

World History Bulletin

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World History Association

Denis Gainty

Editor

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Editor's Note

From the Executive Director

Letter from the President

1

2

Special Section: The World and The Sea

Introduction: The Sea in World History

Michael Laver (Rochester Institute of Technology)

4

From World War to World Law: Elisabeth Mann Borgese and the Law of the Sea

Richard Samuel Deese (Boston University)

5

The Spanish Empire and the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans: Imperial Highways in a Polycentric Monarchy

Eva Maria Mehl (University of North Carolina Wilmington)

9

Restoring Seas

Malcolm Campbell (University of Auckland)

14

Ship Symbolism in the 'Arabic Cosmopolis': Reading Kunjayin Musliyar's "*Kappapattu*" in 18th Century Malabar

Shaheen Kelachan Thodika (Jawaharlal Nehru University)

17

The Panopticon Comes Full Circle?

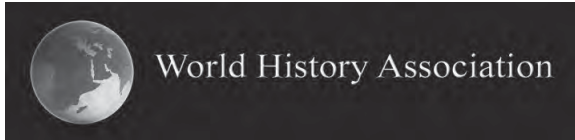
Sarah Schneewind (University of California San Diego)

25

Book Review

Abeer Saha (University of Virginia)

29



Editor's Note:

We are pleased to present in the Fall issue of the *World History Bulletin* a special section on the sea, broadly conceived, in world history. This section, guest-edited by Michael Laver, includes essays that explore human encounters and exchanges both within and through the context of oceans, seas, and other bodies of water. These contributions, fittingly, cover a broad spectrum of time and place, challenging our sense of how the waters of the earth have connected and constrained human behavior even as they suggest and support new directions in world historiography. I am grateful to Michael and all contributors for their interesting work, and to Sarah Schneewind for her thought-provoking essay on Bentham's Panopticon and Imperial China.

As always, the *Bulletin* seeks to publish "short-form" essays on all aspects of historical scholarship including pedagogy, research, and theory. Topics may include any period or geographic focus in history, and pedagogical materials such as syllabi or assignments are welcome, as are reviews of books or other scholarly works. Historians and disciplinarily allied scholars interested in guest-editing a selection of essays on a particular theme are strongly encouraged to contact me at dgainty@gsu.edu.

With warm best wishes,

Denis Gainty

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Managing Editor: Denis Gainty (Georgia State University)

Student Assistant: Lashonda Slaughter-Wilson

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From the Executive Director

Being a Massachusetts native, I eagerly await this particular theme in the *World History Bulletin* (WHB), the sea and the world. In New England, the sea is particularly meaningful. Just a month ago, I boarded the ferry and visited Martha's Vineyard, which has a rich history connected with the water. Long before US presidents vacationed at this spot and Hollywood types flocked here to enjoy the water, the Vineyard had a long history, which is associated with the sea, most notably its connection to the whaling industry.

This fall, there is so much happening in the World History Association office. We are currently starting the full nominations process for 2017, which will nearly be complete when this WHB is published. The Call for Papers (CFPs) announcement has gone out for our 2017 annual conference here in Boston with a deadline date of November 30, 2016. We look forward to reviewing these CFPs, whether they are closely linked to our conference themes, "The Atlantic World" and "Food in World History" or in another genre, which offers a diversity of sessions for participants. To continue with our efforts toward complete financial stability, for the second year we are conducting the WHA Giving Tuesday campaign. In 2016, Giving Tuesday falls on November 29. It's the perfect time of year to consider a donation. This comes with the added benefit that a percentage of all gifts we receive goes to a charity that assists those around the globe. We offer you three choices, and then you vote on your top pick. In 2015, twenty percent of the WHA Giving Tuesday campaign went to UNICEF. We look forward to offering other interesting choices this year and donors have the added advantage of knowing their donation is assisting two organizations.

As I write this letter, we are working daily on the 2017 conference. By January 1, 2017, full information about the Boston meeting will be listed on our website, including links to our host hotels and lodging options as well as the special events and tours. Before you book your flight, be sure to review the events that are being offered to our conference registrants before June 22 and beyond June 24. Boston is lovely in June and we hope that you can participate in these other carefully selected options.

An important part of the conference has always been offering scholarships to participants.

The following three awards require applications that are due by March 15, 2017: World Scholar Fund, William H. McNeill Teacher Scholarship and the Conference Registration Fee Waivers (multiple waivers distributed). Specific information about these awards can be found on the WHA website, under the drop-down menu entitled "awards." Since we aim to support the greatest number of scholars possible, applicants who are awardees must not have received WHA awards in prior years.

Moving into our third year at home in the History Department of Northeastern University, we are fortunate to have another talented graduate student join our team for 2016-2017. Bridget Keown graduated *cum laude* with a degree in History and Russian Literature and Language from Smith College. She received her Master's Degree in Imperial and Commonwealth History from King's College, London. She is currently a fourth-year doctoral candidate at Northeastern. Her dissertation, which is provisionally titled "'She is lost to time and place': Women, War Trauma, and the History of the First World War," studies reports of war trauma from women at the battlefield and the home front in order to tell a more inclusive story about total war, as well as to challenge the gendered assumptions about war trauma.

Bridget also brings many years' experience in research, public service, and administrative work. She has organized several major public events at numerous museums, including The Old Manse and The Wayside Museums in Concord, MA, and assisted with organizing events at museums around New England, including the Longfellow House, the Prudence Crandall Museum, and Minuteman National Historic Park. She has worked at Houghton Library at Harvard, where she played a major role in organizing their extensive theater collection, and the Imperial War Museum, where she cataloged the private papers of First World War veterans to make them accessible to researchers, as well as Houghton Mifflin Harcourt in Boston. She is currently an assistant reference librarian at the Peabody Institute Library in her hometown of Peabody, Massachusetts.

Bridget and I are working on most initiatives together, including our WHA awards. I am thrilled to report that the WHA Dissertation Prize has received the most applications ever, nearly forty. This points

to the growing body of world historians from around the globe who are participating in the WHA. To stay current with the changing landscape of education, I will participate in the AP Symposium on History this coming week and in early November, the ACLS Directors Meeting in St. Louis. Bringing back information to our governance is important for our vision and growth, but what is also important to share with you is these costs are generously subsidized by the organizations themselves. There is minimal funding that needs to be borrowed from the WHA operating budget.

As we continue to create meaningful programming and plans for our members, I think back

on the many happy faces in Ghent. This is my reward and I hope to see you enjoying yourself next year as we gather in Boston. You can always share your visions and ideas with our office. We can be reached at info@thewha.org or 617-373-6818.

Best wishes,

Kerry Vieira
Administrative Coordinator/Executive Director, The
World History Association

Letter from the President of the World History Association

Richard Warner, Wabash College

Dear Colleagues,

Greetings from the World History Association! I am happy to offer another update to you, our members and soon-to-be members. The WHA had a busy year!

Ghent 2016

We hosted a successful conference in Ghent, Belgium in early July. Our Administrative Coordinator Kerry Vieira, the Conferences and Program Committees, and colleagues from the University of Ghent worked hard to make this a memorable experience. The panels, the excursions, and – the food! – were all excellent. As you know, we like to hold our conferences abroad about every three years. Aside from the great benefits we all receive from these international experiences, I believe that it is quite healthy for us to cultivate international relationships in world history. Hopefully, we can continue to do this in other ways as we move forward. If you have ideas for future venues, please let me or Kerry know. It is especially helpful if there is a potential institutional partner that we can work within the international settings.

Boston 2017: Northeastern University

Planning is well underway for our conference next summer. Northeastern University has been

wonderful as a partner, both for the upcoming conference and as the host of our office. You can find the Call for Papers on our website. Take care to watch the due dates, since this one is likely to fill up quickly. Kerry and her staff have done a magnificent job reserving a variety of accommodations for participants. Again, I would strongly advise making early arrangements if you are concerned about budgets or other considerations. We are moving more aggressively this year to attract important scholars and quality panelists (more on that below). The conference planners are also assembling a good variety of extra excursions and events. Our themes are “Atlantic History” and “Food in World History.” There will be possibilities for historical tours focused on early U.S. and world history (after all, we are in Boston!), and some fun activities such as a pub crawl and possible museum tours. We are planning a special event in Northeastern University’s “Xibition Kitchen.” This is a fully equipped TV kitchen set with monitors. Selected chef-historians will provide cooking demonstrations as they discuss issues in food history. Check the website for details.

Governance

We have established a couple of new committees this year. Most recently we started the Digital and Social Media committee, under the leadership of Executive Council member Ruben

Carillo. The group will investigate ways to extend our digital presence. Among other projects, we will establish a “members only” section of our website, to provide teaching and research resources. Other resources will continue to be shared on the public side of the site as well. Relatedly we have started the Research Committee, chaired by Laura Mitchell. We hope to improve research opportunities and identify scholarly resources in world history research. As far as the conferences are concerned, the Research Committee is actively attracting key scholars to Boston, and attempting to bring together research-related panels. Meanwhile, our Teaching Committee, now chaired by Amy Elizabeth Manlapas, will also be searching for teaching resources to share on our website.

Finances

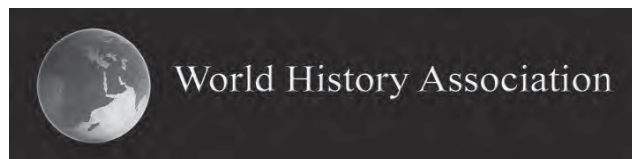
As you know, we have worked hard over the past few years to make the WHA fiscally sustainable. This has been truly a herculean effort. I want to publicly thank several people for their leadership in this endeavor: former president Craig Benjamin, Treasurer Michele Louro, my other fellow officers Secretary Maryanne Rhett and Vice President /

President-Elect Merry Wiesner-Hanks. The Executive Council has been very supportive. And of course, Kerry Vieira has worked hard on the front lines. Once we have successfully launched the members-only side of our website, we will upload financial reports that should make our situation very clear. One nice outcome of our improved economic situation is that we are able to lower the conference fee for 2017 by \$50 to the lowest rate in many years!

