The City and the Ocean

The City and the Ocean: Journeys, Memory, Imagination

Edited by

Jonathan White and I-Chun Wang

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Jonathan White and I-Chun Wang

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

JONATHAN WHITE

Throughout history cities have been locations of human encounter. Equally they have been contexts for the trade of goods and services, for the evolution of various forms of urban space, and for the production, development, and enrichment of culture and technology. Different cities in a variety of cultures continue to reproduce a series of familiar "common places," each a site of shared memory: centres of government and other public buildings; places of worship and the diversity of sacred spaces; neighbourhoods and residential areas; markets and commercial zones; and public squares, monuments or parks. Many cities grew up along shorelines, which themselves constitute some of the globe's most important cultural boundaries. Our book's theme of the city and journeying is to be understood in relation to the migration of peoples across seas and oceans since early records were kept. For above all else, it is water that has separated but also connected different communities, races, religions and nations, down through recorded time. With the rapid advance in technologies of communication, encounters between cultures have multiplied at a rate that no individual can follow or control. The present book constitutes a space of "memory" in its own right, one of its chief *raisons d'être* being that a group of diverse scholars herein maps certain key encounters between peoples, past as well as present, and the urgent issues generated in consequence. No one person could have traced such diversity and made sense of it, whereas a scholarly grouping of persons reporting on phenomena from around the world, such as is provided here, offers its readers a vision of global change and development.

With the twentieth and twenty-first centuries a new set of mega-cities in Asia, Africa, and Latin America has emerged to challenge the primacy of European and North American metropolitan centres. This expanded landscape is here interpreted with special attention, as already mentioned, to cities located at coastlines, hence (generally speaking) more exposed to

globalizing trends. Migrants, exiles and refugees, ethnic and racial minorities, as well as alternative or countercultural groupings continue to complicate the ways in which cities articulate their now pluralized identities, in terms of (and by means of) literature, history, architecture, social events, and other forms of artistic and cultural production. The international scholars whose work is assembled in these pages are well placed to engage with the intersecting themes and issues of the volume. Contributors have mapped different examples, from Homeric narrative, through Renaissance drama and its representation of crossways of culture such as Rhodes and Malta, to an earlier time in the development of a New World city such as Boston: others look at the twentieth and twenty-first centuries' complexity of great world cities and of oceanic migration or trade between them. Shanghai, Singapore, London, Detroit, Shantou, Macau, and Saigon are some that are dealt with in detail. Emphasis falls on both the historical reality of those contexts as well as how they have been culturally represented.[1]

Early Precedents

The ancient Greek-speaking world on the mainlands of Asia Minor and the Hellenic peninsula lived its life in constant counterpoint with the sea. Certainly the islands of the Aegean and Adriatic (and of course Crete) existed daily and hourly by the rhythms of the Mediterranean and its adjacent seas. It should be no surprise then that Homer's epic poem *The Odyssey* takes place as much on the seashore, or even aboard ship, as it does on land. At the close of the fifth book of the epic the protagonist Odysseus, having lost all his crewmembers through the perils of travel during his ten-year-long and constantly thwarted return home from the battle of Troy, lands on the island of Scheria, home of the Phaeacians. The location of Scheria was disputed even in antiquity. Some would place it in the eastern Mediterranean; others identified it with the island of Corcyra (modern Corfu), off the west coast of Greece. But the ancient writers Strabo and Plutarch located it still further to the west, in the Atlantic Ocean. John T. Kirby's first chapter in the present book considers the different Greek words for "sea" and "ocean," and their meaning for classical mythology. It focuses on the *polis* of the Phaeacians, describing

[1] In the following introductory tracing of our book's themes and coverage bibliographical details are sometimes omitted, in cases where they can be found in the footnotes and lists of works cited by contributors. Citations in this Introduction are therefore mostly of works not referenced later in the volume.

its relationship to the ocean that surrounds their island. Equipped with this knowledge we are ready to consider the importance of this setting for Odysseus in his wanderings, and to compare it with his own home on the island of Ithaca. For our book as a whole this first chapter lays down classical precedents; both similarities with as well as differences from our later accounts of cities in relation to seas or oceans, and of travel between and across them.[2] Kirby's chapter, based in the epic age of Homeric narrative, anticipates the way the interlinked themes of the book vary and morph in later representations, and throughout the historical events that our separate authors treat.

Latin poets too were acutely aware of the importance of cities. In Virgil's *Aeneid*, Aeneas's and Achates' first sighting of the New Carthage being built by Dido and her people is of a city of soaring towers, the din of paved streets, the trenching of foundations for domestic dwellings, and the manhandling of blocks of stone for its central public places. There is attention to the needs of trade as well as of public entertainments:

> Here they dig out a harbour basin; here they are laying
> Foundations deep for a theatre, and hewing from stone immense
> Columns to grace one day a tall proscenium.

We see an entire society, as busy as the beehive that is deployed by Virgil as an analogy for the varied and purposeful activities of these Tyrian city-builders.

> So in the youth of summer throughout the flowering land
> The bees pursue their labours under the sun…
> Relieve incoming bees of their burden, or closing ranks
> Shoo the drones, that work-shy gang, away from the beefolds.[3]

Such a comparison between humans and bees became a trope for later epic narratives following Virgil. His Aeneas clearly envies this Carthaginian people, so advanced as they are in building their civilization; not just its solid edifices, but also the more abstract legal and parliamentary structures for the well functioning of the city's existence. "Ah, fortunate you are, whose town is already building," he will immediately cry out, after the lines already quoted. Aeneas's own appointed task still lies ahead of him. He must use his remnant of Trojan peoples to found another great city and

[2] For an extensive account of the representation of cities in Homeric epic, see Scully. The classic older treatment of this subject is that of Glotz, a portion of which titled "The Homeric City" is anthologised in de Jong, II, 105-25.

