

ROUTES, ORDERS, GLOBALIZATIONS — NEW AND OLD

GLOBALIZATIONS?

Peter Kien-hong Yu remarks: “An academic coined a new term, Chiglobalization, which fuses the strengths of all other globalizations, such as Ameriglobalization, Anglobalization, and the Silk Road, which was the first wave of globalization” (2012, 157). The term “Chiglobalization” was introduced by Wenshan Jia (Jia, 2010) who has commented on China’s growing global role, while authors Sujian and Baogang Guo have written on “globalization with Chinese characteristics” (2010, 6). Polish scholars Radosław Pyffel and Adrian Zwoliński identify this new globalization with the emergence of the second formation of the Silk Road and they state that: “globalization is the Silk Road 2.0” (2016). According to these propositions contemporary globalization, with the crucial role of the US, would neither be the first, nor the last one. Meanwhile, Niall Fergusson has come up with “Anglobalization” to account for the globalizing tendency initiated by Great Britain and its colonies (2007, 19; see also O’Rourke, Williamson, 1999). The idea of the Silk Road being the first globalization is quite inspiring and many scholars seem to be taking it up. Alexander Archer writes of its influence on globalization (2016), Mousumi Ghosh finds it to have been its early, archaic form (2016), and Keyvan Tabari speaks of *“The Ancient Highway for Globalization”* (2016).

When in 1876 Ferdinand von Richthofen wrote down “Seidenstrasse” (Waught, 2007, 4) in the description of the map of Central Asia he himself had crafted, he invented a new term and a new notion. The German word was translated to many languages, including Chinese, and made a world career, just like the notion created by the German geographer... One of Chinese dictionaries, while explaining the etymology of the Chinese equivalent of the German term, refers to Richthofen and says that he “first introduced the term Silk Road 絲綢之路 Sīchóuzhī Lù” (MDBG). In this way, we get to know that the “Seidenstrasse — Silk Road” term reached China through English. In numerous places one can find corrections which state that the Silk Road was not a route but rather a net or even a space of interactions, yet still we consider the word to designate an entity in accordance with the formula: one word — one notion — one signified. It is as if we all believed, together with Richthofen, that we are dealing with a whole and not for example with a multitude of different, albeit conjoined, phenomena. Thinking of the Silk Road in terms of an archaic or primary globalization, do we not still remain Richthofen’s debtors? Or perhaps

prisoners of his imagination? What about our thinking of the New Silk Road? If it is bound to signify a whole, then is it not also the legacy the German geographer had bequeathed us? Some speak of Silk Roads, plural. But then, at issue is the whole of the net of relations they constitute, or is it the plurality of relations? Let us stop to consider this plurality and diversity of routes in time and space that the term Silk Road encompasses.

ROUTES

From Frances Wood's work we know that seven thousand years before the Silk Road was given its name, between neolithic Chinese settlements and Central Asia's oases there had been moving different goods, and one of the first ones had been jadeite which reached settlements in the east and the south of the country from Hoten region located in the west of today's China. Therefore, instead of the term "Silk Roads" it might be more proper to speak of "Jade Roads" (2002, 26). Elena Kuzmina writes in turn of existing in the third millenium B.C. "Nephrite Road" wherein from Hoten and Yarkant precious stones were transported into settlements of the Longshan culture at the Yellow River and to Chinese settlements at the time of the Shang and Chu dynasty (2008, 4). E. Eduljee accounts for the beginnings of the Silk Roads and points out at another stone and different regions of Asia. He writes of lazurite (*lapis lazuli*) which was mined in Sar-e-Sang in Badaghshan province in the east of Afghanistan and transported to cities in the Indus Valley, Mesopotamia, and Egypt (2016). Y. Majidzadeh points out at the Great Khorasan Road which connected Badakshan with Central Asia, the Iranian Plateau, Mesopotamia and the Middle East and via which in 4000 and 3000 B.C. lazurite reached the Mediterranean (1982). Philip Kohl discusses the similarity in style of the sculptures made of soapstone, dated back to that period and found in Mesopotamia, Indus Valley and Fergana Valley in Central Asia. He deems them to represent an "intercultural style" and concludes that the products "imply some form of contact" and that "this contact took the form of long-distance organized trade" (1976, 74). The stones mined and shape-processed by mountain communities of the Iranian Plateau were carried to the cities of Elam and Sumer and to Inus and Fergana. We can therefore speak of Stone Roads existing in the neolith and used for transporting different stones, such as jadeite, nephrite, lazurite, obsidian, flint, carnelian, and quartz, from a few mining sites to numerous settlements. The names of places attest to this fact, examples being The Yumen Pass to the north-east of Dunhuang in China and the Lazurite Pass in Mountain Badakshan province in Tajikistan.

