different type of pork as well as a different relationship with the pig than those that prevailed after the introduction of international standardization in terms of pig breed and pork production.

As suggested by the above summary of each chapter's contents, one of the collection's greatest strengths is its breadth and diversity. The chapters span an impressive range in terms of time period, source material, and theme, and participate in scholarly dialogues in and across a wide range of disciplines. The chapters deal with fascinating sources that have previously been underexplored in academic discourse (for example, the *nongshu* discussed by Bray, the *pulu* examined by Siebert, and the *shanshu* analyzed by Goossaert). In addition, many chapters include accurate and engaging new translations of materials that have not been translated into English before. *Animals through Chinese History* represents an exciting contribution to the fields of Chinese studies and animal studies. The collection brings together the insights of leading specialists to provide a valuable resource for both scholars and students.

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What India and China Once Were: The Pasts That May Shape the Global Future. Edited by SHELDON I. POLLOCK and BENJAMIN A. ELMAN. New York: COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2018. Pp. xiii + 365. $35.

This is an innovative, informative, and highly accessible comparative study, based on a commendable fresh approach to academic collaboration. It can satisfy different audiences, providing inspiration for professionals and serving as an engaging introductory text for students. The eight chapters that constitute the main body of the book have all been written by duos composed of an Indologist and a Sinologist. They cover a broad range of themes dealing mainly with the early modern period (ca. 1500–1800). Nevertheless, this time range is not treated as a hard constraint, as the contributors discuss the precursors to early modern phenomena and their permutations in contemporary societies.

Chapter 1, "Life and Energy," written by Sumit Guha and Kenneth Pomeranz, deals with environmental history, giving an insightful overview of the responses to environmental challenges adopted by Chinese and Indian governments and societies. Although both China and India are described as "energy-sparing economies," a complex combination of factors such as the differences in climate and geography (favoring less reliance on irrigation in agriculture and a larger animal population in India), structures of government (more centralized in China), and cultural preferences (the more civilianized elites in China had less interest in the closure of hunting grounds and pastures, among other things) defined different strategies of environmental adaptation. Chapter 2, "Conquest, Rulership, and the State," written by Pamela Crossley and Richard M. Eaton, compares how the Mughal (1526–1858) and Qing (1636–1912) "conquest dynasties" developed new strategies to integrate different ethnic and cultural elements in their empires. It also provides the valuable political-historical background, describing in particular the co-existing, mandala-like concentric configuration of political power of the Sanskritic tradition and the more centralized Persianate model that jointly shaped the Mughal empire. In the Qing empire, it was matched by the confluence of the Manchu, Mongolian, and Chinese systems of rule, allowing the emperor to present himself as the highest authority to the subjects belonging to each tradition. Chapter 3, "Gender Systems" by Beverly Bossler and Ruby Lal, offers a sympathetic—if not apologetic—reassessment of the traditional gender structures in India and China, challenging the more conventional views entrenched in the writings of predominantly male authors, Western and non-Western alike. Chapter 4, "Relating the Past" by Cynthia Brokaw and Allison Busch, contains an overview of historiographic developments in the modern period, including the productive encounter of Persianate and Sanskritic traditions in India, and a discussion of historiographic responses to conquest in both regions. Their contrasting depiction of the interconnected and centrally managed historiographic realm of China as opposed to the complex multicultural and multilingual historiographic universe of India is particularly insightful. Chapter 5, "Sorting Out Babel," written by Stephen Owen and Sheldon Pollock, strikes a good balance between general themes—for example, the trend toward vernacularization and the interplay between languages and scripts on regional and local levels—and case studies of specific literary genres, in this case, lyric poetry and the broadly conceived "epic." The chapter shows convincingly that vernacularization, despite outward similarities, cannot be understood as a simple unidirectional process that all cultures have to go through: while in India it was pushed forward by religious groups that wanted to challenge the dominance of Sanskrit, in China the vernacular genres and linguistic registers "crept in around the edges of an already heterogeneous literary language." Chapter 6, "Big Science" by Benjamin Elman and Christopher Minkowski, does a good job of summarizing an impossible amount of information, addressing indigenous structures of knowledge and the ebbs and flows in the exchange of scientific knowledge during the early modern period. They illustrate their points by the particularly well-chosen example of calendrical systems, which had much political significance in both China and India. The central element of their story is the "big science" astronomical enterprise of Hülegü Khān (r. 1256–1265) and the Arab polymath Naṣīr al Dīn al-Ṭūsī (1201–1274), which involved the construction in 1259 of an observatory in Maragha (present-day Iran) and resulted in the composition of the treatise *Zīj-i Īlkhānī* (Astronomical handbook of the subordinate Khan), which had significant impact in both China and India. Chapter 7, "Pilgrims in Search of Religion," written by Zvi Ben-Dor Benite and Richard H. Davis, is somewhat different from what the title suggests, offering a comparative overview of Chinese and Indian complex religious landscapes, with a necessary excursus into earlier medieval interactions. The last chapter, by Molly Aitken and Eugen Wang, compares Chinese and Indian painting through the prism of the interplay between the distinct line and the unclear wash (haze). It supplements the conventional analytical comparison with the unraveling of the history of a futile twentieth-century Japanese attempt to conceive a pan-Asian artistic style, adopting haze as the definitive element.