[3] Virgil, 18-19 (Bk. I, ll. 427-31, 454-55).

civilization, that of Rome. To do so he will first need to leave behind him this astonishing city of Carthage and its queen Dido, and sail with his crew across the sea to Italian shores. Seeing the Tyrians so busily consolidating their culture is a sharp stimulus to Aeneas in his own long-term enterprise. J.D. Reed has suggested a "mirror-quality" between Dido's Carthage and the Rome that is eventually founded, "not least in the surprising image of Carthaginian *coloni*, magistracies, consecrated Senate, and so on."[4] In those respects Carthage also acts as a *prefiguration*, or model for Rome; the latter a civilization that exists only *in potentio* at this early stage of Virgil's poem.

The later Latin poet Ovid, in the first book of *Metamorphoses*, suggests that the purity and innocence of people of the Golden Age derived in large measure from their not yet living amid the corruptions of urban-based societies and of communication between peoples. (I quote from the rhyming "fourteeners" of Arthur Golding's 1567 translation, so dear to Ezra Pound.)

> The loftie Pynetree was not hewen from mountaines where it stood,
> In seeking straunge and forren landes, to rove upon the flood.
> Men knew none other countries yet, than were themselves did keepe:
> There was no towne enclosed yet, with walles and diches deepe.[5]

We sense that in such a description Ovid was hankering for a simpler world; one without the "contagion" feared in contact with other peoples, and consequently with none of the defenses ("walles and ditches") needed to keep such others at bay. Only with the later and more debased Age of Iron, dominated by "Craft, Treason, Violence, Envie, Pride and wicked Lust," do humans, according to Ovid, begin long-distance journeying across seas. It is important to remember that this particular classical precedent in Ovid for our own book's major theme of cities in relation to journeying is an entirely negative account of the development of commerce between peoples. As Stephen M. Wheeler has written, "The image of the pine tree descending from the mountains into the sea—a perversion of the demiurge's order—defines the difference between the golden and the iron age." Wheeler points out the way in which, in the description of the Age of Iron, Ovid implies a "confusion of nature in which ships grow upon mountains," and furthermore that "Ovid … draws attention to the hubris of sailing."[6] Ovid's vision of human evils is not

[4] Reed, 74.
[5] Ovid, Bk. I, ll. 109-12.
[6] Wheeler, 24.

confined by any means to shipbuilding, travel, and the construction of cities, but extends even to the industrial activities of humankind, in particular to the first mining of the earth, "for Riches coucht and hidden deepe, in places nere to Hell."[7] Altogether, the rise of cities and of travel, not to mention this further matter of mining for the earth's valuable metals, are seen as developments nothing less than hellish, in Ovid's account of human decline from perfection over the course of the four ages of mankind.

Mention of hell helps project us rapidly forward, to the later Italian vernacular poet Dante, close follower of epic precedents in both Virgil and Ovid. (Dante uses Ovid heuristically, for instance, to describe how "shades" of the dead are metamorphosed instances of their earlier living selves; notably in his account in *Inferno* of thieves being changed into unstable reptilian forms.) Dante's hell is basically imagined as a large and complex medieval city under the earth's crust and going down to its centre, the *raison d'être* of which is to accomplish God's work of punishing sinners.[8] Even its mythological beasts such as the giants surrounding the lowest, ninth circle, resemble from afar the towers that immured the local town of Monteriggioni near Siena in Dante's time (and still today). Along with the "spirit" of the long dead Virgil, his guide and mentor, Dante travels from one circle to another, inspecting the varying punishments of the damned, all accomplished on a well-nigh industrial scale. The idea of hell as a city begins early in the narrative. The entry portal at the beginning of the third canto of the poem, like many another in Dante's times, is the gateway to a city, including an inscription naming the place it provides access to—specifically *la città dolente* or "woeful city." This city, like others of the time, has a series of concentric walls, each one enclosing a smaller and smaller space. In Canto VIII, for instance, a further set of walls of this city (which Dante follows Virgil in now naming as the city of Dis) encloses fiery-red "mosques" (l. 70) among its other edifices—Dante's way of suggesting a citizenry that included infidel congregations. Although this idea of burning mosques in hell is an extraneous element, many other aspects of the topography of Dante's city of Dis are related to features of an Italian city of his day.

And not merely Italian. Dante reaches as far as North Sea contexts when he wishes to give an analogy of how built up were the "dykes" bordering the desert upon which the sodomites are punished by an eternal falling of flakes of fire: "As the Flemings between Wissant and Bruges,

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[7] Ovid, Bk. I, ll.148 and 157.