Thank you all for your support, financially and otherwise. I do hope that we can continue to raise funds for our Endowment, to bring it to the previous level. Many of you have given already, and we will continue to offer more opportunities to help us achieve that goal. For now, I feel like we have a hopeful and promising future. Please let us know if you would like to become more involved in the WHA, and we hope to see you in Boston!

Cheers,

Rick Warner
President, The World History Association



Guest Editor's Introduction: The Sea in World History

Michael Laver, Rochester Institute of Technology

Then I saw a great white throne and the one who sat on it; the earth and the heaven fled from his presence, and no place was found for them. ¹²And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Also another book was opened, the book of life. And the dead were judged according to their works, as recorded in the books. ¹³And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and all were judged according to what they had done (Revelation 20:11-13).

In this passage, the author of the Christian book of Revelation speaks of all of those who will be judged at the coming of the Son of Man in the end times. As we expect, he names all of the souls that have died (all those who reside in Death and Hades). But then unexpectedly, he mentions all of those who died and were in the sea, as if the sea is a separate Hades to which maritime souls are consigned upon their tragic and watery death. How odd that maritime deaths should be treated as a category apart from all other deaths. It's not that the peoples who wrote the Hebrew and Christian testaments were unfamiliar with the seas, living as they did in the larger Mediterranean world, a world in many ways defined by the sea and other bodies of water (The Red Sea, the Dead Sea, the Sea of Galilee, the Nile, the Tigris and Euphrates, and the Mediterranean). So why a special category of death reserved for the unfortunate souls of seafarers?

I think the answer lies in the fact that the sea is a geographical liminal state if, by liminality, we mean a state of disorientation between two known states of existence. The sea is an in-between place politically, in the sense that no one "owned" the sea in early modern times; and it was an in-between place spiritually in the sense that when one died at sea, one was truly "lost." The body was given up to the deep, rather than being buried alongside ancestors in one's home country. In other words, death at sea was a special kind of death made more terrifying by the fact that when one was

consigned to the sea, one was lost in every sense of the term. This is why, I think, our apocalyptic author takes special pains to mention those lost at sea. The Last Judgment will be thorough, according to the author; even those lost in the sea will not be left out at the end time. Comforting, I suppose, in an apocalyptic kind of way.

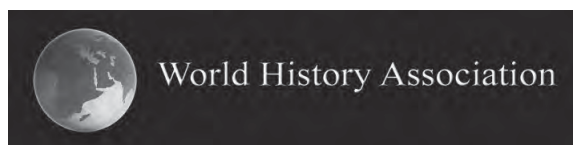
Maritime history has seen somewhat of a surge in popularity in recent years as evidenced by the robust discussion around Lincoln Paine's recent work *The Sea and Civilization*.¹ Piracy as a discipline of study is also on the rise it seems, especially in non-western studies, as historians grapple with the sometimes fluid distinctions between legitimate trade, piracy, and the in between spaces of the Ocean. This volume of the *World History Bulletin* is timely, therefore, and presents four excellent essays that present four unique discussion of the sea in world history. R.S. Deese provides an analysis of Elizabeth Mann Borgese's role in defining the ocean as the heritage of all people, a sort of maritime "global commons" that led to the 1982 Third United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Eva Maria Mehl offers a study of The Spanish Empire as a "polycentric monarchy" in which several peripheral nodes of power in both the Atlantic and Pacific worlds retained considerable decision making authority despite the perceived absolute nature of the Spanish monarchy, a situation that was facilitated by the vast distances to be traversed across both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Malcolm Campbell offers a critique of recent histories of the ocean and seeks to highlight a particularly overlooked aspect of maritime history, namely the intersection of the Pacific and Indian Oceans as well as the lands that bordered that intersection. He traces the borders of these two great oceans from early modern times to the era of imperialism and highlights the north-south movement of peoples along this border, in contradistinction to the usual pattern of maritime history that pays more attention to the east-west pattern of trade and conquest. And finally, Shaheen Kelachan Thodika presents an analysis of the "*Kappapattu*," a poem written in 18th century Malabar by a Sufi poet, widely understood to be an allegorical treatment of human life and the ship. Shaheen relates this poem to the larger Indian Ocean World and explores the connection of religious themes with themes such as port life.

Each of these four papers, while disparate in theme and time period, deals with significant aspect of the sea and its relationship to the political, economic, and cultural lives of those who lived on the edge of as well traversed the sea. While the sea may still be a liminal space for some, for world historians it is increasingly becoming central to understanding

the important and ubiquitous connections between seemingly distant parts of the world.

Notes:

1. Lincoln Paine, *The Sea and Civilization* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2013).



From World War to World Law: Elisabeth Mann Borgese and the Law of the Sea

Richard Samuel Deese, Boston University

Introduction

The life and work of Elisabeth Mann Borgese reveal an essential connection between the world federalist movement that thrived immediately after World War II and the global environmentalist movement that began to gather force two decades later. Between 1945 and 1951, Elisabeth Mann Borgese (E. M. B.) played a key role in the Committee to Draft a World Constitution at the University of Chicago. In 1967, she took up the cause of ocean conservation, and her contribution to the creation of the Third United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea marked a significant advance for both transnational environmentalism and the principles articulated by the world federalist movement.

In August of 1945, Chancellor Robert Maynard Hutchins convened the Committee to Draft a World Constitution at the University of Chicago to address the new dangers posed by nuclear war. As the only woman to be part of this project at its inception, E.M.B. began as an assistant to the Committee but rose to be the editor of, *Common Cause*, the quarterly journal published by the University of Chicago as a forum for the Committee and its research. Although the world federalist movement was greatly weakened by the Cold War polarization of the 1950s, she would not abandon its goal of building a framework for intelligent cooperation and democratic accountability

on a global scale. In the mid-1960s, she resumed her work with Hutchins at the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions in Santa Barbara, where she focused on advancing the cause of ocean conservation. During this period, she also contributed to the research of the pioneering environmentalist think tank, the Club of Rome.¹

In 1970, E. M. B. proposed and organized the first *Pacem in Maribus* (Peace in the Oceans) Conference in Malta. This conference led to the creation of the International Ocean Institute, an NGO dedicated to ocean conservation that she cofounded, along with the Maltese diplomat Arvid Pardo, in 1972. In the realm of international law, the *Pacem in Maribus* Conference became a seminal forum for the international process of deliberation that would produce the Third United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. After a little more than a decade, this process culminated in the drafting of the unprecedented Law of the Sea treaty of 1982.² Her chief contribution to this treaty was to defend the principle, first developed with her colleagues at the University of Chicago in the late 1940s, that a global commons, such as the seabed under international waters, must be recognized and protected as “the common property of the human race.”³

Background

Born in 1918 to the German author Thomas Mann and Katia Pringsheim Mann, Elisabeth came of age on a continent shadowed both by total war and by the rise of totalitarian government, before her family immigrated to the United States in 1938. As

the youngest daughter in an extraordinary family, E. M. B. grew up in an atmosphere where free inquiry, cosmopolitanism, and feminism were part of her intellectual inheritance. Her father was a critic of hyper-nationalism and anti-Semitism in Germany before the rise of Hitler, and her mother was the granddaughter of one of the most outspoken European feminist authors of the nineteenth century, Hedwig Dohm. One of Dohm's most famous statements ("Die Menschenrecht hab keine Geschlecht" or "Human rights have no gender") appears as the epitaph on Dohm's headstone, and was a credo that inspired E. M. B. to advocate a social order that affirmed not only cosmopolitan democracy but also unprecedented freedom from traditional conceptions of gender.⁴

Although Elisabeth's father was perhaps the most famous German author of the twentieth century, Thomas Mann was a better exemplar of Enlightenment cosmopolitanism than he was of any particular national culture. The novel for which he won the Nobel Prize, *Buddenbrooks*, presents itself as the chronicle of a merchant family in decline. However, it also expresses an eloquent lamentation for the loss of a pre-national culture in the coastal cities of northern German cities such as Lübeck. Such cities had deeper ties to the seafaring and cosmopolitan culture of the Hanseatic League than to the militaristic Prussian culture that animated German unification in the second half of the nineteenth century. In the imagery of *Buddenbrooks*, the sea represents freedom, equality, and even genuine love. When a young Antonie Buddenbrook asks her beloved Morten, who has joined a secret liberal society at his university, to explain his cause, he says, "Freedom," and, without another word, gestures to the open sea. Long after Antonie's father compels her to accept an arranged marriage, mementos from the sea still torture her with the memory of the liberty and love that she has lost.⁵

Thomas Mann's model for Antonie Buddenbrook was his aunt Elisabeth Mann, who died in 1917. The following year, when his youngest daughter was born, she was given the same name. Like the character of Antonie Buddenbrook, some of young Elisabeth's most formative memories involved the sea, and she came to see it as a powerful symbol for freedom. At the age of eight, Elisabeth saw her family reprimanded and fined by local authorities in Fascist Italy for letting her bathe naked in the Mediterranean.⁶

Her family's political outlook and confrontations throughout the 1920s and 1930s inspired Elisabeth to embrace the cause of antifascism. In 1939, she married the outspoken Italian scholar and antifascist Giuseppe Antonio Borgese, on the eve of the Second World War.⁷

Decades later, when E. M. B. addressed the legal issue of ocean conservation, she employed language that echoed *Buddenbrooks*:

The Oceans are free. The mere thought that they could be "appropriated" by any ruler however mighty, by any nation, no matter how vast its empire, has something blasphemous. The oceans, in a way, are the most sublime expression on earth of what is extra-human, superhuman, indomitable.⁸

Freedom, of course, is an abstract concept, while the sea is an immense and tangible reality. We perceive an abstraction with our intellect and a tangible reality with our senses. The rare genius of a great artist is to bring these two modes of perception together so that what is meaningful to our intellect may become tangible to our senses, and what it is tangible to our senses may become meaningful to our intellect. This was a gift that E.M.B. certainly possessed, and it often made her contributions to the discourse of International Relations extraordinarily eloquent and engaging. In the field of International Relations, which has produced so much colorless prose, larded with technical jargon and an alphabet soup of acronyms, the work of E. M. B. belongs in a category of its own. She was that rare combination of an expert and a poet.

