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REVIEW ARTICLE

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TRADE, MOBILITY, AND THE SEA

FAHAD BISHARA, *Sea of Debt: Law and Economic Life in the Western Indian Ocean, 1780–1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017)

MATTHEW S. HOPPER, *Slaves of One Master: Globalization and Slavery in Arabia in the Age of Empire* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2015)

VALESKA HUBER, *Channeling Mobilities: Migration and Globalisation in the Suez Canal Region and Beyond, 1869–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013)

JOHAN MATHEW, *Margins of the Market: Trafficking and Capitalism across the Arabian Sea* (Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press, 2016)

ALEXIS WICK, *The Red Sea: In Search of Lost Space* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2016)

Trade, mobility, and the sea—as concepts and practices—have, in the last several years, been the focus of superb and fascinating scholarly work. This essay explores some of the themes and arguments linking, and dividing, a body of work that has reinvigorated and shifted conversations about the Middle East toward a recognition of the significance of the Arabian Peninsula and Indian Ocean for our understanding of colonial and economic history. As with any review, this one cannot be comprehensive; these texts are far too rich for these limited pages. Nevertheless, I aim to trace some of the main lines of inquiry of each monograph as well as to note some of the overlaps of and differences between their arguments and approaches.

Until recently, historical work on the Western Indian Ocean was primarily the focus of Africanists who engaged with the politics of "Arab" presence in East Africa from the perspective of "compradors" in British colonial projects.[1] And, while ethnographers of and travelers to the Arabian Peninsula, Iran, and South Asia had long noted the presence of social groups whose "origins"—however framed—were traced locally to East Africa or other places along the perimeter of the Indian Ocean, details about the economic, political, infrastructural, and legal histories that shaped movement remained little explored. At the same time, historians of the Middle East seem to have viewed the Arabian Peninsula and Indian Ocean as too marginal to the dynamics and politics of the "central" Ottoman and post-Ottoman lands. Thankfully, much has changed, and the five works under review are a testament to the transformations in scholarly attention. There are certainly many reasons for such a change in attention, including, for example, the sporadic loosening of research permits, the establishment of research institutes and

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archives in the Arabian Peninsula, limits on the possibility of conducting research elsewhere in the Middle East, and a shift in scholarly interest to move beyond and challenge the traditional centers and boundaries of research. Whatever the reason or reasons, each of the works reviewed here draws on colonial, traveler, merchant, and "local" scholarly and legal material to illuminate the practices and perceptions of those moving and trading, as well as imagining, regulating, and discussing such exchanges, across seas and oceans.

The five texts under review all expand or revise the image of the Arab comprador and, most significantly perhaps, of a rather vague sense of "connections" between various economic, social, and political practices of people living along the Indian Ocean. They all draw on careful and subtle readings of documents from colonial archives. And yet, they approach their sources somewhat differently: either by simultaneously emphasizing French and German sources (Huber), focusing particularly on the silences within British sources (Mathew), contrasting Omani legal texts or other nonimperial sources with British sources (Bishara), contrasting Ottoman representations of a space with British scientific frames (Wick), or emphasizing travel, missionary, and merchant narratives and letters (Hopper). I will return to the methodological approaches of these five texts, but—clearly—the sources that the scholars examine and their readings of them shed light on a variety of aspects of legal, administrative, and economic practices of the Indian Ocean in the 19th century, and either specify the "connections" or highlight the particular differences, tensions, and conflicts within the spaces of passage or over items and people on the move.

Fahad Bishara's *A Sea of Debt* is an account of Omani and British legal practices and notions of debt as they manifested in Zanzibar and Oman over the 19th century in particular, though Bishara begins his account in 1780 and extends his work to 1950. In the first half of the book, Bishara focuses on the systems and practices of contract and debt that enabled the growing and changing commercial life of the Indian Ocean to thrive. He traces how merchants worked and traded within networks that not only demanded trust, but also were embedded in law. He describes the particular forms and institutions through which debt and credit were shaped and accounted for, from the legal questions and documents of obligation to the ledgers, and, central to the arguments of the monograph as a whole, the introduction of British attempts at accounting.

