

THE INDIAN OCEAN IN THE LONG EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Prasannan Parthasarathi and Giorgio Riello

INTRODUCTION

The Indian Ocean is with the Mediterranean, the Atlantic, and more recently the Pacific one of the main oceanic fields of history. Its literature goes back fifty years and has produced a great deal of debate and disagreement, especially on the role played by European powers after 1500. This article considers the Indian Ocean in the eighteenth century, a period that is classically seen as a moment of profound transition for the Ocean as an economic system. Until recently, historians agreed that the 1750s represented a shift from an Indian Ocean world that—withstanding a long European presence—remained quintessentially Asian, to one that became colonial and came under the control of European empires, the most prominent of which was the British.

This paper takes a different perspective, one that is less dominated by the political trajectory of India and instead focuses on the Indian Ocean as a space of trade and production. Of course trade involves the exchange of knowledge, ideas, and values—as well as the movement of people—as much as the exchange of goods. Nevertheless, economic historians were among the first to use the “Indian Ocean” as a methodological and geographical perspective and their conceptualization is still extremely influential in the way in which the Indian Ocean is adopted in the research

Prasannan Parthasarathi is Professor of South Asian History at Boston College. He is the author of *Why Europe Grew Rich and Asia Did Not: Global Economic Divergence, 1600–1850* (2011), which received the Jerry Bentley Book Prize of the World History Association in 2014.

Giorgio Riello is Professor of Global History and Culture at the University of Warwick. He is the author of *Cotton: The Fibre that Made the Modern World* (2013), which received the Jerry Bentley Book Prize of the World History Association in 2014.

of historians of culture, environment, or empire. From an economic perspective, the eighteenth century was a period characterized by profound continuities, starting with the expansion of trade in the late seventeenth century and concluding with the creation of a European colonial system, as well as a Europe-centered global economy, but in the early nineteenth century rather than the mid-eighteenth.

We start by charting the Indian Ocean in time and focus both on the *longue durée* and specifically on the eighteenth century. We then move to a critical assessment of the space of the Indian Ocean and consider how the Ocean fits within a global history agenda for the eighteenth century. Finally, we consider the Indian Ocean in relation to the scholarship on other oceans and especially the Atlantic world. Our paper attempts to respond to Kären Wigen's critique of the study of oceans which, she writes, remains "a burgeoning but fragmented body of work."¹ One of the challenges for Indian Ocean scholars is that of forming closer links and collaborations with scholars working on the Atlantic, the Mediterranean, and the Pacific.

TIME AND THE INDIAN OCEAN

Time and space are intimately connected in the study of the Indian Ocean. Although this may be a surprising statement, given the influence of Fernand Braudel's emphasis on the *longue durée*, even a cursory glance at classic works such as K. N. Chaudhuri's *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean* reveals that periodization is an essential element of writings on the Indian Ocean.² The reasons for this are complex—it may have to do with the unforgivingness of Braudel's structural vision which is difficult for other historians to replicate or it may have to do with the deep-seated impulse of historians to periodize.

The Indian Ocean, like the Mediterranean but unlike the Atlantic or Pacific, has a dense history of connections dating back to ancient times. The task of Indian Oceanists is, therefore, made more complex because of this longer time frame. Historians of the Indian Ocean conventionally divide the history of the ocean into four periods: the ancient, the "Islamic" (hence the phrase in the subtitle of K. N. Chaudhuri's classic book, "from the rise of Islam"), the early modern which is characterized by the entry of Europeans, and the period of European domination and empire from the mid-eighteenth century onward.

While historians now reject the claim that the arrival of the Portuguese marked a decisive break with what came before, the activities of Europeans continue to be privileged in Indian Ocean studies. The argument for continuity pre- and post-1500 has been made forcefully by a number of historians, including Ashin Das Gupta, Michael Pearson, and more recently Sebastian Prange, who questions one of the great shibboleths of Indian Ocean history, that the Portuguese brought a new kind of force and violence.³ Similarly, compelling arguments have been made for the vitality of Asian traders well into the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, Edward Alpers's excellent 2014 overview of the Indian Ocean literature still maintains the established periodization by dividing the long history of the Indian Ocean into five periods: the ancient, the Islamic, the European, the long nineteenth century, and the twentieth century.⁴

The bulk of scholarship on the Indian Ocean focuses on the early modern or European period, which runs from approximately 1500 to the mid-eighteenth century. There is a smaller literature on the ancient and Islamic periods, ranging from Abdul Sheriff's *Dhow Cultures of the Indian Ocean* to Andre Wink's multi-volume study of *al-Hind*, which focuses on the Islamic epoch, to Philippe Beaujard's two-volume work on the Indian Ocean as the core of an Afro-Euroasian world system before the sixteenth century.⁵ Similarly, the writings on the period after the mid-eighteenth century are limited, although there are some important works by Sugata Bose and Thomas Metcalf.⁶ However, scholarship on these previously neglected periods is growing and for the purposes of this essay some new works now provide important details on the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, a period which had formerly been a "blank slate" but was assumed to be one of European dominance in the Indian Ocean.⁷

The centuries between the entry of Europeans into the Indian Ocean and the mid-eighteenth century are divided most typically into Portuguese, Dutch, and British periods, as different European "powers" are believed to have been, in succession, the major actors in the Ocean. The Portuguese ruled the sea in the sixteenth century, the Dutch in the seventeenth, concluding with the rise of the British in the eighteenth. This is obviously a Eurocentric point of view and emerges in part as a consequence of the voluminous records of the East India companies which are the major source for reconstruction of economic activity on the Ocean in these centuries.⁸ This approach, which can be dated to at least K. M. Panikkar and his classic study, *Asia and Western Dominance*, has been subjected to repeated criticisms, but the coming of Europeans and their activities continue to give shape to writings on the early modern Indian Ocean.⁹ An alternative tack, taken by Ashin Das Gupta and Michael Pearson in an important edited collection, *India and the Indian Ocean, 1500-1800*, is to simply divide the history of the early modern Indian Ocean into centuries.¹⁰ The external marker of the passage of years becomes the instrument of periodization. This has the benefit of moving beyond the Eurocentrism of previous approaches but while it may be useful for teaching—it is convenient to divide a class into chronological units—it is less compelling in historical terms.

For our purposes, both approaches—the Eurocentric and the chronological—see a breaking point in the eighteenth century when it is believed Europeans became the dominant force in the Indian Ocean, both politically and economically. Therefore, in these approaches the eighteenth century is bifurcated. K. N. Chaudhuri, for instance, ends his *Trade and Civilisation* in the mid-eighteenth century on the grounds that the rise of British power in Bengal reshaped the whole Indian Ocean region. As he writes, "If Asian historians see a kind of chronological unity in the period from 650 to 1750, it is perhaps because they are aware of the course of Asian history during the two centuries from 1757 to 1947."¹¹ While it is critical not to minimize the importance of the rise of British power in the Indian subcontinent, it may not be a marker of dramatic change in the Indian Ocean world. There were important continuities to the eighteenth century which persisted despite growing British political power in India. These included the pattern of trade within the Indian Ocean and between the Indian Ocean and other regions, in particular the Atlantic, to which the essay now turns.