The eight chapters are complemented by an introduction written by the two editors. It is a substantial contribution in its own right, particularly valuable for its reflections on the nature and methodology of transcultural comparison involving non-European cultures. The scope of this introduction, in a certain sense, is larger than that of the book itself: apart from the mandatory summary of contents, it also contains a "wish list" of the subjects that the editors would have liked to cover had they not faced financial and temporal constraints. The editors are conscious of the complexities of their project: by embarking on a direct comparison between India and China, they stop treating Europe as the universal reference point, the conventional standard for all comparison. While offering a methodologically sound alternative to this eurocentric approach, they do not appear to treat it as the ultimate solution. This wise neutrality is visible from the variety of opinions and perspectives in the individual essays that form part of their project. Indeed, a contemporary academic cannot pretend to have cast off the constraints of his or her own culture and have momentarily reached the state of transcendent objectivity. Therefore, in all the essays, there is always a visible presence of the "third" entity, which can be understood either as Europe or as the contemporary community of global Westernized elites. Those authors that demonstrate conscious awareness of this inevitable presence generally appear more convincing, as they discuss how their own culture mediates and shapes their comparison. I feel obliged to provide a critical example, which should not be understood as an attack on the contributors' commendable work. In their discussion of Indian and Chinese historiography, Brokaw and Busch contrast Indian royal inscriptions to the Chinese state-controlled histories, arguing that the two societies developed distinctively different strategies of history-writing. Surprisingly, they never mention the abundant Chinese inscriptions, which offer a more relevant comparative case. Arguably, this distortion is caused by the Western habit of prioritizing Indian inscriptions as the sources of chronologically precise history, which, in the Chinese case, is readily available in dynastic histories.

Apart from the introduction, the book also contains an afterword, which consists of detailed reviews by Dipesh Chakrabarty and Haun Saussy and a transcript of a conversation between them. This part is, generally, less carefully crafted than the main essays, but is interesting precisely for the sense of an immediate non-concerted reaction that it conveys. This "bonus" element would be useful for those who would like to compare their own impressions of the book against the opinions of widely acclaimed specialists.

The book can be a very useful aid in teaching. Its inventive, bi-authorial comparative approach can complement the more narrowly focused specialized books and articles and help to cultivate a better multicultural awareness among students. Although the essays work better together, they are also standalone pieces, which can be read (and assigned) in classes on early modern Asian history or on more specialized subjects that they relate to.

Nevertheless, this important scholarly contribution is much more than an introductory textbook. It is extremely valuable for the questions that it raises and the example that it sets. Despite the focus on the early modern period, it remains open toward both the past and the future. On the one hand, it explores how the earlier periods of history left their profound imprints on early modern societies, while on the other, it ponders how the early modern experiences will continue to shape the future, which, in an increasingly globalized society, will affect not only India and China, but all of us.

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Time and Its Adversaries in the Seleucid Empire. By Paul J. Kosmin. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018. Pp. x + 379, illus. $55.

Intended as a companion piece to the author's *The Land of the Elephant Kings: Space, Territory, and Ideology in the Seleucid Empire* (2014), this volume concerns the implementation of the Seleucid Era—a consecutively numbered dating system continuing beyond a single generation. The two volumes can easily be read separately, however, and one gets the feeling that a third is in the works. The Seleucid Era, to be sure, presented an innovative method of time-reckoning, though similar to the Olympiad system, and is the immediate precursor of the Common Era (the modernization of the Anno Domini calendar).

Apart from a short preface with acknowledgments, an introduction, and a brief conclusion, the monograph is divided into two parts: the first deals with the implementation of the Seleucid imperial dating system, the second with local responses to and supposed resistance against it; each part is further subdivided into three chapters of unequal length (ca. 15–50 pages). Additionally, the backmatter consists of extensive endnotes (65 pages), lists of abbreviations, maps, illustrations, and tables, as well as a substantial bibliography (60 pages) and a helpful index (11 pages).

The imperial dating system that is the Seleucid Era introduced a standardization of rationalized time administration that remained in use for centuries, rather than starting anew each generation as the common method of counting regnal years. Kosmin, Professor of the Classics at Harvard University, emphasizes that the Seleucid Era was reckoned retroactively from Seleucus's return to Babylon (in 311 BCE), after he had been ousted as provincial governor (*satrap*) by Antigonus, the general (*strategos*) of Western Asia (in 316 BCE), nominally under Macedonian sovereignty. Seleucus had actually assumed kingship only six years later (in 305 BCE), after claiming to rule as general of Asia as successor to Antigonus, as well as *satrap* of Babylonia, positions for which he had to fight (both during the Babylonian War, 311–309/8, and the Fourth War of the Successors, 308–301 BCE). As such, the author contends, the Seleucid Era represents an artificial epoch which he believes constitutes a "technology of historical idealization" (p. 26).

The second chapter traces the bureaucratic implications of the new dating system, particularly the different methods in which the numbering was repeated. Examples include administrative forms of record keeping, such as sealing documents with Seleucid Era dates, public inscriptions such as royal decrees, and a volume-measuring standard. Kosmin makes a point about the fact that in counting the Seleucid Era the numbers were reversed (saying "three and twenty and one hundred," p. 47), but does not consider when this numerical reversal was introduced, or who cared about it in a world where few people could read. The author furthermore addresses the destruction of archival material as deliberate