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Introduction: Spatial Histories of Foreign Occupation and Colonialism

David Baillargeon and Jeremy E. Taylor

Introduction

As on-going conflicts in the Middle East, South Asia, the Caucasus and elsewhere demonstrate, foreign occupation shapes today's world in innumerable ways. At the same time, and as we are reminded by a vast literature in postcolonial studies – as well as public debates about the physical and institutional residua of imperialism – the legal, political and cultural legacies of colonial rule can still be found in everything from national borders to structural inequalities between the global North and global South. As debates over contested sovereignty in locations as diverse as the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), Kashmir and Western Sahara continue to rage alongside renewed arguments about the after-effects of colonialism more broadly, scholars are now exploring the similarities and continuities between what were long held to be two quite different modes of 'alien rule' (Hechter 2013).

Only a handful of scholarly volumes or monographs have previously brought together studies of foreign occupation, colonialism and related forms of 'foreign control' under a comparative lens (e.g. Moses 2008; Hechter 2013; Dubnov and Robson 2019). There are, of course, a profusion of excellent histories written about specific case studies of 'occupied territories' around the globe – particularly focused on Israel-Palestine (e.g. Weizman 2007), US-occupied Japan and Okinawa (e.g. Koikari 2008) and the Nazi occupation of parts of Europe during the Second World War (e.g. Erlichman and Knowles 2018). However, there is relatively little work on how occupation frameworks and typologies travelled across space and time in the modern period, including within and beyond the construction of the modern nation-state. Similarly, while sociologists such as Cornelius Lammers (2003; 2014) have openly called for 'occupation regimes' and

‘colonial regimes’ to be compared, few historians have been willing to step outside the disciplinary (or nation-state-defined) boundaries provided by subfields such as ‘colonial history’.¹

This is particularly the case with relation to Asia, where the historiography rarely addresses the continuities and ruptures that have existed across the recently constructed regional boundaries of South, Southeast and east Asia (Rafael 1999; Dent 2016; Sadan 2018). Asia was (and still is) a site of numerous occupation regimes. It is also a region that has long been subject to encroachment by competing colonial (and other) empires, as well as by expanding postcolonial nation-states. This region therefore represents a neglected point of comparison for studies of colonialism and occupation (Sidaway et al. 2016) – a fact that this collection seeks to address.

The aim of this volume is to provide a comparative and interdisciplinary history of foreign occupation and colonialism in Asia during the modern period. It does this through an examination of the ways in which different spatial geographies emerged, were adapted and were transformed in the occupation context, and how occupation and colonial rule were shaped, and gave shape to, new interpretations and typologies of ‘space’. A focus on ‘the spatial’, this volume shows, reveals much about the nature and character of occupation *and* colonialism (as well as the similarities and differences between them). Because occupation regimes used similar methodologies and tools in an attempt to manipulate the spatial realm, a study that contrasts how different spaces emerged and were transformed under occupation – whether on a national territorial level or in more localized and transnational spaces – uncovers the commonalities and differences that existed across borders, places and settings.

To elucidate these connections, contributors to this volume examine case studies across South, Southeast and east Asia during the modern period – from the nineteenth century to the present day – using a variety of disciplinary perspectives. This includes thinking about ‘spaces of occupation’ not only in urban and architectural environments, but also in landscapes, in pathways that transgress national and political borders, in cartographic representations and, significantly, in the imagination. With themed sections focused on particular spatial typologies – urban spaces, rural and inland spaces, and island and maritime spaces – the volume ultimately reveals the similarities, entanglements and points of rupture that existed between different spaces of foreign occupation and colonialism in Asia, while also putting these hitherto disparate studies in dialogue with one another. In doing so, the volume shows how a focus on historical geography and space can revise broader categories and

conceptualizations related to foreign control of territory, be that under colonial, postcolonial, wartime or Cold War powers.

Foreign occupation, colonialism and contested sovereignty

‘Occupation’ is a term that has elicited considerable attention and controversy over the past few decades. This has particularly been the case since the US-led invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003, when questions over the legality of the ongoing American presence in the region became a focal point for international public debate (McCarthy 2005; Roberts 2007; Jackson and Moses 2017). Nonetheless, definitions and theories of occupation have varied greatly over time, including within different academic disciplines. While scholars point to the 1899 and 1907 Hague Conventions as moments when a systemized and rigid conception of ‘occupation’ was first enshrined in law, many occupation specialists have shown how the codification of this legal apparatus emerged from a long dialogue among European powers about international law and the nature of conquest during the late eighteenth and long nineteenth centuries (van Glahn 1957; Bhuta 2005; Benvenisti 2008; Arai 2009; Benvenisti 2012). In addition, scholars have differentiated between many unique typologies of military occupation, all of which are positioned under the same legal umbrella. Adam Roberts (1984: 260–1), for example, cites seventeen discrete types of occupation, including ‘belligerent occupation’, ‘multilateral occupation’ and ‘forcible peacetime occupation’, amongst others. In doing so, however, Roberts concedes that occupation categories are never ‘mutually exclusive’ and can overlap and shift in nature and classification over time. Occupation, in other words, is a legally complex and multi-layered category of analysis, with an equally complicated provenance over the modern period.