The Law of the Sea

The single most important idea that E. M. B. brought to the issue of ocean conservation was the principle that the seabed under international waters must be legally established as the common heritage of the entire human race. Her role in developing and promoting this idea began with her experience as part of the Committee to Draft a World Constitution at the University of Chicago immediately after World War Two. As part of this project, she worked with university president Robert Maynard Hutchins, the

philosopher Richard McKeon, and with her husband, Giuseppe Antonio Borgese. Drawing on the work of dozens of scholars, the Committee studied both functioning and proposed democratic constitutions from around the world as it attempted to design a framework for the stable and sustainable practice of representative democracy on a global scale.⁹

The fact that both Stalin's propaganda machine in the USSR and jingoistic reporters in the United States forcefully condemned this draft constitution reflects the determination of its authors to transcend the limitations of both doctrinaire ideology and narrow nationalism. Jealously protecting Stalin's conception of Soviet national interest, *Pravda* condemned the Committee to Draft a World Constitution as a Trojan horse for American imperialism. Meanwhile, conservative American papers such as the *Chicago Tribune* aired suspicions that the Committee was animated by a desire to advance Marxist communism. Of course, since this project was being conducted in the United States, the charge that it was a Yankee capitalist plot may have had some credibility for *Pravda* readers. Likewise, the charge that the Committee to Draft a World Constitution was establishing a beachhead in Chicago for the advance of world communism could point to a key concept in the document that it produced, i.e. the principle that the classical elements essential to life, "earth, water, air, and energy," must be legally recognized as "the common property of the human race."¹⁰

Though the vigilant editors of the *Chicago Tribune* decried this principle in the late 1940s as a clever Marxist ruse, it had much deeper roots in the history of human civilization. As the historian Peter Linbaugh has documented in *The Magna Carta Manifesto*, the foundational Magna Carta of 1215 drew much of its power from another document promulgated at the same time, the Charter of the Forest. This charter guaranteed ordinary people access to common lands for gathering food, grazing cattle, hunting, and the gathering firewood.¹¹ Of course, in their allusion to the classical elements of earth, air, fire, and water, the drafters of the World Constitution reached even further back, to the philosophical and political discourse of the ancient Greeks.

The principle that a global commons must be protected for all, though more narrowly applied than E. M. B. would have liked, was enshrined as Article

136 in the Law of the Sea when it was drafted in 1982. It led to the creation of the International Seabed Authority (ISA), based in Kingston, Jamaica. All mining of mineral resources on the ocean floor under international waters is regulated by the ISA and a portion of the profits from this economic activity go into a common resource fund that is available to aid economic development in all nations, including those which are landlocked.

After the negotiations for the Law of the Sea were completed and it was opened for signature in 1982, Arvid Pardo, the UN ambassador from Malta and a close confidant to E. M. B., expressed some disappointment that the treaty did not go further in safeguarding natural resources and establishing the rule of law on a global scale.¹² On balance, the Law of the Sea is quite friendly to the territorial claims of nation states and the commercial interests of multinational corporations. The legal category of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), allows many seafaring nations to assert their sovereign interests further from their shores than ever before. In spite of the fact that the Law of the Sea is actually quite accommodating to national sovereignty and to commercial interests, the principle that the ocean floor under international waters must remain the common property of the entire human race has proven unacceptable in some quarters.

In particular, advocates of traditional nationalism and free market fundamentalism at organizations such as The Heritage Foundation and the Cato Institute see this concept as poison pill. For this reason, the Reagan administration refused to sign the Law of the Sea treaty in 1982, while former Nixon speechwriters Pat Buchanan and William Safire advanced a broad critique of the treaty in the press, even dusting off the charge, leveled at E. M. B. and her Chicago colleagues four decades earlier, that the principle of sharing the wealth of a global resource must be a Marxist plot. Building on the old chestnut of creeping Marxism, Safire added a racially charged metaphor when he sounded the alarm that, "the nose of the third world camel is in the industrial world's tent" when he urged the Reagan administration to kill the treaty.¹³

In an attempt to cut the emerging treaty off at the knees, the Reagan administration sent former Nixon Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld as a

special envoy to the United Kingdom, West Germany, and France to propose an alternative framework for exploiting mineral resources under international waters entirely outside the framework of the Law of the Sea treaty.¹⁴ Given the size of these economies, a success for Rumsfeld in this endeavor would have effectively destroyed the treaty. However, these nations all came to accept the treaty. Rumsfeld's attempt to create what we might call a "coalition of the unwilling" failed, largely because the treaty as it stood was so accommodating to national and corporate interests. By 1994, more than 160 nations had endorsed the Law of the Sea, thus endowing it with the status of accepted international law. The Clinton administration agreed to sign the treaty but did not submit it to the Senate for ratification. To date, the United States still has not ratified the Law of the Sea, though the U.S. Navy has declared that it will accept it as law. The principle that E. M. B. helped to articulate at the University of Chicago – the concept of the common heritage of the human race – has proven to be too radical a concept for American opponents to the Law of the Sea.

The specific issue that inspired the creation of the International Seabed Authority was the desire to mine manganese nodules from the surface of the seabed below international waters. These nodules, pieces of igneous rock that resemble burnt potatoes, are rich in valuable minerals such as copper, nickel, and cobalt. Though the market price of these minerals was rapidly rising in the 1960s and 1970s, it has since stabilized to an extent that the cost of harvesting manganese nodules from the ocean floor still outstrips their market value. Thus, the refusal to accept the International Seabed Authority is, in reality, the refusal to accept the diminution of *potential* profits in a *theoretical* future rather than the loss of actual profits in the present. For this reason, the vast majority of countries, including nations such as Japan with extensive maritime interests, have been willing to accept the Law of the Sea. Those who have been resolutely opposed, such as the Reagan administration, an oppositional bloc within the U.S. Senate, and think-tanks such as the Cato Institute and Heritage Foundation, have been opposed for strictly ideological rather than economic reasons. These opponents recognize that establishing the seabed under international waters as the common property

of mankind would establish a powerful principle that could limit the activities of private industry in other common areas, such as the Arctic, Antarctica, and outer space. It could even establish a precedent for limiting the actions of private industry in order to protect the common resources of the earth's atmosphere and climate.

They are correct.

Conclusion

In the seventeenth century, Hugo Grotius argued for *Mare Liberum*, or a free ocean, citing the fact that the sea by its nature is not clearly divisible.¹⁵ In the twenty-first century, we are discovering something that Elisabeth Mann Borgese bore witness to for her entire career as a writer and activist. That is the concept which she helped to articulate at the University of Chicago, that certain fundamental resources constitute the common property of the human race. That she helped to weld this concept to the Law of the Sea is a signal achievement. If the oceans could be divided, owned, and degraded in the name of private enterprise, so could the atmosphere that we breathe and the climate on which we depend as the lynchpin of our ecosystems. If we destroy the oceans in the name of private property and national sovereignty, we will destroy ourselves. Elisabeth Mann Borgese dedicated the last three decades of her life to this realization: Only if we save the oceans for the sake of our common interests, can we manage, as a species, to save ourselves.

Notes:

1. John Hannigan, *The Geopolitics of Deep Oceans* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015), 125.

2. Betsy Baker, "Uncommon Heritage: Elisabeth Mann Borgese, Pacem in Maribus, the International Ocean Institute and Preparations for UNCLOS III," *Ocean Yearbook* 26 (2012), 11-34.

3. Elisabeth Mann Borgese, *A Constitution for the World* (Santa Barbara: Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, 1965), 28.

4. For Thomas Mann's early opposition to extreme nationalism and anti-Semitism, see chapter 22 in: Ronald Hayman, *Thomas Mann: A Biography* (New

York: Scribner, 1995). For an extended look at E.M.B.'s ideas about cosmopolitan democracy and gender see the epilogue of: Elisabeth Mann Borgese, *Ascent of Woman* (New York: George Braziller, 1963).

5. Thomas Mann, Buddenbrooks, H. T. Lowe-Porter, trans. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983), 115.

6. Ronald Hayman, *Thomas Mann: A Biography* (New York: Scribner, 1995), 363.

7. Ronald Hayman, *Thomas Mann: A Biography* (New York: Scribner, 1995), 456.

8. Elisabeth Mann Borgese, "Lecture on the Ocean Regime" 1969.

9. Betsy Baker, "Uncommon Heritage: Elisabeth Mann Borgese, Pacem in Maribus, the International Ocean Institute and Preparations for UNCLOS III," *Ocean Yearbook* 26 (2012).

10. John W. Boyer, "Drafting Salvation" *University of Chicago Magazine* 88, no. 2 (December 1995), accessed June 23, 2016, <https://magazine.uchicago.edu/9512/9512TOC.html>.

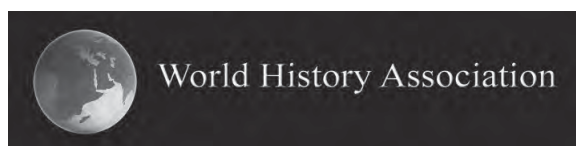
11. Peter Linebaugh, *The Magna Carta Manifesto* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2008).

12. Arvid Pardo, "The Law of the Sea: Where Now?," *Law and Contemporary Problems* 46, no. 2 (Spring 1983), 102.

13. William Safire, "Welcome to Club Seabed" *New York Times* (November 8, 1982), A17.

14. Ibid.

15. Hugo Grotius, Richard Hakluyt, trans, *The Free Sea*, originally published as *Mare Liberum* in 1609 (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2004), 85.