In many ways, the text traces a scholarly genealogy of jurists from Nasir bin Abi Nabhan al-Kharusi (1778–1847) to Saʿid bin Khalfan al-Khalili (1816–70) through Nur al-Din al-Salimi (1869–1914) as they and/or their work crossed the Western Indian Ocean commenting on and responding to questions about economic life. Indebtedness, he argues, meant entering a circuit of economic, social, and political obligations. Taking a loan, in other words, did not simply mean entering a relationship of required repayment, but where uncertainty and risk were minimized, where creditors recognized that some years would be thin and others less so (but where the debt would rarely be called in), where a legal world upheld a system in which such commerce could endure, and where someone would see incurring debt as a vehicle for entering the mercantile economy. These contractual relationships were also both presumed to be long-term (passing to the heirs if unpaid) and recognized between members of differing religious and ethnic communities (pp. 59, 63), making "nonpersons" into persons, reframing Hindu family

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firms as natural legal persons, and attaching slaves and former slaves to the genealogies of their masters (pp. 71–79). Finally, these agreements were also documented on paper (*waraqa*). As Bishara notes, while these scholars responding to questions about debt were following in the footsteps of a long history of scholars who were concerned with economic affairs, the economic world of the 19th century demanded new categories for contending with trade and credit.

Bishara thus focuses on a particular contractual form and type of exchange, the *khiyār* sale, as it evolved over the course of the 19th century. Briefly, to access credit, people began to use their property either as security against a loan (*rahn*) or by "temporarily selling" their property (*khiyār*) and by transferring rent (or the yield from the harvest of the property) to the creditor (and new owner), while the debtor continued to use the property until the end of the period of the sale (p. 90). Bishara argues that this particular instrument for debt and credit enabled Omanis to participate in growing regional circuits and to keep open relationships of obligation across generations until it began to face legal and administrative challenges from the expanding British-Indian legal system.

With the interlude, Bishara introduces two shifts to the discussion: the rise of a brief theocratic Ibadi administration (1868–71) in Oman (established with the help of Saʿid bin Khalfan al-Khalili) and the introduction of British-Indian legal structures in Zanzibar. With regard to the former, the theocratic regime quickly alienated and ostracized "foreigners," especially Indian (both Hindu and Muslim) merchants who could no longer collect on their loans, causing financial disaster compounded by growing economic downturn throughout the Indian Ocean. Muscat's place as a trading hub seemed over.

At the same time, Britain expanded its juridical and administrative presence in Oman and Zanzibar as officials sought to regularize and systematize legal responsibilities for their subjects. Of course, this meant that the British had to try to determine who qualified as a subject (p. 121). Interestingly, Bishara argues, claims for British subject status increased significantly and merchants "gradually accumulated a much clearer understanding of British jurisdictional policy than the officials themselves did" (p. 123). As merchants began claiming British subjecthood, they also began registering the loan/sale documents (*waraqa*s) with British consuls. Bishara traces the history of the establishment and expansion of British-Indian courts, Anglo-Indian law, and juridical administration in Zanzibar and Oman, and how British judges interpreted the loan and sale documents that had previously been debated by scholars such as al-Khalili. Bishara emphasizes the disjunctures between the notions of a mortgage or "time sale" and the *khiyār* sale. He describes the different ways that such documents were employed, as a form of accounting for long-term relationships or as a form of evidence for litigation (p. 137), as well as the different ways the conditions of property ownership and transfer were understood (p. 147): a sale in which the title was not transferred to the creditor (as the relationship was one of a loan), an out-and-out sale, or an ownership claim that required possession.

Bishara illustrates that by the end of the 19th century these conflicts over commercial relations and property became more urgent as British expansion and speculation into mainland Africa increased and ownership of land became a matter of imperial rule and infrastructural extension. British judges and British-Indian lawyers began to take center

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stage, but also determined that in matters pertaining to land, "local" or "Islamic law," rather than Anglo-Indian law, applied (p. 165). In practice, this meant that judges and lawyers were either interpreting "Islamic law" themselves or turning to qadis.

In the final three chapters of the book, Bishara attends to further attempts at regulating and standardizing legal interpretation and practice in Zanzibar, especially through the publication in 1919 of the *Zanzibar Law Reports*, a compendium of cases meant to serve as a guide and common law corpus. With regard to the *khiyār* sale, Bishara illustrates how this compendium framed the practice as a mortgage (p. 173) and that in the bulk of *khiyār* disputes, judges extended the time period of the loan rather than force the transfer of property to the creditor (p. 178). Thus, even though the protectorate had established "Islamic law" as paramount with regard to land, the British judges determined that the only proper understanding of these contracts was that they were mortgages, and not sales.