Roberts’ exacting differentiations of occupation hint at the indefinite and shifting nature of the concept. However, most scholars today employ a definition of occupation set out in international law. This view is best and most succinctly articulated by David M. Edelstein (2004: 52), who argues that ‘occupation is the temporary control of a territory by another state that claims no right to permanent sovereign control over that territory’. Central to this definition are two important ideas. First, and in contrast to categories such as colonialism, annexation or conquest, occupation denotes impermanence, and not the indefinite occupation of lands and territories over long stretches of time (Bernard 2012: 8–9). While the exact contours and timeline of an occupation can vary,

with some occupations lasting only a few months and others enduring – like, for example, the Israeli occupation of the West Bank – for decades, the idea generally is that an occupation is a temporary arrangement (Roberts 2005). And even though these short-lived occupations often act as a bridge to more permanent measures, such as in the recent Russian occupation and subsequent annexation of Crimea (Coynash and Charron 2019), each category has distinct temporal features.

The second important idea that Edelstein introduces relates to the question of sovereignty, which, like the notion of time and impermanence, is meant to differentiate occupation from related concepts such as ‘colonialism’. If one of the key determinants for the status of ‘occupation’ is that an occupying power does not claim sovereignty over the territory it occupies, then one of the parallel determinants for ‘colonial’ rule is the opposite: in strictly legal terms, a colony is a territory where sovereignty rests with the imperial power that claims such territory as its colony (and not, for example, with some other power that was previously in place prior to the territory being claimed). It is this distinction that has led some scholars to contest the increasing tendency to ‘elide military occupation and colonialism’ (Stirk 2016: 5).

As a growing body of critical legal scholarship has demonstrated, however, this distinction is fundamentally based on nineteenth-century, Eurocentric ideas about sovereignty and the control of territory. ‘Occupation’ as we understand it today was first formulated following the Congress of Vienna in 1815, and ‘was applied exclusively to land wars between European sovereigns’ (Bhuta 2005: 729). As Nehal Bhuta (2005: 729) explains, sovereignty was thought of as a ‘gift of civilization’ and was, almost exclusively, a recognized attribute only of the ‘European family of states’. Hence, ‘occupation’ was often not applied when it involved the conquest of territories beyond Europe, simply because many of the inhabitants or rulers of such territories were not recognized as ‘sovereign’ by nineteenth-century European jurists. When European powers colonized and annexed extra-European territories, they became sovereign rulers of those territories in their own right, and not simply temporary ‘occupiers’ (Mazower 2006; Fitzmaurice 2012). As a result, and as Yutaka Arai-Takahashi (2012: 73) has argued:

behind its facade of innocuous value-neutrality, the law of occupation has long hidden a tacit dichotomy: on the one hand, the application of this normative framework . . . only among ‘civilized’ nations capable of exercising sovereignty in international relations; and, on the other, the system of colonialism imposed upon the vast majority of non-Western nations bereft of sovereignty.

To put it another way, behind the legal framework of ‘occupation’ lies a conception of sovereignty through which European powers could legitimize their colonization of non-Western states (Anghie 1999, 2004).

The problems with this occupation/colonialism dichotomy were exposed in the process of post-Second World War decolonization and the postcolonial process of nation-building that arose in the second half of the twentieth century. Events that occurred at that time continue to lie at the heart of a number of ongoing controversies today. Consider, for instance, Western Sahara. As Stephen Zunes and Jacob Mundy (2010: xxiii–xxv) demonstrate, Morocco’s claims to this disputed territory are at least partly based on the argument that a postcolonial Morocco has the right to claim those territories that were ‘severed’ from it by European imperial powers; Eurocentric dismissal of Moroccan sovereignty in centuries past can be corrected in the postcolonial present. In contrast, Western Saharan nationalists argue that the Moroccan invasion contravened the basic right of self-determination that other postcolonial communities had been granted (often via referenda), and that, as Western Sahara was a sovereign entity in 1975, Moroccan rule since then constitutes a clear instance of belligerent occupation as per international law. Similar debates surround other ‘occupations’ that were initiated by postcolonial states in the post-Second World War decades, and which continue at present, such as West Papua (Kirksey 2012).