[8] For more extensive accounts of Dante's hell as a city, see White, 43-48, and Rose, 7-28.

fearing the tide that rushes in on them, make the bulwark to drive back the sea" (*Inf.* XV, 4-6). We are astonished perhaps that this early Italian poet knew so much about sea defenses in another part of Europe. But we should recall that by the first and second decades of the fourteenth century, the period of the writing of Dante's poem, Europe and extensive regions bordering it were comprehensively interconnected by land and sea communication routes. Steven A Epstein has recently claimed, in speaking of links between Europe, the Middle East, East Asia, and Africa, that "the period from the tenth century to the plague witnessed the rise of the first world system of trading in which these disparate regions formed, to some extent, a common market that brought prosperity to its participants. Travelers, pilgrims, conquerors, scholars, and adventurers also frequented the routes that the merchants used and fostered communications among the big regions."[9] Late in the fourteenth century the merchant portrayed in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* plies between Middelburg in Holland and the Orwell river on the East Anglian coastline, an admittedly rather modest trading distance. By contrast, the same author's knight has fought in far more dispersed lands; in the Crusades during the taking of Alexandria, as well as in Prussia, Lithuania and Russia; not to mention at the siege of Algeciras in Grenada and cities won from Islamic forces in Morocco. Chaucer may have been exaggerating for satiric purposes or, contrariwise, idealizing his knight by presenting feats composited from many such combatants of the times. Contesting the more traditional reading of the knight as a "completely ideal figure," Terry Jones has argued that "the people of Chaucer's day were deeply suspicious of these mercenary knights."[10] It remains doubtful that a single knight could have been at all the battles claimed in the thirty-six-line portrait of him in the General Prologue. There is nonetheless something impressive—in realms of the geographical imaginary—about this author's urge to list for his late-fourteenth-century readership such far-flung European, Middle Eastern and North African chivalric engagements.

The great fear as far as navigation was concerned in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was still the Atlantic Ocean. In classical geography, the so-called Pillars of Hercules—the rocks on either side of the Straits of Gibraltar separating the Mediterranean Sea from the Atlantic Ocean—were seen as the limits of the known world, or in Dante's fourteenth-century definition, "that narrow outlet where Hercules set up his markers,

[9] Epstein, 70. See Epstein's entire chapter on "Trade 1000-1350" (70-99) for an account of the dynamic of intercommunication in question, and also his following chapter on "Cities, Guilds, and Political Economy" (100-28).

[10] Jones, x, and *passim*.

that men should not pass beyond" (*Inf.* XXVI, 108-09). Thomas Benjamin has recently clarified: "They marked the boundary between the 'inner' (Mediterranean) and 'outer' (Atlantic) seas. Beyond the Pillars and the great island of the earth was the 'River Ocean' that encircled the continents.… In the Medieval period, the idea of the River Ocean was superseded by the belief that a vast open sea lay beyond the Mediterranean." Benjamin goes on to affirm that even to the major Arab geographers the Atlantic was known as the "Sea of Darkness" and "Great Green Sea of Gloom," while "the Bible viewed the oceans as chaos possessed of monsters, like the coiled serpent Leviathan."[11] Given all that propounding of fear and mystery, it is impressive that in 1291 two mariners, the Vivaldi brothers from Genoa, financed by the merchant D'Oria family and accompanied by a member of it, ventured in vessels beyond the Straits of Gibraltar in search of the Indies, as Columbus would do some two hundred years later (though the latter set out from the Canaries). After apparently skirting the Moroccan coastline the Vivaldi brothers and their crew and craft were never heard of again. Here in translation is the 1294 account in the D'Oria annals of this fated voyage:

> Tedisio d'Oria, Ugolino Vivaldi and a brother of the latter, together with a few other citizens of Genoa, initiated an expedition which no one up to that time had ever attempted. They fitted out two galleys in splendid fashion. Having stocked them with provision, water and other necessities, they sent them on their way, in the month of May, toward the Strait of Ceuta in order that the galleys might sail through the ocean sea to India and return with useful merchandise. The two above-mentioned brothers went on the vessels in person, and also two Franciscan friars; all of which truly astonished those who witnessed them as well as those who heard of them. After the travelers passed a place called Gozora there was no further news of them. May God watch over them and bring them back safely.[12]

In current Dante scholarship it is thought that the poet might have been aware of this recent failed enterprise in his description of the last journey of Ulysses[13] (aka the Greek Odysseus), who, unlike in Homer's version, neglects wife Penelope and Ithaca his island home in favour of a further quest beyond the known. In this refashioning by Dante of the Odysseus myth, heroic venturing out beyond the two known cities of the Straits (Seville in southern Iberia, Ceuta in North Africa) was in no respect based on a motive of economic gain, as was explicit in the gamble by the Vivaldi

[11] Benjamin, 52.
[12] Jacopo d'Oria, 1294, trans. in Rogers, 31-45.
[13] See for instance Padoan, 188.

brothers in Dante's own lifetime ("in order that the galleys might sail through the ocean sea to India and return with useful merchandise"). Rather, Ulysses is driven by a lust for knowledge, with which he infuses his men: " 'O brothers,' I said, 'who through a hundred thousand dangers have reached the west, to this so brief vigil of our senses that remains to us, choose not to deny experience, following the sun, of the world that has no people. Consider your origin: you were not made to live as brutes, but to pursue virtue and knowledge' " (*Inf.* XXVI, 112-20). Ulysses' and his men's eventual fate sees their vessel battered by a mighty storm, within sight of Mount Purgatory at the bottom of the southern extension of the Atlantic. They and their vessel are swallowed by an oceanic whirlpool of divine sending.

