Notes on the contributors

DIMITER ANGELOV is Fellow in Byzantine History at the University of Birmingham. His main interests lie in the political and intellectual history of the Byzantine empire during the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. He is the author of *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought in Byzantium, 1204–1330* (Cambridge, 2007) and recently published an analytical study of the uses and textual history of the Donation of Constantine during the late Byzantine period in the volume *Church and Society in Late Byzantium* (2009) edited by him.

PETER FIBIGER BANG is Associate Professor at the Saxo Institute, University of Copenhagen, and holds a doctorate from the University of Cambridge. He is a Roman comparative historian, interested in political economy, the sociology of power, state-formation and world history. He was chair of the COST research network Tributary Empires Compared 2005–9 (www.tec.saxo.ku.dk) pioneering comparison between the Roman, Mughal and Ottoman empires. He has published *The Roman Bazaar: A Comparative Study of Trade and Markets in a Tributary Empire* (Cambridge, 2008) and six other edited volumes, including, with C. A. Bayly (eds.), *Tributary Empires in Global History* (2011). With Walter Scheidel he is editing *The Oxford Handbook of the State in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean* (in press).

GOJKO BARJAMOVIC is Associate Professor of Assyriology at the University of Copenhagen. His research is focused on early historical economy and the political, social and intellectual history of the ancient Near East with particular emphasis on the Old- and Neo-Assyrian periods. He is the author of *A Historical Geography of Anatolia in the Old Assyrian Colony Period* (2011); *Ups and Downs at Kanesh: Observations on Chronology, History and Society in the Old Assyrian Period* (with T. Klitgaard Hertel and M. Trolle Larsen, 2012) and is editing three volumes on various aspects of

intellectual history, including *Libraries before Alexandria* (with K. Ryholt, forthcoming).

GARTH FOWDEN is attached to the Centre for Greek and Roman Antiquity, National Research Foundation, Athens. His books include *Empire to Commonwealth: Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (1993) and *Qusayr 'Amra: Art and the Umayyad Elite in Late Antique Syria* (2004). His current research develops those works' concern with culture, religion and empire during the first millennium, with special reference to emergent Islam. In preparation: *Before and after Muḥammad: The First Millennium Refocused.*

PETER HALDÉN holds a PhD from the European University Institute, Florence and is currently a researcher at the Department of Peace and Conflict Research at the University of Uppsala, Sweden. He has specialised in the history of the Holy Roman Empire during the early modern era and is the author of *Stability without Statehood: Lessons from Europe's History before the Sovereign State* (2011). His current research interests include state-formation/state-building, constitutions, European and German history, African and Central Asian societies, and international security.

JOHN A. HALL is James McGill Professor of Comparative Historical Sociology at McGill University, Montreal and a visiting professor at the Saxo Institute, University of Copenhagen. His interests roam widely from nations, states and empires to sociological theory and intellectual history. Among his many publications are *Powers and Liberties* (1985), *International Orders* (1996), *Ernest Gellner: An Intellectual Biography* (2010) and *Power in the Twenty-First Century: Michael Mann in Conversation with John Hall* (2011).

JUDITH HERRIN is Professor of Late Antique and Byzantine Studies at King's College, London. Her research interests include: Ravenna in Late Antiquity, early church structures, and women in the Byzantine world. Recent publications: 'Book Burning as Purification', in Philip Rousseau and Manolis Papoutsakis (eds.), *Transformations of Late Antiquity: Essays for Peter Brown* (2009), 205–22; 'The Acts of Trullo (692) as a Continuation of Chalcedon', in Richard Price and Mary Whitby (eds.), *Chalcedon in Context: Church Councils 400–700* (2009), 148–68. A revised edition of *The Formation of Christendom* is forthcoming.