If debates about sovereignty in sites such as Western Sahara expose the difficulties in distinguishing ‘occupation’ from ‘colonial rule’ in a postcolonial world, then the literature around other disputed territories offers a more direct critique of the Eurocentrism inherent in international law itself. In the voluminous scholarship on the OPT, for example, it has now become commonplace to talk not just of ‘The Occupation’, but also of Israeli ‘colonialism’ in the West Bank, particularly (though not exclusively) when it comes to sites such as Israeli settlements beyond the borders of Israel itself (Reuveny 2003). Informed by the emerging field of ‘settler-colonial studies’ – as, indeed, are a number of chapters in this volume – such work looks well beyond the problems of international legal definitions, and instead finds parallels between present-day Israeli policies and the past behaviour of settler-colonial regimes in other parts of the world. Many scholars working in this field stress the actual *control* of territory by settler populations (as opposed to disputed definitions of sovereignty) and the relationship between settlers and Indigenous populations (e.g. Wolfe 2006; Veracini 2019).

While the OPT and Western Sahara represent ongoing disputes over territory, the critical scholarly re-assessment of the occupation/colonialism dichotomy

has inspired a growing list of scholars who are reconsidering historical cases of occupation. In the historiography of wartime Europe, for example, there is a significant body of literature which re-frames the German occupation of central and eastern Europe during the Second World War as a form of 'colonialism'. As David Furber (2004: 542) argues, for instance:

the Nazi occupation of Poland was a colonialist project. In the fantasies of the German colonizers who saw themselves as bearers of German Order to the benighted East of Europe, to the kinds of states that they erected in the conquered territories, going to the East resembled going to colonies elsewhere.

While such literature has stressed the similarities in the very nature of rule that the Nazis practiced in places such as Poland – suggesting that legal definitions of sovereignty are not always the most important aspects of the social or cultural history of occupation – it also undermines the very idea that a neat and clear distinction between 'occupation' and 'colonialism' can always be achieved. In the words of Christine de Matos and Rowena Ward (2012: 3), 'the lines' between different forms of territorial occupations have always been 'more blurred than clear cut'. For scholars such as Jürgen Zimmerer (2005: 200), then, the continued adherence to a strict occupation/colonialism dichotomy '... not only perpetuates a distinction between European and non-European development, but also hinders a useful perspective on both European military history and the history of foreign occupation during the Second World War'.

In addition to such debates, a sizeable critical scholarship has emerged that examines the nature of rule for types of control that fit uncomfortably into the 'colonial' category. For example, an expanding critical literature on '[sovereign] military bases' – exceptional and often vast areas within the boundaries of sovereign states, yet over which a foreign power claims sovereignty and/or exercises complete control, sometimes in perpetuity – is now suggesting that the existing framework we have for 'occupation' – and, indeed, 'empire' – needs to be expanded (Lutz 2009).² Often created or significantly expanded during the Cold War, when superpowers and their allies were reluctant to openly acknowledge their control of foreign territory as acts of 'belligerent occupation' (Bhuti 2005: 734), military bases can still be found across the world – including in some of the very sites that are examined in this volume, such as Okinawa. In addition, scholars have spoken of these spaces in terms that expose the difficulty of defining them – as 'colonialism redivivus' (Clogg 2015) or as new articulations of empire (Lutz 2008). Indeed, in the case of Okinawa, it is the on-going US military presence, continuing well after the formal end of the American occupation in

1972, which continues to fuel a lively and influential body of theoretical literature on foreign occupation more generally (e.g. Tanji and Broudy 2017).

To underline and question the problematic definitions and origins of 'occupation' as a legal category, this volume uses this term in a broad sense. It includes chapters that cover not just cases of 'occupation' that are recognized today as such under international law, but also colonial and other legally adjacent occupation typologies, including annexation, cession and military bases. In doing so, this volume builds on the work of de Matos and Ward (2012), Lammers (2003), and other scholars who have moved beyond a narrowly imagined conceptualization of the term 'occupation'. We adopt this approach not to elide or conflate 'colonialism' and 'occupation', but to underline the difficulty in drawing a clear distinction between the two in light of recent theoretical discussions (cf. Taylor 2021).

Ultimately, then, the goal of this volume is to show how using a broad language of occupation can provide new insights into the relationship between occupation and colonial regimes across time, space and scale. To accomplish this task, this collection not only employs a comparative approach to place studies of colonialism and occupation side-by-side; it also includes research that travels across Asian geographies during the modern period. From colonial case studies in locations as diverse as India, Malaya and Indonesia to the wartime or postwar occupation of places such as China, Japan and Okinawa, and disputed territories such as Indonesian-controlled East Timor, this collection highlights the similarities and differences that exist across occupation and colonial contexts, as well as between areas of Asia that scholars rarely compare.