The Atlantic and its ocean extensions have been perennially violent and forbidding, including in recent times. While on the subject of cities in relation to oceans in medieval times, it is useful to visit W.G. Sebald's 1995 classic, *The Rings of Saturn*, specifically his account there of a major medieval sea port on the East Anglian coastline, the town of Dunwich. Over the centuries Dunwich has been washed away by the violences of the North Sea, until there are only a few houses remaining of all that it once was. As Sebald reports, the port "reached the high point of its evolution in the thirteenth century": "Dunwich, with its towers and many thousand souls, has dissolved into water, sand and thin air. If you look out from the cliff-top across the sea towards where the town must once have been, you can sense the immense power of emptiness." Sebald stares out to sea from one of the easternmost points of the British landscape, which has been eroded over centuries by the furies of the North Sea. Dunwich's urban structures, its streets and buildings, have been swallowed by water, then buried under the alluvial sand and gravel that the sea ceaselessly shifts about:

> The Dunwich of the present is what remains of a town that was one of the most important ports in Europe in the Middle Ages. There were more than fifty churches, monasteries and convents, and hospitals here; there were shipyards and fortifications and a fisheries and merchant fleet of eighty vessels; and there were dozens of windmills. All of it has gone under, quite literally, and is now beside the sea, beneath alluvial sand and gravel, over an area of two or three square miles. The parish churches of St James, St Leonard, St Martin, St Bartholomew, St Michael, St Patrick, St Mary, St John, St Peter, St Nicholas and St Felix, one after the other, toppled down the steadily receding cliff-face and sank in the depths, along with the earth and stone of which the town had been built.[14]

[14] Sebald, 155-59.

Many are rapidly recognizing *The Rings of Saturn* as one of the great works of our time. Sebald's major theme concerns destruction, both by violences that are natural, and by those of human agency. In the above quotes he hauntingly captures the fragility of a city built along a geologically vulnerable coastline. And nor are we dealing here with some mythical city, such as Atlantis. Dunwich was a real and thriving port, as Sebald's description makes clear, though now a peripheral remnant of its medieval heyday. By means of his listing of churches and vessels, streets and windmills, Sebald vividly evokes the life of this former port, so contrasting with its few isolated dwellings in the present; the latter likely in turn to cede to the ravages of time and tide. This is a meditation that might have prepared our imaginations (not entirely—but then nothing could have) for the devastation caused by the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami, which destroyed whole cities in Indonesia and laid waste other centres of population over thousands of square miles; or the cataclysmic Japanese earthquake and tsunami of 2011. Sebald was himself tragically killed in a car accident near his Norwich home in 2001. Had he not been, he was one of the few authors in modern times who, one feels, might have found ways of addressing those recent natural disasters with an imagination at least in some sense adequate to the scale of destruction wrecked.

There were impressive transcontinental travelers even in the medieval age, the most well known to us now being Marco Polo. Because our own book deals in some of its chapters with cities of Pacific Asia, it is appropriate to pay special attention to this early precedent of a European reporting on a great but very distant world civilization. We should, however, be wary of treating Polo's accounts of an exotic orient (retailed in any case at second hand through the writing up by a Pisan scribe, Rustichiello) as reliable witness to eastern cities. In his descriptions Marco Polo seems to use exaggerations of what is already familiar to comprehend and represent the strange.[15] Hence his accounts of the great city of Hangzhou, called in his text "Kinsay" (or Quinsai, a real city that had served as the capital of the Southern Song dynasty until 1279), invest it with a remarkable resemblance, if on a larger scale, to his native Venice. "There are in it twelve thousand bridges of stone, for the most part so lofty that a great fleet could pass beneath them. And let no man marvel that

[15] Susan Oliver has shown how, in entirely different circumstances, namely the accounting for the unfamiliar in reports by early nineteenth-century travellers in the American West, the already familiar is often what is most resorted to for purposes of description and explanation. See her forthcoming book on transatlantic periodical culture of the first half of the nineteenth century.

there are so many bridges, for you see the whole city stands as it were in the water and surrounded by water, so that a great many bridges are required to give free passage about it. And though the bridges be so high the approaches are so well contrived that carts and horses do cross them."[16] Marco Polo's accounts of the trade and social organization of Kinsay make it thoroughly comprehensible to a contemporary European mindset. The scribe Rustichiello writes up Polo's accounts of stone towers for the defense of goods against fire; contrastingly, of wooden dwellings that are incident to being accidentally burned down; guild organizations under master craftsmen training up others in necessary skills; marriage feasts and entertainments; and burial rites including supply of provisions for a "next world."[17] Very little if anything is admitted as defeating ordinary powers of analysis, by reason of its utter difference from pre-existing European realms of experience. The layout of streets is, as it was for the most part in European cities of the medieval period, by trades and professions. And this layout in turn gives rise to a discourse on social organization—essentially of surveillance and control—that would make utmost sense to a readership or audience receiving such a report in Marco Polo's own Mediterranean world of the 1290s:

> Other streets are occupied by the Physicians, and by the Astrologers, who are also teachers of reading and writing; and an infinity of other professions have their places round about those squares. In each of the squares there are two great palaces facing one another, in which are established the officers appointed by the King to decide differences arising between merchants, or other inhabitants of the quarter. It is the daily duty of these officers to see that the guards are at their posts on the neighbouring bridges, and to punish them at their discretion if they are absent.[18]

Sometimes the behaviour of the inhabitants of Kinsay is used as an implicit admonition in relation to what are felt to be corrupt or inferior practices in Europe. At such moments Polo's account is worded in a hortatory or tutelary way, as a correctional text:

> The natives of the city are men of peaceful character, both from education and from the example of their kings, whose disposition was the same. They know nothing of handling arms, and keep none in their houses. You hear of no feuds or noisy quarrels or dissensions of any kind among them. Both in

[16] Polo, II, 185-86.
[17] Ibid, 186-91.
[18] Ibid, 203.

