

Hopkins, A. (2002): Globalization in World History. London: Random House.

A.G. HOPKINS Introduction

Globalization – An Agenda for Historians Globalization is the catch-word of the day. It emerged in the 1990s as the preferred term for encompassing the multiplicity of supra-national forces that have imprinted themselves on the contemporary world, and it seems likely to remain in use, and probably in over-use, in the foreseeable future. Examples of globalization – from the mountainous waves generated by sudden financial flows to the less tumultuous but no less striking spread of a universal popular culture – compete for attention and are reported in the media almost daily. The issues thrown up by these and associated developments have also begun to revive the ideological debate, which has been dormant for a decade, about the merits of capitalism. The advocates of globalization, who swept all before them after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, have now to take note of an opposition that is beginning to stir. Free trade is challenged by fair trade.¹ Capitalist triumphalism is confronted by an emerging civic conscience that makes global claims of its own on behalf of the poor and oppressed. Transnational corporations strive to attach consumers to the brand and the logo; popular demonstrations in Seattle (1999), Prague (2000), London (2000), Quebec (2001), and Genoa (2001) provide evidence of a growing concern with the adverse consequences of globalization and an allied disillusion with representative government.² The defending champion has advantages of weight, height and reach, but at least there is now the making of a contest. The workers of the world, whether or not they are thought to be born free and everywhere in chains, are again beginning to attract attention. These developments present historians with an exceptional opportunity to enter what is currently the most important single debate in the social sciences: the analysis of the origins, nature and consequences of globalization. A large and illuminating literature on the economics, politics and sociology of the phenomenon now lies readily to hand. With few exceptions, however, historians have still to participate in the discussion or even to recognize the subject. The dominant tradition of writing history within national boundaries has contributed to this omission by limiting the number of historians who engage with supra-national issues. National (and regional) specialists leave global concerns to others, but the others are too few to be in a position to alter the direction of the subject.³ Postmodernism has also helped to narrow the range of enquiry, though in different ways. Its scepticism of ‘structural’ history and the ‘totalizing project’ associated with it has not been supportive of spacious enquiries about the material world; its emphasis on the construction of texts and the images they convey has produced work that is strong on cultural issues in general and on representations in particular, but weak on the economic and political questions that stand at the centre of any discussion of globalization. The main purpose of this book is to suggest that it is time to reorder these priorities by giving the study of globalization a prominent place on the agenda of historical research. The possibilities are as large as the concept itself and cannot be explored fully in a single volume. Nevertheless, the present study, the first on the subject to be written entirely by historians, aims at being sufficiently comprehensive to mark the arrival of globalization as a theme deserving serious historical analysis. The detailed contributions that follow provide abundant evidence of the historical diversity of globalizing forces and the unevenness of the process of globalization. But they also draw out two general themes that bring coherence to the book as a whole: one emphasizes the non-Western dimensions of globalization; the other explores its historical forms and sequences. In seeking to decentre the analysis, the studies that follow run counter to the dominant assumption of the existing literature, which holds that globalization is the product of the