Nonetheless, the boundary between colonialism and occupation is not the sole focus of the volume. To examine the realities, commonalities and variances that existed across occupation and colonial contexts, the case studies in this collection compare the experiences of occupation through a shared analysis of particular spatial categories, including urban spaces, inland and rural spaces, and island and maritime spaces. This collection reveals how these specific 'spaces of occupation' were transformed under different occupying and colonial regimes, and how the spatial realm shaped and was shaped by the experiences of occupation across modern Asia.

Space, place and occupation

Spatial Histories of Occupation: Colonialism, Conquest and Foreign Control in Asia builds on a large body of interdisciplinary scholarship that examines the

role of space, place and scale in historical perspective. It does so by borrowing from a litany of scholars and disciplinary fields, including key theoretical works on the 'production of space' from theorists such as Henri Lefebvre (1991), Edward Soja (1989), David Harvey (1989) and Derek Gregory (1994), as well as work broadly defined as environmental history (e.g. Ross 2014; Biggs 2018). The volume also exists in dialogue with research concerned with the intersection between space, occupation and power, such as the work of Eyal Weizman (2007, 2011, 2017). Because of this, the contributions in this volume derive their methodological approaches from a variety of subfields, including urban history, anthropology, historical geography and architecture.

While no one typology of 'space' or 'spatiality' is prioritized in this book, the case studies in this volume examine the intersection between space, colonialism and occupation through a shared analysis of three spatial categories: urban spaces, rural and inland spaces, and island and maritime spaces. Because the contributions in the volume employ a diverse set of disciplinary perspectives and the case studies travel across distinct Asian contexts, the use of common spatial categories provides an empirical way of comparing across otherwise unique occupation and colonial environments. As Philippa Levine has argued (2014: 331), while comparative history sometimes serves to reproduce universalist and nation-centred historical narratives, it can also act as a 'bridge-builder' that encourages complex and innovative scholarship that travels across boundaries, borders and the confines of more narrowly defined research agendas. This volume, with its focus on spatial classifications rather than fixed regional or national boundaries, represents one way to compare across geographies, revealing not only the commonalities that existed between and across colonial and occupation contexts but also the significant differences that made each case unique. It is through such comparisons that scholars can better understand the nature and attributes of particular colonial and occupation environments, as well as the connections that may have bound them across time and space.

In addition to providing a common point of comparison for the chapters in the collection, this volume focuses on 'the spatial' for a number of important reasons. As the German jurist Carl Schmitt once noted (2006: 205–7), the law of occupation was, in its definition, a conceptual device that European powers crafted to solve the 'spatial problem' of conquest. Any typology of foreign occupation, however, could be thought of as being an exercise in spatial control. Because occupation – whether in its colonial or military guise – entailed the literal and physical occupation and subjugation of a foreign territory, occupation regimes across different geographic and temporal contexts encountered

analogous concerns in regard to the ‘fixing’ and appropriation of occupied space. Although in the colonial setting this often meant transforming local land tenure laws to promote foreign settlement or the economic exploitation of occupied landscapes, the invasion and physical occupation of foreign territory by outside powers occurred across colonial and occupation contexts, both within and outside of Asia. Considering that many well-known cases of ‘military occupation’ have also included dynamics of settlerism – such as in the OPT (Gazit 2015) – as well as significant economic advantages for occupying powers – like petroleum in American-occupied Iraq (Le Billon 2005) or palm oil in Indonesian-occupied West Papua (Chao 2018) – territorialization and the control of land have been central to colonial and military occupations alike. These commonalities make a spatially-focused study particularly revealing about the nature of and relationship between colonial and occupation environments, as well as the role of land, territory and sovereignty within the context of occupation.

While concerns about land control and territory impacted how foreign agents developed occupied space, these occupying forces did so through the use of common instruments of power. To consolidate and organize authority in an occupation setting, in other words, occupying powers deployed similar tools of spatial manipulation to manage the natural and built environments. This included but was not limited to the use of mapping and cartography, the importation of urban planning models, the use of surveillance and curfews, as well as the large-scale construction of roads, railways and other infrastructure. These efforts to make occupied spaces more legible for state interests also operated as a broader application of governmentality, whereby occupying powers used the spatial realm to control the movement and bodies of populations living under occupation (Foucault 1991; Scott 1998; Legg 2011). The fact that occupying regimes used these ‘technologies of power’, as Michel Foucault (1995) labelled them, allows for a more uniform comparison between and across occupation contexts, even when the local experience of occupation may have differed immensely.