In the Bronze Age these new and old routes served not only to transport stones but also metals. Mesopotamian texts from the third millenium B.C. speak of copper imported by ships

from Melukha which some associate with the Indus Valley (Dani, Thapar, 1999, 285). Bridget and Raymond Allchin claim that since the beginnings of the cities of the Indus Valley there had been an abundance of copper there and the most probable ore site were the terrains of today's Rajasthan in India (1968). Copper ores were also mined and processed in places such as Anatolia, Cyprus, Caucasus, Ural, and Altai whereof copper in shapes of bars and other products were transported to many other, sometimes quite distant places (see Nobis, 2014, 471-482). In order to produce real bronze materials one needs tin which is then added to copper. James Muhly writes thus that "for Western Asia Afghanistan has emerged as the most promising source for much of the tin in use during bronze Age times. Its deposits of gold and lapis lazuli, both materials highly prized by Sumerians during the third millennium B.C., may have led ancient prospectors to tin, which was also then exported to Sumer. It is even possible that, via Mari and Ugarit, Afghan tin was carried to Middle Minoan Crete" (Muhly, 1985, 290). And so Afghan tin and gold were reaching the West by routes via which lazurite had been carried, while articles of Anatolian copper had spread through routes used earlier for delivering obsidian products. Silver mined in the second millennium B.C. in Anatolia was transported by merchants from Assur to Mesopotamia. In exchange, the merchants delivered to Anatolia woolen textiles from Babylonia and tin probably from Afghanistan (Veenhof, 1997).

We know Ptolemy's *Geography* from its later copies according to which the author placed on the map of the world, in the far east over the Imaus mountains, a country called Serica (Ptolemy, 2016) which means the country of silk (latin *sericā*) (Kumaniecki, 1976). Silk is mentioned by Roman authors and the Romans themselves are sometimes depicted as dressed in silk on wall paintings like the one from Pompei (Knox, Mckeown, 2013, 256, Fig. 14). Suetonius, who lived at the turn of the first and second millennium B.C. writes: "Libra enim auri tunc libra serici fuit." (Suetonius, 2013, XLV1). The other problem is whether the textiles and raw material originated in China or Central or West Asia. Nonetheless, they came to Rome, along with the information concerning them, via routes which were earlier used to carry stones and metals, including gold.

Writing of China's contacts with the rest of the world in the Middle Ages, Su Il Jeong points out at mass export of ceramics distinctly visible since the half of the eighth century and at the development of sea routes brought about by political instability of Central Asia oases. He calls the marine and land roads via which ceramics at the times of the Tang dynasty was sent to the world "The Ceramic Road". The evidence left after the Road is the shipwreck dating back to the Tang dynasty discovered in 1998 at the shores of Belitung Island in the Java Sea and currently exhibited in Singapore (Asian Civilisations Museum, 2016). It contained more than sixty thousand products of ceramics, gold, and silver destined for the Persian Gulf region. Arabian litera-

ture can also attest to the existence of these contacts. A text dated for the half of the ninth millenium reads: “In regard to the ports which so-called ‘Chinese’ ships call at, it is believed that a good many of them embark in Sarafa” (Sulejmān, 1998, 41). This indicates the port at the northern coast of the Persian Gulf. Buzurg Ibn Šahrijār, most likely a Persian merchant, mentions China several times in a text dated for the second half of the tenth century. He writes of “a captain by the name of Abhara who came from Kerman” and who “seven times embarked on voyages to China” (Buzurg, 1998, 130). The evidence for the existence of the Ceramic Road would also be ceramics from Chinese province Guangdong discovered in East Africa and dated for 800-950/80 (Zhao, 2015). When it comes to Europe, David Whitehouse writes of Chinese porcelain only since the thirteenth century (Whitehouse, 1972). In his *Description of the World* Marco Polo mentions a Chinese town, “where they produce plates of porcelain [...] the most beautiful one can ever see [...] and from where they are distributed all over the world” (Polo, 1954, 388). The appearance of Chinese porcelain in western peripheries of Eurasia was possible thanks to the existing net of older land and sea roads for transportation of textiles, metals and Stones which together with porcelain were reaching Europe.