West and, in its current form, of the United States in particular. Of course, the Western world features prominently in the story and is well represented in nearly every essay – and exclusively so in the contribution by David Reynolds on the United States. But the aim throughout the book has been to prevent the history of globalization from becoming simply the story of the rise of the West – and the fall of the rest – under another name. Consequently, the essays underline the antiquity and importance of non-Western forms of globalization and demonstrate that encounters with the West produced a world order that was jointly, if also unequally, created. This approach is especially evident in the chapters by Amira Bennison on Islam and Hans van de Ven on China, but is given prominence by nearly all the other contributors too. By re-mapping the geography of the subject, we hope to point the way towards a truly global history of globalization. In doing so, we also aim to provide a means of drawing separate regional specialists into a much wider historical debate – without at the same time committing them to a particular view of the causes or consequences of globalization. The question of whether globalization is a product of the contemporary world or has origins that stretch into the distant past is fully recognized by the current literature, even though it has been put by social scientists other than historians. Part of the answer depends on the definition of terms, which can trap or misdirect unwary newcomers, and part relies on the use of historical evidence, which is the obvious point for historians to enter the debate. The concept and its uses are introduced in my first essay in this volume, which shows how different definitions of globalization fit different assessments of its causes and consequences, and constructs a guide to the still fragmentary historiography of the subject. It will be apparent from this survey that the existing literature rests on a number of very generalized statements about the past. If these are amplified and repeated, future studies will present the history of globalization as a linear trajectory that will amount to little more than the ‘stages of growth’ revisited and renamed.⁴ The essays that follow anticipate this danger and try to avert it by showing that, historically, globalization has taken different forms, which we have categorized as archaic, proto, modern, and post-colonial.⁵ Since no serious attempt has yet been made to consider whether various types or sequences of globalization can be derived from the detailed historical evidence, these categories must be regarded as being first rather than last thoughts on the subject, and accordingly are put forward to stimulate debate. The main purpose of this essay is to introduce the four categories and relate them to the essays that follow.⁶ If subsequent discussion leads to an improved and more refined understanding of globalization in world history, the tentative taxonomy offered here will have served its purpose. For purposes of exposition, each category will be dealt with separately and in turn. It is important to emphasize, however, that they are best viewed as a series of overlapping and interacting sequences rather than as a succession of neat stages. Typically, one form co-existed with another or others which it may have nurtured, absorbed, or simply complemented. The relationship, whether symbiotic or competitive, does not therefore foreclose on the future. There are interactions and tendencies but there is no inexorable dialectic. Proto-globalization contained elements that were realized by its modern successor, but could itself be steadily stunted or aborted. Today, as in the past, globalization remains an incomplete process: it promotes fragmentation as well as uniformity; it may recede as well as advance; its geographical scope may exhibit a strong regional bias; its future direction and speed cannot be predicted with confidence – and certainly not by presuming that it has an ‘inner logic’ of its own. The first of our categories, archaic globalization, refers to a form that was present before industrialization and the nation state made their appearance, and thus covers a very broad swathe of history. The concept and its exemplars are explored in C.A. Bayly’s essay, are taken up in Amira Bennison’s analysis of Islam, and resurface in John Lonsdale’s treatment of Africa. They are given prominence, too, by Hans van de Ven and Tim Harper, whose complementary studies of China and Southeast Asia both emphasize the role of the Chinese diaspora in promoting a form of globalization that was wholly non-Western in origin. Before the modern era, as C.A. Bayly shows, globalizing networks were created by great kings and warriors searching for wealth and honour in

fabulous lands, by religious wanderers and pilgrims seeking traces of God in distant realms, and by merchant princes and venturers pursuing profit amidst risk across borders and continents. At a more mundane level, consumers prized exotic medicinal herbs and precious goods and tokens that they hoped would bring them health and fortune. All this powered archaic globalization. It was sea-borne as well as land-based; and it was promoted particularly by the great pre-modern empires – from Byzantium and Tang to the renewed expansionism of the Islamic and Christian powers after 1500. This was a world in which territorial-state systems were far more fluid than they were to become. The strongest affiliations were both universal and local; the junction between them was found most notably in the development of cities; connections between far-flung cities were made by mobile diasporic networks and migrants of all kinds. The limits to the effective authority of the state, combined with the powerful presence of universal belief systems, notably Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity, encouraged the movement of ideas, and with them people and goods, across regions and continents. These developments fostered, in turn, a global division of labour, spanning lower manual and upper distributive occupations, that was superimposed on the local economies with which it was intermittently connected. The strategy of expansion was to co-ordinate rather than to assimilate; distinctive origins were retained not homogenized. Before mass production imposed standardization, difference was an important precondition of trade. This feature is apparent in Bayly's description of Java in the eighteenth century; it emerges even more strongly from Amira Bennison's account of the world of Islam (*dā al-islām*), where the universal Muslim community (*umma*) and Arabic – the *lingua franca* – provided a common framework for forms of interaction that flourished on diversity. Archaic globalization thus exhibited some strikingly 'modern' features. The importance of cities, the key part played by migrants and diasporas, and the specialization of labour all point towards themes that figure prominently in the discussion of contemporary globalization, while the presence of systems of belief that made universal claims and extended across continents provides a direct link with the aspirations of the present, when prospects for creating a global civil society are again being canvassed. At the same time, the archaic form of globalization was a circumscribed one. The technical and institutional limits that both restrained the power of the state and permitted mobility beyond its borders also placed checks on the spread of cosmopolitan influences. Archaic globalization did not extend to the Americas or Australasia. Within its spatial compass, ideas percolated down the social scale more easily than goods, which could be traded over long distances only if they had a high value-to-weight ratio. The size of the market, as Adam Smith was famously to observe, was limited by the extent of the division of labour and was in turn limited by it. We use the term proto-globalization to refer to two interacting political and economic developments that became especially prominent between about 1600 and 1800 in Europe, Asia and parts of Africa: the reconfiguration of state systems, and the growth of finance, services and pre-industrial manufacturing. The political and the economic came together most visibly in complementary but ultimately competing systems of military fiscalism. Uneven though the process was, a number of states – Muslim as well as Christian – strengthened the links between territory, taxation and sovereignty during this period, though they had still to claim, or at least to make effective, a monopoly of the loyalties of their subjects. Although Bennison has space only to touch on the proto-globalization generated within the world of Islam, she demonstrates, nevertheless, that periodic renewals (*tajdīds*) ensured that Islam remained innovative and dynamic, while her summary of state-building and commercial expansion suggests parallels with developments in Europe. The African element in this story, as John Lonsdale shows, extended south of the Sahara and beyond the reach even of Islam. Hans van de Ven hints at similar trends in China during the Ming and Qing periods. He, too, stresses the importance of indigenous sources of change, and emphasizes (with Bayly) the role of consumption in preserving and enlarging difference and hence trade in pre-industrial manufactures. These contributions make it clear that the 'rise of the West' was complemented by developments in other parts of the world. The fact that these have yet to receive