> their commercial dealings and in their manufactures they are thoroughly honest and truthful…. And this familiar intimacy is free from all jealousy or suspicion of the conduct of their women. These they treat with the greatest respect, and a man who should presume to make loose proposals to a married woman would be regarded as an infamous rascal. They also treat the foreigners who visit them for the sake of trade with great cordiality, and entertain them in the most winning manner, affording them every help and advice on their business.[19]

Here we have outright idealizations, for a target audience, of the social, legal and commercial life of a foreign city such that, taken together, they constitute a model for contemporary Europeans to emulate. John Larner has described what we experience at such moments in the text of Marco's discoveries as "elements of generalised idealisation." He asks rhetorically, "Who … can doubt but that Marco has the most profound admiration for the city and in many respects for its people?"[20] The description of Kinsay at such points is, as it were, a "reversal" of all that is held to be at fault in the home culture of Europe. That does not mean that Marco Polo is going outside contemporary modes of thinking. He is simply inverting his (implied) sense of European corruption. Where those in the home nation are querulous and arms-bearing, the men of Kinsay are peaceful and unarmed. Likewise Kinsay men display a highly civilized conduct in relation to women and foreigners, which Europeans would be wise to emulate.

Returning to the major theme of the present book—city in relation to ocean—Kinsay's upriver positioning only twenty-five miles from the sea is described by Marco Polo in terms of familiarities of navigation and trade: "the Ocean Sea comes within 25 miles of the city at a place called Ganfu, where there is a town and an excellent haven, with a vast amount of shipping which is engaged in the traffic to and from India and other foreign parts, exporting and importing many kinds of wares, by which the city benefits. And a great river flows from the city of Kinsay to that sea-haven, by which vessels can come up to the city itself. This river extends also to other places further inland."[21] Altogether, Marco Polo's account of this great city of China is subject to an Occidentalizing gaze (a making familiar rather than a making strange). Only a few of Polo's accounts of the behaviour of Kinsay's citizens deal in realms of the tantalizingly other. Interestingly, it is in Polo's description of the female courtesans of the city

[19] Ibid, 204-05.
[20] Larner, 102, 98.
[21] Polo, II, 189-90.

of Kinsay—"in such a number that I dare not say what it is"—that he solicits wonderment on the part of late-thirteenth-century Italians and others:

> They are found not only in the vicinity of the market places, where usually a quarter is assigned to them, but all over the city. They exhibit themselves splendidly attired and abundantly perfumed, in finely garnished houses, with trains of waiting-women. These women are extremely accomplished in all the arts of allurement, and readily adapt their conversation to all sorts of persons, insomuch that strangers who have once tasted their attractions seem to get bewitched, and are so taken with their blandishments and their fascinating ways that they never can get these out of their heads. Hence it comes to pass that when they return home they say they have been to Kinsay or the City of Heaven, and their only desire is to get back thither as soon as possible.[22]

"Orientalising" this may be (in an early sense of such a Saidian term), but as Larner has argued these are not "words born of a crafty colonialism but of altogether warmer sentiments."[23]

So much for one of the more colourful texts of the medieval period. What about our key themes of city and ocean in Renaissance times? One of Leon Battista Alberti's main topics in his mid-fifteenth-century treatise, *On the Art of Building*, is his discussion of ideal sites for building cities. What he has to say about the "advantages and disadvantages" of building a city along a coastline is of utmost interest and importance to our book's theme: "The coast is convenient for importing merchandise, although it is said that no coastal city is ever calm: it will be continually troubled and churned by the attraction of political change and by the excessive power of the merchants. What is more, it will be exposed to the many hazards and the dangers of foreign fleets."[24] Later in the same fourth book of his treatise Alberti writes carefully about choosing the ideal coastal site for a city on the basis of the kind of natural harbour offered, and about the means by which one may defend such a harbour and its hinter-lying town: "Within the harbor a quay and a bridge should be constructed, making it possible to unload the ships close in." Alberti adds—just in case one should slip into the error of assuming a situation of endless peaceful trading relations with foreign powers—that

[22] Ibid, 202-03.
[23] Larner, 99.
[24] Alberti, 97.

> …tall and well-fortified towers should be erected at the harbor mouths, as lookouts from which to descry the approach of sails, and as nighttime beacons to show sailors the way in. Their battlements would protect allied shipping, and chains could be thrown across between them to deny the enemy entry. A military road should extend from the harbor into the centre of town, with access to several neighborhoods, along which a counterattack may be launched from all sides against any intruding enemy fleet.[25]