THE COMMERCIAL WORLD OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

In a classic essay published in 1987, Ashin Das Gupta, the doyen of Indian Ocean studies, argued that “the relative importance of the European factor grew considerably during the eighteenth century, and it is a characteristic of the century that at its end the Indian Ocean was dominated by the Europeans.”¹² The rise of Europeans was balanced by a decline in Indian (in particular Gujarati) shipping and commerce and Das Gupta declared, “Not only was the European ship dominant in the ocean but . . . the Indian ship had sailed into oblivion.”¹³ These shifts were accompanied by other changes including the retreat of Dutch trade, the growing prominence of British port cities such as Calcutta and Bombay, and the development of a direct trade between India and China.

The thesis that the eighteenth-century Indian Ocean became Europeanized has been influential for several decades and even recently given rise to such statements as: “By the middle of the eighteenth century European demand for Indian Ocean products was probably bigger than the total internal trade in the Ocean, through this takes no account of inland markets.”¹⁴ It is impossible to quantify the size of the Indian Ocean trade and of its various pieces, but scattered evidence suggests that this statement is off the mark.¹⁵ However, it appears plausible, given the dominance of an interpretive framework which privileges the activities of Europeans in the eighteenth-century Indian Ocean.

In Ashin Das Gupta’s essay, which forcefully makes the argument for the dramatic impact of European power, there are signs of dissonance between the findings of historians of the terrestrial and the maritime parts of the Indian Ocean world. While Asian actors were in retreat on the water, the same could not be said for the land and Das Gupta noted that the old certainties of eighteenth-century decline in Indonesia, India, and the Arab countries were giving way to new interpretations. “The arithmetic of decay and growth is particularly difficult to work out in the Indian subcontinent,” he wrote.¹⁶ This rethinking of political and economic developments within the Indian subcontinent in the eighteenth century, which began in the 1970s with the writings of Frank Perlin, Christopher Bayly and others, is now revising understandings of the Ocean as well.¹⁷

This is very evident in a recent collection entitled *Britain’s Oceanic Empire* in which two authors reject the thesis that Indian traders were supplanted by their European counterparts in the eighteenth century. Lakshmi Subramanian examines relations between Indian merchants and the English East India Company in western India at the end of the century and points to the continued influence and power of Indian traders and the “vitality of Indian participation in western India’s export trade.”¹⁸ Rajat Datta surveys the commercial economy of eastern India in the late eighteenth century and concludes that “Indian merchants were still a strong presence in the fiscal and commercial environment, with the two great staples of eastern India’s traditional commerce—food grains and cotton—still in their hands.”¹⁹ Although Datta has little to say about Bengali mercantile participation in the Indian Ocean trade, their powerful position in the regional economy would suggest a role in maritime commerce. In addition to these two works, a forthcoming study of trade between western India and eastern Africa emphasizes

that Gujaratis dominated that circuit of exchange well into the nineteenth century. The Gujarati merchants' knowledge and access to informational networks allowed them to outcompete both Portuguese and British traders.²⁰

Given these revisionist findings, in the minds of the present authors it makes eminent sense to speak of a long eighteenth century which began in the late seventeenth with a boom in cotton textile exports from the Indian subcontinent and ended in the early nineteenth with the dramatic drop in that trade.²¹ This approach is contrary to long-standing conventional wisdom, which saw the rise of British political power in eastern and southern India in the mid-eighteenth century as marking a new era in which the English East India Company and British traders dominated the commercial world of the Indian Ocean. If we instead adopt an economic lens, the trade boom with Europe (known by European historians as "The Calico Craze") from the 1660s and 1670s led to higher levels of production in the major cotton centers of the subcontinent, which lasted until the early nineteenth century. In this long eighteenth century, new sources of demand in the Atlantic world supplemented traditional markets in the Indian Ocean, ranging from West Asia to East Africa and Southeast Asia. Taken together, it is clear that the textile trade of the Indian Ocean continued to operate at a high pitch in this period.²²

The other side of the trade in cottons was a trade in silver, the dynamics of which also united the long eighteenth century into a single period. Silver was needed for the purchase of Indian cotton textiles and substantial quantities of silver flowed into the Indian subcontinent. It was an exchange of "bullion for goods" in Om Prakash's pithy phrasing.²³ According to one estimate, between 1600 and 1800 the region absorbed twenty percent of the world's precious metal production.²⁴ Figures compiled by Artur Attman show that from the late seventeenth century very large quantities of silver entered the Indian Ocean trading system, with the European East India companies accounting for a large fraction of the precious metal trade. This point will not be elaborated upon in this paper, but it makes sense that this was the case, given that large quantities of cotton cloth from India were being sent to Europe and the Atlantic world. While the European East India companies carried more silver, a significant quantity of the metal continued to enter the trading world of the Indian Ocean through the Ottoman Empire and Iran as well as Central Asia and was likewise used for the purchase of Indian cottons. Therefore, the influx of American silver into the global economy of the eighteenth century, by boosting exports from the Ottoman Empire, Iran, and Central Asia, which were paid for with bullion, increased the purchasing power of these regions.²⁵

The inflow of bullion set off a commercial boom in the Indian Ocean trading system. From the late seventeenth century, there was a steady growth of economic activity across the regions that bordered that sea. Not surprisingly, the Indian subcontinent itself, where much of the silver settled and was subsequently coined, experienced a far-reaching monetization. The expansion of money use, the growth in markets, and the growing power of commercial groups are some of the changes that historians of eighteenth-century South Asia have traced. These changes had their antecedents in the seventeenth century, but in the eighteenth they intensified and expanded in scale. Therefore, the maritime trade of the Indian Ocean was complemented by trade on the lands that lay adjacent to that body of water.²⁶

The production of goods intended for oceanic trade also led to a quickening of land-based commerce. In the case of cotton textiles, although much of the cloth that entered the exchange networks of the Indian Ocean was woven and finished (bleached, dyed, printed, or painted) in coastal regions of the Indian subcontinent, the cotton itself was often grown deep in the interior where soils were more appropriate for the cultivation of the plant. Much spinning of yarn was concentrated in the cotton-growing regions of the interior as well. By the eighteenth century cotton and yarn were transported on a large scale to coastal weaving centers and were likely to have been the largest bulk trades of the subcontinent.²⁷ The growth in maritime commerce had a commensurate impact on the land-based economy. A focus on the Indian Ocean should not lead to a neglect of terrestrial developments, which were often critical to the vibrancy of life on the water.²⁸

The expansion of the maritime economy of the Indian Ocean should not obscure the continuing vitality of trade on land in other regions as well. The East India companies, as Niels Steensgaard has argued, may have reduced the caravan trade in the seventeenth century, although a number of authors criticize this assertion.²⁹ Nevertheless, the infusion of American silver into the global economy of the eighteenth century appears to have stimulated other land routes. One of the most notable connected the Punjab in northwestern India with Central Asia and even further north into Russia. The commercial expansion of the eighteenth century stimulated economic growth in the Arab territories of the Ottoman Empire as well. One sign of this was the expansion of several urban areas. André Raymond reports that the built-up areas of a number of cities in the Arab provinces of the empire grew by about fifty percent between the early sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. Damascus, for instance, encompassed an area of 212 hectares at the beginning of the sixteenth century but 313 hectares in the mid-nineteenth. A similar transformation took place in Cairo.³⁰