Moreover, and as many chapters in this volume show, the ways in which occupying powers imagine and manipulate space often leads to different and unanticipated results in the local setting. To put it another way, the local *mattered* to how an occupation context was built and evolved, and ‘occupied’ populations – through their voices, actions and resistance – had a significant impact on how an occupation took shape. This makes a spatially-centred comparative study of occupation especially revealing. Because occupation policies and legislation had consequences that varied across borders, landscapes and urban centres, studies

attuned to notions of place and scale can show the important differences that existed across occupation contexts, just as they show the similar 'spatial imaginaries' that occupying forces deployed in their pursuit of power (Watkins 2015). As Richard White (1999) has observed, 'the social space' of different scales 'focuses attention on a set of relationships between people and things', with 'each scale reveal[ing] some things while masking others'. This volume – with case studies that move from islands and oceans to mountains and jungles, and from laboratories and households to villages and large cities – shows just how wide ranging and complex the occupation setting could be.

Examining occupation on a broad level means that *Spatial Histories of Occupation: Colonialism, Conquest and Foreign Control in Asia* does not spotlight a singular typology of space. Rather, it examines the experiences of occupation and colonialism by focusing on a number of particular spatial categories. Highlighting a diversity of case studies, we argue, is important. Although recent scholarly work has emphasized the ways in which concepts such as camps (Forth 2017), military bases (Höhn and Moon 2010) and extra-territorial sites of occupation (Press 2013) have travelled across space and time, this collection instead offers a more comprehensive view of what constituted a 'space of occupation' in the modern period. This effort to widen our framework on what a 'site' of occupation is or could be does not aim to minimize the violence that accompanied life under these more extreme spaces of 'exception' (Agamben 2005). Instead, the volume reveals how power and violence imbued many areas of occupation, including those sites less typically studied in the historiographies of colonialism and occupation. Ultimately, this collection shows how power travelled and was remade across varying typologies and environments of occupation, whether in concentration camps or 'everyday' spaces such as ships, mines or city streets.

In addition, and owing to its trans-Asian comparative perspective, this volume aims to move beyond the spatial categories and boundaries that have dominated studies about Asia – and in some cases, the globe – over recent decades. Whether in terms of abstract conceptual designations – such as frontiers (Barfield 1989), borderlands (Hämäläinen and Truett 2011) and networks (Lester 2006) – or 'new regionalisms' – including the Indian Ocean World (Anderson 2012), Pacific studies (Matsuda 2006) or research focused on the concept of 'Zomia' (van Schendel 2002) – this volume eschews these larger spatial classifications in an effort to broaden our comparisons and areas of inquiry across geographies. As Eric Tagliacozzo, Helen F. Siu and Peter C. Perdue (2015: 6) have argued, 'instead of viewing regions, cultures, and peoples as physically bounded units occupying

continents and polities, we need to focus on multilayered, interactive processes that embrace both land and sea routes and incorporate political dynamics of empires, nation-states, neoliberal markets, and postsocialist global engagements at relevant historical junctures.' In drawing on such insights, this collection not only offers a much broader collection of case studies across nation-state contexts, but also reveals the connections and differences that existed between occupation environments in a variety of scales, landscapes and micro-regions. The volume's broader focus does not mean to suggest a criticism of these alternative spatial approaches. Instead, it builds on the existing literature about spatiality and occupation to examine the complex and variegated nature of the occupation environment and, significantly, to think more deeply about the categories and language we use to discuss and position these spaces. In the end, this volume shows how the categories we employ in our research can dramatically alter the narratives we tell about the 'shape' and experience of occupation.

To accomplish this task, the contributions in this collection are divided into three spatially-oriented themes: urban spaces, rural and inland spaces, and island and maritime spaces. In addition to these themes, each section of the volume includes case studies situated within both colonial and occupation contexts, as well as examples of 'occupation' that occurred across Asian regional geographies. This organization not only allows for a dialogue that cuts across different geographically bounded historiographies, but also provides a common point of comparison between the volume's colonial and foreign occupation case studies. In the end, these diverse examples – ranging from contemporary Okinawa to British Burma and the colonial Philippines – are all anchored in a common analytical concern with Asia's urban, rural and maritime spaces, which serve as the different sections of the volume.

The first theme of the volume, which is also the focus of Part One, involves an examination of the city under foreign occupation and colonial rule. This section explores 'the urban' through an analysis of how centralized urban planning proceeded under different occupation and colonial regimes, and how local agents and local resistance re-imagined and re-made cities in new and sometimes surprising ways. With chapters focused on Manila under American colonialism and Indonesian-occupied Dili in East Timor, this section provides a comparative view of how the construction of 'place' shaped and was shaped by the lived experience of foreign occupation, and how urban spaces were transformed in the occupation context. In doing so, this section provides fresh insights into the relationship between and entanglement of urban space and occupation in the modern period, a subject that has garnered significant interest in studies of Asia

over the past few decades (e.g. Yeoh 1996; Legg 2007; Allen 2012; Henry 2014; Roberts 2016; Junaid 2020). In addition, this section introduces readers to theories related to surveillance, local resistance and the production of space, which are themes that resurface throughout the volume.