For Alberti, the fifteenth-century theorist of ideal cities, coastal positioning is good for trade with the foreigner. However, when the foreigner is figured in personal terms, it is mostly as a potentially invasive enemy. Only in a sentence describing architecture and ceremony does one sense the possibility of more positive and peaceful engagement with persons from another culture: "The harbor must also have an ambulatory around it, with a portico and a temple, where those disembarking might be received." "Those disembarking" could be sailors or traders from one's own culture returning to port. But the words seem to hint rather at traders from elsewhere, particularly in that idea of "receiving" them in an engaging architectural context. The ceremony of welcome extended to "those disembarking" may include processing with them along the ambulatory, or a visit to the harbour temple, the latter with portico for shelter or for diplomacy of the kind that trade requires to oil its human mechanisms. Foreign missions or royal embassies, often in such covered, semi-outdoor settings, are the subject of a number of paintings of the Italian Renaissance. Nowhere in this part of Alberti's text of around 1450 is it suggested that foreigners might become members of the polis itself. One's natural assumption is that they will go away again. There *were* cities in the medieval and Renaissance world that had large foreign communities. We may instance Venice and Constantinople, two cities that were sometimes fierce and warring rivals, but which for long periods had sizeable communities of one another's peoples; Venetians in Constantinople, Turks in Venice. As Steven Epstein has affirmed, "Venice's links to Constantinople, forged in late antiquity, were never broken."[26] Such metropoli with extensive foreign populations and quarters had initially been an exception in early medieval times. However, most trading cities increasingly developed what in Italian were called *fondachi*—from the Arabic word

[25] Ibid, 115.
[26] Epstein, 77.

funduq—namely, secure places for foreign merchants and their wares in an established quarter at the water's edge.[27]

Painting of ideal city with ships in port, usually attributed to Francesco di Giorgio Martini (1439-1502). Thought to be from the early 1490s, this illustration and two others like it, now in Baltimore and Urbino galleries, were influenced by Albertian ideals of city planning and layout. Berlin, Gemaeldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Poplar panel, 131 x 233 cm. Inv. 1615. Photo: Joerg P. Anders. © 2012. Photo Scala, Florence/BPK, Bildagentur fuer Kunst, Kultur und Geschichte, Berlin

I-chun Wang's chapter in the present book treats the geo-political significance of Rhodes and Malta as "contact zones," in particular within representations by early modern English dramatists. Just as Granada and Seville, Rhodes and Malta were significant sites witnessing the growth of empires, wars and conflicts, as well as the identity politics imposed on their inhabitants over centuries. The strategic importance of the Maltese islands and of Rhodes as geographical bridges between Europe, North Africa and the Middle East had already in the classical world drawn the attention of Phoenicians, Greeks and Romans. These islands were included in the realm of the eastern Roman Empire. However, from the eighth through to the eleventh centuries the Turks controlled them. If Ceuta and Granada remind us of the conflict between the Spanish Catholic and Moorish powers, Malta and Rhodes by contrast epitomize the wider

[27] See Epstein, 80, for more explanation of the historical development and form of the *fondaco*, in multiple trading centres of the Mediterranean and beyond.

conflicts between European countries and the Ottoman Empire. English dramatists from the early modern period onwards have incorporated their military history into dramatic works. Wang's chapter explores cultural contact and conflict as represented in three plays that proved popular in their early stage representations; *The Jew of Malta* by Christopher Marlowe, *The Knight of Malta,* a collaboration by three playwrights, and *The Siege of the Rhodes* by William D'Avenant. It discusses the competition for material profits and territorial expansion as represented by the colonial discourses that inform these early modern works.

Moving closer to the present time, Susan Oliver considers Boston as a representative city on the Atlantic seaboard. Arising out of the Massachusetts Bay Colony established by British Puritan migrants in1630, Boston has for more than three centuries been a major hub of transatlantic trade, communication and migration. The position of the city in relation to Europe is such that an ambivalent relationship, based on connection and separation, has informed developments in its newspaper and periodical press. The Atlantic Ocean, which had brought prosperity and population growth, acquired a more sinister aspect as an agent of dread and death in the early nineteenth century. Boston's press charted the routes of yellow fever, smallpox, and cholera in ways that fed public interest in the body and its treatment. Each of those diseases was imagined as a form of exotic visitation. Yellow fever had associations with the southern states, the Caribbean, and Africa, whilst cholera came from India, through Russia and Europe, across the Atlantic to Canada. Smallpox generated a battle for reputations amongst physicians, as arguments over the use of Edward Jenner's English transgenic cowpox vaccine were printed in letters to editors. The built environment of Boston and its surroundings reflected anxieties about contagion, with quarantine hospitals and lazarettos serving as holding stations for the potential carriers of sickness. Newspapers carried reports, statistics, letters and advertisements, alongside notices of theatre productions that dramatized anxiety. Oliver's chapter argues that press debates concerning contagion are crucial to the configuration of Boston as a transatlantic city. It follows that such readings demand a reappraisal of Boston's cultural history within a distinctly global, rather than national, framework.

A further chapter by Kuo-Jung Chen considers issues of the Atlantic slave trade. In Britain during the wars with Napoleonic France and the consolidation of Empire farther afield, Jane Austen's novels of the Regency period chart domestic life in the home country. Patricia Rozema's cinematic rendition (1999) of Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* (1814) received many negative responses from general viewers. What

some objected to was that Rozema had read "between the lines," and by so doing constructed in her film version a narrative that more overtly referred to the slave trade in contemporary Antigua than does Austen's novel. In the film's climactic discussion about the slave trade Rozema also introduces, though just in passing, two important contemporary polemics on slavery: Edward Long's *The History of Jamaica* (1774), which characterized black slaves as having "bestial manners, stupidity and vices," and "every species of inherent turpitude"; and Thomas Clarkson's *An Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species* (1785), which helped move opinion against slavery and towards the eventual passing of the Slave Trade Act of 1807, prohibiting any further British trade in slaves. By investigating historical and textual contexts of Austen's period and how they were appropriated or adapted in Rozema's film, Chen studies in his chapter how Rozema "writes back" to the original novel, filling in some of its silences about the Atlantic slave trade, in which the British were heavily implicated from their sea ports, especially Bristol.