Such urban expansion was propelled by a number of factors, such as the growth of the *hajj*, but the expansion of commerce was a critical contributor, made possible by Ottoman sovereignty. As Raymond writes:

The establishment of an immense Mediterranean empire . . . created an enormous market where both individuals and products could circulate freely from the frontiers of Morocco to those of Iran, from the steppes of southern Russia to Abyssinia. The centers located on the main commercial routes (which was the case of most of the big Arab cities) could only benefit from the activity of these interior currents, which would remain dominant up until the eighteenth century. The vitality of Oriental trade was not really interrupted by the entry of Europeans into the Indian Ocean, and the appearance of a new product such as coffee afterward gave it an enormous expansion.³¹

The Arab lands became corridors for the transfer of goods between the Mediterranean Sea and Indian Ocean. The expansion of Cairo, as well as other changes in the political economy of the city such as the decline in weaver wealth and income, was a result of its key position between the Red and Mediterranean seas. In the eighteenth century the city's weavers were squeezed between rising cotton prices, driven up by European demand, and stable cloth prices, set by the sizable imports of Indian cottons.³² Further east, the caravan trade through Mesopotamia, which

carried large quantities of Indian textiles, connected Persian Gulf ports with centers of demand which lay to the north.³³

This extension of the ocean onto the land had important political consequences in the eighteenth century, which is another marker of the period. In the Indian subcontinent the commercialization of economic life, which began in the late sixteenth century and picked up pace from the late seventeenth, undermined the political and economic conditions that had made Mughal rule possible over large stretches of northern India. Older interpretations of Mughal decline saw the end of the empire as resulting in eighteenth-century disorder and chaos. In Irfan Habib's famous words, "In the period that followed [the decline of the empire] the gates were opened to anarchy and colonial conquest."³⁴ More recent interpretations see continuities from the seventeenth to the eighteenth centuries as the Mughal state was displaced from below as local power holders amassed greater resources with which they resisted imperial demands and undermined imperial legitimacy.³⁵ The great commercialization of the Indian Ocean world, on both sea and land, contributed to this consolidation of wealth in the lower rungs of the political order. A similar process of change has been identified in the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire. The weakening of the power of the Ottoman state over these regions is no longer seen as a marker of decline, but of growing power from below. In the Ottoman case, these local elites, *ayans*, accumulated more power and more resources and achieved greater autonomy. Their expanded wealth drew in part on the vibrant commercial world that the Indian Ocean made possible.³⁶

Thus, the long eighteenth century in the Indian Ocean began in the closing decades of the seventeenth with expanded exports of cottons and imports of silver. It concluded in the nineteenth century when flows of silver into the Indian Ocean world came to an end and when the export of cotton cloth was reduced to a trickle.³⁷ By around 1810, British cottons displaced Indian in the major markets of the Ottoman Empire. Christophe Aubin—an agent for a Glasgow cotton manufacturer who traveled through Ottoman territories to collect information on cloth consumption—discovered that Indian goods had been preferred till recently when they were replaced by less expensive British imitations.³⁸ Around the same time, the purchases of the East India companies in India ground to a halt. The English East India Company, for example, closed its factories in South India by 1816 and 1817. A long trade boom in the Indian Ocean world thus began to contract. It would revive later in the nineteenth century but along very different lines.³⁹

SPACE AND THE INDIAN OCEAN

Himanshu Prabha Ray and Edward Alpers observe that in the trading world of the Indian Ocean "the complex connections built through the mediation of the sea remain to be articulated both spatially and chronologically."⁴⁰ The chronology of the Indian Ocean cannot be separated from changing interpretations of its geography. As is the case with time, space is not a neutral category when we consider the boundaries and internal workings of the Indian Ocean. Broadly speaking, three different views of the "space of the Indian Ocean" can be found in the literature: first, one that sees the Ocean as a system, whose parts and internal logics changed over time; second, one that conceptualizes the Indian Ocean as a network for the movement of people, commodities, and ideas; and finally a per-

spective that sees the Indian Ocean as a space made of individual places and their relationships and connections.

It has become almost second nature for historians of the Indian Ocean to interpret it as a system formed of different parts. Partly because of regional specializations, the Indian Ocean has often been divided into smaller areas. The most common is a tripartite division into the Chinese Sea, the eastern Indian Ocean, and the western Indian Ocean, the latter at times further divided into the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea. While the division of the Indian Ocean into its eastern and western wings is perhaps unavoidable given the nature of much archival-based historical scholarship which leads to delineations of smaller units and regions, it is also consistent with much of the trade in the Ocean, which, because of the nature of monsoon winds, generally remained localized in one or the other of the two wings.

Historians' focus on the different areas of the Indian Oceans has varied according to the period considered. Whilst the Chinese sea has been examined across the divide represented by the entry of Europeans around 1500, the eastern Indian Ocean has been seen as key to sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century trade, especially as it was structured first by the Portuguese and then the Dutch. Although the literature on the western Indian Ocean is not as developed as that for other areas, the focus thus far has been either on the period before 1500 or the era that we have defined as the long eighteenth century. It was in the latter period that the Indian Ocean system reached its peak in terms of its extent (on both sea and land), of its connections, and of their intensity.

Yet research remains uneven. Until recently, for instance, East Africa was sidelined from the Indian Ocean world. The above-mentioned articulation into smaller areas suggested that in the eighteenth century Africa was touched by Asian trade and exchange but was not central to it. A new series of studies, most notably by Edward Alpers, Gwyn Campbell, and Pedro Machado, has challenged this interpretation and has pointed to the importance of East Africa beyond its contribution to the Red Sea trade, which has been more studied.⁴¹ Malindi, Mombasa, and indeed Madagascar, the Comores, Mauritius, and Reunion formed an important part of the Indian Ocean trading system in the eighteenth century. African consumers, it has been argued, did not sit at the periphery of the Indian Ocean trade or at ports of call for Europeans on their way back to Lisbon, Lorient, Amsterdam, or London. African tastes and preferences, as highlighted by Machado for the long eighteenth century and Jeremy Prestholdt for the nineteenth century, shaped the production of commodities in places like western India. These goods were consumed far beyond the ports of East Africa.⁴² Through inland trade routes, goods from the trading world of the Indian Ocean were dispersed across sub-Saharan Africa, reaching as far as the Atlantic coast. The need to bring Africa into the picture has led Michael Pearson to suggest that the Indian Ocean be renamed "the Afrasian Sea."⁴³

At the other side of the Indian Ocean, research on Southeast Asia has been booming for the past twenty-five years, producing major pieces of scholarship such as Anthony Reid's and Victor Lieberman's multi-volume works.⁴⁴ One might say that the issue with Southeast Asian scholarship has been its potential to form its own distinct "area study" characterized by a research agenda that attempts to link the Indian Ocean, the Pacific, and the China Sea. As a consequence, scholarship

on eighteenth-century Southeast Asia is less linked to the Indian Ocean than that on the seventeenth century, which was the heyday of the spice trade.