Finally, as the Zanzibar courts called on qadis (even if the courts interpreted the sources differently), the qadis themselves were in the midst of a changing Ibadi legal landscape or "renaissance." By the beginning of the 20th century, another Ibadi theocratic administration was being established in Oman and along with it (and as it emerged), were reinvigorated legal debates. Within Zanzibar qadis were adjusting to the British courts (allowing, for example, for the extension of the *khiyār* sale beyond what had previously been accepted) (p. 199), while in Oman the reach of the court was weaker. Nur al-Din al-Salimi, the preeminent Ibadi theologian of the beginning of the 20th century, was not simply re-enforcing earlier readings of *khiyār* along the lines of al-Khalili, but doing so, Bishara contends, as an alternative to the legal authority expressed in the *Zanzibar Law Reports* (p. 215).

The picture Bishara paints of legal practice, law, and economic life not only encompasses the details of rich scholarly debates (whether among Anglo-Indian lawyers or Omani qadis), but also how (male) merchants—both wealthy and not wealthy—turned to, were managed by, and used legal decisions and administrations as they traversed the Western Indian Ocean.

Johan Mathew's *Margins of the Market* approaches Indian Ocean economic history from a different angle, though *Margins* and *Sea of Debt* both illuminate the complex trading practices and regulations that emerged in the 19th-century Western Indian Ocean. In his book, Mathew is squarely concerned with the workings of capitalism itself and whether trafficking (that is, illicit trade) is, as he writes, a perfection of the notion of free trade or its limit. While Adam Smith seems to have endorsed (or absolved) smuggling, Mathew points out that other forms of trafficking stand at the limits of what became morally acceptable to trade. Indeed, he notes that according to Marx and Smith, trades that "subvert the concepts of free labor or property rights violate the fundamental boundaries of free markets." For Mathew, however, free labor and property are not only the pillars of free trade, but the "contestation over the boundaries of the market is constitutive of capitalism itself." Indeed, he argues, the (conceptual) limits of free trade turned "slaves into labor, guns into property and coins into capital" (p. 2).

Most significantly, Mathew argues, "Whereas other polities tended to turn a blind eye to trafficking, the British Empire consistently worked to monitor, identify, and suppress trafficking." And, similarly, "it became essential to prevent traffics in slaves, weapons, and currency, precisely when free trade was most comprehensively embraced" (p. 5).

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In other words, Mathew is interested in the ideology or logics behind and processes of regulation that were consistent sites of moral and logistical struggle.

Mathew attends to the processes of regulation by focusing on three goods (arms, slaves, and gold) that he argues correspond to the protections of land, labor, and capital and reveal most poignantly—through the difficult processes of their regulation—the importance of free labor and property for capitalism. He argues that slavery undermined free labor; coins were used without a standard system for affixing value or regulating "real" money; and the violence that the arms wielded undermined securing landed property. The fact that slaves, coins, and arms could themselves be seen as private property only complicates the attempts at bounding "the market." Mathew draws from the work of Michel Callon to argue that these three particularly problematic commodities are "intermediaries" as they both "frame and over-flow" the market. The book argues, therefore, that "human bodies, firearms, and coins are the key intermediaries that both frame and overflow the free market. Wage labor, private property, and capital are within the market, while slavery, violence, and counterfeits are outside the market" (p. 7). However, as the processes of removing certain trades from the market were intentional, Mathew prefers the image "framing out" rather than "overflow." While the idea of "framing out" is helpful, at times it seems to serve both literal and metaphoric practices. Most clearly, and as Mathew notes in his conclusion, when something is "framed out" it is no longer "visible" to the "licit" market, either because it is banned for contradicting fundamental tenants or because it cannot be seen.

Like Bishara, Mathew effectively illustrates the particular ways that merchants circumvented the regulations and laws that aimed to curtail and control their activities. For Mathew, different colonial regimes and varying levels of colonial control were present in the Arabian Sea, and merchants recognized the blind spots. Merchants would provide documentary evidence required by colonial officials, for example, all the while exploiting any gaps they could find. Furthermore, merchants took advantage of the differences between markets (arbitrage) rather than working within a supposedly singular market.

