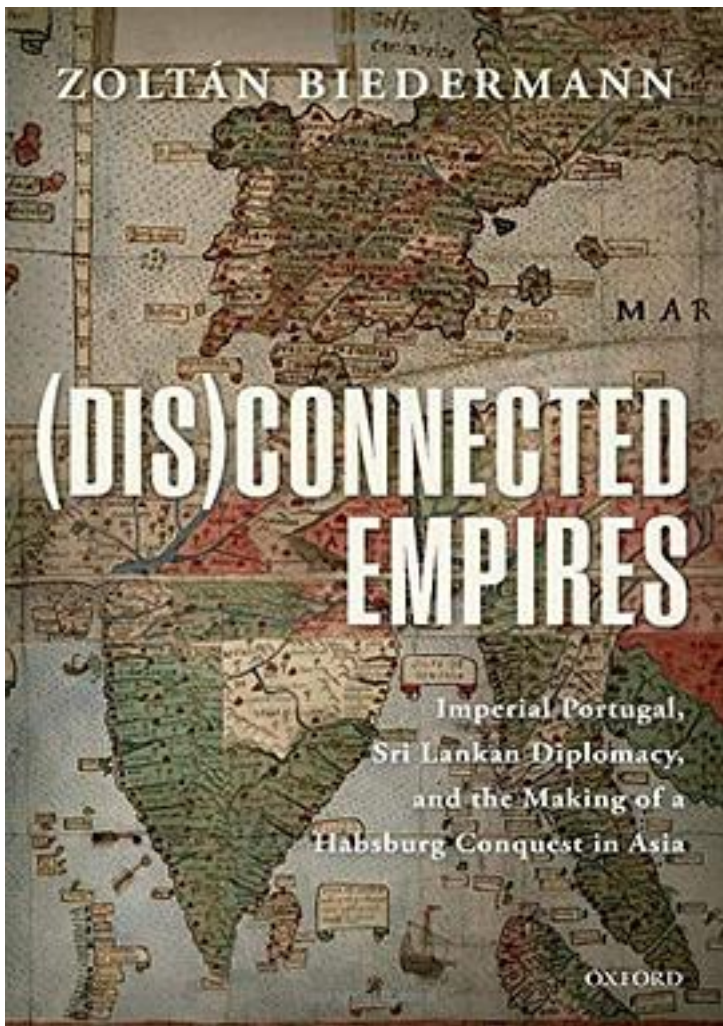


(Dis)connected Empires



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(Dis)connected Empires takes the reader on a global journey to explore the triangle

formed during the sixteenth century between the Portuguese empire, the empire of Kotte in Sri Lanka, and the Catholic Monarchy of the Spanish Habsburgs. It explores nine decades of connections, cross-cultural diplomacy, and dialogue, to answer one troubling question: why, in the end, did one side decide to conquer the other? To find the answer, Biedermann explores the imperial ideas that shaped the politics of Renaissance Iberia and sixteenth-century Sri Lanka. (Dis)connected Empires argues that, whilst some of these ideas and the political idioms built around them were perceived as commensurate by the various parties involved, differences also emerged early on. This prepared the ground for a new kind of conquest politics, which changed the inter-imperial game at the end of the sixteenth century. The transition from suzerainty-driven to sovereignty-fixated empire-building changed the face of Lankan and Iberian politics forever, and is of relevance to global historians at large. Through its scrutiny of diplomacy, political letter-writing, translation practices, warfare, cartography, and art, (Dis)connected Empires paints a troubling panorama of connections breeding divergence and leading to communicational collapse. It examines a key chapter in the pre-history of British imperialism in Asia, highlighting how diplomacy and mutual understandings can, under certain conditions, produce conquest.

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Zoltán Biedermann, Associate Professor of Portuguese and Brazilian Studies at University College London, is a historian of early modern global connections with a focus on the Portuguese Empire in Asia. His interests include diplomacy, imperial ideas, cartography, and the politics of space. He received his PhD in 2006 from the École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris and the Universidade Nova in Lisbon. He has been a research fellow at UCLA, Assistant Professor at Birkbeck College London, Visiting Assistant Professor at Brown University, and Maître de conférences invité at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris.

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