Andre Gunder Frank(1998, 65, Map 2.1) presents a global net of routes that emerged between the fifteenth and seventeenth century under the influence of all colonial superpowers. It consists of all the older stone, metal, and silk routes connecting Asia, Africa and Europe but it also contains sea routes. Some of them integrate Europe with the Indian Ocean, others connect through the Atlantic Europe and Africa with America — the Portuguese, Spanish, French, Dutch, and English one. The third set of routes connects through the Pacific Ocean Mexico and Peru with the Spanish Manila in the Philippines and the rest of the Far East of Asia. The central element of this global net were “triangular” Atlantic routes allowing for the navigation between Europe, Africa, and America. They connected ports of Western Europe, West Africa, Brazil, Mexico, and the Caribbean and New England and enabled the purchase of African slaves, the supply of the colonies and the sale of the products coming therefrom (Braudel, 1979, Wolf, 1982). Frank goes on to explain that the main element within the global net was silver from the Spanish mines located in vicekingdoms of Mexico and Peru, leaving in huge amounts America for the east through Atlantic to Europe, Africa, and Asia and also for the west through the Pacific to Asia where both streams met each other in China. In the sixteenth century seventeen thousand tons of silver left America, in the seventeenth it was thirty-seven thousand tons, and in the eighteenth seventy-five thousand out of which the west provided China with thirty-nine thousand and the east with twenty-five thousand tons (Frank, 1998, 148, Map. 3.1). Dennis Flynn and Arturo Giráldez underscore that it was in China that the two streams of American

silver met after leaving the continent in two opposite directions and this leads them to argue for the existence of the first genuinely global market which had contributed to the emergence of subsequent markets for other goods. Their paper has a title “Globalization began in 1571” and brings attention to the launching by Spaniards of a regular connection between America and Manila. The authors not only indicate a precise date of globalization’s beginning, but they also account for its reason which they see in the activity of China. They write: “The singular market most responsible for the birth of globalization was the silver trade. The most dynamic end-markets for silver in the world resided in China. European were important middlemen (...) China is the prime candidate for centrality at the time globalization was born. (...) The reason is simply that the price of silver in China was double its price in the rest of the world.” (Flynn, Giráldez, 2006, 239-40).

Along with the development of other global markets and the global net of exchange they had created (in the nineteenth century it embraced the interior of Africa, vast terrains of the Americas, Asia, Australia, and Oceania), the net changed itself. Kevin O’Rourke and Jeffrey Williamson (1999) outline the development of the nineteenth century Atlantic economy which linked Great Britain with the US making them the new centers of world economy. Other scholars notice and analyze the decreasing significance and peripheralization of the older routes and commercial centers of the Old World. Nicholas Rerich was visiting Hotan in 1925. It was a city and oasis in the west of China, located on the route that linked Central Asia with Chinese cities. He noted: It is hard to speak of real commerce here. The weaving of carpets has totally declined. [...] The selling of nephrite has ceased. (...) It is strange to think it is the same Hotan, the one of which Fa Sien wrote emphatically in the fourth century that “the country lives in prosperity. The nation is rich” (Rerich, 1980, 125). He then added: “It goes without saying that places such as Hotan have left behind the times of their greatness” (143).

GLOBAL ORDERS AND OTHERS

Nake Kamrany states that along with the New Road “a new international economic and political order is being born” (2016). Sebastien Peyrouse writes of “the New World Order” (2016), Pepe Escobar (2016) and Peimin Ni (2016) announce “the New (Silk) World Order” and “the New Silk Road World Order”, and Afshin Molavi maintains that “The ‘New Silk Road’ is fundamentally transforming our world” (2016). Numerous conferences are taking place such as the one held in Brussels on October 6, 2015 under the title “The Silk Road, the New World Order”. Let us consider now the question what links the New Silk Road with global order.

We can begin by saying that with the routes and the world the global order was also changing, although not all the changes are now visible and understandable for us. First of all, we are speaking of the Old World of Afro-Euro-Asia and of other equally old worlds which today some refer to as the New Worlds of both Americas, Australia, and Oceania. The division itself into the Old World and Others, although it did not mean their respective isolation, bore the mark of a global order. The Stone Roads in neolith were used to transport the necessary material and stone products from distant sites of mining and processing. At the same time they enabled intercultural contacts. To a given place there were brought different Stones, by different routes and from different directions. The nets of the distribution of the stones overlapped, creating a whole web of stone roads: obsidian, flint, jadeite, nephrite, carneol, lazurite, turquoise...