Certainly, a discussion of trafficking lends itself to careful reading of potential elisions as well as a creative search for sources. Mathew suggests that while records on trade do not necessarily reveal the practices and significance of trafficking, when one looks in the "wrong places" (p. 15), those that "exceed the frame of the market" (p. 16), police and court records are rich with—nearly ethnographic—material. While one might have different understandings of the "market" or even "wrong places," Mathew's attention to what sources are *not* saying or how what is said is intended for a particular audience, is compelling. Similarly, Mathew, like Bishara, turns to the work of Nur al-Din al-Salimi to ascertain what a "local" scholar might say about trade. However, Mathew approaches Nur al-Din al-Salimi's work less as evidence of authentic local, alternative activity than as another normative structure (p. 16). Approaching sources through his own acts of "arbitrage" helps produce a picture of trade and exchange in the Indian Ocean that illustrates the cat-and-mouse quality of colonial attempts at management that Bishara and others note, but also the archival gaps, silences, and misrepresentations that allowed for the expansion of capitalist markets.

The three central sections (on the slave trade, arms trade, and money) analyze, in particular, the ways that people circumvented regulations. For example, to circumvent regulations on the slave trade, people made claims about marriage, adoption, and

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"domestic servants," while bonded labor increased significantly. For their part, in order to declare victory over the slave trade, British officials overlooked, did not recognize, or encouraged such practices and shifts. Weapons similarly played an intermediary role, such that arms threatened private property (a cornerstone of the capitalism), even while being property themselves. Though one could certainly question whether arms *are* violence or *represent* violence, or whether such a distinction matters (Mathew argues that they were "violence commodified" [p. 112]), the material in this chapter seems to suggest that the violence that these arms threatened was more problematic for the centralizing power of the state than for private property itself (though Mathew is clear that states are expected to protect property, even with violence). Interestingly too, in this chapter, Mathew argues (in a somewhat different vein than he does elsewhere and along the vein of other scholars working on "illicit" trade) that:

> Regulation did not facilitate legitimate trade, it stanched the flow of legitimate trade by increasing the transaction costs and reducing the flexibility of traders. Merchants moved instead into illicit trading or to transactions far removed from what imperial bureaucrats conceived of as trade. Attempts to make arms traffics more transparent actually resulted in their becoming more opaque. (p. 97)

In the final section of the book, Mathew attends to money, gold smuggling, counterfeiting, and the various attempts by British officials to create a standard system of value and to gain control of the system of valuation itself. The material that Mathew presents also reveals a world rich with merchant bankers, accountants, Hollerith machines that were used to calculate trade statistics, reputations and personal relationships of trust, tiny marks on coins to test metal, electroplating, and the simultaneous circulation of Maria Theresa thalers, Indian rupees, and, temporarily, East African rupees.

It is in the conclusion where Mathew clarifies and emphasizes significant aspects of his argument. First, he clarifies that what is "framed out" of free trade relies on "regimes of perception" and visibility. In other words, "framing out" was not only a matter of banning practices, but also of not seeing them or not making them visible. Second, he notes that regulations aiming to "frame out" were particularly intensive "at the border and in the international space of the sea," helping to "structure the freedoms within territorial borders" (p. 175). In other words, the intermediary role of these three forms were particularly significant as they moved across the more indeterminate space of the sea and threatened to reach the shores. The Indian Ocean, as an ocean, becomes therefore a particular type of space (indeterminate) whose borders require a system of regulation, marking the transition to a territorial regime.

Indeed, the sea itself is a focus of the next two monographs as well: Veleska Huber's *Channelling Mobilities* and Alexis Wick's *The Red Sea*. Huber's book shifts our attention to one particular (and new) nodal point of transportation, the Suez Canal. After its opening in 1869, movement between Europe and India completely transformed, becoming highly bureaucratized (but also encountering an already existing Red Sea traffic). The new regime of movement, Huber argues powerfully, was neither one of "unhampered movement or of hardening borders" but rather of the "differentiation, regulation and bureaucratisation of different kinds of movement" (p. 3). In examining peoples' (mostly Europeans, but also South Asians) experiences of travel through the canal, from observations that travelers made of the landscape and the people they saw to the

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experiences of pilgrims and laborers as they struggled through and with the new regimes of travel, Huber emphasizes and focuses on three themes: the varying categories of travelers and forms of mobility, the differential treatment of those assigned to these categories (especially as they were accelerated and decelerated), and, finally, the emerging "rules of globalization" whereby different levels and groups of actors competed and attempted to manage movement (pp. 6–7). Globalization, Huber illustrates, shaped new perceptions of time and space, economic interconnection, and worldwide labor migration.