While Part One focuses on the experiences of occupation and colonialism in urban settings, Part Two moves beyond the city to examine how occupation and colonialism transformed Asia's rural and inland spaces. Although this theme is threaded throughout the volume, Part Two specifically explores the role that knowledge accumulation and the development of 'spatial imaginaries' played in the production of space under different occupying regimes, as well as how plans to rationalize space developed, transformed and oftentimes failed in rural settings. With chapters focused on British colonial mining efforts in Malaya and Burma and the use of cartography and political 're-mapping' in Japanese-occupied China, this section provides a comparative view of the divide between policy and practice in the occupation context, as well as the ways in which such 'imaginaries' shaped occupation at local, regional or national levels. In doing so, this section reveals the ways in which knowledge and power were deeply interwoven in occupation settings, and how concerns over land were central to occupation and colonial projects across modern Asia.

The last key theme of the volume, which is the focus of Part Three, examines maritime and island spaces under foreign occupation and colonial rule. This section specifically engages with debates about the production and fixing of spatial categories under different occupation regimes, as well as the ways in which fluidity, emptiness and 'in-between-ness' impacted the creation and maintenance of boundaries in non-urban settings. The section – which includes chapters focused on British colonial rule in the Andaman Islands, Dutch colonialism in Indonesia and the American military occupation of Japan and Okinawa – also emphasizes the role and agency of occupied peoples in responding to border-making under occupation, similar to Part One's examination of these realities in the urban context. Finally, this section – particularly its final two chapters – reveals the importance of land use and land ownership in the making of occupation and colonial environments, building on a theme that was especially significant in the previous section of the volume.

In sum, the aim of this volume is to open up new avenues of inquiry into the experience and geography of occupation. With its collection of case studies that travel across nations, regions and landscapes, this collection reveals how a trans-Asian study of foreign occupation and colonialism disentangles the links that existed across occupation contexts in modern Asian history. Nevertheless, this

volume is only a starting point. While the contributions in this collection show the value in using a broad comparative methodology, any such comparison is still limited to the specific case studies that are introduced. In addition to the island, urban and rural spaces considered in this volume, one could identify countless other unique sites to study, including those found in different landscapes and ecologies, in other micro- and macro-regions, or in the homes, bodies and imaginations of people. A prolonged examination of these many sites of occupation will only uncover new understandings about the nature and lived experience of occupation, as well as the important ways in which occupations shape and are shaped by the spatial realm.

Sites of occupation

Spatial Histories of Occupation: Colonialism, Conquest and Foreign Control in Asia is organized thematically. Part One, entitled 'Urban Spaces', begins with a chapter by Vannessa Hearman, who examines the history of East Timorese resistance in Indonesian-occupied Dili during the late twentieth century. Drawing on interviews, memoirs and governmental reports, Hearman focuses on the role of the East Timorese youth clandestine movement in resisting Indonesian occupation in the region, and the ways in which the spatial features of Dili's urban landscape played a part in the way people experienced the Indonesian occupation and used the city as an arena of operation. Hearman's chapter shows how the rise of new suburban spaces in Dili acted as 'islands' of East Timorese resistance out of the reach of Indonesian administration, enabling the creation of an embryonic vision of national identity hewn from collective resistance and the social transformation of the city.

In Chapter 2, Ian Morley focuses on the history of urban planning in Manila under American colonial rule. Morley examines the replacement of the Spanish-introduced Laws of the Indies with American architect John Burnham's 1905 plan to redevelop Manila, which used imported 'City Beautiful' planning rationalities. Morley's study not only relates this history in a detailed narrative, but also uses a Digital Humanities approach – in this case, text mining – to appraise Burnham's report on Manila as a literary document, revealing how the text, whether deliberately or not, spoke of/to Philippine cultural advancement. Morley's chapter, which intentionally veers away from traditional structuralist-influenced architectural and spatial historical narratives, serves as a fitting conclusion to the section because it not only shows how the experience of

occupation was unique in the context of the modern city – a common theme in the historiography of spatial history – but also foreshadows a number of other themes present later in the collection, such as the production of space and the importance of ‘spatial imaginaries’.