The Spanish Empire and the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans: Imperial Highways in a Polycentric Monarchy

Eva Maria Mehl, University of North Carolina Wilmington

Early modern empires like the Spanish, the British, the French, the Portuguese, and the Dutch were founded especially on their ability to protect long-distance trade routes. Sea and ocean waters were essential parts of these political entities. In order to extend royal sovereignty and maintain control of overseas possessions, empires needed to master the technology to navigate, explore, trade, and exploit the seas. Shipbuilding, cartography, sailing techniques, sea routes, naval warfare, and coastal defense were among the indispensable elements of, and everyday aspects in, the administration of early modern maritime empires. The Spanish empire, with colonial outposts

as far as Manila in the Philippines in the Western Pacific, is a case in point as it spread over three continents and two oceans and linked Atlantic waters to the Pacific basin through dynamics of imperial power. But to see oceans merely as a tool by which early modern states established dominance over far removed regions and exploited the natural resources found therein only reinforces a center-periphery model that considers empire from the perspective of the center and does not account for regional particularities, relationships among peripheries, and the perspectives of areas physically removed from the core. Instead, this essay seeks to understand the Spanish empire from the sea in order to argue not only that geographical distance from the European center left outlying areas with considerable autonomy but also that oceanic connections allowed processes originating in the peripheries to have unforeseen impacts on the metropolitan core. A polycentric monarchy model, with a European imperial core and a series of colonial

centers that developed their own associations with colonial peripheries, provides an understanding of the dynamics and internal organization of early modern empires that elude us when we employ a centralized model of imperial organization.¹

Oceanic frameworks have proven to be more suitable to explain material links and human movements that were not confined to bounded territorial states. In the empire “on which the sun never sets,” Spanish authorities ruled over approximately 12 million square miles of which 50,000 were coastal territory. Imperial lines of communication stretched for 3,000 miles from Spain to the western shores of the Atlantic Ocean and about 10,000 miles in Pacific waters from Mexico to the Philippines. In this context, oceans were simultaneously an essential connective lifeline and a geographical barrier. In the sense that water transport was faster and cheaper than carrying goods and people long distances overland, sea lanes allowed Spain to create, extend, and maintain colonial relationships that connected the Iberian Peninsula to the Americas and the Philippines. The outlook is different, however, when we consider trans-oceanic networks not from the perspective of the mother country but from the point of view of the colonies. Indeed, the long distances of ocean that separated Spain from its possessions gave rise to propitious circumstances for colonial authorities to expand their own autonomy and act according to actual social conditions and local pressures rather than in full compliance with royal legislation. Maritime connections developed unpredictably and often times eluded the ambitions of the Spanish metropole to properly channel them—a challenge to which other early modern empires were not alien, either.

During the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Spanish Empire made highways of the Atlantic and Pacific waters for a wide range of intercontinental exchanges. In part due to the fact that early modern European empires traversed the Atlantic Ocean more frequently and more regularly than any other basin, trans-Atlantic links and the peoples, economies, societies, politics, and cultures that arose as a result have been a subject of intensive study.² In the Atlantic world, the most important exchange that Spain established was a commercial arrangement with its American colonies based on the annual periodicity of heavily protected and rigidly

regulated fleets. A series of sustained interactions grew out of this trading connection. Many of these contacts were crucial for empire building overseas and, as such, they unfolded in a regularized, predictable fashion within a framework of regulation, taxes, and laws. Besides trading with a myriad of commodities, Spanish metropolitan authorities arranged for personal and official correspondence as well as royal decrees, orders, and provisions to be delivered and for soldiers, royal officials, missionaries, convicts, and African slaves to be transported back and forth across the Atlantic. These connections were based upon a relationship of dominance and inflicted enormous changes in the colonial realms.

In the early modern period economic, social, and cultural bonds transcended the geographical limits of one body of water and spilled into adjacent oceans, enlarging imperial dominions while also increasing the prospects for local autonomy as distance from the core increased. As empires expanded to other domains, they replicated the colonial networks that they had established elsewhere. Immediately after a Spanish expedition seized Manila in the Philippines in 1571, the imperial machinery stretched to bring the region into the orbit of the Spanish crown. Shortly thereafter, the Philippines became a niche of unique strategic importance as a hub for commercial relationships with China and Southeast Asia, and the Spanish imperial economy ceased to be exclusively Atlantic. With the foundation of a trans-Pacific trade route, the Acapulco-Manila run, imperial oceanic circuits eventually became extensive enough to connect Spain to Asia. From 1571 until 1815 silver-laden galleons sailed out of Acapulco, in the western coast of the viceroyalty of New Spain, with annual frequency and returned from Manila with a precious cargo of silks, porcelains, spices, and other Asian goods.³ A portion of this merchandise was transported across New Spain and loaded on Atlantic-crossing ships toward the Spanish markets. Likewise, recruits, military officers, criminals, merchants, sailors, bureaucrats, missionaries, and secular clergy who arrived in New Spain from the Iberian Peninsula continued their journey to Asia on board the Manila galleons.

In this manner, processes of commercial exchange, military recruitment, convict transportation, missionary enterprise, transfer of Castilian laws, and bureaucratization of colonial milieus connected the

Spanish Pacific to the Spanish Atlantic and made this Iberian empire a truly global operation. By focusing on interoceanic connectivity the extent of imperial exchanges and the existence of not so apparent intra-colonial connections become more clearly defined. Mobility across maritime spaces is also an important factor in shaping the unique nature of the different early modern dynastic states, as imperial networks built across large expanses of sea connected diverse regions and set in motion varying types of colonialism, some based on commercial outposts and others on outright colonial rule.

There existed movements between oceans that were not the outcome of a systematic government program of expansion—the flow of authority outward from center to periphery—but the result of other factors, like accidental occurrences and individual initiative. As such, these exchanges were for the most part unexpected, even unintended, and they sparked developments that do not easily fit in the model of a center dictating and a periphery receiving but that of a metropole and its colonies mutually influencing each other. A fundamental component of these encounters are the biological and environmental transformations that historian Alfred W. Crosby Jr. argued were the most significant consequence of 1492.⁴ The process by which people, plants, animals, and pathogens almost from the start were moved across vast ocean networks drastically transformed not just colonial regions but metropolitan centers worldwide.

Besides foreign biological matter, ocean-going vessels carried information about the landscapes and peoples of what to Europeans were unfamiliar regions of the globe. In his influential book *The Old World and the New, 1492-1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), John Elliott inspired us to think about how Europeans attempted to comprehend this information and concluded that inherited organizing principles were inadequate to assimilate the new lands and peoples into the Europeans' consciousness. Further building on this discussion of the epistemological consequences of Europe's encounter with the Americas, historians have lately started to reflect on the new practices of science that emerged in the Spanish empire in part from materials and knowledge from the western side of the Atlantic. This has been a refreshing move given that historiographical works studying the relationship

between science and empire have for decades primarily focused on the French, German, and British colonies. Recent scholarship has revalorized the role of the Spanish empire in the process of scientific exchange in the Atlantic World, and in so doing they are redressing the long-held historiographical assumption that the Scientific Revolution owed nothing to Spanish intellectuals.⁵ We are told now, for instance, that the empirical information gathered in the Americas and transported in the fleets across the Atlantic Ocean was paramount to the evolution of empiricism and the establishment of institutions of knowledge-making in Spain.⁶ The fact that Spanish America provided resources favorable for the development of empirical practices in the metropolitan core invalidates the premise that European scientific knowledge spread in a single direction from an imperial center to a colonial periphery. More relevant for this essay's argument, these findings point to the fact that colonial centers were important in defining the nature and direction of imperial developments.

Movements of Asian population that enriched the cultural diversity of Spanish America and Spain are another case in point in relation to the variable, non-state-planned flows of empire. They also support the idea of a mother country being shaped by processes that emanated from the outer realms of the empire. Historians have paid much attention to the new local cultures that were formed in the Atlantic world through the integration of European, American, and African peoples, cultures, and traditions.⁷ This is less true, however, for the interethnic communities of Asian roots that were also founded in the Atlantic region. Two seemingly unconnected historical chapters exemplify the bonds that interoceanic shipping lanes created between Spain and the Pacific World. One is the presence of slaves of Asian origin in the Iberian Peninsula. Immigrants from China, Japan, India, the Philippines and Malacca who arrived in New Spain during the colonial period typically crossed the Pacific on board of the Manila-Acapulco galleons as sailors, servants of Spanish passengers, slaves, and merchants. Many of them stayed in the viceroyalty and married local native American and mixed-raced women, but the Asian migratory flux eventually crossed over to the Atlantic world with Asian slaves appealing for their freedom to the Council of the Indies in Spain in the 1600s.⁸

The other example of how ethnic communities with an Asian heritage came into being in the Spanish Atlantic is the Keicho Embassy, a diplomatic mission that Date Masamune, a daimyo in northeastern Japan, sponsored in 1613 to Spain and Rome by way of Mexico.⁹ While Date's hopes to obtain from the Spanish King Philip III an agreement to establish direct trade between Japan and Mexico bypassing the monopoly of the Manila galleon were frustrated, the cultural and ethnic repercussions of this enterprise in New Spain and Spain are fascinating. Out of the 140 Japanese samurai, merchants, and attendants who departed Japan, only about a dozen returned to their home country in 1620. Today a couple hundred residents in Andalusia identify themselves –Japón is their surname- as descendants of the members of the Keicho Embassy.¹⁰ These two episodes illustrate how a process that evolved far away from the Iberian Peninsula and largely beyond its control—the establishment of an annual commercial relationship between New Spain and the Philippines—created the conditions for the far-reaching tentacles of Asian culture to touch the shores of Spain.

