



Mark William Hauser and Julia John Haines: The Archaeology of Modern Worlds in the Indian Ocean

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In this edited volume, Mark Hauser and Julia Haines offer a “starting place” for using historical archaeology to examine Indian Ocean eras and peoples that archaeologists have long overlooked (p. 17). Their edited volume includes 11 contributions, including their introduction, two chapters of commentary, and an eclectic assortment of eight chapters of original research. Some chapters offer multi-sited research to illustrate connections across the Indian Ocean, others focus intensely on a single region, and two examine how to reconcile historical (that is, textual documents) with archaeological data. South Asia receives the most attention, but several chapters discuss new research in Southeast Asia and the African islands of Mauritius and Zanzibar. The authors recognize that a single volume cannot hope to cover the entire scope of the Indian Ocean, even if confined to the modern era (defined here as *ca.* 1500 to 1800). In addition, it is not always apparent whether contributors use the word “historical” to refer to specific eras, documentary sources, or the discipline of history. However, the connecting thread across the volume is that each chapter illustrates methodological “transgressions” of disciplinary, temporal, and political boundaries that challenge still-dominant narratives of European hegemony in the modern Indian Ocean (p. 1).

The two standout chapters for this reviewer give a sense of the diversity of research available in this volume: de Ruyter’s chapter on ship illustrations from the thirteenth century and Čaval and Cianciosi’s chapter on quarantine stations in seventeenth to eighteenth centuries Mauritius. De Ruyter demonstrates that the well-known *maqamat* illustrations of Indian Ocean ships derived from shadow puppet plays, rather than direct attempts to illustrate any specific ship. He then offers a close reading of the textual narratives in which the illustrations appeared. His analysis suggests that closer attention to the writings in which the images appear will require archaeologists to revise their debates over the physical “configuration of masts and steering gear,” among other matters (p. 39). Here, closer attention to textual details serves as a corrective to unmoored archaeological debates.

In sharp contrast, Čaval and Cianciosi compare the infrastructure of healthcare in the Mascarene Islands between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. In one section, they examine human remains in cemeteries established during the transition from slavery to indentured servitude. This data reveals the specific diseases and health challenges of the laboring classes on Mauritius, with a particular focus on women. A second section compares quarantine stations at Le Reunion and Mauritius. Their discussion shows how site surveys and palaeogenetic analysis complement the rather brief documentary records by demonstrating precisely how colonial government used race and gender to

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organize space. Their contribution thus shows how archaeological data expands the narratives of European historical documents by detailing the precise challenges faced by emancipated and indentured laborers as they sought new opportunities on the island.

Hauser and Haines's introductory chapter details how scholars have developed historical archaeology in the Indian Ocean and how the case studies in this volume combine different kinds of evidence to produce new narratives. Besides their focus on challenging narratives that overemphasize European hegemony in the ocean, they make the case that thinking "collectively, connectively, and comparatively" in different localities help distinguish the Indian Ocean from studies of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, where historical archaeology is more developed. Indeed, it is striking, particularly in East Africa but also in South Asia, that archaeologists' attention has focused so often on the deeper past while neglecting more recent centuries. However, instead of limiting their discussions to modern times, most authors bridge this temporal divide to show how historical archaeology can inform discussions in all eras of the Indian Ocean. The resulting narratives often dislodge Europeans as the primary agents of change in modern Indian Ocean history, while recognizing how they and others shaped production, consumption, and labor patterns.

For example, Hsieh and Sakai's chapter on the South Asianization of Southeast Asia examines the circulation of Buddhist architecture, Muslim cenotaphs, and tiles between South Asia and Southeast Asia to demonstrate how European trade networks fit into existing systems of exchange. The chapter moves chronologically from the early ninth century, when stupa architecture in Southeast Asia indicates the extension of Buddhist religious networks, to the consumption of European manufactured tiles in Taiwan and Singapore in the early twentieth century. Yet, they complicate the narrative of European domination in the production of luxury Art Nouveau tiles; production and distribution of Chinese "double-happiness wares" became common among Arabs and Chinese migrant laborers throughout the Indian Ocean in the same century. By tracing these changing patterns of circulation across successive eras, Hsieh and Sakai challenge a periodization that limits Indian influence

in Southeast Asia to the classical period or overlooks the continuity of Chinese, Arab, and Persian networks alongside new European ones in the recent past.

Seetah, Manfio, and Sarathi offer a direct comparison of Mauritius and Zanzibar in their chapter on "island archaeology." This approach emphasizes the connections between islands in order to challenge European notions that islands are inherently isolated. They first provide a contextual overview of the demographics, geography, and history of the two islands. This summary sets up their discussion about how changes in labor regimes led residents to transform the landscape on both islands. By paying heed to the ways that the geographic features of islands influence human behavior, and vice versa, they detail how oppressive institutions denied people agency. They suggest that this approach will help move beyond "historicization," meaning historical disciplines that favor documents over other kinds of evidence (p. 72). Although they recognize the comparative value of working with European and historical frameworks, they suggest that the teleology of Europeans' technological supremacy obscure the dynamic of "human and non-human actors that formed the world(s) of the Indian Ocean" (p. 87). Their discussion of "the landscape affordances" that shaped the possibilities of a plantation economy at Bras d'Eau in particular show how this kind of analysis better acknowledges laboring peoples' contributions to the modern Indian Ocean.