appropriate recognition points enticingly to prospects for future comparative work in the field of global history. As for the West itself, Tony Ballantyne describes how Europe, headed by Britain, extended its connections with the wider world in the second half of the eighteenth century. The 1760s were a 'globalizing decade' that not only witnessed the start of renewed commercial expansion and a fresh wave of imperial acquisitions, but also inaugurated a knowledge revolution that mapped, surveyed and classified the world of contact and conquest. Ballantyne's welcome emphasis on the cultural history of globalization is complemented by Richard Drayton's reaffirmation of the importance of the material world and of labour in particular. Improved efficiency in the transactions sector generated flows of goods, bullion and labour that were far more extensive than those achieved under any previous form of globalization. Sugar, tobacco, tea, coffee and opium entered circuits of exchange that created a complex pattern of multilateral trade across the world and encouraged a degree of convergence among consumers who otherwise inhabited different cultural spheres: coffee-drinking, for example, spread to parts of the Muslim world, as well as to Europe, in the seventeenth century. These trends were underpinned by the improved economic management of sea-borne commerce, which expanded the connections between West and East, and made possible the 'green revolution' in the Americas based on the plantation system and on large exports of slave labour from Africa. In structure, scale and geographical reach, proto-globalization was a departure from its archaic precursor. But it had limits that caused it to fall short of the requirements of its modern successor. Our third category, modern globalization, is defined, conventionally, by the appearance of two key elements after about 1800: the rise of the nation state and the spread of industrialization. The sovereign state based on territorial boundaries was filled in by developing a wider and deeper sense of national consciousness and filled out, variously, by population growth, free trade, imperialism and war. In the course of the nineteenth century, as Tony Ballantyne demonstrates, the cosmopolitanism that was such a marked feature of archaic and proto-globalization was corralled, domesticated and harnessed to new national interests. Political management made growing use of national identity to secure internal cohesion and control with the result that differences between states became sharper. Political developments fitted new economic needs based on industrialization. The labour force gradually shifted from farms to towns, occupational specialization increased, wage-labour became the norm, the link between owning and managing capital was weakened and eventually severed. These developments brought global influences into the more confined sphere of international relocations. Overseas expansion nationalized the new internationalism by exporting national constitutions and religions and by extending national economies to distant parts of the world. Reciprocally, these exports played an important part in consolidating the nation states that promoted them, as I show in my second essay, which deals with The Netherlands and Britain, and as Reynolds demonstrates in the case of the United States. The new international order was created partly by persuasion and partly by command: free trade delivered one; empire the other. New states, independent and colonial, sprang up in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Land was everywhere converted to property; property became the foundation of sovereignty. Sovereignty in turn defined the basis of security both by determining the extent of the monopoly of coercive power and the reach of tax-gatherers, and by guaranteeing international credit, which was essential to the new global division of labour. As the nineteenth century advanced, regions producing raw materials were integrated with the manufacturing centres of Europe, and international trade, finance, and migration experienced an unprecedented, if also irregular, expansion. The imperial expression of modern globalization gave rise to two main strategies of control: assimilation and association. My second essay shows how Greater Britons settling in Canada tried to eliminate difference by applying assimilationist policies to the First Nations who fell under their sway, while on the other side of the world the Dutch, having tamed Bali's rajahs, then consolidated tradition to produce indirect rule by association. John Lonsdale's complementary analysis of colonial Africa adds the important point that traditions and tribes were imagined from