The challenging of the spatial contours of the Indian Ocean and its articulation as a system has led to a further rethinking of its connection with terrestrial spaces. The previous sections of this paper discussed the centrality of the land-sea connections in the Indian subcontinent and the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire. We may broaden this interconnection of sea and land to include large parts of sub-Saharan Africa, as well as Central Asia and mainland Southeast Asia. The integration of land and sea spaces has been particularly evident in the work of historians considering diasporic communities in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Stephen Frederic Dale, for instance, has studied Indian merchant communities in Iran, Turan, and Russia in the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth century; Sebouh David Aslanian has recently considered the global trade networks of Armenian merchants from New Julfa; and Rene Barendse has shown the overlap and intersections between land and sea trade in the Red Sea area.⁴⁵ Whilst our focus is on the world of trade and commercial activities, it must be underlined that the same permeability of land and sea can be seen with respect to cultural productions, religion, language, and ideas.⁴⁶

These and other recent works seem to escape a strictly maritime definition of the Indian Ocean and adopt instead a network perspective. They support Nile Green's observation that the maritime world model "not only has the danger of delimiting the scale and scope of interaction, but it also lacks analytical value for explaining many of the processes that occur in the space it demarcates."⁴⁷ Moving away from either Braudelian or Wallerstenian spatial frameworks, in the past few decades historians have re-conceptualized the vast, amorphous, and changing space of the Indian Ocean by drawing on the notion of networks, whether social, economic, or cultural. Some scholars go back to the classic tripartite division of the Indian Ocean and point to the existence of "interlocking circuits of commerce."⁴⁸ Others instead prefer to see the Indian Ocean not as formed by regions but by connections created across nodes, ports, and entrepôts. In methodological terms, this entails a rejection of "natural" spatial categories, such as the boundaries of the ocean itself, and their replacement by fluid spaces that change over time and are defined by networks that constantly re-articulate space.⁴⁹

This modification of spatial perspective—or perhaps more accurately the very notion of space embodied by the Indian Ocean—has also changed historians' research agendas, especially for the eighteenth century. Networks point to the importance of information and communication over long distance, to interconnections, and the role of institutions.⁵⁰ Networks are sustained not only by communities, but also by brokers and "go-betweens."⁵¹ Such brokers in the Indian Ocean were critical for exchanges of knowledge, not just of goods and people, but also of science, technology, and more widely religious and cultural ideas, and retained this function long after the beginning of European influence in the Subcontinent and across the Indian Ocean.⁵² A more qualitative perspective has emerged, one that, as Philippe Beaujard observes, addresses not just the size of the network but also "the regularity, intensity and speed of the exchanges that resulted."⁵³

One of the major contributions to a network perspective of the Indian Ocean comes from the study of commodities, each of which connects different

places in the Ocean through what we might define as “vectors of exchange” and embodies a specific set of geographies. In the period from the fourteenth to the eighteenth century, the Indian Ocean trade ran primarily from north to south with China and India producing manufactured goods to be sold in East Africa and Southeast Asia while raw materials, slaves, spices, ivory, and gold moved in the opposite direction. These patterns began to change from the late eighteenth century with the expansion of the production of raw cotton, indigo, and sugar in India, coffee in Southeast Asia, and tea in China, which led to the expansion of an east-west trade. This was a trade heavily influenced by European and Atlantic demand, but its chronology of change did not conform to the classic mid-eighteenth-century watershed. The cultivation and trade of raw materials and produce came into being slowly; not until the nineteenth century did this new trading structure cement a new relationship between international commerce, production in the littoral areas of Asia, and colonial power.⁵⁴

Networks have also led to a renewed interest in the role of cities as nodes of exchange. This draws on an expanding literature on global cities as places that are able to attract capital, entrepreneurial elites, and coordinate international flows of goods, people, and ideas. Key to the articulation of the Indian Ocean were in particular the many “factories”—ports that coordinated the procurement of merchandise—either controlled or settled by the European trading companies. Their importance, however, lies not only in the European presence but also in their cosmopolitanism. A city like Jakarta, controlled by the Dutch East India Company, had in 1763 just 2000 Dutch settlers and 726 Eurasian, compared to 3000 Chinese, over 500 “black Portuguese,” 3000 inhabitants of Malay background, and more than 13,000 slaves. Around 1700 the important port of Surat had a fleet of more than a hundred vessels of two to three hundred tons, but Europeans accounted for no more than ten percent of the city’s estimated annual trade worth 16 million rupees.⁵⁵

The nature, composition, everyday life, and strategic economic role of cities like Surat, Batavia, Madras, Hormuz, or Macao, as well as their changing interactions form a new area of study that addresses the relationship between the local and the global. Historians of the Indian Ocean have developed a nuanced notion of “place” to complement that of “space.” Particularly relevant for recent studies of the eighteenth-century Indian Ocean has been the idea of looking at the ocean from the perspective of a specific place within it. In the 1950s and 1960s one of the achievements of Indian Ocean scholarship was to challenge a view of the Ocean “from the deck of a ship.” This was how J.C. van Leur characterized scholarship that treated the Indian Ocean as a sidebar to the story of European expansion.⁵⁶ The establishment of a distinct Indian Ocean historiography, however, produced the opposite effect: in the attempt to emphasize the agency of Asians and the identity of the Indian Ocean as a distinct unit, not enough care was taken to highlight contrasting views, different interests, and the nature of locales. Recent work by Ghulam Nadri, for instance, challenges this perspective allowing for a better articulation of the space of the Indian Ocean, starting from a single region and then expanding to a consideration of the Indian Ocean as a system.⁵⁷ This allows the balancing of local and global perspectives as well as for the integration of local history, archaeological findings, and anthropological methods into the study of the Indian Ocean.⁵⁸

Whatever definition or perspective we adopt on the Indian Ocean, its geography came to change in the course of the early modern period. If in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, especially under the influence and presence of the Portuguese and later the Dutch, the Red Sea and Southeast Asia had been instrumental in carrying the trade within the Ocean and between the Indian Ocean and Europe, by the late seventeenth century the picture had substantially altered. The English East India Company had invested heavily in India and developed a thriving trade in Gujarat and the Coromandel Coast. Bengal was fast emerging as an important area of trade not just for the English company but also the Dutch. At the turn of the eighteenth century, Bengal accounted for as much as forty percent of the total exports from Asia for these two European companies.⁵⁹ Yet if we move from a regional perspective to an oceanic or global one, the long eighteenth century seems to be particularly stable, especially compared to the extensive reconfiguration of the Indian economy and the Indian Ocean system which took place in the nineteenth century.⁶⁰

THE INDIAN OCEAN IN A GLOBAL FRAME

What happens if we move away from considering the Indian Ocean as a separate system and instead view it as a part of a global story? This is not necessarily a novel perspective, but one that has been critically assessed by historians of the British Empire. As Bowen, Mancke, and Reid have observed, British imperial history created a divide between the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. The different structures of British commercial activity and the divergent trajectories of British political power in the two oceans seemed to disconnect them from each other. Eighteenth-century commentators saw the “imperial project” as something scattered, haphazard, and rather chaotic. Actions and processes—especially in the Americas and Asia—seemed to follow different logics rather than being part of one intertwined whole. Historians added a series of marked contrasts and oppositions between the settler societies of neo-Europeans in the Americas and the commercial entrepôts of Asia and between the free trade of the Atlantic and the company-dominated context of the Indian Ocean.⁶¹ This is, of course, a British metropolitan perspective, which privileges the views and programmatic intentions of economic and political interests based in Europe. Nevertheless, it is symptomatic of the separation of the Atlantic and Indian oceans in historical scholarship.