LaViolette and Norman report on their site surveys of Portuguese settlements in seventeenth-century Zanzibar. What is striking about this chapter is that Portuguese settlements along the Swahili Coast have received very little attention from archaeologists, aside from surveys of the forts that the Portuguese built near major ports. By turning their focus to failed Portuguese settlements in Zanzibar's countryside, the authors demonstrate two major issues. First, Portuguese investments in Indian Ocean trade also led them to invest in production. In this case, Portuguese settlers produced tobacco within a walled field and built another structure where they prepared it for market. Second, LaViolette and Norman demonstrate that this productive activity required extensive collaborations with local Zanzibar communities. Despite much historical research on Portuguese entry into the Indian Ocean, this analysis of one of their failed experiments reveals major gaps in the documentary record that the material record is well-suited to fill.

Selvakumar and Hauser take a more experimental approach to the documentary record in their chapter on the diaspora of the Coromandel Coast. Most of the chapter is concerned with presenting archaeological evidence about intra-regional migration in the Indian sub-continent. They note that scholars have often focused on “pre-historical” sites of the military and commercial buildings in European colonial enclaves at the expense of contemporary hinterland settlements. In addition to site surveys and excavations, the author’s introduce inscriptions from palm-leaf documents, temple inscriptions, and modern *cindu* poetry to explore the “lived experiences” of poorly documented laborers and enslaved people. The chapter ends with excerpts from a few twentieth-century poems about the viciousness of labor recruiters and the risk of migration. The chapter effectively complicates the story of nineteenth-century indentured labor by contextualizing it more deeply in India’s economy before the arrival of Europeans, but the analysis of the documents remains experimental and suggestive. The authors suggest that these sources could better reveal the experiences of laborers, though it is not clear how poems in the 1950s might be relevant to laborers in the twelfth or thirteenth centuries.

In addition to their introductory chapter, Haines and Hauser share surveys of housing and water infrastructure they completed in their respective research sites at Mauritius and Tamil Nadu. Notably, the survey in Mauritius takes advantage of the Bras d’Eau site’s abandonment in the nineteenth century and preservation as a national park in 2011 to offer the first description of the interplay between domestic and industrial architecture in Mauritius. There is no direct connection between the two locations except that both sites received migrant laborers from northern and southern India from the eighteenth to twentieth centuries. After describing the difficulty in using colonial records to ascertain the characteristics of migrant laborers, the chapter summarizes pedestrian surveys and surface collections at Sathangudi in Tamil Nadu and Bras d’Eau. Both places exhibited a wide variety of housing styles reflecting class distinctions; but stone building materials seemed to dominate at Bras d’Eau. The authors then complicate their survey findings by presenting a nineteenth-century historical account. This document indicates that indentured servants preferred living in “huts” made from perishable materials rather than the stone

barracks and detached stone houses of their enslaved predecessors (p. 200). Haines and Hauser emphasize that the particularities of each site were more important than the origins of any particular group of residents; but they also observe that comparing the two sites reveals how indentured laborers adapted their water management strategies to meet the needs of their new homes. By supplementing site surveys with documentary evidence, the chapter illustrates how the methodology of historical archaeology tacks between both kinds of evidence.

Wilson’s contribution on historical preservation in Goa shows how the focus of archaeological research constrains options for heritage management. In particular, he details how preservation efforts have focused on Goa’s urban and ecclesiastical architecture. This attention has left country estates outside the city without resources for preservation, even though they were essential to Goa’s economic and political development. Wilson’s chapter is a timely reminder that both popular and academic narratives of history depend on the sources and evidence that survive. So, if there is any hope of complicating or challenging conventional narratives, heritage managers must have a wider view of what must be preserved and curated.

The final two chapters are commentaries by Kusimba and Varma. While Kusimba references some of the other chapters in the volume, he mostly offers a historical synthesis that details how the Swahili coast built on its local, regional networks to participate in globalization. As in his other research, he emphasizes that these commercial networks extended into the hinterland and interior of Africa. He also makes the case for using ethnography and oral traditions as counterpoints to marginalizing narratives, and he uses the East African institution of blood brotherhood to illustrate how such sources can be incorporated into a historical narrative of globalization. Varma concludes the volume with a useful summary of each chapter’s major contributions, and the prospect for historical archaeology in South Asia.

The Archaeology of Modern Worlds in the Indian Ocean is richly illustrated with photographs, tables, and maps. Most readers of this journal will already be familiar with the historical and geographical contexts of Zanzibar and Mauritius which are summarized in various chapters. However, the new research on these islands, as well as the brief introductions to the Coromandel Coast, Southeast Asia, and other locations

deserve a wide reading. For historians and archaeologists of Africa, the biggest attraction of this volume may be the variety of models offered about how historical archaeology can complicate narratives of the transition from pre-colonial to colonial Africa. Integrating analysis of texts with material culture, genetic studies, geographic features, and other archaeological evidence is complicated. Despite the challenges, this volume shows

how the temporal and methodological transgressions inherent in historical archaeology can weave a more complete, and compelling, picture of the past.

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