

eighteenth century. This is a pity, but it may reveal a gap in recent quantitative research on the earlier period, and therefore serve as an encouragement for researchers to fill that gap.

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Die Spur der Juwelen: Materielle Kultur und transkontinentale Verbindungen zwischen Indien und Europa in der Frühen Neuzeit. Kim Siebenhüner.
Ding, Materialität, Geschichte 3. Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2018. 426 pp. €62.

Die Spur der Juwelen offers a multifaceted reconstruction of a global early modernity by investigating the circulation of precious stones, disclosing their function as nodal access points to the intersection of economic, social, and cultural histories. The brief opening account of the wanderings of the Koh-i-noor diamond, before it came to rest as the centerpiece of the crown jewels, is perhaps emblematic of the book as a whole: that journey through time and space traces simultaneously complex, variable processes of appropriation and reinterpretation that inscribe themselves on the body of the stone, most literally when this Asian diamond was recut to fit English tastes and needs, losing 40 percent of its original material in the process.

“The itinerary of precious stones provides this study with its architectural foundations,” Siebenhüner writes (25). Retracing the paths that brought gemstones to Europe, the book’s four central chapters—following a discussion in chapter 2 (see below) of how knowledge about gemstones changed in early modern Europe—divide themselves between East and West. Chapter 3 focuses on the circulation of precious stones within the Indian subcontinent by studying their presence in the Moghul court; chapter 4 traces their passage to Europe, introducing us to key European figures in India who enabled the growing intercontinental trade in jewels. Complementing the attention to Indian markets, chapter 5 turns to the numerous, relatively autonomous jewel exchanges in Europe to which the treasures of the East ultimately flowed. The concluding case study in chapter 6 is in some measure a pendant to chapter 3 in that it examines the intra-European circulation of precious stones to reveal the multiple symbolic and material functions they continued to serve.

Overall, this is a rich and informative book, offering a fascinating glimpse into Euro-Asian proto-colonial interactions through an unusual window. Given Siebenhüner’s larger concerns—to reconstruct the cultural and social histories through which early modern jewels acquired value and meaning—the book’s perspective does occasionally seem a little gimmicky or forced, for it is not always evident what the particular focus on precious stones yields that we have not already learnt from other histories of early modern travel and colonialism. Chapter 2 is a case in point. Beginning with John Mandeville’s hugely

influential *Travels*, it sketches the emergence of an empirical knowledge of the East through the travel narratives of Varthema, Barbosa, Pires, Linschoten, and Tavernier. It argues that while these writers set European knowledge of the East on a new empirical basis, the earlier apocryphal accounts such as Mandeville's continue to lend this empiricism its distinctive contours. Much of the material here, as well as its central claim, would be familiar to anyone who has worked on relations between Europe and the East in early modernity, and the occasional citation of what these writers have to say about gemstones or the gem trade does not offer very much additional illumination.

However, the chapter's conclusion breaks from the familiar with a fascinating discussion of a singular artifact: an enormous, cabinet piece studded with precious stones and purportedly depicting the celebration of the Emperor Aurangzeb's birthday (in particular the ritual of weighing the emperor against a collection of costly objects). The scene was created by Melchior Dinglinger at the behest of August the Strong, Elector of Saxony, who used this phantasmatic image of an Indian court, Siebenhühner argues, as a surface on which to project his own ambitions and his understanding of himself as absolute monarch. In such moments, when the book goes beyond much-discussed texts, it comes into its own. Thus, chapter 3's reconstruction of the systematic logic of Moghul courtly culture through its material practices is at its most illuminating when it moves away from, say, Thomas Roe's embassy to discuss instead far less-studied evidence from non-European sources, ranging from Persian texts and the autobiographical chronicles of the Moghul emperors to miniature paintings and costly artifacts of everyday use, such as jeweled boxes or daggers. Through these, the chapter successfully reconstructs a complex gift economy, in which jewels were used not only to mark differences in the social, political, ethnic, and gendered hierarchies of the Moghul empire, but also in dynamic functions, changing rapidly from gift to tribute to booty to inheritance, their significations transforming to match such shifts in status.

The book's final case study, of the material cultural practices involving jewels in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Nuremberg offers an interesting European contrast to this Moghul investment in gemstones. In the new context their circulation opens up the different and less tangible questions of what jewels meant to the individuals who possessed them, and in particular of how they expressed the social identities of their owners, their communal belonging. Siebenhühner skillfully correlates a rich variety of primary sources—including testaments and inventories, bejeweled artifacts, cabinets, and paintings—to disclose the variety of forms of self-construction and self-representation that jewels afforded the middle and upper classes in early modern Europe. Jewels were, as she writes, "preserved, accumulated, bequeathed, gifted, pawned, worn down, remodeled, museumized, acquired, and lost" (358), and each of these actions opens onto enveloping social practices that shed light upon the individuals carrying them out.

Even if some of the European and Indian contexts explored in this book seemed familiar from my own work, *Die Spur der Juwelen* as often made me reconsider what I thought I knew—opening a new perspective, for example, on Shylock's pained

protestation that he would not have given away the turquoise ring he had received from his wife Leah for “a wilderness of monkeys.”

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Exterranean: Extraction in the Humanist Anthropocene. Phillip John Usher. Meaning Systems. New York: Fordham University Press, 2019. xii + 208 pp. \$32.

The point of departure for this stimulating and rigorous study is a critique of the tendency in ecological thinking to focus on emissions. As Phillip John Usher points out, before emissions can occur, extraction takes place. Extraction brings from the earth the substances (coal, oil, cobalt, and so on) that are subsequently released into the atmosphere. And yet extraction as a general principle has not been subject to the same critical gaze as have emissions. The second broader point made by Usher is to challenge the way historical humanism is understood by scholars of ecocriticism. As Usher points out, humanism is used as a foil against which posthumanism may be conveniently opposed. Indeed, ecocriticism often casts the latter in a heroic role while humanism takes the fall for the plight of the Anthropocene. *Exterranean: Extraction in the Humanist Anthropocene* is in this respect a welcome corrective: a way of thinking the urgency of our present situation with a deep understanding of humanism.

The term *exterranean* figuring in the title is a neologism coined by Usher to refer to an “ecology of extraction” (16) and much of Usher’s primary corpus is composed of works on mining (poetry, dialogues, and treatises)—works devoted to the processes of extracting from the earth’s “entrails” key substances (gold, limestone, and salt, in particular). His corpus also includes works that engage more obliquely with the notion of extraction such as Rabelais’s *Pantagruel* (the hero being known for his epic “weaponization” of salt) and Montaigne’s “Des Coches” (which denounces European fantasies of extracting gold and silver from the New World). However, even when examining those treatises generally held to be unproblematic endorsements of mining, such as Georgius Agricola’s *De Re Metallica*, *De Animantibus Subterraneis*, *De Natura Fossilium*, and François Garrault’s *Des mines d’argent trouvées en France*, Usher uncovers considerable ambivalence despite their espoused extractivist agenda. He thereby excavates “a sense of the exterranean *not* as one in which humans fully master an inert Earth but as one in which taking matter *ex terra* involves, at the site of extraction, an Earth that is vital, vibrant, and ready to enter the miner as much as the miner enters it” (112).

Even in the highly practical treatises of the time, ostensibly dedicated to furthering the efforts of *homo faber* to exert mastery over nature, instrumentalization of nature is questioned through representations of forlorn landscapes (sickly trees and