In this story of intercontinental and transoceanic exchanges, the Mexican viceroyalty functioned as a communication bridge through which peoples, goods, ideas and religions travelled between Europe and Asia. Furthermore, New Spain also played a dynamic, autonomous, and flexible role in managing these interactions in lieu of the metropole. To be sure, while oceans might have facilitated the establishment of imperial power over remote populations, they remained insurmountable obstacles for a central state to maintain and consolidate said power. This is illustrated by the fact that communications between Spain and the Philippines took significantly longer than between Mexico and the archipelago. Maritime transport from the southern coast in Spain to one of the ports in the New World usually took about two months. To continue the journey to the Philippines from New Spain—the Spanish did not regularly use the route around the Cape Horn until 1785—required an additional 40-50 days of overland journey from Veracruz to Acapulco and about three months for the completion of the Pacific crossing from Acapulco to Manila. Inevitably, inter-colonial relationships thrived in the Pacific Ocean, the nature of which Spain was not always in a position neither to anticipate nor to

have ascendancy over.

The annual sailings of the Manila galleons did generate a dense web of networks in the Spanish Pacific world that were conducive for New Spain to behave as an extension of the Spanish empire's core and exert more influence in the Philippines than Spain did. The viceregal office of Mexico City supplied Manila with financial resources and enjoyed a great deal of oversight of Philippine political and ecclesiastical affairs. The seemingly never-ending silver production from the northern Mexican mines gave wholesale merchants from Mexico City the means to infiltrate themselves in the Philippine commercial organization and eventually assume the control of trading activities with Manila. Furthermore, because Spain could not effectively assist the archipelago, the responsibility of a well-fortified and supplied Philippines rested with New Spain. Starting on the 1570s, the viceroyalty regularly dispatched Mexican recruits and convicts to Manila to replace dead soldiers and deserters. In the late eighteenth century, viceregal authorities began to conduct annual anti-vagrancy campaigns in Mexico City and other provincial capitals to fill the replacement quota for the Philippines. But punishing individuals who had no military training to serve as soldiers in a place from which many never returned bespeaks more a social cleansing campaign in response to perceived rising levels of delinquency and moral misconduct among Mexican plebeian sectors than an intention to actually provide Manila with manpower.¹¹ Distance from the center of government in Madrid and regular maritime communications with the Philippines enabled New Spain to establish its own satellite and maintain and define trans-Pacific connections not always to the satisfaction of Spain but often to the viceroyalty's advantage.

When treated as a category of historical analysis, oceans emerge as massive conduits for the circulation of commodities, germs, peoples, cultural practices, and knowledge. While some exchanges were subjected to strict regulation, others developed beyond the control of central imperial authorities and frequently yielded unforeseeable results. This essay has examined trans-Atlantic and trans-Pacific relationships in the context of the Spanish empire by following these flows from the place they originated to where they had an impact in order to throw light upon

a Spanish metropole with limited absolute power and colonial centers that exercised significant decision-making capacity. Specifically, the independence of New Spain from the Iberian core derived not only from distance from the center but also from the trans-oceanic links that were built in the Spanish Pacific world. That these connections could even hinder the execution of the Spanish crown plans further compounds the idea that each periphery was integral to the empire. Unlike a traditional core-periphery model based on coercion and centralization, the concept of a polycentric monarchy with multiple interlinked centers that interacted not only with the metropolitan core but also with each other provides a flexible analytical framework that is especially suitable for early modern empires that were structured around long-distance maritime connections.

Notes:

1. Recent works that uphold the polycentric model are Pedro Cardim, Tamar Herzog, José Javier Ruiz Ibáñez and Gaetano Sabatini, eds., *Polycentric monarchies. How did Early Modern Spain and Portugal Achieve and Maintain a Global Hegemony?* (Eastbourne, UK: Sussex Academic Press, 2012); Giuseppe De Luca and Gaetano Sabatini, eds., *Growing in the shadow of an empire. How Spanish Colonialism Affected Economic Development in Europe and in the World (XVIth-XVIIIth cc)* (Franco Angeli: Milano, Italy, 2012).

2. The circulation of peoples, commodities and ideas among the continents that compose the Atlantic basin is one of the most important components of Atlantic history. A leading work in the field is David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick, eds., *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800* (New York: Palgrave, 2002). Some of the latest titles in this thriving literature are D'Maris Coffman, Adrian Leonard, and William O'Reilly, eds., *The Atlantic World* (London and New York: Routledge, 2015); Nicholas Canny and Philip D. Morgan, *The Oxford Handbook of the Atlantic World, 1450-1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Jack P. Greene and Philip D. Morgan, eds., *Atlantic History: A Critical Appraisal* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); and Caroline A. Williams, ed., *Bridging the Early Modern Atlantic: Peoples, Products and Practices on the Move* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009).

3. Arturo Giraldez, *The Age of Trade: The Manila Galleons and the Dawn of the Global Economy* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015).

4. Alfred W. Crosby, Jr., *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (Wesport: Greenwood, 1972).

5. Emblematic authors and works in the reappraisal of Iberian science are Juan Pimentel, "Iberian Vision: Science and Empire in the Framework of a Universal Monarchy, 1500-1800," *Osiris* (2000).

6. Antonio Barrera, *Experiencing Nature: The Spanish American Empire and the Early Scientific Revolution* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006).

7. For a recent title on this subject, see John K. Thornton, *A Cultural History of the Atlantic World, 1250-1820* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

8. Tatiana Seijas, *Asian Slaves in Mexico* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

9. This delegation has not made its way into the standard narrative histories of colonial Mexico or the Spanish empire and remains an exclusive realm of specialists in the history of Japan and the history of Japanese encounters with other cultures. See for instance, Robert Richmond Ellis, *They Need Nothing: Hispanic-Asian Encounters of the Colonial Period* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 46-51.

10. Juan Manuel Suárez Japón, *Japones y Japoneses en la orilla del Guadalquivir* (Seville: Fundación El Monte, 2007).

11. Eva Maria Mehl, *Forced Migration in the Spanish Pacific World. From Mexico to the Philippines, 1765-1811* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

Restoring Seas

Malcolm Campbell, University of Auckland

The Red Sea, the Dead Sea, the Sea of Galilee. The Mediterranean Sea, the Aegean Sea, the Black Sea. The Coral Sea, the Timor Sea, the Arafura Sea. Each of these seas figured in my high school education, whether in history, geography, or religious studies. However, by the time I got to university, oceans were well on their way to supplanting seas as the foci of serious historical study. In the mid-1980s Fernand Braudel's monumental study *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean world in the age of Philip II* was making its mark in the English-speaking world as the Annales School's influence on historical writing approached its peak.¹ Though focused principally on three temporal scales of change around the Mediterranean, Braudel's work on the most famous of seas ironically provided an exemplar for a new genre of oceanic histories that emerged first among scholars of the Atlantic World. The earliest of these new oceanic histories re-thought spatial categories to facilitate fruitful dialogue between two related fields of history, English early modern and American colonial history, which had until then remained stubbornly apart. Over time, the breadth of Atlantic scholarship expanded to include the contributions and involvement of the French, Spanish and Dutch, to name just a few European nations. African-American connections were constituted as the "Black Atlantic" and transoceanic connections among political radicals became the "Red Atlantic".² Numerous well-executed studies investigated the movement and exchange of peoples, goods, organisms and ideas across this most intensely-travelled ocean. Despite some ongoing questions about its scope, historicity, and intellectual coherence, the concept of the Atlantic World expanded in reach and thrived within the academy.

The academic impact of the Atlantic World project encouraged similar research on the other great oceans. The 1980s saw the publication of important new studies of Indian Ocean trading networks, and from the mid-1990s scholars including Michael Pearson and Kenneth McPherson progressively advanced the idea of a distinctive Indian Ocean World that differed in geography and historical experience from the Atlantic World.³ Matt K. Matsuda's

influential essay in the *American Historical Review's* 2006 forum "Oceans of History" elevated the status of the Pacific Ocean in the practice of oceanic history and since that time the largest of oceans has also been investigated in a range of well-received publications.⁴ However, it is now timely to pose the question whether oceanic history as practiced over the last thirty or so years has run its course? Is there scope for future development of the genre? Or, is it time to refocus our attention away from the holistic study of the largest water masses to smaller ones, to reconsider and reinstate the importance of seas in history, and to intensify our interest in the littoral places where water and land adjoin. In this essay, I will identify some of the weaknesses of today's oceanic history and propose a new spatial agenda focused on the seas and lands where the Pacific and Indian Oceans intersect.

It can easily be overlooked that oceans are physical features of the globe *and* spaces discursively constructed by people. Jet age travel tends to dim our awareness of the currents and tides and of the intrepid navigators below. Arguably, because of the human role in the construction of space, we can only truly begin to talk of the world's three great oceans from the early sixteenth century, when Ferdinand Magellan's voyage of circumnavigation enabled understanding of the global connectivity of these largest maritime spaces. To be sure, the northern Atlantic had for a very long time been a basin in which people and goods circulated. For centuries, Malay seafarers had traversed the Indian Ocean through their mastery of monsoon winds and sea currents. Maritime networks linked many Pacific peoples, too.

Trade and exchange were, therefore, continuous features of the lives of the peoples of all three oceans long prior to the 1500s, even if the frequency of movement and scale of activity varied widely. However, three discursively constructed oceanic worlds, named spaces, brought into connection and juxtaposed rhetorically, existed only from the early 1500s when the Portuguese and Spanish fleets crossed the Indian and Pacific Oceans respectively and made claims upon the lands that separated them. The journal of the Spanish Friar Andrés de Urdaneta (1508-68), describes in 1527 Portuguese and Spanish governors who traversed the two oceans from the west and east respectively facing off against each other, "each accusing the other of being usurpers in the Moluccas."⁵

Oceanic history as practiced over the past three decades exhibits some common flaws. First, the weight of scholarship has tended to reinforce perceptions of the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific oceans as closed worlds where movement and exchange operated within the inelastic boundaries established by the adjacent land masses. Islam spread westward from the Arabian Peninsula to Southeast Asia; silver shipped westward across the Pacific from Acapulco to Manila; nineteenth-century European migrants sailed west from Liverpool or Hamburg to establish new lives in industrializing North America. Each of the oceans has been constituted as a discrete object of study. However, if modern-day historians have found rounding the capes and navigating from one ocean to another unsettling, early modern traders and nineteenth-century immigrants proved much more adept at charting the treacherous waters between oceans. Historically, people, commodities and ideas circulated within *and* between world's great oceans. As Linda Colley commented in relation to the Atlantic Ocean, "to the extent that the world was in motion in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, and this was expressed in the wider transmission and exchange of commodities, ships, ideas and people, the practice of singling out the Atlantic, and the lands connected by it, circumscribes our understanding of what was involved."⁶ The recent popularity of global approaches to the past owes at least a measure of its appeal to its ability to breach the artificially-imposed boundaries of the oceanic worlds and illustrate wider-scale interactions in the past.