Huber's monograph is divided into three sections arranged chronologically and thematically (though the times and themes overlap): a space of threshold, a frontier of the civilizing mission, and a checkpoint. As a threshold, Port Said served as an in-between zone where the experiences of transformation were most acutely felt and described. Yet it was also a space where time often seemed to drag, rather than quicken (except for those in the military). The ships themselves, carrying travelers (tourists, colonial administrators, dignitaries, merchants, and troops), often became microcosms of broader social dynamics and hierarchies as well as sites where the infrastructures of mobility became visible. Travelers of means observed coal heavers, for example, provide the resources to power the ships. Some of the most fascinating material used by Huber includes the post cards, photographs, and personal letters, which convey both what people understood they were seeing and how they presented "Suez" to the world. Life on the ships as well as through and around the canal, as represented in this growing European personal and organized travel literature, brings social life to the infrastructural transformation. English, French, and German travelers from Europe and Indian travelers from the Sub-Continent, along with the travel material from new agencies such as Thomas Cook, frame this space as one of difference and borders, rather than of connection and hybridity.

In the second section of the monograph, Huber highlights how European travelers and colonial administrators perceived and managed the deserts on either side of the canal as well as the Red Sea. Bedouin in the desert and "slave-trading" dhows were depicted, not surprisingly perhaps, as "backward" and in "decline," vestiges of some traditional past, and therefore objects of civilizing missions. At the same time, the difficulty that colonial administrators had controlling and managing the activities, movement, and settlement of Bedouin and dhow traders as well as the reliance of administrators, the Suez Canal Company, and shipping companies on "traditional" routes and people all illustrate for Huber the limits of the civilizing mission and the visions of difference on which this mission relied. Pilgrimage, in addition to the slave trade, became a site for the discussion of the boundaries of civilization and expanded "rules of globalization" as French and British officials, in particular, negotiated and aimed to implement directives for controlling the movement of people deemed "archaic" and dangerous (p. 204). The business of pilgrimage travel for touring companies (Thomas Cook) and steam ship companies from Egypt, Russia, the Netherlands, India, and France as they negotiated with colonial administrators and inspectors provides a window onto not only the acceleration and deceleration of movement, but also the daily working of mobility. One only wishes that more non-European sources (besides a few complaints about conditions registered in European archives [e.g., pp. 229, 234]) describing impressions of the journey were also available.

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In the final section, Huber describes debates over and policies concerning disease and contagion as well as the attempts at control through quarantine and identification through passports. Huber notes that the period before World War I was one of experimentation (sterilization, disinfections, vaccinations) in managing both medical contagion and processes of identification (p. 272). The systems and procedures for categorizing and classifying travelers were also linked to shifting theories about disease: from disease being connected to sites of origin to being connected to the type of traveler such that some were deemed more susceptible (non-Europeans) and others immune (European), therefore blocking some travelers while allowing others passage (p. 270). Finally, Huber examines the varying types of identification and travel documents required for certain categories of traveler as well as certain inhabitants of Port Said, as officials and companies were made responsible for "their subjects." Identification became, she argues, "not so much about knowing a person's whereabouts per se, but was instead often linked to questions of financial or legal responsibility" (p. 304).

If the bulk of this monograph traces the institutionalization of accelerated mobility, stigmatization of "other" forms of mobility, and the dangers of acceleration itself (p. 306), then the conclusion turns to the immediate post-1914 period as well as to Ellis Island in order to explore further the analytic of "channeling." Channeling, like Mathew's "framing out" and Bishara's emphasis on the emerging legal bureaucracy, highlights the dramatic increase in colonial regulatory regimes and helps specify the forms through which movement and "connections" were experienced.

