



A World Elsewhere: Europe's Encounters with Japan in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

Derek Massarella

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After the discovery of the New World, Europeans looked further afield, beyond the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean and towards the China seas, to search out new trading opportunities. Here they encountered formidable and ancient civilizations and witnessed the momentous events that were shaping the sophisticated societies of the East. In this book Derek Massarella surveys this first phase of European contact with the Indies by focusing on the East India Company, and the factory it maintained in Japan from 1613 to 1623.

For the first time the history of the East India Company is placed within the larger context of the beginnings of European cultural and economic expansion in Asia and of the changes in Japan's diplomatic and commercial relations that were affecting its foreign trade. Using previously unexplored sources, both English and Japanese, Massarella describes the background and history of the company, its establishment in 1600, its arrival in Japan, the rise and decline of its factory, and the ambition and policies of its more successful Dutch rival. He also reveals how merchants of the period lived among and mixed with the local population, their encounters unclouded by any sense of racial superiority or value-laden notions such as 'Orient' and 'Asia'. The result is a fascinating case study of cross-cultural contact and the English and European presence in 'a world elsewhere'.

The definitive work on the early English in Japan, the book also contributes to our understanding of the contemporary relationship between the West and Japan which, since the intervening periods of empire, mistrust and misunderstanding, has reverted to its original nature – that of a trading relationship. First published in 1990, this ebook contains corrections and a new Preface.

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