EBBA KOCH is a professor of Asian art at the Institute of Art History, University of Vienna and a senior researcher at the Institute of Iranian

Studies, Austrian Academy of Sciences. Professor Koch was visiting professor at Harvard (2008/9), Oxford (2008), Sabanci University (2003) and the American University in Cairo (1998), and held an Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture Fellowship at Harvard (2002). Since 2001 she has been global advisor to the Taj Mahal Conservation Collaborative, and she was Austrian delegate to the Management Committee of COST Action 36 'Network of Comparative Empires' of the European Commission (2005–9). Her research interests are Mughal art and architecture, the political and symbolic meaning of art, and the artistic connections between the Mughals and their neighbours and Europe. Her publications include *Mughal Architecture* (1991), *Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology* (2001), and *The Complete Taj Mahal and the Riverfront Gardens of Agra* (2006). She has co-authored, with Milo Beach and Wheeler Thackston, *King of the World: The Padshahnama: An Imperial Mughal Manuscript from the Royal Library, Windsor Castle* (1997).

DARIUSZ KOŁODZIEJCZYK is associate professor at the Institute of History, University of Warsaw and has published widely on Ottoman and eastern European history. His most important work has focused on the relationship between early modern Poland-Lithuania and its Muslim neighbours and includes *Ottoman–Polish Diplomatic Relations (15th–18th Century): An Annotated Edition of 'Ahdnames and Other Documents* (2000), *The Ottoman Survey Register of Podolia (ca. 1681): Defter-i Mufassal-i Eyalet-i Kamaniçe* (2004), and *The Crimean Khanate and Poland-Lithuania: International Diplomacy on the European Periphery (15th–18th Century): A Study of Peace Treaties Followed by Annotated Documents* (2011).

JUSTYNA OLKO is associate professor at the Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies 'Artes Liberales', University of Warsaw. She specializes in Aztec/Nahua ethnohistory, Nahuatl philology and cross-cultural transfers between Europe and New Spain. She has authored several books, including *Turquoise Diadems and Staffs of Office: Insignia of Power in Aztec and Early Colonial Mexico* (2005) and *Insignia of Rank in the Nahua World* (University Press of Colorado, in press) as well as of numerous journal papers and book chapters. She has conducted extensive archival research in Mexico, Spain and USA where she received fellowships at Dumbarton Oaks and John Carter Brown Library; she currently directs an international team project on contact-induced change in older Nahuatl within the Focus Programme of the Foundation for Polish Science.

VELCHERU NARAYANA RAO is currently Visiting Distinguished Professor of South Asian Studies at Emory University. For thirty-eight years, he taught Telugu and Indian literatures at University of Wisconsin-Madison. His publications include *Girls for Sale: A Play from Colonial India*, a translation of *Kanyasulkam* by Gurajada Apparao (2007), and several books in collaboration with David Shulman and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, including, with the former, *Srinatha: The Poet who Made Gods and Kings* (2012).

EVELYN S. RAWSKI holds a Ph.D. in History and Far Eastern Languages from Harvard University and is currently Distinguished University Professor of History at the University of Pittsburgh. She has published books on sixteenth- and eighteenth-century Chinese agricultural development, elementary literacy, and the emperors and imperial institutions of the Qing dynasty, which ruled China from 1644 to 1911. Among her books is *The Last Emperors* (1996).

ROLF MICHAEL SCHNEIDER studied classical archaeology, ancient history and Byzantine art history in Hamburg, Heidelberg and Rome. He has lectured in Heidelberg, Marburg, Munich and Cambridge where he also was Curator of the Museum of Classical Archaeology and Fellow of Downing College. He is currently Professor of Classical Archaeology at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich. His research interests revolve around image and (con)text, cultural readings of marble, the 'Other' in Greece and Rome, anthropology of emotions, Classics in South Africa and beyond. He has published extensively in these fields (www.klass-archaeologie.lmu.de/) and is co-editor of the series ICON (Berlin).

SANJAY SUBRAHMANYAM is Professor and Doshi Chair of Indian History at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). Since 2005, he has also directed the Center for India and South Asia at UCLA. He earlier taught in Delhi and Paris, and held a chair in Indian History and Culture at Oxford. His recent publications include *Textures of Time* (with V. Narayana Rao and David Shulman) (2003); *Explorations in Connected History*, 2 vols. (2005); *Three Ways to Be Alien: Travails and Encounters in the Early Modern World* (2011); and, with Muzaffar Alam, *Indo-Persian Travels in the Age of Discoveries, 1400–1700* (2007) and *Writing the Mughal World* (2011).