Alexis Wick's *The Red Sea* approaches some of the same geographic spaces quite differently, making it an excellent companion to Huber's text in particular. Where Huber emphasizes European colonial regulations and European travelers' impressions of their experiences crossing a border that has often been described as a passage, Wick highlights Ottoman spatial formations and imaginings and the conditions that made them possible. The interaction between land and sea, which was critical to Huber and Mathew, is also important in Wick's text. However, Wick attends less to European colonial regulations at the point of interaction between land and sea, the views of the land from the sea, or the details and practices of trade per se. Rather, Wick emphasizes Ottoman representations and uses of the oceans and European notions of a "sovereign sea," and offers reflection on the disciplines of geography and history that shaped perspectives on a particular space. Indeed, this text aims to emphasize how "the sea does not have a natural and eternal purchase on an objective reality. It is rather a heavily laden concept" (p. 5). The underlying goal, he states further, is to "evoke the possibilities for imagining today a different relationship to landscape and ecology (whether maritime or terrestrial) as an inhabited and meaningful place, based on relational rather than a managerial understanding of space" (p. 15).

For Wick, the transformation of the Red Sea from *Baḥr-i Süveys* to *Baḥr-i Aḥmer* in the mid-19th century corresponded not only to greater European colonial presence in the region, but also to a shift in "basic assumptions regarding philosophy, political economy, cartography, geography, and of course history" (p. 6). As this "corridor" came to be named and its geographic homogeneity came to be understood, the Red Sea as an object was formed. The first chapter traces the genealogy of its name, the pre-19th-century (i.e., pre-steam ship) North–South geographic division of the sea, and—most significantly—the ways that the Red Sea became a coherent (though split)

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and autonomous space in the 19th century (p. 45). It was with the British settlement of Aden, the British occupation of Egypt, and the opening of the Suez Canal that what had become a "coherent actor" came to be seen as "an empty corridor connecting other times and places" (p. 45). This chapter explores, therefore, how this space shifted from an autonomous and coherent actor to a corridor. Taking coffee as a concrete example, Wick also illustrates how it was changes in production rather than trade of coffee, as well as coffee's inclusion in the world economy, that significantly altered the sea's coherence (p. 52).

The following chapter focuses on Ottoman historiography and provides "six theses" to help explain the paradox that the "Red Sea" was significant to Ottoman history but does not appear in its historiography. In these theses, Wick argues that maritimity has mostly been associated with Europe, rather than with Islam; that Ottoman economic ideology has mostly been associated with land-based and agrarian provisioning rather than mercantilism and capitalism; that the Red Sea lies at a divide between "Arabs" and "Africans"; that there is no nation (or European colony) to which it corresponded; that the Ottoman archives do not have a "constituted deposit labeled 'Red Sea'"; and, finally, that "the Red Sea did not exist as such in Ottoman discourse." Instead, in the 18th and early 19th centuries, Wick argues, there were "many seas in the space that is today called the Red Sea, and their names derived from port cities or lands with which they were associated" (p. 83). And yet, Wick argues at the beginning, this space became coherent; it is the historiography that has had great difficulty formulating it as such (p. 45).

The next chapter is, in many ways, the central chapter of the monograph as it analyzes how Ottoman sources (or, an Ottoman source) represented the Red Sea prior to the 1850s. Through a close reading of a document from 1777, Wick expands on the idea that there was "no Ottoman conception of that bounded coherent totality now called the Red Sea prior to European imperial expansion" (p. 95). Instead, as Wick illustrates, the sea was understood as a space through which ships would travel, transporting needed grain from Egypt to Mecca and Medina, provisioning the Hijaz as was the responsibility of the Ottoman regime. The sea was pivotal, and yet the difficulties were multiple: not enough wood to make boats, the purchase of ships from local merchants was costly, and the sea was full of hazards. This was, according to the text, also an endless and recurring predicament. The image one gets is a constant administrative problem where merchants reign, nature threatens, and bureaucrats attempt to solve and take responsibility. This is a profoundly mediated space.

Wick contrasts this vision of the Red Sea with its scientific invention (however "muddled") in the following chapter. Although this chapter and other sections of the monograph dip into what may feel to some readers like an author's working through of a range of foundational theoretical debates, the prose is clear and crisp. For any reader familiar with the genealogy of this monograph's arguments, the theoretical exposition may not be particularly revealing, though it is nicely written. For those readers less familiar with these foundational texts, this exposition may be helpful, though it may also be distracting. Wick's description of the early genres of topography, of doubts about steam navigation, of the late-18th century rivalry between Britain and France, of the structural changes of the increased power of the pasha in Cairo that drew Britain's attention, of the newfound creed of free trade, and of the development of steam travel in

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the Indian Ocean are all fascinating in their connection to the emergence of the Red Sea as a mapped corridor, as is the more expansive discussion of the resulting charting of the Red Sea itself in the *Sailing Directions for the Red Sea* published in 1841. As Wick also notes, however, deference to local pilots in this text, as well as in Wellsted's *Travels in Arabia*, complicate the objectivist and scientific rhetoric. Ultimately, drawing from Edward Said's note that imperialism was "first and foremost an act of geographical violence" (p. 148), Wick argues persuasively that these acts of mapping enabled British colonial rule.