We have seen that well before the formalization of European empires in Asia, Atlantic links were absolutely critical to the economic vitality of the Indian Ocean world, for without the silver of Potosí and Zacatecas commercial activity would have been at a far lower level. The bulk of this silver was carried from the Americas to Europe and then made its way to the Indian Ocean via a variety of routes. Some was brought directly from northwestern Europe to the Indian Ocean by the East India companies. Other routes for silver went by sea and land across Europe, Russia, the Ottoman Empire, Iran, and Central Asia to reach the lands bordering on the waters of the Indian Ocean. While we still do not exactly how much, a not insignificant portion came via Manila and the galleon trade across the Pacific from Acapulco.⁶² The galleon trade was conducted for more than two centuries, from the late sixteenth to the early nineteenth, and in its heyday three large five-deck vessels plied this route every year.⁶³ Therefore, an understanding

of the Indian Ocean in the eighteenth century rests critically upon its connections with neighboring bodies of water.

Similarly, the history of the Atlantic in the eighteenth century is inconceivable without its links to the Indian Ocean. In this period the Atlantic slave trade entered a new phase. According to Nicholas Canny and Philip Morgan, "It was not until after 1700 that trade in slaves became the principal interest of European merchants dealing with Africa."⁶⁴ The eighteenth century accounted for more than half the slaves that entered the Atlantic trade between 1500 and 1867 (6.5 million out of the total of 12.5 million), making it the zenith of this commerce.⁶⁵ The Indian Ocean was pivotal for this trade because Indian cotton cloth represented about a third of the value of the goods that Europeans exchanged for slaves, from the Guinea coast to Angola.⁶⁶ One more marker of the long eighteenth century, therefore, is the greater density of links between Atlantic and Indian oceans, in comparison to what preceded and succeeded that period. Silver and cottons were not the only connections between the two oceans. By the seventeenth century important Indian commodities such as indigo and sugar had been transplanted to the Americas and began to compete with the "originals." At the same time, new crops arrived in the Indian Ocean such as tobacco, maize, and chili. Chili took off in a number of locations, particularly in South India where there was a rapid expansion of its cultivation. However, it is still unclear how the creation of global markets affected established Indian Ocean production, trade, and consumption patterns.

Despite the important links between oceanic studies and global processes, global and ocean histories have not been sufficiently connected. In the case of Atlantic history, Peter Coclanis has criticized "the obsession with the Atlantic world *qua* unit [which] continues to impede our understanding of the degree to which this unit drew its life blood from—and hemorrhaged into—others."⁶⁷ Much the same criticism may be leveled at writings on the Indian Ocean. Why does there continue to be a divide between those who study the Indian Ocean and those who focus on the Atlantic or Pacific? In many respects, this problem has analogies with an earlier divide between global history and area studies, where the concentration on regions came at the expense of global as well as other viewpoints.⁶⁸ In the case of Indian Ocean studies, there is an additional Eurocentric bias with the persistence of a privileging of European companies. Moving away from this is a prerequisite for a dialogue between the oceanic and global histories. At the same time, Indian Ocean studies is becoming a well-developed field of study with its own research agendas, which absorbs the intellectual energies of scholars, despite the limitations of such a constricted spatial focus.

THE INDIAN OCEAN IN A METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

We have tried so far to show how the scholarship on the Indian Ocean has developed its own boundaries both in terms of time and space. Unlike oceanic connections in the Atlantic and the Pacific, the world of the Indian Ocean stretches back to ancient times and therefore shares some of continuities that are often associated with the Mediterranean. At the same time, the Indian Ocean shares with the Pacific a porous notion of space whose perimeters have been the subject of great debate.⁶⁹

Together with time and space, the Indian Ocean is also characterized by its own academic practices. There are several “Indian Ocean” centers in different continents, though collaboration among scholars has not been as widespread as it has been for the study of the Atlantic or as it is fast becoming for the study of both the Pacific and the Mediterranean.⁷⁰ The same could be said about major debates, a common feature of Atlantic scholarship, but much rarer in the study of the Indian Ocean. These broad comparisons on the shape of different oceanic fields of study must acknowledge the idiosyncratic nature of the sources available for the study of the Indian Ocean, heavily reliant as they are on the extensive archives of the European East India companies. Only recently have scholars started using sources in a variety of Asian and African languages, opening however the problem of linguistic training and access to archives in Asia and Africa.⁷¹

In terms of methodologies, a comparison with the Atlantic scholarship is instructive as it underlines both the particularities of writings on the Indian Ocean and highlights several areas and approaches that remain uncharted in the Indian Ocean scholarship. We would like to briefly discuss three issues: first on the contribution of specific oceanic studies to wider historical scholarship, second on the methods adopted, and finally on key themes considered. From the point of view of the Indian Ocean, it is striking how the Atlantic has developed a self-critical and even skeptical strand of scholarship that has questioned the very project of writing an oceanic narrative. For instance, some Atlantic historians have criticized the emphasis given to oceanic ties as they often hide continental connections. More generally, the critical awareness of the concepts and narratives used has allowed historians of the Atlantic world to step away from primarily narrative or descriptive approaches. That has in turn provided a number of “transferable notions” that make Atlantic historical scholarship popular beyond the group of its practitioners.

The Atlantic has made good use both of comparative and connective methodologies. The work of John Elliott, for instance, has used colonial societies and projects as a platform for a comparative study of the two halves of the Atlantic.⁷² So far the Indian Ocean has not seen similar works either in terms of comparing and contrasting macro areas or in showing the different experiences across the vast space of the Indian Ocean. Whilst the Atlantic has been successful at capturing other levels of analysis such as that of states, colonies, empires, and continents,⁷³ the historiography on the Indian Ocean has subsumed them to the maritime framework.⁷⁴ As is the case with the Atlantic, the Indian Ocean scholarship has a great deal to contribute to “entangled histories,” which are concerned, as Eliga Gould explains, with “‘mutual influencing,’ ‘reciprocal or asymmetric perceptions,’ and the intertwined ‘processes of constituting one another.’”⁷⁵ This agenda should show that “the ocean was not just a place within which people circulated: it was itself the place within which they had transformative experiences.”⁷⁶

As historians we are not in the business of forecasting the future and surely not of predicting future scholarly trends. However, it is clear that oceanic scholarship is becoming less triumphalist and more nuanced in its approaches. One fact that needs to be acknowledged is that the Indian Ocean was “intrinsically unstable.” This is true historically in the sense that we should abandon a view of the Indian Ocean—or any oceanic space for that matter—as one of inevitably increasing connectedness, expansion, and linear development. The Indian Ocean, perhaps even

more than the Atlantic, shows profound discontinuities and fuzziness of processes, across both time and space. But the instability is also methodological. As Kären Wigen observes for the Atlantic, “Oceanic histories invert scholarly conventions by turning political peripheries into regional cores.”⁷⁷ The Indian Ocean, for instance, has the potential to challenge established narrative of empire, be they Mughal, Ottoman, or British.