below as well as invented from above, and demonstrates that colonial subjects continued to pursue their own goals while also making unavoidable adjustments to alien rule. The continuities were striking everywhere because the European empires were built on the archaic foundations and proto-globalizing tendencies of the societies they subordinated. As Tim Harper argues with respect to the diasporas of Southeast Asia, the structure and evolution of colonialism itself were heavily influenced by the resilience and continuing dynamism of indigenous institutions. Hans van de Ven makes the same observation about China, which was influenced but not ruled by foreign powers. Moreover, Chinese investors and merchants continued to play a vital part in trade with the West, in promoting a renewed form of regional globalization in the South Seas, and in the sub-globalization launched by Japan in the second half of the nineteenth century. The agents of modern globalization greatly extended their reach, but they never completed their control, even in the colonial world. The imprint of the universal empires endured, even where their political authority had been dismantled. The concept of a global Muslim community remained unbounded by geography, as it does today. Indeed, one profound reaction to the encroachment of the West, as Amira Bennison and John Lonsdale note, was the renewal of supra-national loyalties expressed in the movements for Pan-Islamic and Pan-African unity that so alarmed the European colonial powers.⁷ A second reaction, which Tim Harper and Hans van de Ven comment on too, saw the rise of various 'self-strengthening' movements that sought to turn Western knowledge to local advantage. Long before the end of empire, the subject peoples were adapting the language and ideals as well as the institutions and technology that accompanied the imperial mission. In this way, the extension of nationalism that reached the rest of the world as imperial rule or imperial influence was itself domesticated, thus helping to bring one phase of globalization to an end and pointing the way, albeit uncertainly, to another.⁸ We use the term post-colonial globalization to refer to the contemporary form that can be dated, approximately, from the 1950s. There are other possibilities. But the term 'postmodern' suggests misleading connections, and 'post-imperial' would imply that all types of imperialism, in addition to formal empires, have been eliminated – a claim that offers too many hostages to fortune. By the mid twentieth century, the modern and modernizing empires that had taken over or taken apart their archaic predecessors had themselves fallen. New types of supra-territorial organization and new forms of regional integration had begun to make their appearance. By the close of the century, the nation state had ceased to be the unquestioned vehicle of progress and in some cases had begun to unravel – at times spectacularly. Ex-colonial states were under pressure to make concessions to ethnic and provincial claimants; internal disorder was common, even where formal boundaries remained in place. The world economy had experienced a profound realignment: the exchange of manufactures for raw materials that had underpinned the modern phase of globalization was replaced by a pattern of integration based on interindustry trade. The geographical ties established in the nineteenth century became relatively less important; links between advanced economies, notably the triad of United States, Europe and Japan, became stronger. The new economy gave increasing prominence to trans-national corporations in general, and to finance, and commercial and information services in particular. As the century drew to a close, there were clear signs that the world economy produced by nation states was again becoming global rather than, in the literal sense, international. These developments, as is well known, bear the strong imprint of the United States. The concise overview of the 'American century' provided by David Reynolds first traces the pre-history of globalization within the United States, and then explains why the process has achieved such unprecedented reach and depth. Running through his essay is the paradox that the latest and most extensive form of globalization is to a large extent the product of one country – albeit a superpower. This theme connects directly with the lively debate in the current social science literature on whether globalization strengthens or weakens the nation state. The essays dealing with the non-Western world, where typically the nation state is a less formidable force (and is sometimes no more than a quasi-state), place greater emphasis on infranational and supra-national influences