Whereas the two previous chapters serve as excellent companions to Huber's book, the fifth chapter serves as one for Mathew's. Here, Wick examines theories of the sovereign sea or *Mare liberum* (the inherent freedom of the sea) to return to his early argument about connections between ideas of free trade, maritimity, and progress. Whereas for Mathew, the "freedom" of the sea is unsettling, shaping the way that some of the items that cross it must be "framed out" once at port, for Wick, this "freedom" of the sea transgresses political territories and appears in European historical thought as "civility, morality, universality" (p. 171). Indeed, Wick elegantly traces the genealogy of thalassological imagination to a point where the sea is "domesticated and turned into an anthropomorphic character" (p. 180), and what "defines the European continent . . . is the maritime principle" (185). Braudel's project of making the Mediterranean an anthropomorphic subject leads to Wick's concluding chapter, which reflects on the discipline of history and on Braudel's own work as the history of a particular time, after which even the Mediterranean is no longer coherent or unitary (or "sovereign").

I end this review with Matthew Hopper's *Slaves of one Master* in part because it returns to the routes and trades between East Africa and the Arabian Peninsula that Bishara, Mathew, and Huber discuss in different ways. Hopper's monograph brings life to the slave trade between East Africa and the Gulf during the 19th century, filling in details and gaps in much of the existing literature. While it differs from Mathew's chapter on the slave trade in a number of significant ways (e.g., its different conclusions about whether there was a "thriving" slave trade by the end of the 19th century and about the ways that this trade related to the emergence of capitalism), the books have much to say to each other. And, while its argument about globalization also differs from Huber's, Hopper's book serves as a wonderful companion to it as well. Whether one agrees with Hopper's perspective or Mathew's, or with Hopper's rather than Huber's, they are all incredibly rich.

Drawing primarily from British and American travelers' accounts, admiralty cases, and manumission records, Hopper's monograph traces the expansion of the slave trade in the late 19th century not only in East Africa, which has long been noted, but also in the Arabian Peninsula, with the growth of the date and pearl markets. Unlike Mathew, who argued that the ideology of free trade rested on notions of free labor such that British officials worked to "frame out" slavery, Hopper emphasizes how liberal economics that encouraged greater trade enabled slavery (p. 11). And, when the British government found itself caught between this trade and abolition, it tended to turn a blind eye (p. 11). Hopper's argument is compellingly straightforward: greater production of dates and pearls in the 19th century for the global market required more slaves from Africa. Also diverging from much of the literature, Hopper argues that the vast majority of the slaves transported to the Arabian Peninsula during the 19th century were men working on

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date "plantations" and in the pearl industry rather than women who worked as domestic slaves.

In tracing the expanding slave trade, Hopper also makes a case for use of the term "diaspora," even though he recognizes differences between the Atlantic and Indian Ocean trade as well as differences between the ways that African-origin peoples in the Americas and in Arabia relate to Africa (p. 12). Nonetheless, Hopper finds the term "diaspora" helpful for emphasizing these African origins and the history of slavery in Arabia, a corrective to the silences about the past in official representations of Gulf histories. In the end, he argues, the same transportation technologies that enabled the growing capitalist markets from the Arabian Peninsula also spelled their demise as American date cultivators and Japanese pearl merchants replaced their counterparts from the Arabian Peninsula.

Some of this text's richest sections may be those drawing from manumission documents dedicated to the experiences of slaves and freed slaves in Arabia. In tracing the trade, and in contrast to Mathew's approach to the archives, Hopper is, however, more willing to accept the descriptions and representations of the conditions of the slave trade provided by European and American travelers. For example, whereas Mathew is highly skeptical of the number of "barracoons" on the East African coast where slaves were said to be held waiting transport, Hopper states that there were many (p. 44). Hopper's approach to his sources is also different from the other texts under review in his more sparing use of footnotes. While some readers might prefer such an approach, the result is that it is not always entirely clear on which archive or text a particular claim is based. And, sometimes, one wishes for even greater detail supporting particular claims. For example, while Hopper's descriptions of pearl diving provides an excellent sense of what the work entailed, one has less of an idea of the "back-breaking labor required to irrigate, tend, and harvest dates" (p. 52). Nevertheless, Hopper paints a solid picture of the date trade between the United States and Arabia as well as the date markets that led to an increase in the slave trade to the Arabian Peninsula. The description of the work of pearl divers in the third chapter is similarly rich and gives a more expansive sense of both the labor of diving and the markets for pearls.