Chapter 3, which begins Part Two of the collection, brings readers from Asia’s urban centres to the region’s inland and rural spaces. To begin this section, Joanna Lee focuses on how British economic activities in Malaya inspired conflicting perceptions about land usage and, by extension, the type of colonial rule that ‘should’ occur in the region. Lee shows how British administrators imposed disparate meanings onto the peninsula’s landscape and peoples as they struggled to reconcile incompatible social, economic and cultural motivations. Using a mix of colonial-era reports, correspondence and other published texts, Lee reveals how colonial perceptions of mining and agriculture were influenced by prevailing sentiments about what constituted an ‘ideal’ colonial society, as well as what represented its ‘picturesque’ aesthetic. This chapter, which flows neatly from Chapter 2’s focus on spatial imaginaries, reveals how representation and perceptions of ‘ideal’ and ‘picturesque’ space influenced the literal ‘shape’ of occupation. In doing so, it provides a foundation for other contributors’ insights into other typologies of spatial imaginaries, including those related to political economy, colonial science and cartography.

In Chapter 4, Yi Li focuses on the ways in which mining knowledge and expertise travelled within and across the geographic crossroads between Burma, Siam (now Thailand) and Malaya during the late nineteenth century. Li does this through a study of an 1888 visit by colonial officials in Burma to nearby southern Siam and British Malaya, where they learned important lessons about how to develop large-scale tin mining. Upon their return to Burma, however, the mission proved a failure. Although the deposits in southern Burma – specifically at the site known as Maliwun – existed along the same trans-peninsular tin belt as the deposits in Siam and Malaya, differences in the environment and spatiality of the region made it impossible to replicate the dynamics of extraction present elsewhere in Southeast Asia, and commercial agents ultimately abandoned the site. Li’s chapter reveals the ways in which territory-bounded institutional politics and unique local geographies affected economic development under colonial rule, as well as how mining knowledge at one site of extraction did not always map neatly onto others, even within the same geological landscape. While Li’s chapter, similar to the final thematic section on island and maritime spaces, addresses movement across borders and occupation contexts, it also adds to the insights of Lee and Serfass by showing how scientific knowledge about the

natural environment and rural space impacted the shape of occupation contexts, whether through the success – or, in this case, failure – of particular schemes.

In Chapter 5, the final chapter of Part Two, David Serfass focuses on the history of state building in Japanese-occupied China between 1937 and 1945. In particular, Serfass examines how Japanese ‘mapping’ was used to define the spatial configuration of the occupation state in China, with actual maps being only one medium among others used to do so. This chapter shows that far from being the historical anomalies described in Chinese historiography, ‘puppet’ regimes during wartime were an integral part of the *longue durée* of the Chinese state, and efforts to map China to reconcile nominal authority, administrative efficiency and Japanese encroachments were similar in nature to those undertaken by Chinese governments before and after the war. With its insights into the conflicting conceptions of China’s administrative map, Serfass follows Lee’s and Li’s observations about the construction and ‘imaginaries’ of space, while also adding to those chapters by focusing on how occupying states used spatial representations to reconfigure and assert power in the occupation context. In addition, Serfass’s essay, in its building of new and important connections between space and time, hints at new directions in the study of spatiality and movement that are the focus of the final part of the collection.

Chapter 6 marks the start of Part Three of the volume, focusing on maritime spaces and islands under foreign occupation and colonial rule. In this chapter, Vishvajit Pandya and Madhumita Mazumdar examine the British colonization and settlement of the Andaman Islands. The authors particularly focus on the British occupation of strategic spaces on the islands’ coastlines and in their hinterland that aimed to corral, segregate and eventually destroy the pre-colonial island space, including the livelihoods, languages and cosmologies of hunter-gatherer groups. Using both conventional archival records and ethno-historical accounts, this chapter draws attention to the ‘spatial political economy’ and ‘spatial logic’ of occupation, which worked to sever zones of exchange between the islands’ Indigenous communities and to displace, replace and ultimately confine those populations across borders and boundaries. In considering the ‘spatial logic’ of occupation as well as notions related to agency and resistance, this chapter complements the first two thematic sections of the volume while also pushing beyond those concerns to think more deeply about boundary making, confinement and the relationship between space and power. In doing so, the chapter also serves to introduce readers to a new set of ideas and methodological frameworks – particularly those related to boundaries, fluidity and landscapes – that define the essays in the rest of the collection.

With Chapter 7, Kris Alexanderson moves readers from islands to oceanic spaces through an examination of the colonial maritime world and what she refers to as the 'in-between' spaces of empire. Alexanderson focuses on the shipping industry and Dutch colonial rule in Indonesia, revealing how the sea became a realm of surveillance and subversion from the late 1920s until the Japanese occupation in 1942. Alexanderson argues that ships operated as a 'colonial classroom' during this period, with the Dutch government and shipping companies attempting to maintain hegemony outside the geographic confines of the colony and metropole through a web of control, removing anti-colonial struggles from the nation-state and inserting them into the transoceanic arena. This chapter builds on Chapter 6's interventions about the 'spatial logic' of occupation by revealing how occupation moves across borders and boundaries, while also showing how different typologies of occupation existed within and across different nationally-bounded territorial spaces. In doing so, this chapter reveals that colonial rule was not 'fixed' in time and space, speaking to the final two essays in the collection that examine fluidity across environmental boundaries.