that can be traced back to earlier forms of globalization. John Lonsdale's revisionist assessment of tribalism in Africa first sets it in a comparative context and then shows that it can provide the basis of democratic, multi-cultural politics and a means of negotiating globalization. The separate studies by Amira Bennison, Tim Harper and Hans van de Ven all stress the continuing importance of indigenous globalizing forces, whether manifested in the dynamism of the Chinese diaspora, the revival of Buddhism (now assisted by the Internet), or the debate about reconciling the *dār-al-islām* with modern, imported institutions. My second essay looks at the local consequences of globalization, contrasting the success of the Balinese in promoting tourism – one of the principal industries of post-colonial globalization – with the desperate plight of the Innu, who have very nearly been destroyed by other, less benign globalizing forces. The shape of the world order is more than usually in transition. The boundaries of the 'global village' are fluid; its inhabitants are highly mobile. Each street has its own problems, but each problem impinges increasingly on the population as a whole. The 'tyranny of distance' has been overcome; isolation has been eliminated. Once obscure events now receive intense scrutiny from the international media; local knowledge has become universal information.⁹ With the appearance of globalization as a major subject of debate, historians can again join their expertise to the discussion of contemporary issues. The classic subjects of historical research invite renewed attention: political structures are everywhere in doubt; poverty endures. New themes can be added to emphasize the long-standing importance of the supranational, borderless world, where frontiers are mapped by systems of belief, circuits of trade, financial flows, zones of famine and disease, and patterns of migration, and to underline the antiquity and continuing relevance of infra-national forces, such as ethnicity. Neither history nor ideology has come to an end. The advocates of capitalism and free trade see globalization as a positive, progressive force generating employment and ultimately raising living standards throughout the world. The critics see it as a means of expropriating the resources of poor countries by drawing them into debt, encouraging the use of sweated labour, and accelerating environmental degradation. The protagonists will turn increasingly to history for support. The obligation now falls on historians to ensure that the history cited is based on evidence rather than on honorary facts, and to consider how they can apply arguments about the present to improve our understanding of the past. Notes and

References

Some varied examples include Diane Coyle (ed.), 'Globalization: A Report to Accompany the New White Paper on Eliminating World Poverty', in the *Independent*, 12 December 2000, Naomi Klein, *No Logo: Taking on the Brand Bullies* (London, 2000), and Noreena Hertz, *The Silent Takeover: Global Capitalism and the Death of Democracy* (London, 2001). The last two are significant for the popularity of their polemic rather than for the strength or novelty of their analyses. A recent academic discussion, focusing on the protectionist implications of fair trade, is Jagdish Bhagwati, 'After Seattle', *International Affairs*, 77 (2002), pp. 15–29. ² In some quarters government is held to have become, once more, the tool of big business. See Mark Seddon (the editor of *Tribune*) in the *Independent*, 23 April 2001. Elsewhere, it is seen to have failed the national interest by opening the door to globalizing forces. This was evident in the protests in Paris in December 2000. See the *Independent*, 8 December 2000. ³ The paradox that, as globalization proceeds, the study of history remains confined largely within national boundaries is discussed in A.G. Hopkins, 'Back to the Future: From National History to Imperial History', *Past and Present*, 164 (1999), pp. 198–243.

Frederick Cooper, 'What is the Concept of Globalization Good For An African Historian's Perspective', *African Affairs*, 100 (2001), pp. 189–213. We agree with Cooper's view that current studies of the history of globalization have a strong teleological bias that reads the present back into the past. Our purpose here is precisely to counter this tendency by encouraging historians to produce superior

accounts of previous (and in some cases still continuing) forms of globalization. 5 I am most grateful to my colleague, C.A. Bayly, for contributing ideas on this issue so freely. 6 Readers are reminded that other themes, touched on earlier, are expanded in my first essay in this volume, 'The History of Globalization – and the Globalization of History?' 7 These are just two of many examples. Others, noted in the essays that follow, are Pan-Turanism, Pan-Arabism and Pan-Buddhism. 8 The theme is developed further in the 'Afterword' to P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism, 1688–2000* (London, 2001). 9 The attempted suicide of Innu children, discussed in my second essay in this volume, is just one of many striking examples.