From the issue of methods to that of themes, once again Indian Ocean scholars have an open field in considering topics ranging from the hybridity of culture, to the history of travel (a field that has been more concerned with empires and land travel than oceans), to the issue of agency of Asian populations *vis-à-vis* that of Europeans. There are already several studies on race, slavery, population flows, and art that need to be set within an overlapping framework and connected with the wealth of scholarship on trade and the Indian Ocean economy.⁷⁸ This we think might be accomplished in different ways. First, studies of commerce can be connected with those on material culture in which objects must be considered not just as commodities but as markers of identity and makers of meaning.⁷⁹ Another possibility is to expand the study of the commercial networks that encompassed the Indian Ocean. The unit here is that of entrepreneurial enterprises, often merchants and groups of merchants and their associated subsectors such as maritime services (shipbuilding and maintenance, insurance, brokerage, financial services, victualing, etc.).

CONCLUSION

Rila Mukherjee has argued that the cartographic category of the Indian Ocean was “slow to capture the European imagination” and that the very expression “Indian Ocean” came into existence only in the nineteenth century.⁸⁰ It is not surprising that the name given to this body of water and to this arena of activity has its origins in the era of European predominance. Although when historians use the “Indian Ocean” they deploy a methodological and historiographical concept that did not exist in the minds of historical subjects in the eighteenth century, as this paper has shown, the waters of that ocean—along with the land that bordered it—were the domain of dense human activity.

In the nineteenth century the Indian Ocean economy surveyed in this paper was dramatically restructured. From about 1810 Indian cotton cloth began to be displaced by British imitations, which were marketed with Indian names. The contraction in the Atlantic slave trade and the ending of British participation in that commerce broke an important link between Indian and Atlantic trading worlds and shortly thereafter the English East India Company closed its factories in India and terminated its purchases of cotton cloth.⁸¹ This was followed by a growing export of silver from India to China and Europe itself. A new economic order was emerging in the Indian Ocean, which was reinforced by British political power and British domination of the seas. As a consequence, in the nineteenth century the trading world of the Indian Ocean would be subordinated to the new dynamic centers of the Atlantic.

This does not mean that the Indian Ocean was no longer a zone in which people, goods, and ideas traveled, and one should not underestimate the scale of

activity on the waters of that sea, especially in the decades between 1860 and 1930. However, the framework in which movement took place and the links between distant shores that were formed—some longstanding, some novel—were dramatically different from what had existed in the long eighteenth century. It was one in which Africans, Arabs, and Asians were dependent upon the economic and political power of Europeans. The nineteenth century was in many respects a European century, even in the distant waters of the Indian Ocean.

NOTES

The authors are grateful to the helpful comments of Maxine Berg, Tirthankar Roy, and two anonymous readers.

1. Kären Wigen, "Introduction," in *Seascapes: Maritime Histories, Littoral Cultures, and Trans-oceanic Exchanges*, ed. Jerry H. Bentley, Renate Bridenthal and Kären Wigen (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 2.

2. K. N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1985).

3. Ashin Das Gupta, "Introduction II: The Story," in *India and the Indian Ocean, 1500–1800*, ed. Ashin Das Gupta and M. N. Pearson (Calcutta: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987), 28; Michael Pearson, *The Indian Ocean* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 113; Sebastian R. Prange, "A Trade of No Dishonor: Piracy, Commerce, and Community in the Western Indian Ocean, Twelfth to Sixteenth Century," *American Historical Review* 116 (2011): 1269–93.

4. Edward A. Alpers, *The Indian Ocean in World History* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2014).

5. André Wink, *Al-Hind: The Making of the Indo-Islamic World*, 4 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1990–2002); Abdul Sheriff, *Dhow Cultures of the Indian Ocean: Cosmopolitanism, Commerce and Islam* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2010); Philippe Beaujard, *Les Mondes de l'Océan Indien*, 2 vols. (Paris: Armand Colin, 2012). See also Steven E. Sidebotham, *Berenike and the Ancient Spice Route* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2011) and for the Islamic period, Roxani Eleni Margariti, *Aden and the Indian Ocean Trade: 150 Years in the Life of a Medieval Arabian Port* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2007).

6. Sugata Bose, *A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2006); Thomas Metcalf, *Imperial Connections: India in the Indian Ocean Arena, 1860–1920* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2007).

7. See essays in H.V. Bowen, Elizabeth Mancke, and John G. Reid, eds., *Britain's Oceanic Empire: Atlantic and Indian Ocean Worlds, c. 1550–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2012) as well as Pedro Machado, *Ocean of Trade: South Asian Merchants, Africa and the Indian Ocean, c. 1750–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, forthcoming).

8. For synthetic works on the European East India Companies see: Om Prakash, *European Commercial Enterprise in Pre-Colonial India* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998); Femme S. Gaastra, *The Dutch East India Company: Expansion and Decline* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2003); Felicia Gottmann, "French-Asian Connections: The Compagnies des Indes, France's Eastern Trade, and New Directions in Historical Scholarship," *Historical Journal* 56 (2013): 537–52; Tirthankar Roy, *The East India Company: The World's Most Powerful Corporation* (New Delhi: Allen Lane, 2012); and the research Project "Europe's Asian Centuries" based at the University of Warwick and coordinated by Maxine Berg: <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/history/ghcc/eacl>.

9. K. M. Panikkar, *Asia and Western Dominance: A Survey of the Vasco da Gama Epoch of Asian History, 1498–1945* (London, Allen & Unwin, 1953).

10. Das Gupta and Pearson, eds., *India and the Indian Ocean*.

11. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation*, 4. The year 1757 represents the Battle of Plassey and 1947 Indian independence.