Secondly, works of oceanic history have often displayed only a limited register in dealing with matters of orientation and scale. For reasons that can only be briefly noted here, practitioners of oceanic history have tended to place greater stress on east-west-east mobility and exchange than on north-south-north exchanges. Part of the explanation for this tendency lies in contemporary cartographic practices that orient maps northward. So, too conventional Western reading practices affect the way we view the printed page. As a result of these influences, we have been rather more attuned to observe movements along the lines of latitude than along the lines of longitude. Simultaneously, the oceanic approach prioritizes the macro-level approach to the study of these large water masses. Attempts to turn up the dial of the microscope and adopt a more densely textured approach to oceans

and their inhabitants have been rarer.

One solution to the issue of scale has been to step back from a holistic approach and consciously fragment oceanic space. In his excellent recent book, *The Great Ocean*, David Igler writes that the concept of the Pacific World "is unstable and problematic, even if its shorthand utility makes it difficult to resist." He understands the Pacific Ocean from the late eighteenth century as "not a single ocean world [but as a] vast waterscape where imperial and personal contests played out on isolated bays and coastlines."⁷ As works including Igler's show, the challenge posed by diversity, both physical and cultural, is particularly acute in the case of the Western Pacific Ocean. In this space, in particular, we need to make room for the sea to return. Unlike the long land barriers of the Americas or the formidable coastlines of Africa, the Indian and Pacific Oceans are divided by an irregular patchwork of lands and islands, and of seas and straits. The Indian Ocean's eastern/Pacific Ocean's western boundary constitutes a seam that is porous, physically diverse and culturally varied. This oceanic connection offers a test site for a new approach to waterways and littorals where seas are brought to the foreground—the South China Sea, the Celebes Sea, the Java Sea, the Andaman Sea to name just a few. In refocussing on seas and shallows rather than the ocean deep, I take to be true the argument advanced by scholars including Leonard Andaya that by reconfiguring spaces in this way we can identify alternative ways of studying the past.⁸

What would a future study that privileges seas rather than oceans, and investigates the tide lines of seas and littoral spaces look like? How would this enable historians to eschew conventional East-West orientation and explore in more detail the north-south mobility of people, goods and ideas over time? If we take the border between the Indian and Pacific oceans as our testing ground, a number of lines of investigation stand out. Foremost is the development of trading networks. Southeast Asian historians including Anthony Reid have long acknowledged their region's importance in trade between China and Western Asia. Along the other axis, a body of exciting new scholarship is extending our knowledge of north-south connections along the variegated chain of lands and islands that runs from continental Asia to Australia, including the connections between the peoples of Makassar and indigenous Australians.⁹

Asian and European mariners plied the seas between the oceans trading goods. From the late eighteenth century ships from Kolkata set sail for Sumatra, passing through the Strait of Malacca before entering the Java Sea. The Australian colonies and the Fijian islands quickly entered this trading world, as did New Zealand as voyages across the Tasman Sea became more frequent.¹⁰ The subsequent intensification of migration from southern China also left an indelible mark on nineteenth-century trading patterns. For example, in 1854 a young Chinese merchant named Lowe Kong Meng, arrived in Melbourne, Victoria, to take advantage of new opportunities presented by the gold rushes in eastern Australia. Meng was a man of the sea: born in Guangzhou, educated in Penang, a trader on his own vessel between Mauritius, Kolkata and within the South China Sea, his extended southward journey was in some respects a continuation of sea-borne trading traditions that had been building for centuries.¹¹

Just as these seas were places of vibrant trade, they were also the filaments along which ideas were transmitted. The seas and littorals between the Indian and Pacific Oceans constitute a line of demarcation of religious influence, the former part of the world of Islam and the latter a place of Christian missionary endeavor. The two faiths, and others, made landfall and competed for land and adherents. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Friar Urdaneta observed in the Spice Islands the young Sultan of Tidore and the Spanish Captain-General Zarquisano swearing loyalty to each other, one on the Koran and the other on the Bible. The arrival of these and other faiths and their interaction with indigenous beliefs had enduring consequences. While historians have attended to the national and regional implications of these competing belief systems, focus on the intersection of sea and land has the potential to advance our current narratives and explore more fully the longitudinal scope of religious impacts. Examples of these interactions include the Islamic influence that spread southward across the Banda Sea from Makassar to indigenous communities in northern Australia.¹²

Seas, like oceans, were places of vast human mobility. Though men and women had been moving within and between the Indian and Pacific oceans for centuries, the size of the population on the move increased dramatically as indentured laborers and contract workers from mainland Asia joined tens of

thousands of European newcomers in reshaping the demography of the lands along the oceanic seam. While much scholarship has explored large-scale European migration east and west across the great oceans from the eighteenth century, this perspective runs the risk of ignoring the vast non-European migration on the seas and littorals adjacent to oceans from the latter half of the nineteenth century. For example, Adam McKeown has shown that in the period from 1846–1940 in the order of 48–52 million people moved southwards out of India and southern China into Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean rim, and the South Pacific, traversing seas and coastal waterways as far as New Zealand.¹³

Southeast Asian historians have also drawn attention to the complex nature of colonialism in their region and emphasized the importance of re-thinking spatial boundaries to investigate its causes and effects.¹⁴ By the time of the nineteenth century's age of empire, the tenor of European engagement at the intersection of the two oceans was transformed from its earlier manifestations into the forcible imposition of colonial rule or the establishment of protectorates where treaties determined relations with the Western powers. Bookended geographically in the northwest by the British presence in India and in the south by its colonization of New Zealand, the growth of the European empires involved competition not only for lands but for the stewardship of seas and shallows that extended as far as the islands beyond the Coral and Solomon seas.

While larger-scale oceanic studies have advanced our knowledge enormously in recent decades, let's not forget the historical importance of the sea. Trade, belief systems, people and power found texture and meaning in fine-grained encounters on smaller and more enclosed waterways, the seas between the Indian and Pacific Oceans. As the spatial turn underway in the humanities and social sciences encourages us to rethink our approaches to scope, scale and orientation, reinstatement of the sea promises a timely stimulant to or efforts to rethink the past.

Notes:

1. Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean world in the age of Philip II* (London: Collins, 1972).

2. Scholarship on Atlantic history and its principal themes is extensive. A recent overview of the scholarship and bibliographic source is Trevor Burnard, *British Atlantic World: Oxford bibliographies online* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).
3. Kenneth McPherson, *The Indian Ocean: a history of the people and the sea* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993); Michael Pearson, *The Indian Ocean* (London: Routledge, 2003).
4. Matt K. Matsuda "The Pacific", *American Historical Review* 111, no. 3 (2006): 758–80. His monograph *Pacific worlds: a history of seas, peoples and cultures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 2012, develops and extends the concept. Other recent scholarship includes David Igler, *Great ocean: Pacific worlds from Captain Cook to the gold rush* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), and David Armitage and Alison Bashford, eds., *Pacific histories: ocean, land, people* (Houndsmills, Hants.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).
5. Mairin Mitchell, *Friar Andrés de Urdaneta, O.S.A. (1508-1568): Pioneer of Pacific Navigation from West to East* (London: MacDonald and Evans, 1964), 41.
6. Linda Colley, "The Sea around us," *New York Review of Books* (22 June 2006).
7. Igler, *Great Ocean*, 4, 10.
8. Leonard Y. Andaya, "'The sea of Malayu': an ocean perspective of Malay history," https://icssis.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/0609082010_07.pdf.
9. For example, Julia Martínez and Adrian Vickers, *The pearl frontier: Indonesian labour and indigenous encounters in Australia's northern trading networks* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015). On Southeast Asian trade see Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce 1450–1680 Volume 2: Expansion and Crisis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).
10. Early maritime connections between New Zealand, Australia and Asia are explored in a wide range of contemporary sources and historical studies. A tantalizing sampler of mobility on the seam between India and New Zealand including Sydney, Hobart, Batavia and Penang, is J. W. Davidson, *Peter Dillon of Vanikoro*, ed. Oscar Spate (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1975).
11. Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the global colour line: white men's countries and the international challenge of racial equality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 16, 25.
12. Mitchell, *Urdaneta*, 37.
13. Adam McKeown, "Global migrations, 1846–1940," *Journal of World History* 15, no. 2 (2004): 156, 157.
14. Remco Raben, "The Colonial Intrusion: Boundaries and Structures," in Norman G. Owen, ed., *Routledge Handbook of Southeast Asian History* (London: Routledge, 2014), 25.