The Bronze Age witnessed the emergence of interconnected phenomena: cities, metallurgy, metrology, social hierarchy, the elites and intense though distant contacts. This inspires some scholars to speak of the globalization of the Bronze Age (Vandkilde, 2016). Lorenz Rahmstorf points out at the “contemporaneous appearance of balance weights from ca. 2600 BC in the vast region between Aegean and western India” (2010, 100). With the appearance of the weight there appear weight measures and weighing itself plays an increasingly important role along with the development of metallurgy and the religious and political practices of temples and palaces. To meet the demand of temple and palace elites, metals are mined for and delivered from afar in order to manufacture symbolic and prestigious objects. The globalization of the Bronze Age means above all contacts between temples and palaces. By the end of the second millennium B.C., the net of far-reaching contacts deteriorates, cities depopulate just like temples and palaces. Researchers are still trying to explain these changes. The Bronze Age comes to an end and so does the globalization accompanying it. From then on we tend to speak of the coming of the Dark Ages.

The Silk Road to which Ferdinand von Richthofen referred when coining the term, connected two enormous countries existing at the opposite edges of the Eurasian continent: Mediterranean Rome and China during the rule of the Han dynasty (206 BC — 220 AD). The latter entity united a good part of today’s Republic and its borders reached Central Asia. Their relations were immediate, however. The Road enabled delivering silk and other prestigious goods to Rome thanks to the merchants and rulers of the Parthian and Kushan Empires and of Central Asia oases. The end of the Han dynasty and the division of China into three warring kingdoms, with the subsequent division of the Roman State into two Empires and the decline of its western part marks the time of marginalization of the Silk Road.

Janet Abu-Lughod discusses the world order accompanying the Ceramic Road. Her analyses focus mainly on the twelfth and thirteenth century and she calls this order the thirteenth century world system (1991). It connected through a net of land and sea routes remote regions of three continents of the Old World with the key role of the Indian Ocean. The author distinguishes eight circles in it: Western Europe, Eastern Mediterranean, Central Asia, Persian Gulf, Red Sea, Arab Sea, and South China Sea regions (1991, 34, Figure 1). She lists also three interconnected circles having a central role within the system: The Arab Sea, the Bay of Bengal, and the South China Sea (1991, 252, Figure 10). According to Abu-Lughod, it was again the Arabian, Hindu and Chinese rulers and merchants that represented the dominant powers. She goes on to underscore that the world order was possible thanks to the cooperation of the three regions of power, although none of the centers had ever gained control over the whole system. It had always remained essentially pluralistic.

The world system built by European colonial superpowers did not divide the globe into different universes like the former orders did, but it integrated with the Old World the remaining continents. The key role was assigned to the Atlantic Ocean. It also altered the polycentric character of the old system by replacing it with a monocentric order wherein there can only be one hegemony and the history of this genuinely global system is a history of constant struggle for supremacy and a kaleidoscope of consequent changes of dominating world powers: Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, Great Britain, and The United States (Arrighi, 2002). Within this order, of increasing importance were the contacts between Europe and Americas and then on between Great Britain and the United States in the nineteenth century. The complexity of connections culminated in the second half of the twentieth century in the emergence of Euro-Atlantic relations between the US and its European allies. Accompanying it was a progressive peripheralization of the other parts of the world: Africa and Asia (Central, South and East). And China.

The question of the future of the New Silk Road and the new global order is intriguing. I have to admit, though, that Ilya Prigogine has convinced me that the future is unpredictable (Prigogine, Stengers, 1984). Still, it is repeatedly said that the global order built and controlled by the West has already undergone fundamental changes. Instead of thinking about the future, then, let us try to comprehend the present. What global order is currently associated with the emerging New Silk Road? Giovanni Arrighi wrote fifteen years ago: “the displacement of an ‘old’ region (North America) by a ‘new’ region (East Asia) as the most dynamic center of processes of capital accumulation on a world scale is already a reality” (2002, 332). He also indicated another change. In 1980 the value of trans-pacific trade exchange outgrew the value of trans-atlantic exchange