12. Ashin Da Gupta, "India and the Indian Ocean in the Eighteenth Century," in *India and the Indian Ocean*, 132.
13. Das Gupta, "India and the Indian Ocean in the Eighteenth Century," 134.
14. Pearson, *The Indian Ocean*, 153.
15. See, for instance, Prasannan Parthasarathi, *Why Europe Grew Rich and Asia Did Not: Global Economic Divergence, 1600–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2011), 26.
16. Das Gupta, "India and the Indian Ocean in the Eighteenth Century," 133.
17. Frank Perlin, "Proto-Industrialization and Pre-Colonial South Asia," *Past & Present* 98 (1983): 30–95; C. A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the Age of European Expansion, 1770–1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1983).
18. Lakshmi Subramanian, "Seths and Sahibs: Negotiated Relationships between Indigenous Capital and the East India Company," in *Britain's Oceanic Empire*, 337.
19. Rajat Datta, "The Commercial Economy of Eastern India under Early British Rule," in *Britain's Oceanic Empire*, 367.
20. Machado, *Ocean of Trade*.
21. For a discussion of this change in South India see Prasannan Parthasarathi, "Historical Issues of Deindustrialization in Nineteenth-Century South India," in *How India Clothed the World: The World of South Asian Textiles, 1500–1850*, ed. Giorgio Riello and Tirthankar Roy (Leiden: Brill, 2009).
22. Giorgio Riello, *Cotton: The Fabric that Made the Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2013), 87–109.
23. Om Prakash, "Bullion for Goods: International Trade and the Economy of Early Eighteenth-Century Bengal," *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 13 (1976): 159–87.
24. Parthasarathi, *Why Europe Grew Rich and Asia Did Not*, 46–50.
25. Artur Attman, *American Bullion in the European World Trade, 1600–1800*, trans. Eva and Allan Green (Göteborg: Kungl. Vetenskaps-och Vitterhets Samhället, 1986); Arthur Attman, "The Flow of Precious Metals along the Trade Routes between Europe and Asia up to 1800," in *Asian Trade Routes*, ed. Karl Reinhold Haellquist (London: Curzon Press, 1991), 7–20.
26. See for instance: Scott C. Levi, "India, Russia and the Eighteenth-Century Transformation of the Central Asian Caravan Trade," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 42 (1999): 519–48, for the eighteenth century; and Niels Steensgaard, *Carracks, Caravans and Companies: The Structural Crisis in the European-Asian Trade in the Early 17th Century* (Copenhagen: Studentlitteratur, 1973) for the seventeenth century.
27. Prasannan Parthasarathi, *The Transition to a Colonial Economy: Weavers, Merchants, and Kings in South India, 1720–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2001), 67–71.
28. This is not, of course, a novel point. See, for instance, Patricia Risso, *Merchants and Faith: Muslim Commerce and Culture in the Indian Ocean* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 4.
29. Steensgaard, *Carracks, Caravans and Companies*. For a trenchant critique of Steensgaard see Bruce Masters, *The Origins of Western Economic Dominance in the Middle East: Mercantilism and the Islamic Economy in Aleppo, 1600–1750* (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1988), 28–29.
30. André Raymond, *The Great Arab Cities in the 16th–18th Centuries: An Introduction* (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1984), 5.
31. Raymond, *The Great Arab Cities*, 8.
32. Parthasarathi, *Why Europe Grew Rich and Asia Did Not*, 119–21.
33. Gilles Veinstein, "Commercial relations between India and the Ottoman Empire (late fifteenth to late eighteenth centuries): a few notes and hypotheses," in *Merchants, Companies and Trade: Europe and Asia in the Early Modern Era*, ed. Sushil Chaudhury and Michel Morineau (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999), 110.

34. Iran Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India* (2nd rev. ed., Delhi: Oxford Univ. Press, 1999), 405.

35. See, for example, Muzaffar Alam, "Aspects of Agrarian Uprisings in North India in the Early Eighteenth Century," in *Situating Indian History for Sarvepalli Gopal*, ed. Sabyasachi Bhattacharya and Romila Thapar (Delhi: Oxford Univ. Press, 1986), 146–70; Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Introduction," in *The Mughal State, 1526–1750*, ed. Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam (Delhi: Oxford Univ. Press, 1998).

36. Dana Sajdi, "'Decline' and its Discontents and Ottoman Cultural History: By Way of Introduction," in *Ottoman Tulips, Ottoman Coffee: Leisure and Lifestyles in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Dana Sajdi (London: IB Tauris, 2008), 1–40; Dina Rizk Khoury, *State and Provincial Society in the Ottoman Empire: Mosul, 1540–1834* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1997).

37. Stephen Broadberry and Bishnupriya Gupta, "Lancashire, India and Shifting Competitive Advantage in Cotton Textiles, 1700–1850: The Neglected Role of Factor Prices," *Economic History Review* 62 (2009): 279–305; Parthasarathi, "Historical Issues of Deindustrialization," 415–36; Tirthankar Roy, "The Long Globalisation and Textile Producers in India", in *The Ashgate Companion to the History of Textile Workers*, ed. Lex Heerma van Voss, Els Hiemstra-Kuperus, and Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010), 253–74; H. V. Bowen, Bullion for Trade, War, and Debt-Relief: British Movements of Silver to, around, and from Asia, 1760–1833," *Modern Asian Studies* 44 (2010): 445–475.

38. A. B. Cunningham, ed., "The Journal of Chrisophe Aubin: A Report on the Levant Trade in 1812," *Archivum Ottomanicum* 7 (1983): 5–127.

39. See, for instance, Rajat Kanta Ray, "Asian Capital in the Age of European Domination: The Rise of the Bazaar," *Modern Asian Studies* 29 (1995): 449–554.

40. Himanshu Prabha Ray and Edward A. Alpers, "Introduction," in *Cross Currents and Community Networks: The History of the Indian Ocean World*, ed. Himanshu Prabha Ray and Edward A. Alpers (New Delhi: Oxford Univ. Press, 2007), 1.

41. Gwyn Campbell, ed., *The Indian Ocean Rim: Southern Africa and Regional Cooperation* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Edward A. Alpers, *East Africa and the Indian Ocean* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2009); Machado, *Ocean of Trade*.

42. Pedro Machado, "Awash in a Sea of Cloth: Gujarat, Africa, and the Western Indian Ocean, 1300–1800," in *The Spinning World: A Global History of Cotton Textiles, 1200–1850*, ed. Giorgio Riello and Prasannan Parthasarathi (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2009), 161–180; Pedro Machado, "Cloths of a New Fashion: Indian Ocean Networks of Exchange and Cloth Zones of Contact in Africa and India in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," in *How India Clothed the World*, 53–84; Jeremy Prestholdt, "On the Global Repercussions of East African Consumerism," *American Historical Review* 109 (2004), 755–81; Jeremy Prestholdt, "Similitude and Empire: On Comorian Strategies of Englishness," *Journal of World History* 8 (2007): 113–40; Jeremy Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2008).

43. Pearson, *The Indian Ocean*, 14.

44. Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia In the Age of Commerce, 1450–1680*, 2 vols. (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1988–93); Victor B. Lieberman, *Strange Parallels: Southeast Asia In Global Context, c. 800–1830*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2003–9).

45. Stephen Frederic Dale, *Indian Merchants and Eurasian Trade, 1600–1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002), esp. 1–4; Sebouh David Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2011). See also Ernst van Veen and Leonard Blussé, eds., *Rivalry and Conflict: European Traders and Asian Trading Networks in the 16th and 17th Centuries* (Leiden: Research School CNWS, Leiden Univ., 2005).

46. Rila Mukherjee, "The Indian Ocean: Historians Writing History," *Asian Review of World Histories* 1 (2013): 295–307.

47. Nile Green, "Maritime Worlds and Global History: Comparing the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean through Barcelona and Bombay," *History Compass* 11 (2013): 513.