Ship Symbolism in the 'Arabic Cosmopolis': Reading Kunjayin Musliyar's "*Kappapattu*" in 18th century Malabar

Shaheen Kelachan Thodika, Jawaharlal Nehru University

Introduction

Manga (mango), *thenga* (coconut) and numerous other crops, fruits and objects were the central themes of many songs in the Arabi-

Malayalam literary language.¹ In this paper, I focus on "*Kappapattu*" ("Ship Song") written in the 18th century Malabar. Reading it within the Malabar context, scholars saw the "Ship Song" as an original approach of a Sufi poet in towards formulating an allegorical relationship between the lives of humans and technology within ships. While a few analyses in Malayalam have demonstrated the importance of the ship in Quran and Islamic literature, no attempts have yet been made to understand the "*Kappapattu*" of Malabar in the larger Indian Ocean context.² This

particular poem, written by Kunjayin Musliyar, an 18th century Sufi scholar, is exceptional for its mystical depth and an excessive presence of Tamil words in the Arabi-Malayalam song.³ This paper also explores questions such as how the tradition has linked technology within Sufi knowledge; how religious life and port life shared a deep knowledge of seasons, ship movement, sea movement etc.; and how this enabled Musliyar in easily connecting and conversing with the larger Muslim population. The paper looks at how Musliyar invokes a glorious Muslim maritime past and asks why, after the Portuguese havoc,⁴ Sufi literature invokes such narratives of the past. It also enquires whether the invasion of Mysore allied with the Arakkal dynasty, a major maritime power in the region, and Tipu Sultan's interventions in Malabar contributed to the formation of a new concept of the maritime towards the close of the 18th century.

One of the first references to the 18th century Arabi-Malayalam poem I am dealing with “*Kappapattu*” in a secondary Malayalam source is in the *Mahathaya Mappila Sahithya Paramparyam* (*The Great Mappila Literary Tradition*, 1978), co-authored by KK Muhammad Abdul Karim and CN Ahamad Moulavi.⁵ KK Muhammad Abdul Karim also wrote “*Rasikashiromani Kunjayin and ‘Kappapattu:’ Oru Padan am*” (*The Comedy King Kunjayin and The Ship Song: A Study*) in 1982. Prior to Abdul Karim's work, Kunjayin Muslaiyar (d. circa 1785) was very popular among Malabar Muslims for his humor and wit.⁶ Precisely because of that reason Kunjayin Musliyar is not in need of an introduction to the Mappila population. Yet these stories of humor overshadow Musliyar's remarkable contribution to Sufi knowledge and Arabi-Malayalam poetry, which are relatively unexplored. An attempt by Dr. Zakeer Hussain in *Kunjayin Musliyar and “Kappapattu”: Oru Darshanika Padanam*, is the latest attempt explore the Sufi writings of Kunjayin Musliyar. One could see from Kunjayin's title itself that he was a Musliyar, which denotes Ulama in Malabar. Very few attempts have been made to understand the role of Ulama in Malabar context.⁷ One could say Kunjayin was a religious scholar of humble origins,⁸ a Sufi poet⁹ as well as a very popular story figure centuries after his death. Musliyar was born in Thalassery (Tellicherry in English East India Company documents)¹⁰ in North Malabar, but went on to procure a religious degree

from Ponnani in South Malabar.¹¹ Of the popular stories attributed to him, some are worth mentioning here in order to understand Kunjayin Musliyar's role in the 18th-century Malabar society.

Kunjayin Musliyar in the oral tradition

Stories attributed to him include his humor, from his childhood days in the madrasa to his rise as a prominent member of Zamorin's court. In one of the stories, Musliyar had a Hindu neighbor—belonging to traditional land-owning caste- who was a miser and used to live on usury taken from people.¹² Musliyar decided to target the neighbor with his humor. Once, he asked to borrow a copper vessel from the neighbor who was reluctant to hand over his house utensils to outsiders. But knowing Musliyar's talents in mocking and critiquing people, the neighbor could not refuse. After a few days, Musliyar returned the utensil along with two small copper vessels. When asked by the astonished neighbor, he replied that the copper utensil had given birth to these two vessels. The neighbor was, of course, overjoyed and waited for Musliyar to borrow more objects. And Musliyar borrowed copper vessels from the neighbor twice or thrice and returned them with multiplied smaller vessels. Many days later, Musliyar asked the neighbor for his biggest copper vessel for preparing a communal feast in the madrasa. The neighbor, expecting a sizeable profit, happily gave Musliyar what he asked for. A few days later, Musliyar told the neighbor, much to the latter's dismay, that his biggest copper vessel had died during the delivery and was lost forever.¹³

In some of these stories Musliyar plays a messenger between Zamorin's court and the rival *Kottayam kovilakam* (“little kingdoms” or authorities of pre-colonial Malabar).¹⁴ In the friendly skirmishes between these “little kingdoms,” the stories are evidence of Musliyar's intelligence which soared above that of members of both the courts. To understand Musliyar's humor in a historical context here, I move to discussions on the historiography concerning Birbal, the most famous figure of humor and wit in Mughal courts.

C.M. Naim, in his analysis of Birbal jokes in Akbar's time, refutes the attributions of Birbal jokes as a result of the repressed/suppressed Hindu mind against the Muslim/Mughal Rule. According to him Aurangzeb, who was supposedly more disliked, would

also have been the target of such jokes, but there are hardly any. To complicate the picture, Naim looks at Mulla Do Pyaza, another figure in Akbar's court who was also known for his humor but whose humor Naim categorizes as "an expression of suppressed aggression." Do Pyaza inhabited what Naim calls the religious orthodoxy in Akbar's court. By examining the evidence, Naim is doubtful about the historicity of Mulla Do Pyaza and finds him "fictional" unlike Birbal whose historicity is established through major sources. But this construction of Mulla Do Pyaza projected, in Naim's words, "a great deal of later communal polarization."¹⁵ Similarly, it is possible that the tensions between Kunjayin Musliyar and Zamorin's minister Mangattachan may have evolved in the later communal polarizations of Malabar. For instance, in the agrarian outbreaks, although its attribution of communal factors by colonial historiography has been questioned, the tensions and subsequent polarization which followed cannot be denied entirely.

Kunjayin Musliyar died in the same year 1786 when Tipu Sultan's Malabar invasion took place. Early colonial historians and travelers saw this invasion as markedly different from that of Hyder, characterized as it was with Tipu's "barbarity and cruelty."¹⁶ It is important to conduct an analysis of such colonial characterization of Tipu Sultan in the context of the transformations that were taking place in Malabar from early 17th century rather than accepting the alleged "barbarity and cruelty" at face value. In the second story, I have mentioned the property and disputes between Nair lenders who accept that usury was important. But there would be another dimension to this story, a major colonial source on Tipu Sultan's rule written by M.M.D.L.T and edited by Gholam Mohammad.¹⁷ Tipu's son, who was a pensioner of the English in his later life, wrote in his biography of Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan that the relations between Mappila Muslims and Nairs were undergoing a transformation.¹⁸ Zamorin, to whose court Mangattachan belonged, had been, as I argued earlier, witness to a harmonious relationship between the two communities, based on humor. But towards North Malabar, tensions were increasing gradually and, as Ruchira Banerjee demonstrated, one could locate the growing importance of maritime life and its consequences on Mappila life.¹⁹ A new aggressive

maritime conduct seems to have occupied Ali Raja and his naval assertions during this time.²⁰ For example, Maistre de la Tour (M.M.D.L.T), writes that in his expedition to Maldives, Ali Raja conducted cruel excesses by plucking out the eyes of the Maldives king. Haider Ali, who is shown as a better and more powerful figure than Ali Raja in M.M.D.L.T's account, reprimands the latter for this behavior. The growing maritime power also had consequences in poetry and Sufi literature, as the "*Kappapattu*" reflects. I now attempt to enquire into how peaceful the maritime rise of Mappilas was, as represented in the "*Kappapattu*." Could one see the poem as a Sufi response to the aggressive rise of ship and army in the contemporary context, since it is written by Sufi scholar who was known for his harmonious humor which I would like to call Sufi humor? One may read the poem closely for this purpose.

Following the Beautiful Ship

Before embarking on the journey, the poet is giving certain instructions to the Human who is already allegorized as a ship. The initial lines are spiritual instructions which ask everyone (human-ship, or the travelers in the ship) to eliminate ego and pride and to be more conscious in life. Subsequently, the poet begins describing the ship or how a ship is constructed, including the measures of wood used for making this ship. Here he is explicit in comparing the ship with the human body. Kunjayin Musliyar's knowledge of ship technology and human anatomy is brought together in these lines. Musliyar was a student of Maqdoom at Ponnani, and his knowledge of various aspects of life would not be surprising, considering that the syllabus of the Dars included these topics. After explaining the features of the wooden ship, Musliyar moves to the sky (heaven). Here, he uses words such as *oruvathumonnu* for *ahadathile alif* and it is not surprising that *Nayan* is used for Allah at the beginning of the poem.²¹ One could argue in this context that so many Arabic words have been translated to Malayalam or Tamil throughout these texts. The captain of the ship, as Zakeer Hussain explains in the poem, is the *Nakhuda* who has *dabiyass* or foresight. Many other workers in the ship including *Srank*, *Karani*, *Muallimi*, etc. are mentioned. Hussain in his analysis compares this song with Malayalam contemporary *Bhakthikavya* (Hindu

devotional poetry) tradition where in *Njanappana* (17th century) similar verses are attributed. But unlike *Njanappana* where the all-powerful God nullifies humans, here the story is also important with its strong roots in the Sufi tradition. Kunjayin Musliyar's poem is unlikely to have been influenced by the traditions of *Bhakti Kavya* although there are some broadly similar trends. Musliyar seem not to be borrowing anything from local other than the form of the ship, which appears more analogous to a dhow when one analyses the text.