In the following chapter Joseph Abraham Levi examines the different ways Islam entered the future independent nation of Mozambique, before, during, and after its independence from Portugal, celebrated on 25th June 1975. Using as a springboard the different time frames and the obviously different ports of entry of Islam into the geographic area known as the East African Coast, more specifically the Swahili coast, Levi's analysis focuses on the way Islam adapted itself to the local milieu, thus creating a Muslim society within a traditional African context, where the pre-existing Indian Ocean culture played a decisive role in shaping developments. Levi's account of Islam in East Africa and specifically in Mozambique clarifies a long and complex history that reaches back from modern times to the first millennium of the Common Era.

Along quite another coastline in the mid-nineteenth century, Shantou, a city on the east coast of China's Guangdong Province, was opened as a treaty port for foreign trade according to the Treaty of Tianjin. Thereafter Western merchants, including British, Americans, French, and Germans, conducted business in this port city. Shantou became one of the most international cities in China. Along with other foreign powers, Japan established a consulate in Shantou in the early twentieth century. Accompanying the advent of Japanese banks, schools, stores, and even religious institutions was Japan's exertion of significant cultural influence upon the city. In her chapter Lin-yi Tseng places discussion of this treaty port in a transnational framework, by exploring how Japanese culture was fostered and perpetuated in Shantou, and how, furthermore, the Japanese themselves perceived Shantou as both a geographical periphery of their

empire and, meanwhile, as a context possessing significant economic, political, and cultural meaning in its own right. Tseng's sources for her chapter include official documents of the Foreign Ministry of Japan, newspaper reports of Japanese entrepreneurs, personal travelogues, and maps.

Contemporary worlds and their past traces

The remaining chapters of our book deal with cities of dispersal and arrival in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and equally with memories of the deeper past that may be buried in their histories, not to say repeated in the many diasporic narratives of which they are the present loci.

For instance, Isabel Morais deals in her chapter with the way an early twentieth-century Dutch novelist traces the Portuguese poet Luis de Camões's footsteps from Lisbon to Macau. J. J. Slauerhoff (1898-1936), major Dutch writer and poet, published his first novel *Het verboden rijk* (*The Forbidden Realm,* 1932) drawing upon his voyages to the city ports of Lisbon and Macau, and above all upon a singular admiration for the cultural impact of the Portuguese age of exploration. In the early twentieth century, the novelist's alter ego mirrors the Portuguese poet Camões´s own journey from Lisbon to the Far East centuries earlier. The main character, an Irish sailor, possessed by the spirit of Camões, initiates both an inner journey and a real ocean voyage, which lead him to shipwreck and ultimately to Camões´s realm of memory in China—the mythic Camões Grotto in Macau. It is precisely there, in a decadent Macau, notwithstanding its Mediterranean charms and traces of past glory, that the sailor's journey and obsession finally cease, thereby exorcising the ghost of Camões and liberating Slaurhoff's protagonist. Morais's chapter shows the degree to which twentieth-century journeys have been re-conceptualized in terms of an earlier age of exploration and, in this particular case, of its greatest work within the Portuguese literary tradition. The connections made reveal the impact of the prime Portuguese colonial city (Lisbon) upon its colonized "other" (Macau), and also the onward reflection of these myth-inflected realities upon the imaginative world of a different early-twentieth-century European literature, that of the Dutch.

Yu-cheng Lee's chapter shows how London is variously represented as a diasporic city in recent literary production. In particular he reads recent works by British Asian or British Caribbean writers in ways that bring out the analyses and critiques of changing "Britishness" that they enshrine. Lee begins by tracing the historical process by which London was

transformed into a post-imperial city, with multiple peoples from former colonies forming a significant proportion of its population. The chapter faces readers with the question as to how successfully diasporic communities manage to co-exist, both with one another and with older, white British culture(s). Lee proceeds to study a wide range of literary works, exploring why contemporary London has become important to so many (otherwise very different) writers. This particular study partakes of the methodologies of "psychogeography" to fathom multicultural experience of the city; built as such experience frequently is upon memory (often of cultures of origin) and imagination (different ways of seeing and understanding a newly adopted city than those of its former writers).

Cormac McCarthy's Pulitzer-Prize-winning novel *The Road* (2006), about a father and son's migration to the sea across a post-apocalyptic American South, derives its power largely from its allegorical structure. In his chapter dealing with the novel Joseph Murphy focuses on the seacoast as key to the novel's allegorical design and to its place in American cultural history. The protagonists' southeasterly trek to the Atlantic reverses the westward course of American history patterned by Puritans and pioneers. No longer conducive to immigration and commerce, McCarthy's Atlantic is a desolate "vat of slag" that overturns the American geography of redemption. The ocean also sheds its conventional symbolism of primordial mother and cyclical time, as is illustrated here by reference back to Walt Whitman's *Sea-Drift* poems and to the iconology of abandoned sea vessels in nineteenth-century American Luminist painting. In *The Road*, the coast presents the last chance to re-inscribe the nation's ruins. Ultimately, the father-son pilgrimage clings to the coast as the only hope for glimpsing a "far shore," where the world's unmaking might merge with the world's re-creation.