48. Rene Barendse, "Trade and State in the Arabian Seas: A Survey from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century," *Journal of World History* 11 (2000): 175.
49. For a methodological overview, see Matthias Middell and Katja Naumann, "Global History and the Spatial Turn: From the Impact of Asia Studies to the Study of Critical Junctures of Globalization," *Journal of Global History* 5 (2010): 152.
50. Aaron Graham, "Mercantile Networks in the Early Modern World," *Historical Journal* 56 (2013): esp. 280.
51. See for instance Simon Schaffer, et al., eds., *The Brokered World: Go-betweens and Global Intelligence, 1770–1820* (Sagamore Beach, MA: Science History Publications, 2009).
52. See for instance the important work by Kerry Ward, *Networks of Empire: Forced Migration in the Dutch East India Company* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2009). More widely on networks within and across oceans, see Rila Mukhrjee, ed., *Networks in the First Global Age, 1400–1800* (New Delhi: Indian Council of Historical Research, 2011).
53. Philippe Beaujard, "The Indian Ocean in Eurasian and African World-Systems before the Sixteenth Century," *Journal of World History* 16 (2005): 412.
54. G. J. Knaap, "Coffee for Cash: The Dutch East India Company and the Expansion of Coffee Cultivation in Java, Ambon and Ceylon, 1700–1730," in *Trading Companies in Asia, 1600–1830*, ed. J. van Goor (Utrecht; HES, 1986), 33–50. For indigo, see the current research by Ghulam Nadri. This topic has yet to receive much scholarly attention though there is more research for the nineteenth century. On cotton see for instance Sandip Hazareesingh, "Cotton, Climate and Colonialism in Dharwar, Western India, 1840–1880," *Journal of Historical Geography* 38 (2012): 1–17.
55. Pearson, *The Indian Ocean*, 157 and 164.
56. See Giorgio Riello and Tirthankar Roy, "Introduction: The World of South Asian Textiles, 1500–1850," in *How India Clothed the World*, 7. See also Leonard Blussé and F. S. Gaastra, eds., *On the Eighteenth Century As a Category of Asian History: Van Leur In Retrospect* (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1998).
57. Ghulam Nadri, *Eighteenth-Century Gujarat: the Dynamics of Its Political Economy, 1750–1800* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).
58. Michael Pearson, "History of the Indian Ocean: A Review Essay," *Wasafiri* 26 (2011): 79–81.
59. Om Prakash and Manish Chakraborti, *Europeans in Bengal in the Pre-Colonial Period: A Brief History of their Commercial and Cultural Legacy* (New Delhi: Embassy of the Netherlands, 2008), 9.
60. The *circa* 1800 transition is however criticized in Kaoru Sugihara, "The Resurgence of Intra-Asian Trade, 1800–1850," in *How India Clothed the World*, 139–70.
61. Bowen, Mancke, and Reid, "Introduction: Britain's Oceanic Empire," esp. 2–3.
62. Parthasarathi, *Why Europe Grew Rich and Asia Did Not*, 48.
63. François Gipouloux, *The Asian Mediterranean: Port Cities and Trading Networks in China, Japan and Southeast Asia, 13th–21st Century* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2011), 123–25.
64. Nicholas P. Canny and Philip D. Morgan, "Introduction," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Atlantic World, c. 1450–c. 1850*, ed. Nicholas P. Canny and Philip D. Morgan (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2011), 4.
65. David Eltis and David Richardson, *Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2010), 23; Riello, *Cotton*, 137–42.
66. Marion Johnson, *Anglo-African Trade in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. J. T. Lindblad and Robert Ross (Leiden: Centre for the History of European Expansion, 1990), 28–29; Herbert S. Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999), 87; Robert Louis Stein, *The French Slave Trade in the Eighteenth Century: An Old Regime Business* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1979), 211. Joseph C. Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730–1830* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 73–83.

67. Peter A. Coclanis, "Beyond Atlantic History," in *Atlantic History: A Critical Appraisal*, ed. Jack P. Greene and Philip D. Morgan (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2009), 339.

68. According to Matthias Middell and Katja Naumann, "Although area studies research helped, to some extent, in fostering a global perspective, it was deeply shaped by the geopolitics of the Cold War. Extra-European pasts were conceptualized as containers within which historical transformation evolved only after being induced by diffusions from the West." Middell and Naumann, "Global History and the Spatial Turn," 157.

69. For a brief overview of the Pacific see Matt K. Matsuda, *Pacific Worlds: A History of Seas, Peoples, and Cultures* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2012).

70. For instance, The Indian Ocean World Centre at McGill University, Montreal: <http://indian-oceanworldcentre.com/>; The Center for South Asian and Indian Ocean Studies at Tufts University: <http://ase.tufts.edu/southasian/>; The Indian Ocean and South Asia Research Network at UTS Sydney: <http://iosarn.com/members/associates/>; and The Indian Ocean Research Group at Panjab University, Chandigarh, & University of Western Australia, Perth: <http://www.iorgroup.org/index.php>.

71. Examples are: Gagan Sood, "Circulation and exchange in Islamicate Eurasia: A regional approach to the early modern world," *Past & Present* 212 (2011): 113–62; and the extensive work by Sanjay Subrahmanyam, especially his *Explorations in Connected History: From the Tagus to the Ganges* (Delhi: Oxford Univ. Press, 2004) and *Explorations in Connected History: Mughals and Franks* (Delhi: Oxford Univ. Press, 2004).

72. John H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492–1830* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2007).

73. Cécile Vidal, "Pour un histoire globale du monde atlantique au des histoires connectées dans et au-delà du monde atlantique" *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 67 (2012): 392.

74. An exception is Francisco Bethencourt and Diogo Ramada Curto, eds., *Portuguese Oceanic Expansion, 1400–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2006) in which the Indian Ocean is positioned within the global span of the Portuguese Empire.

75. Eliga H. Gould, "Entangled Histories, Entangled Worlds: The English-Speaking Atlantic as a Spanish Periphery," *American Historical Review* 112 (2007): 766. There are already excellent examples of collaboration between Indian Oceanists and other ocean studies scholars and global history scholars. See for instance: Emma Christopher, Cassandra Pybus and Marcus Rediker, eds., *Many Middle Passages: Forced Migration and the Making of the Modern World* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2007) and Rila Mukherjee, ed., *Oceans Connect: Reflections on Water Worlds across Time and Space* (Delhi: Primus Books, 2013).

76. Alison Games, "Atlantic History: Definitions, Challenges, and Opportunities," *American Historical Review* 111 (2006): 755.

77. Kären Wigen, "Oceans in History: Introduction," *American Historical Review* 111 (2006): 720.

78. See for instance: Edward A. Alpers, Gwyn Campbell and Michael Salman, eds., *Resisting Bondage in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia* (London: Routledge, 2007); Edward A. Alpers, Gwyn Campbell and Michael Salman, eds., *Slavery and Resistance in Africa and Asia* (London: Routledge, 2005); Gwyn Campbell and Alessandro Stanziani, eds., *Bonded Labour and Debt in the Indian Ocean World* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2013); Sunil S. Amrith, *Migration and Diaspora in Modern Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2011); Sunil S. Amrith, *Crossing the Bay of Bengal: the Furies of Nature and the Fortunes of Migrants* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 2013).

79. See for instance Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1991); Nicholas Thomas, *Islanders: The Pacific in the Age of Empire* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2010).

80. Mukherjee, "Indian Ocean," 299.

81. A slave trade continued from Mozambique to Brazil, but it was on a much smaller scale than the Atlantic trade of the eighteenth century with some 440,000 Africans carried between 1801 and 1860. See Robert Harms, "Introduction," in *Indian Ocean Slavery in the Age of Abolition*, ed. Robert Harms, Bernard K. Freamon, and David W. Blight (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2013), 8.