In Chapter 8, Abhishek Nanavati focuses on the spatial history of hydroponic farms in US-occupied Japan. Nanavati's study, which combines military and environmental history with the history of technology, specifically explores how US military bases in Japan – figurative islands of military control in US-occupied Japan – were built partly out of a fear of 'occupied' land itself, as well as the belief that the soil and terrain of the region was contaminated by the colonized subject. Nanavati shows how the subjugation of the Japanese ecosystem, the moulding of it to produce 'pure' vegetables, and the attempt to build an independent biosphere, were exercises of hegemonic power on the part of the American occupiers, bridging military power with that of scientific ideas about hygiene, contamination and race. This focus allows Nanavati to reveal how, in addition to urban planners and architects, experts such as engineers, medical officers, sanitation specialists and nutritionists also played a role in shaping the geography of occupation, all in an effort to influence the everyday provisioning of food in Japanese society. In doing so, this chapter provides an important statement on the importance of race and colonial 'othering' in the production of occupied spaces, while speaking directly to the concerns about the relationship between spatiality and identity raised by Kris Alexanderson and Sayaka Sakuma in the preceding and following chapters, respectively.

In Chapter 9, the concluding chapter of the volume, Sayaka Sakuma examines the history of land use in Okinawa both during and after the US occupation of the

island. In particular, Sakuma focuses on the Yambaru Forest in northern Okinawa, which recently transitioned from a US military space to a site of tourism and conservation. Drawing from government documents, military publications, participant observation and interviews with residents, the chapter reveals how different scales of international, national and local governance constructed the forest anew, whether for economic, ecological or political reasons. In doing so, the chapter challenges the celebratory narrative of 'land return', and further argues that, on the ground, there are lingering concerns over the future of the Yambaru Forest. In taking such an approach, and owing to its more contemporary focus as well as the conclusions it draws regarding the politics of space and place, this chapter provides a fitting final statement on the many themes highlighted in this collection.

Towards a new 'spatial history of occupation'

The temporal and geographic scope of this volume is deliberately ambitious, ranging from colonial Burma to twenty-first century Okinawa. It incorporates various disciplinary approaches, from anthropology to historical geography, and contributors draw from a multitude of source types. The editors have chosen not to favour a single approach to the spaces of occupation; nor have they sought to enforce a particular theoretical or conceptual framework across all chapters.

Nonetheless, all chapters share a number of attributes which we believe are central to the comparative study of foreign occupation and colonialism in Asia from a spatial perspective, and which have the potential to lay the foundation for a wider study of the spatial histories of occupation beyond Asia. The first of these is the need to consider the *longue durée* when examining both the contemporary effects of former periods or on-going cases of 'occupation' in the region today. As contributors to this volume point out, on-going or recent conflicts and disputes have historical roots that can be traced back, in some cases, centuries. Equally, geographic, cartographic and artistic imaginaries in nation-states such as Malaysia, Japan, the People's Republic of China and India today all betray the influence of spatial imaginaries that were first developed under colonial or occupation regimes in earlier decades or centuries.

The second point that virtually all chapters underline is the extent to which the 'spatial turn' in the study of occupation and colonialism should not take attention away from the importance of individuals, communities and institutions. This volume takes readers to a variety of spaces (at different scales): streets and alleyways; town squares and parks; farms and forests; mountains and mines;

military bases and prisons. Yet in all cases, contributors emphasize the agency of both the ‘occupiers’ and ‘occupied’ in shaping, resisting or interacting with such spaces, even when the focus of some contributors is the abstract exercise of place-making (e.g. through the redrawing of boundaries or the re-placement of institutions). In this respect, while we acknowledge the crucial role of tools such as geographic information systems (GIS) in spatial history, the contributors to this volume have sought to highlight the continuing relevance of the human factor (and of methods drawn from fields such as anthropology and oral history) in studying the spatial history of contested territories, conflicts and colonialism across Asia.

In this way, this volume aims to encourage a new scholarly dialogue in which questions of occupation and colonialism can be re-examined via the very *spaces* in which such occupation or colonialism were experienced. It is our hope that *Spatial Histories of Occupation: Colonialism, Conquest and Foreign Control in Asia* might encourage scholars of Asia, but also of other regions, to look afresh at the very terms, ideas and spaces that continue to generate debate and conflict around the world today.

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Notes

- 1 Although, as we shall explore later in this Introduction, this is now starting to change.
- 2 Victoria Reyes (2019) views such bases as part of a broader category which she calls ‘global borderlands’.

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