Preface

This collection of essays explores the notion of universal empire in Eurasian and world history from antiquity till the dawn of modernity. It is the result of a long journey and one of the main outcomes of a European-based network to compare tributary empires which we are grateful to acknowledge was boldly and generously financed by COST (www.tec.saxo.ku.dk). This brought historians together from a number of fields who had not usually had a great deal of contact with each other and enabled them to meet several times annually for an extended period. In this connection, we want to extend our thanks to all the many participants in this series of meetings and our hosts, as well as to the contributors to the present volume for all the enthusiasm and curiosity they have brought to this endeavour to promote comparative history. In relation to this volume, however, we thank in particular Adam Ziółkowski, who helped organise one of the meetings on which this volume builds, and C. A. Bayly, who acted as co-chair of the network for its entire duration and also commented on a first draft of our introduction. It is also a great pleasure to thank both Michael Sharp and his staff at Cambridge University Press for working hard on bringing our manuscript into print, as well as the two anonymous readers who offered much valuable advice. René Lindekrone Christensen, finally, provided much appreciated technical assistance with the images for this book.

For the past decade or so, imperialism, globalisation and world history have been high on the agenda both of the historical disciplines and of the public in general. Unsurprisingly, both discourses have been dominated by the experience of modernity and colonial empire. (Bayly 2004 is exemplary.) But as these debates are rapidly changing our image of the world, past and present, and are themselves responses to an ongoing seismic shift in the current world order, older forms of history can ill afford to ignore this development; they must find ways of addressing the concerns of the evolving more global perspective on the past or risk consigning themselves

to obscurity and irrelevance. Fortunately, there is a growing sense among students of more ancient forms of history of the need not to study their topics in isolation, but to reach out to neighbouring fields and allow their enquiries to be informed and shaped by more general problems of world history. This is what we have been aiming for in this volume; we radically cut across both conventional chronology and cultural geography to illuminate our theme on the broadest possible canvas. In doing so, we join ranks with a small but accumulating number of studies and projects dedicated to the comparative history of pre-modern empires (Alcock *et al.* 2001; Bang and Bayly 2003 and 2011; Bang 2008; Hurlet 2008; Mutschler and Mittag 2008; Scheidel 2009; Morris and Scheidel 2009). It is a particular joy to mention the project on Rome and Han China led by Walter Scheidel and the network of ancient and modern imperialisms co-ordinated by Phiroze Vasunia, both of whom were present at several of our meetings. Such initiatives are crucial to reinvigorate and renew fields that are both blessed and burdened with a long tradition of scholarship. Perhaps, the most significant and fruitful experience of the dialogue that emerged within our network was to be confronted with the unfamiliar or little known, but not in the broad anthropological sense of 'meeting the other' in general, important as that may be. Rather, it was the engagement with a number of historical societies specifically selected for the general characteristics they had in common, but not usually treated together, which helped us to broaden our own horizons, inspire new questions and shake our firm beliefs, and tempted us to step out of our accustomed mental and intellectual frameworks to explore other vistas. If this volume offers a modest impression of this experience and the excitement it brought, our efforts will not have been in vain.

Peter Fibiger Bang
Copenhagen

Dariusz Kołodziejczyk
Warsaw

CHAPTER I

'Elephant of India': universal empire through time and across cultures

Peter Fibiger Bang with Dariusz Kołodziejczyk

> The Imperial Assemblage is over, and Her Majesty has been duly proclaimed Empress of India . . . The roads to the plain presented a strange and animated spectacle . . . Gaudily-trapped elephants and camels, the many-coloured dresses of the crowd, quaint vehicles, and dust such as has never been seen in England, formed purely Oriental features . . . Soon after 11 most of the officials and Chiefs had taken their seats . . . each could be identified by the banner presented to him last week . . . These banners were of satin, and were shaped like those in the pictures of Roman triumphs.
>
> *The Times*, 2 January 1877 (p. 5)

