

Library—find Pettegree and der Weduwen admirably managing the difficult balancing act of nonspecialist accessibility and specialist detail. In doing so, they have created a volume considerably useful for extending the study of reading, book collecting, and library building to new and wider audiences.

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The Power of the Dispersed: Early Modern Global Travelers beyond Integration.
Cornel Zwierlein, ed.
Intersections 77. Leiden: Brill, 2022. xviii + 514 pp. \$189.

For decades, a huge historiography has introduced and explained to us the relationship between marginal people and the communities where they lived: people that, because of their behaviors or activities, were put on the margin of the society, where they then spent their entire life. At first sight, one might imagine this is the topic of *The Power of the Dispersed*, but it is not.

This book tells us stories about people that stayed outside society, or out of their social role, for just a little time, never losing their societal status. They could interpret law or literature in a different way than usual; they could be strangers outside their nations; but contrary to people on the margins, the dispersed continued to be part of the community in which they were born or where they usually had lived.

The Power of the Dispersed is divided into four main chapters, each one dedicated to an area where we can meet the dispersed: “Dispersed in Ecclesiastical and Diplomatic Network”; “Dispersed in the Republic of Letters”; “Dispersed by War”; “Dispersed in the Commercial and Political Network.” Every main area of Renaissance society could produce dispersed people. According to the book, we can meet the story of people who, because of what they were, the society in which they (temporarily) lived, or the interpretation of their present role, became a sort of foreign people in the land or environment where they belonged. This is the case, for example, of the Greek monks not particularly welcomed in the Reformed Germany (as described in the *Album Amicorum* by Stefano Saracino—or of a man of letters in the Royal Society of London (“Nomads in the Early Modern Republic of Letters,” by Iordan Avramav), of soldiers victim to the politics of war (“Stories of Spanish Captivity,” by Ana M. Rodriguez-Rodrigues), or of merchants that had to stay abroad for a long time due to their economic affairs (“Dispersed Things,” by Cornel Zwierlein). The characteristic of all these people (as well as everyone else we meet in the book) is that, despite their situation of dispersal, they maintained their status of famous and well-respected people in their societies, or in the group to which they belonged.

However, this is not only a book of captivating stories. Through the life of people that were dispersed, this book provokes a strong reflection on the work of historians. It reminds us that we tend to see stories from one point of view, and that we choose some kind of sources and not others. In this way *The Power* opens, or reopens, a line of investigation where the topic is not only the people of the past but also the work of historians and their way of looking at the past. However, this does not mean that this book contains actual criticism of historiography: it just suggests different ways of working on history, and alerts us of the dispersal of sources, which is something different than to lose or fail to find them. It suggests that we all are part of history, and as such we can disperse ourselves in our habits, or from looking at the past in only one way—much like the crowd of Spain looking at the population of the modern Spanish America before the works and travels of Mercado and Solórzano, as narrated by José Luis Egío in “Travelling Scholastics: The Emergence of an Empirical Normative Authority in Early Modern Spanish America.”

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The World the Plague Made: The Black Death and the Rise of Europe.

James Belich.

Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2022. ix + 622 pp. \$39.95.

To explain the formation of a global modern world has been intriguing. While Marxist historians such as Immanuel Wallerstein and Sven Beckert describe the history of globalization as a process in which peripheries were hauled into a world system by Western European countries, the Californian School argues that the world system was not dominated by the West until the early nineteenth century. Belich refrains himself from answering the question directly; instead, he focuses on subglobalization and cross-regionalization, or, in his own term, transformative connectivity (8). Taking the Black Death as a starting point, the book explores how plague-incubated changes facilitated the expansion of regional systems before 1800.

In part 1, the author traces the plague's origin, transmission mechanism, and effects. The Black Death originated in areas near Central Asia (chapter 2) and caused extremely destructive effects in a few centuries. The relationship between humans and economies experienced a sea change due to profound demographic decline (part 2). Resources per capita increased in the early plague period. For example, real wages rose and non-manpower became more available, thus contributing to higher consumption and mechanization. Investment in education increased as birthrates declined and nuclear families became popular (50). Other revolutions, such as a print revolution and a military revolution, which the plague potentially triggered, laid a foundation for following economic expansions.