

Reviews

WOLFGANG REINHARD, *Geschichte der europäischen Expansion*. 3 Vols. Stuttgart, Berlin, Köln, Mainz: Verlag W. Kohlhammer. Vol 1 (1983): *Die Alte Welt bis 1818*. 279 pages, illustr., DM 89.- ; Vol 2 (1985): *Die Neue Welt, 1492-1867*. 352 pages, 19 plates, 78 illustr., 24 tables, DM 98.- ; Vol 3 (1988): *Die Alte Welt seit 1818*. 278 pages, 34 plates, 10 tables, 27 illustr., DM 89.-

Contrary to some other European countries the modern German interest in the history of European expansion (formerly called "overseas history") started quite late. First initiatives date back to the early seventies and are centered on Prof. E. Schmitt who is now working at the University of Bamberg, editing the voluminous *Dokumente der europäischen Expansion*, 4 volumes of which have already appeared. This ambitious project, partially supported by international historians, is being financed by the "Stiftung Volkswagenwerk".

The three volumes under review, written by Prof. W. Reinhard and based primarily on literary material, are in contrast the result of a one-man project. Reinhard presents a comparative study of the history of European expansion, including the process of colonization, imperialism and decolonization. Everyone who is familiar with the predominance of international historians in this branch of world history, knows that such an attempt not only needs great historical knowledge but, above all, courage.

The first volume covers the period from the European middle ages to 1818, tracing the new maritime relationship between Europe and Asia and the Pacific Islands. The Portuguese, Dutch, English and French seaborne empires are the main subjects of this volume. Two chapters - "Structures of mercantile capitalism" and "From trade to (colonial) rule" - present a more general view, giving a most welcome interpretation of this unusual process to the reader.

The second volume changes the scene to America. After a short description of the situation before the coming of the Europeans, the Spanish colonial empire is discussed, followed by a survey of the Atlantic trade between Africa and the Caribbean Islands and Brazil, finally turning north, telling the story of the British and French rivalry in North America. The second part of the book focusses on the "inner" American imperialism and the process of Latin America's decolonization. While the first volume stops at 1818 the second includes the 19th and 20th centuries.

The third volume follows up on the first, elucidating the historical events up to the end of the Second World War. While the first six chapters are organized according to geographical and cultural units - for instance: the British in India, China and Japan - the following chapters concentrate on special historical cross-sections, dealing, for instance, with the background to the First World War or the different stages of decolonization in different parts of Asia and the Pacific area. (The fourth volume, soon to appear, covers the 19th and 20th century history of Africa.

Obviously it is impossible for one man to write a complete history of this complex and unique process embracing the whole world. That is why this study - like so many foreign predecessors - reflects the limits of current international research and of the author's personal viewpoint. Being aware of this difficulty Reinhard limited himself to the demographic, economic and political implications of this five hundred years process, sometimes touching on problems of religious mission, forms of acculturation and the diversification of plants and animals.

Nevertheless there are blanks. Those interested in colonial warfare, the types and changing patterns of colonial towns, Asian and Latin-American country trade and everyday life in the colonies will not find much information.

Sri Lanka - pearl of the Indian Ocean - only gets fourteen lines (Vol. 3).

But of the topical subjects, those on the Dutch monopol company VOC, silver mining around Potosí, the Atlantic slave trade, the flow of Spanish silver from America via Europe to Asia, the Jesuits' activities in Latin America and at the Chinese Imperial Court, the beginnings of British control in India, the "inner" American imperialism and the history of Japanese imperialism are most valuable. Excellent is the description of the arrival of the Portuguese in Asia and the structure of their "*Estado da India*". This part covers four (!) chapters of the first volume. Comparing the three volumes I have the impression that the last one is not written with the same clarity and personal enthusiasm as the first two.

What about theory?

Reinhard is very sceptical of all existing theories of imperialism, 'dependencia' etc. Regrettably, he doesn't discuss the most important. The theories of Hobson and Lenin on imperialism are briefly considered (Vol. 3, pp. 109-114), while Wallerstein's three tier concept of "world-system" is used to interpret the relationship between Spain and her American colonies. (Vol. 2, p. 114f.)

Instead of constructing or following a theoretical framework, Reinhard clearly opts for portraying the economic, financial and political flow of events, seldom interrupting it by general observations. This attitude, though accept-

able, makes the reading of the books chapter by chapter, quite difficult. The mass of information is discouraging. I think the student or lay reader should at first concentrate on one problem or one chapter.

Keeping in mind the foreign historians' predominance in this field of research, the large mass of data and events and the never-ending flood of books and articles on colonization and decolonization, Reinhard has performed an enormous and respectable task.

Uwe Granzow

MYLIUS, KLAUS, *Geschichte der altindischen Literatur: die 3000jährige Entwicklung der religiös-philosophischen, belletristischen und wissenschaftlichen Literatur Indiens von den Veden bis zur Etablierung des Islam*. Bern, München, Wien: Scherz, 1988, 448 pp., DM 68.-

Five years after Mylius' *Geschichte der Literatur im alten Indien* was published (Leipzig: Reclam 1983. See my review in Vol. 15 (1984), pp. 377-378.), the author has prepared a new and enlarged edition under a slightly different title. The text has been revised to include recent research and to take into account suggestions made in the reviews of the first edition. The bibliographical notes have also been updated. No change has been made in the well-proved conception: it is not meant to rival a publication like the *History of Indian Literature* and remains the best one-volume history of classical Sanskrit and Middle-Indo-Aryan literature available in any language.

The larger format has also allowed the inclusion of some illustrations; unfortunately, they are printed in black and white on text paper. While this is sufficient to show what a manuscript text in Indian scripts looks like, the reproductions from illuminated manuscripts are sadly inadequate to give even a glimmering of the beauties of Indian miniature painting.

Hartmut-Ortwin Feistel