On 1 January 1877, it was officially announced in Delhi by Lord Lytton, the British Viceroy, that Queen Victoria had assumed the title of 'Empress of India'. Readers of the *Times of London* would have found this dispatch, telegraphed from Delhi via Teheran, reporting the events in the paper of the following day. The wonder of modern technology brought metropolitan society in close and immediate contact with its imperial possessions, literally thousands of miles away. There was a mastery of distant colonial theatres never achieved before by any legendary conqueror or grand potentate in history. Operating at the level of daily routine, this is an emblematic example of the new-found powers to gather information, systematise knowledge and put in taxonomic order subject societies enjoyed by states and ruling elites during the age of colonialism. Yet this triumph of modern streamlined, even electrified, imperial power cultivated a self-consciously archaic image. The imperial proclamation of Victoria was organised as a grand historicist extravaganza – a timeless medley of Roman, feudal and Indian symbolism.[1] Royal pomp and circumstance were mobilised in a

[1] The fundamental analysis of the assumption of the imperial title by Victoria, the politics involved and the accompanying imperial ceremony, pageantry and symbolism is by Cohn (1983) and further Cannadine (1983 and 2001: 44–57) with a vivid sense of the Victorian era penchant for historicist extravaganza displays. References to ancient Greek and Latin texts below are given by author name, and where necessary by title and the standard conventional book and chapter numbering.