and by the end of decade Pacific trade was well one and a half time bigger than that of the Atlantic one (2002, 337). The publications on the growing global role of China are too many to account for in a scholarly paper. We can thus say that China has returned as a significant component of global order and is now playing the role similar to the one it had in the thirteenth century world system. But the present global system differs from the former. At that time China was the center of the Old World along with India and the Islamic states. Today, China's influence spreads all over the planet, including the US. China is a regular buyer of American debt securities which allows it to keep low American and other countries' interest rates (Nobis, 2014, 227-237). While in the world system of the thirteenth century there were three superpowers of key importance, today it is believed that to resolve the pressing problems of the world it takes only two players: the US and the People's Republic of China — the biggest capitalist state and the biggest communist state (Ferguson, 2008). And what about the oceans? Which one plays a leading role in current global exchange? Among fifty biggest in terms of cargo tonnage world ports (AAPA, 2012) there are thirty Pacific, seventeen Atlantic and four Indian ones out of which the Pacific ones cover 68% of cargo tonnage of the whole fifty, Atlantic ports accounting for 25% and Indian only for 7%. It is the Pacific Ocean that has a key role in current global order enabling the exchange between the US and China and between China and other countries of East Asia, ultimately between the ports of China itself.

The New Silk Road and the present world order — what is the relation here? We should make three remarks. The first one: the New Silk Road supplements China's overseas contacts with the world with overland relations with Eurasia. The second one is that it increases the significance of Central Asia countries within the global net. It mediates China's contacts with Europe and Asia, enhances immediate trade exchange, tourism, and develops political relations between China and countries such as Russia, the Turkey, Caucasus, and European Union. The third one: China's initiative instigates other countries to effectuate their projects of participation in the New Silk Road. The Turkey, India, UE, Caucasus states, and the US definitely want in. *Yuri Kulintsev* (Кулинцев, 2015) argues astutely that the New Silk Road is not China's solo performance, but a symphony orchestrated by many different countries. Thus he points out at the pluralistic character of the New Road and the new world order that emerges with it. Andre Gunder Frank looks at the present advancement of China's global significance historically. When he discusses the times predating the global system built by Europeans he says that: “for the globe-encompassing world economy/system did not have a single center but at most a hierarchy of centers, probably with China at the top” (1998, 328). He emphasizes the role of China in the formation of this seemingly “European” order: “The global Sinocentric multilateral trade

expanded through the infusion of American money by the Europeans.” (1998, 126) and he means the money coming from American ores. Janet Abu-Lughod, when writing of contemporary changes, points out at “a displacement of the center of a global system from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean” and she likens it to “the return to the world system of China” (1991, 370). Hongbing Song¹ argues for another return. In the global system that Europe had created the key role was from the outset played by sea connections which makes the building of rail ways, roads, bridges and tunnels a return to overland routes used for communication between distant regions in the way they were used in global orders before European hegemony. When Sebastien Peyrouse remarks that thanks to the New Silk Road “Central Asia may be the most important part of the world” (2016), he has in mind yet another different return. It is a return to the times when this region was important for the Old World, and Samarkand was the capital of the then powerful Timurid Empire which stretched from the Turkey to India.

But what return is actually meant here? Is it a return to the Sinocentric system of the Old World which Europeans had consequently extended all over the globe by incorporating within it the remaining continents? Does the emergence of the New Silk Road — along with its new ports and rail ways built in Asia, Europe, Africa, and South America, with the planned construction of the new Nicaragua Canal and with trans-American railway in South America — mean the integration of the world with its new center which turns out to be quite old? Or perhaps the New Silk Road means the construction of a pluralistic, multipolar, and multilateral world? The future, or predicting the future, was not supposed to be discussed but these are questions concerning our present which we do not understand.

One can see in the emerging New Silk Road and in the shaping of the new global order anyone can witness some elements well known from the past such as the essential role of China, the intensification of contacts between distant regions, and the development of Central Asia cities. Hotan, which in 1925 r. Nicholas Rerich was visiting, has today the population of 320 thousand and is a dynamically developing city with an airport, manufacture facilities that produce highly valued carpets and nephrite products, and a big bazaar where one can buy them along with silk and other merchandise and all this is a tourist attraction recommended by guidebooks just like the whole city (Lonely Planet, 2016). The new components of the new global order are also visible such as the importance of the Pacific Ocean as a key area of production, wealth, power, and communication, especially between China and the US. It is because of these new elements of the global order that its historically known components change meaning. Yet to understand

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the present role and the meaning of the observed “historical” phenomena is not easy and confusions may as well regard the very character of the new global order. Much debated for example is the question how many and which exactly countries are the key leaders to resolve the problems of the world (Garrett, 2010)? For me, of even greater importance is whether the newly shaped global order has a pluralistic, multipolar, and multilateral character, or maybe we are dealing with a hierarchy of different centers with China at the very top, like it had been in the past as described by Andre Gunder Frank?

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