



# The Eastern Origins of Western Civilisation

By John M. Hobson

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John Hobson challenges the ethnocentric bias of mainstream accounts of the Rise of the West. It is often assumed that since Ancient Greek times Europeans have pioneered their own development, and that the East has been a passive by-stander in the story of progressive world history. Hobson argues that there were two processes that enabled the Rise of the 'Oriental West'. First, each major developmental turning point in Europe was informed in large part by the assimilation of Eastern inventions (e.g. ideas, technologies and institutions) which diffused from the more advanced East across the Eastern-led global economy between 500–1800. Second, the construction of European identity after 1453 led to imperialism, through which Europeans appropriated many Eastern resources (land, labour and markets). Hobson's book thus propels the hitherto marginalised Eastern peoples to the forefront of the story of progress in world history.

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## **The Eastern Origins of Western Civilisation** By John M. Hobson Bibliography

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## **Editorial Review**

### Review

"We are still at the beginning stage of a much-needed revisionist history of the world, to which this book makes a lively scholarly contribution. Hobson's well-documented argument warrants serious consideration."  
Janet Abu-Lughod, author of *Before European Hegemony*

"John Hobson's work is thoroughly researched, enormously wide ranging and well written. It does not merely provide a thoughtful response to recent Eurocentric world histories. It is also certain to play a central role in the new wave of studies demonstrating the substantial contributions to modern 'civilisation' made by so many non-European peoples. The work is a worthy successor to the classic study of 'imperialism' written by the author's great grandfather John Atkinson Hobson." Martin Bernal, author of *Black Athena*

"This provocative book aims to change the way historians think about the 'rise of the West.'  
The International History Review

"This is an important book of comparative and historical sociology. It is both a punchy polemic against Eurocentrism and an impressive gathering of evidence on the historical development of Europe and Asia. Hobson argues that the many inventions which supposedly enabled Europe to dominate the world were actually diffused to Europe from Asia (usually from China) and that Asia/China remained as developed as Europe until the 19th century--and mostly he convinces." Michael Mann, author of *Sources of Social Power* (2 volumes)

"Evidence that Asia's primacy was crucial to the Rise of the West has been accumulating for twenty years. Dr. Hobson has now pulled the pieces together in a compellingly written and most challenging scheme. His grand conception will open a whole new order of debate." Eric Jones, author of *The European Miracle and Growth Recurring*

"The true value of *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilization* resides in its capacity to reveal the manner in which politically expedient mythology has distorted Western understanding of both history and culture. There will be a need for many more such exploratory books..." - Reg Little

"It provides a new set of comparisons of economic and political developments in the East and Europe; and it offers a strong version of the Orient first thesis which it advances on points." - Jam Nederveen Pieterse, University of Illinois

### About the Author

John M. Hobson is a Senior Lecturer in Government and International Relations at the University of Sydney. He is the author of *The State and International Relations* (2000), *The Wealth of States: A Comparative Sociology of International Economic and Political Change* (1997), and co-author (with Linda Weiss) of *States and Economic Development: A Comparative Historical Analysis* (1995).

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