In Chapter 4, Hopper turns directly to the experiences of slaves in the Arabian Peninsula, and questions the sources more explicitly. Hopper describes how British officials saw the slave trade or presented it as benign and the practice as a "timeless feature of Arab society," thereby tolerating it—at least until there was clear evidence of abuse (pp. 112–13). Interestingly, while the earlier chapters of the monograph focus on the 19th century, the middle of the fourth chapter shifts to the period between 1921 and 1941, when, Hopper notes in passing, the British consulate systematized manumission certificates (p. 113). While the other texts under review also note how the interwar years witnessed a significant shift in the bureaucratization of colonial administration, as noted above, Hopper places less emphasis on it.

Two other sections of Chapter 4 deserve special mention. The brief but important section on marriage and sex highlights how gender and sex remain largely absent from much of the scholarship on trade in the Indian Ocean. In addition, the section on the Reformed Church of America's Industrial School for Freed Slaves in Muscat with which the monograph begins draws attention to the work of missionaries in the region as well as a significant aspect of American presence in Arabia. In drawing out travel between

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the United States and Arabia, Hopper also, for example, provides a wonderful description of the life of "William Solomon," who was "rescued" in 1896 at age fourteen from a dhow off Muscat, raised at the school in Muscat, and eventually moved to Harlem in New York City.

Chapter 5 returns, almost jumps back, to the late 19th century to examine the British antislavery campaign and the "blind eye" with which the slave trade was often treated in the Gulf (p. 145). This chapter not only presents the "contradictory" efforts of the suppression of the slave trade that other texts have noted, but also provides more detail about internal problems and complaints, including those surrounding the of hiring interpreters in Zanzibar who spoke neither Arabic nor Swahili (p. 167). A drawing of the British court in Zanzibar from the *Illustrated London News* from 1881 provides, along with Hopper's written account, a greater sense of the formal proceedings or at least how these proceedings appeared to English audiences.

In the following, and final chapter before the conclusion, Hopper follows the work of David Fairchild and Paul Popenoe, "agricultural explorers" for the United States Department of Agriculture and farmers, as they traveled to the Gulf, augured the demise of the date trade, and, in the case of Fairchild, documented those he believed were slaves. Unfortunately, the photographs that Fairchild took of people working on date "plantations" are not included, though two of Popenoe's from Iraq are. Like his attention to the American missionary material, Hopper's presentation of Fairchild and Popenoe's material compliment much of the material on the Indian Ocean that focuses on British sources; one only wishes there was more. In the conclusion, Hopper turns to a discussion of the continued significance of the legacy as well as the powerful silences surrounding the slave trade in the contemporary Gulf.

From details of economic instruments for credit to the archival and political silences surrounding the slave trade and other illicit trade, from the impressions of boundaries and movement to the production of a scientifically demarcated corridor and relationships between the "free" sea and regulated land, these five monographs provide far more than an impressive reorientation for Middle Eastern history. Middle Eastern history is clearly not only witnessing a welcome reorientation that recognizes that the seas and ocean around the Arabian Peninsula were not only regularly crossed, but that such crossings were structured, supported, and circumvented by an array of particular policies and practices and, further, that our understandings of these histories are themselves shaped by contemporary and archival frames through which we must carefully read. These texts bring, therefore, analytic and substantive clarity to the idea of oceanic connections and movements and, ultimately, bring to life the economic, administrative, governing, and material worlds of the 19th-century Red Sea and Indian Ocean.

NOTE

[1]See, for example, Abdul Sheriff, *Slave, Spices, and Ivory in Zanzibar* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1987); Frederick Cooper, *Plantation Slavery on the East African Coast* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1977); and Cooper, *From Slaves to Squatters: Plantation Labor and Agriculture in Zanzibar and Coastal Kenya, 1890–1925* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1981).

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