp. 339–372; Lorda Iñarra and Martínez Rodríguez, pp. 393–422; and Martín Rodríguez, pp. 423–438. See also the epilogue to Tueller, *Navigating the Spanish Lake*.