CANTON-HONG KONG-MACAU: INTERCITY COMPETITIONS AND COMMERCIAL INTERACTIONS BEFORE THE 20TH CENTURY

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Abstract: The speaker examines the changing roles and positions of the three most prominent cities of the Pearl River Delta in South China, namely, Canton, Hong Kong and Macau in the commercial networks and transportation system before the commencement of the 20th century. He identifies the roles of the three cities in different stages from late 16th century down to the end of the 19th century, with focus on the effects of the ascendance of different Western Powers to the domestic city networks of the Guangdong Province of China. By doing so, he evaluates their interactions in the 20th century and forecasts the future competitions and business cooperation among different port cities in the Pearl River Delta in the 21st century.

Speaker’s Biography: Dr. Ka-chai Tam received his BA (1st Class Honours) and MPhil in History from the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1997 and 2000 respectively. Supported by the Swire/Cathay Pacific Scholarship, he earned his Doctor of Philosophy (DPhil) in Oriental Studies from the University of Oxford in 2009. He taught and researched in the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and the Chinese University of Hong Kong before joining the Department of History of the Hong Kong Baptist University as a tenure-track Assistant Professor since 2011. His areas of research interest include business history, Chinese business and management, Historical Geographic Information System (GIS), legal history of Ming and Qing China (1368-1911), as well as maritime and transportation history of East Asia. Dr. Tam has firmly established himself as an emerging international scholar in business history, Chinese law and management, as well as transportation and logistics. He has more than 40 scholarly publications to his name. In 2014, he earned the Early Career Award conferred by the Hong Kong Research Grant Council (RGC) - an award given to scholars who have achieved outstanding academic works, notably publications and external grant applications. Indeed, he is very competitive in applying for RGC grants (comparable to Canada’s Tri-Council grants). For instance, he is Principal Investigator of the RGC-funded projects “Managing social order in Maritime South China: Late-Ming (1550–1645) judicial court experiences” (September 2012 to August 2014) and “The Ming-Qing Transition (1619-1740): A reassessment from the legal angle” (September 2014 to August 2017). He is also an Associate of the University of Manitoba Transport Institute.

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