



The Asian Mediterranean: Port Cities and Trading Networks in China, Japan and Southeast Asia, 13th-21st Century

By Francois Gipouloux

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This insightful book draws upon a wide range of disciplines - political economy, geography and international relations - to examine how Asia has returned to its central position in the world economy.

As in the case of the hosting of the Olympic games, it is cities rather than states which compete, whether as financial centers, logistical hubs or platforms for coordinating international subcontracting. Analyzing the historical precedents of the Mediterranean maritime republics, the Baltic Sea Hanseatic League and the South China Sea mercantile kingdoms, the book delineates the way stable economic and legal institutions were developed largely beyond the purview of, and at times in conflict with, the State. Discussing the strong link between history and contemporary economic situation, *The Asian Mediterranean* will appeal to academics, including post-graduates students, of economics, geography, history, regional studies and Asian studies.

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Editorial Review

Review

'This intensive monograph, *The Asian Mediterranean*, is a great synthesis of East-West Maritime worlds under emerging global world. Professor Gipouloux has combined historical studies on global maritime seas with regional economic studies on Asia. He also integrates historical interaction between maritime seas and coastal port cities by creating the imaginative geo-economical concept of the "East Asian economic corridor", running between Vladivostok and Singapore and locating China, Japan and Southeast Asia into this maritime area. To attain this goal, Professor Gipouloux globalises China through north-south, east-west and past-present combinations, using cross disciplinary approaches - political economy, geography and international relations - under wide historical perspectives. *The Asian Mediterranean* opens a new horizon to look into Asia from a global perspective and at the same time, reminds us of the connection beyond contrast between East and West.'

- Takeshi Hamashita, Tokyo University, Japan and Sun Yat-sen University, Guangzhou, China

'A fascinating analysis of the proposition that the start of the 21st century is witnessing the rapid rise in South East Asia of a new and powerful transnational economic zone, the Asian Mediterranean. It uses a wide range of historical and contemporary multidisciplinary sources to systematically explore how, why, and in what ways we can better interpret and understand this contemporary version of economic globalisation by looking back to the equivalent processes centred on the ports around the Mediterranean and the Baltic seas during late 16th century.'

- Peter Daniels, University of Birmingham, UK

'Francois Gipouloux has written a vast and comprehensive history of the Asian economic system. In the tradition of Braudel, he paints a picture that is detailed, full of insight, and essentially very long term. On the basis of an analysis of the old Mediterranean and Hanseatic economic networks, he surveys the pre-modern Asian system, bringing it up to date with studies of Yokohama, Hong Kong, Singapore and other Asian hubs. The culmination of many years work, Gipouloux throws light on a new China - a China no longer land based and inward looking but dependent on, and a power in, a maritime world.'

- Christopher Howe, University of London, UK

'Gipouloux's ground breaking study based on a long career as a scholar of Asia's past is a most original contribution to the study of globalization. Connecting past and present, the author has further developed the somewhat vague metaphor of an Asian Mediterranean into a well defined concept that can also be applied for analyzing contemporary affairs. While in the past the traditional Chinese and Japanese state systems were failing to formulate adequate answers, on a more informal level, the port cities were able to meet with the maritime challenges of the emerging modern world system. The author convincingly shows how also in the age of globalization, a string of coastal metropolises continues to be instrumental in opening up the Far Eastern economy to the global economy.'

--- Leonard Blusse, Leiden University, The Netherlands

About the Author

Francois Gipouloux, Research Director, Center National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), France

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William Martin:

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