One of the challenges of a book such as this is that a chapter on North American contexts can be followed by one on China. Shung-Mei Ma's chapter is on representations of Shanghai. As though through a camera obscura of longing and loss, turn-of-the-nineteenth-century metropolitanism stands on its head, veiled and refracted in Shanghai's luxurious International Settlement amidst native penury. Shanghai nostalgia of our own times disguises urban cosmopolitan paranoia about ourselves, as epitomized by the war-torn Bund in flames upside down on water, the Huangpu River by the sea. The old, colonial Shanghai is a city by the sea of time, a nostalgic and decadent dream authored by millennial cosmopolitanism, but one that projects a paranoia latent in globalization's triumphal discourse. Such collective dreams turn into the same repetitive nightmare. Ma's chapter conducts readers through the classic Euro-Orientalism of Josef von

Sternberg's *Shanghai Express* (1932) and *Shanghai Gesture* (1941); the semi-autobiographical internment and postmodern schizophrenia of J. G. Ballard's *Empire of the Sun* (1984); the return of repressed Japaneseness in Kazuo Ishiguro's *When We Were Orphans* (2000) and his film script *The White Countess* (2005); the bloodbath-musical thriller of Zhang Yimou's *Shanghai Triad* (1995); and the sadomasochistic retro imaginary of Ang Lee's *Lust, Caution* (2007). Throughout this series of literary and cinematic representations the underclass left behind by globalization and the revolutionaries in revolt against it are displaced onto Shanghai as, on the one hand, the impoverished and vengeful masses, and, on the other, instruments of aggression in the form of the Japanese military and Chinese warlords. Flirting with these historical menaces, playing with fire, is millennial man of our own age, in a dress rehearsal for the new world disorder. If Sheng-Mei Ma's chapter treats of our globalized fears for the future in terms of an absence of every civilizational bond in the present or past, that is because, in their common contextual focus on Shanghai, the works considered constitute a nightmarish tradition that has not been superceded, urgently requiring discussion from the host of hallucinatory perspectives that Ma studies.

Heh Jason Huang and Y. Paul Huo's chapter on Hoa Refugees after the Republic of Vietnam's fall pulls us back from the exotic representations of Shung-Mei Ma's work on Shanghai, to a more solid world of migrants and their experiences, as represented in responses to a survey. Huang and Hoa are keenly concerned with cultural identity; how much it changes under conditions of migration; how much by contrast older traditions are retained from a distant culture of origin, through shared memory of it on the part of those who have made the transit to new cultures of destination. Known as the sixth largest ethnic group in Vietnam, Hoa refers to people who consider themselves as ethnic Chinese. When North Vietnam emerged as the victor of the Vietnam War on 30th April 1975, the ethnic Chinese community suffered under a series of anti-capitalist and anti-Chinese campaigns. Many fled Vietnam as political refugees and settled in other nations. Today, there are many Hoa communities in Australia, Canada, France and the United States, where they have been instrumental in revitalizing local Chinatowns. Some own local businesses that cater especially to Vietnamese immigrants and other Hoa people. Most Hoa refugees spent their prime years in Ho Chi Minh City, formerly Saigon or Cholon, which continues to be a site of shared memory and to constitute for them a series of familiar "common places." The subculture of Hoa peoples in Vietnam and other countries is a classical case of the exceptional longevity and stability of a specific cultural heritage, even in

an era of globalization. Hoa refugees have established their cultural identity through literature, social function, clan associations, and business networking. Huang and Huo report findings from their survey of sixty Hoa immigrants in different nations, about self-perception and affective attitudes toward Vietnam, China, and the countries in which the Hoa respondents currently reside. The findings have important implications for our understanding of multicultural workforces in today's global business environment.

Walter Lim by contrast writes of transpacific experience that aims to give shape and form to the Asian American narrative. If transatlantic Puritanism narrativized young Boston as a "city upon a hill," sanctioned by God to attract and influence the peoples and nations of the world, transpacific migrations transformed San Francisco into a (symbolic) city that encapsulates Asia's important historical sojourning upon "Gold Mountain," the Promised Land of dreams and desire. In assessing literary representations of migration in Asian American Literature, critical commentary has not paid much attention to this corpus's concern with religious themes and motifs. To redress this gap, Lim's chapter considers two Chinese American authors—Maxine Hong Kingston and Russell Leong—who have shown distinctive interest in the subject of Buddhism. By invoking Buddhist themes and motifs in their writings, Kingston and Leong engage implicitly, if not explicitly, with the transatlantic definition of American political and cultural identity as well as with controlling ideas of American exceptionalism traceable to the beginnings of Puritan America. Buddhistic ideas facilitate Kingston's critique of American wars of foreign aggression. They likewise enable Leong to invoke transnational and globalized realities to destabilize the hold of the nation-state over the freedoms of the individual subject.

One of the two editors of the volume, Jonathan White, closes it with a chapter that speculates about cities of the future. Walter Benjamin famously in his readings of Paris of the nineteenth century gave nuance to the figure of the *flâneur*; one who wanders the city, absorbing all. Alone in midst of crowds, the *flâneur* is preeminently capable of grasping novel cultural elements of the nineteenth-century rise and transformation of cities. What are the conditions favorable for a twenty-first-century *flâneur* of cities? Or rather, how must the activities and indeed the very concept of being an interpreter of urban culture change to accommodate radically changed cities? White's chapter of after-reflections upon the issues of our book looks at some figures who have attempted "memory mapping" of modern cities; J.G. Ballard's accounts of London; by contrast, Rebecca Solnit's of urban decay and regeneration in postindustrial U.S. cities such