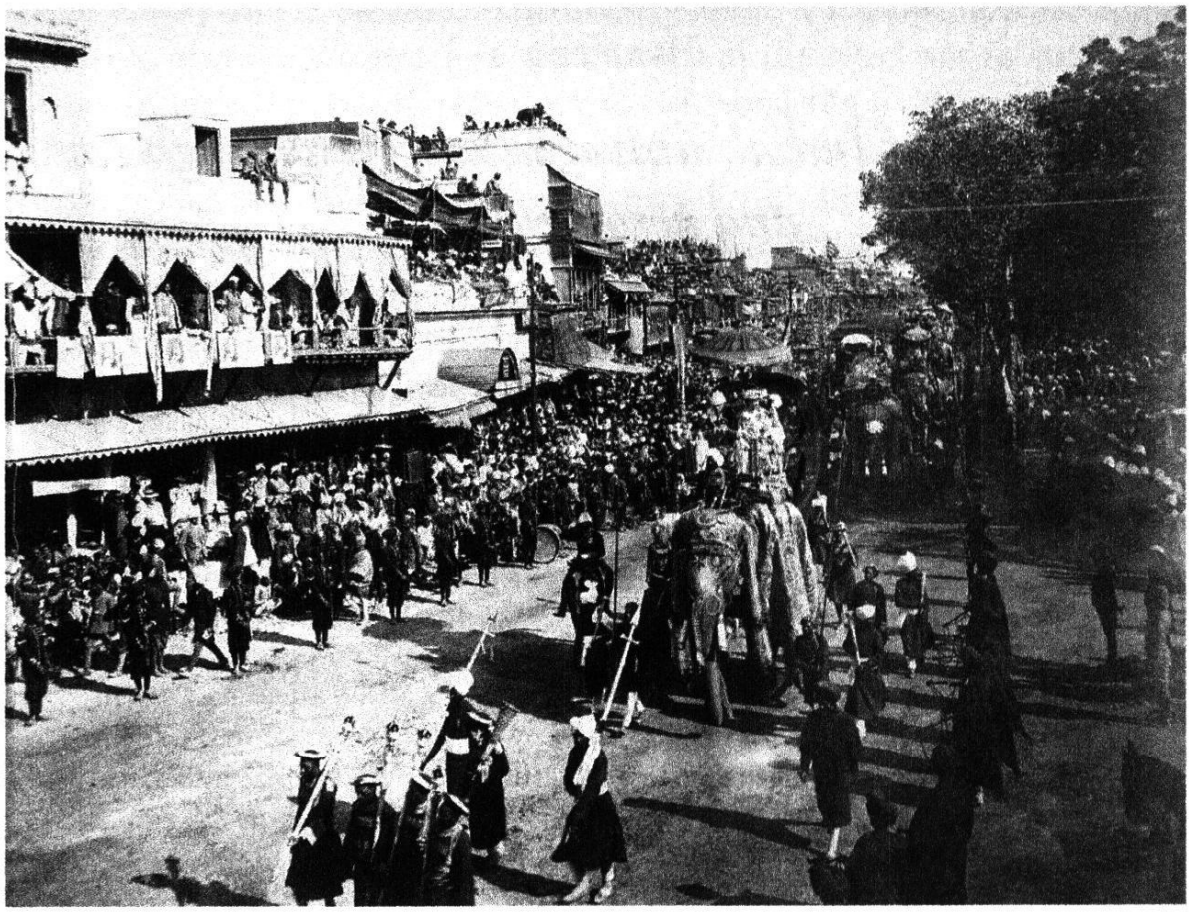

Fig. 1.1 Elephants photographed in procession through the streets of Delhi during the Coronation Durbar in 1903 for which the 1877 celebration of Victoria's imperial title had set the model.

display of might on a scale to match and better any standards set by previous generations. A great throng of Indian chiefs and rulers had been invited to Delhi with their vast retinues to pay homage to their imperial overlord and confirm their commitment to British rule. The staged ritual took great care to muster all the standard metaphors and trappings in the repertoire of universal lordship. Victoria was presented not as a mere monarch, among others, but as a ruler superior to everyone else; she was the supreme lord to whose throne the royalty of India flocked in loyal service. Typical of such occasions, the diversity of subjects put on parade was used to reflect the wide reach and unsurpassed sway of the monarch. Arranged to emphasise variety in dress, colour and equipment, the spectacles showed 'that mixture of splendour and squalor so characteristic of the East', as the correspondent put it.[2]

[2] *The Times*, 1 January, 5. Roberts (1897: 331–5), an eye witness account by one of the central participants in the organisation of the event, gives a good impression of how the British authorities wished the Durbar to appear.

This last observation is significant. In the public *imaginaire* of Britain, the well-established grammar of imperial grandeur was now intimately linked with prevailing notions of the exotic and the strange, exhilarating, but also dangerous (fig. 1.1). The parliamentary debates preceding the decision that Victoria should be invested with an imperial title were not a little acrimonious. Disraeli, the prime minister whose idea this had been, encountered tough opposition in both the Commons and the Lords.[3] This was, he insisted, 'a step which will give great satisfaction not merely to the Princes, but to the nations of India. They look forward to some Act of this kind with intense interest, and by various modes they have conveyed to us their desire that such a policy should be pursued.'[4] Since the deposition of the Great Mughal after the Sepoy mutiny in 1857, a symbolic void had been left in India which it was now time to fill. Moreover, proclaiming Victoria Empress was not only congenial to Indian sentiment, it was also a strong demonstration of the firm commitment of Britain to hold on to her South Asian possession. The imperial title would serve to solidify the foundations of British rule. Neither of these arguments cut much ice with the opposition. To the first, Gladstone and other Liberals objected that they seriously doubted that the Indians liked to have subjection rubbed in their faces. They saw little indication that the government proposal echoed the wishes of the Indian population. British rule ought to be progressive rather than oppressive. Creating a special imperial title for the Queen was likely to breed hostility and resentment in India.[5] If the first part met with serious criticism, the second part of Disraeli's argument earned him little but ridicule. The whole idea of an emperor as a supreme monarch was simply risible. Worse still, to think that an imperial title would help to shore up British rule against competition from other powers, Russia in particular, was a claim 'impossible to treat . . . seriously', the earl of Rosebery scornfully remarked; 'it reminded him of the warlike proceedings of the Chinese [i.e. under the Opium wars] – also, by-the-by, governed by an Emperor – who put their chief trust in wooden swords, and shields painted with ugly faces'.[6]

[3] The Royal Titles bill was presented to the House of Commons on 17 February 1876. Debates in both chambers of the British parliament took place from February till April (the three readings in the Commons: 17 February, 9 March, 23 March 1876).

[4] *Hansard Parliamentary Papers* (House of Commons, 17 February 1876), vol. 227 c. 410.

[5] *Hansard Parliamentary Papers* (House of Commons, 17 February 1876), vol. 227 cc. 410–14; (House of Commons, 9 March 1876), vol. 227 cc. 1735–39; (House of Commons, 23 March 1876), vol. 228 cc. 480–2, 486–92 and 512–13.

[6] *Hansard Parliamentary Papers* (House of Lords, 3 April), vol. 228 c. 1084.