To the captain of the ship, Musliyar asks how farsighted he is. The Persian word *Nakhuda* is used for the captain of the ship in the poem. Musliyar's priority to the five-time prayers is emphasized in the subsequent lines. In the next few lines, pirates are importantly compared with the enemies of this piety. Storm and pirates are the other forces of havoc in the Sufi path of religion. While in Portuguese discourse Mappilas were branded as pirates, here the Mappila-ship-body metaphor is a warning against the pirates. The concept of piracy in Mappila literature is worth enquiring: "*Kallanekathu* (saved from the pirate-thief) *kadalottam* (sailed through the sea)" could be seen as references. Musliyar then moves into more Sufi thoughts where the soul is asked to get the pearl from the deep sea. This call has a precedent in Malabar itself where Zainuddin Maqdoom (d.1583) invokes the metaphor of sea as the *tariqa* (Sufi order) and the pearls inside as the *haqiaqa* (the ultimate destination in the Sufi path). Curiously, in Maqdoom, the ship is the *Sharia*.²² In the poem, if we consider the five-time prayer and *zakat*, *hajj*, etc. as within the realm of the *sharia* (which could be loosely translated as Islamic law but is a much larger concept) then, in this aspect, Musliyar follows a clear paradigm set by Maqdoom. The education and training Musliyar received in Ponnani were in a Shafi system of learning set by Maqdoom, but constantly interacted with North Malabar region where Musliyar and the second Maqdoom are said to have been buried.

In the poem, the journey is described as tough, and one has to encounter not only pirates but also storms and other calamities, where only piety can save one. After narrating the hardships, the poet shifts narration to the Judgment Day, which is the worst hardship before reaching the final destination. After the five-time prayers and the obligatory prayers that

go along with it, the poet is also asked to give charity (*zakat*), perform fasting and *hajj*. While mentioning *hajj*, the poet does not forget to mention the tomb of Prophet Muhammad and is eloquent in this part. The poet's love for Prophet Muhammad is well known with his first veneration poem of Prophet Muhammad called "*Nul Madh*" and "*Nul Mala*." Till now he was only narrating the human body generally as a ship, which had a precedent in the Malay tradition.²³ But at this point he also invokes Prophet Muhammad as a beautiful ship. Annemarie Schimmel in her work *And Muhammad is the messenger* explains Prophet Muhammad "as a beautiful example."²⁴ In this poem, it is not only the best ship but also the beautiful ship. In short, in the concluding part of "*Kappapattu*" one is following the beautiful ship that is called *Prophet Muhammad*.

Apart from Kunjayin Musliyar's own background in writing *Mawliidi*²⁵ poems, this *Mawliidi* aspect²⁶ generally places the poem as not only within the *Mawlid* tradition but also reveals influences of the long Islamic poetic tradition. The sojourner is advised to have self-discipline and avoid the madness of the journey which could be disastrous. The punishments and terrors of being buried in the *qabar* (grave) come at this part of the poem. In these parts of the poem, one could see how intelligent Musliyar's choice of ship was as a metaphor for human. The point that the ship would be damaged and will become unusable is underlined, and here the comparison is obviously with human death. In the end, the human ship reaches the destination in peace, and it ends with a poem where the poet seeks and prays to Allah (*Nayan* is no longer used) to help him meet Prophet Muhammad on the final day.

Towards a new maritime and "dhow cultures"

In 1710 a *Masjid* was established in the hilly region of Wayanad in Malabar by Shafi Muslims²⁷ of Nadapuram,²⁸ signifying a shift in the rural geography of Malabar with the Shafi hinterland migrations.²⁹ I will try to now situate the transformations that were already taking place in the religious life of Muslims prior to the Mysore invasion of Malabar. The expansion of the Ponnani and North Malabar-centered Hadhrami³⁰/Shafi Islam was taking place in the regions of Malabar bordering the Carnatic region during this period. The *Rawuthars* (Hanafi Muslims)

whom Susan Bayly identifies as mounted warriors were gradually migrating during the period of Mysore rule in Malabar.³¹ Here, one would witness what can be seen as a concentrated Hanafi migration into the Shafi Malayalam region by late 18th century. But the first half of the 18th century was witnessing the gradual migration of Shafi Muslims into the hinterland. While the hinterland was going through these important transformations, one needs to locate Kunjayin Musliyar and his “*Kappapattu*” in the context of the Mysore invasion. Musliyar’s early work “*Nul Madh*” and “*Nul Mala*” could be seen as referencing the Shafi hinterland migrations in the first half of 18th century. In the second half, with the maritime region and coastal Malabar becoming an important part of Mappila socio-economic life, one could identify its influences in the “*Kappapattu*.” How does one explain the shift in focus from the “*Nul Madh*” to the “*Kappapattu*?”³² Here I follow a pioneering study of Yasser Arafath on the “*Muhyiuddin Mala*” of the 17th century.³³ “*Muhyiuddin Mala*” is the first Arabi-Malayalam text that is available to scholars.

Written in 1607, this sacred biographical poem of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jeelani set a paradigm for the subsequent *Mappila mala* literature in Arabi-Malayalam.³⁴ Yasser Arafath has contextualized “*Muhyiuddin Mala*” in the specific context of Portuguese havoc on the Mappila Muslim population. The *mala* in Arafath’s view also becomes a symbol of resistance and community formation of Mappilas in the 17th century context. One could see a continuity from the “*Muhyiuddin Mala*” to “*Kappapattu*” in inspiring religious education in the society. My argument is, however, that a significant rupture occurs from *mala* to “*Kappapattu*” when Musliyar focuses on human body which is allegorized with a ship as an individual. In talking about the features of “early modern in South Asia,” Partha Chatterjee has importantly pointed out “a new sense of individual” and a “new skepticism towards the old as constituting the period of early modern.” He analyses the text *Sair al-muta’akkehirin* which sees the Mysore rulers as a sign of hope because of their decisive ability to break from the past.³⁵ One could use these attributes of hope and a critique of the past in the Mysore rulers as features of early modernity. I consider that although all these factors are not simultaneously present in the “*Kappapattu*” text, the break occurs where he

precisely brings the ship and talks about the new ship as an individual. This could be a coincidence when Tipu Sultan, the early modern absolutist ruler, was invading and ruling Malabar in the latter half of the 18th century.

Dilip Menon has argued that Malabar as a region whose “history devolved out of the ocean.”³⁶ The presence of the sea in the land was important in the coinage of local royal titles as *Zamorin* (the king of the sea) and *Ali Raja* (*Azhi Raja* or maritime chief). In this sense the ocean becomes doubly important for the Sufi poetry of Malabar both for its geographical and cultural locations, one could argue. In the poem, we already saw the presence of the word such as *Nakhuda*. One could see from the 18th century inscriptions how the *Nakhudas* (captains of the ship) rose in importance in the 18th century Malabar. One vital move of Tipu Sultan in Malabar was to shift the capital from Zamorin’s old seaside city of Calicut to a more hinterland location near another port town of Beypore.³⁷ It is worth mentioning here that an inscription found at Beypore in the late 18th century demonstrates the rise of this city and a new importance it acquired in the maritime economy. If one looks at certain inscriptions of Calicut city from the late 17th century one could see some mosques as constructed or reconstructed with the help of *Nakhudas* or sailors.³⁸ But the mosques of Calicut are amongst the oldest in South Asia, and one could see mosques from the 11th century onwards. On the contrary, the oldest inscription found in Beypore dates back only to 1790, a year when Tipu Sultan was probably around.

Yet the inscription is silent about Tipu Sultan who also was not a mosque builder in Malabar unlike all Musalman rulers of India with whom, according to Buchanan, Tipu Sultan shared many features. On the other hand, the inscription mentions that the mosque was constructed by “*Nakhuda* and Merchant Faqir son Abdu Rahiman.” The investment of the sailors in the construction of cities such as Beypore, which was not earlier a part of the maritime economy, marks a shift in economic practices. This new role acquired by sailors away from the medieval ports into new riverside hinterland land cities of the 18th century marks the changing relations of economic and social life in the 19th century which gives an ample background for Kunjayin Musliyar to evoke the ship and talk about *Nakhuda* to different ranks of ship-related workers

and co-opt them into the new religious life of 18th century Malabar. Musliyar's knowledge of Sufi Islam, religion, etc. makes his role more as a narrator of the 18th-century transformations, including the changing Mappila-Nair relations, the decline of coasts and shift in economies and hinterland turns,³⁹ etc. than simply as a poet or a figure of wit as popularly assumed in literature.

In 18th century Malabar, the "free maritime" era⁴⁰ was long since past, and Musliyar wrote his poem probably as a tribute to such a past. But the maritime culture of Mappila Muslims whose religion,⁴¹ region,⁴² and lifestyle "devolved on the ocean" refused to accept decline, and got a new life with the Mysore invasion. In other words, the poem marks disruptions in the free sea and a resurgence which were all present in the 18th century southwest coast at the same time.

Notes:

1. Arabi-Malayalam is the practice of writing Malayalam in a modified Arabic. This literary language always presented a wonder to the colonial historians. For instance, Francis Buchanan notes "They (Mappila Muslims) use a written character peculiar to themselves, and totally different from the present Arabic." Francis Buchanan, *A Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara, and Malabar, Vol.II* (New Delhi: Asian Education Services, 1807, reprint 1988), 422.

2. Ronit Ricci's pioneering concept of the "Arabic Cosmopolis" is important to situate the poem and explain the Indian Ocean Islam, translations and conversions. The relation between literature and society has been analyzed by Ricci using the concept of "literary network," which is comprised "of shared texts, including stories, poems, genealogies, histories, and treatises on a broad range of topics, as well as the readers, listeners, authors, patrons, translators, and scribes who created, translated, supported, and transmitted them." But considering this Ricci crucially misses the Arabi-Malayalam region, which presents a richer evidence of translation and texts and conversion. I have elsewhere argued that we consider extending the "Arabic Cosmopolis" to include the Arabi-Malayalam region, which broke away from Tamil tradition at a crucial juncture and developed its own tradition of *Mala* poems, *Mawlid* songs, *Fatwas*,

Masa'las etc. and which was enriched in the late 19th century with the translation of the Quran. I would like to argue that the case of "*Kappapattu*" reaffirms a strong imperative to look at Arabi-Malayalam texts in an "Arabic Cosmopolis" framework but without losing this region's specificities. Ronit Ricci, *Islam Translated: Literature, Conversion, and the Arabic Cosmopolis of South and Southeast Asia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 2. K. Shaheen, "The Domain of Orthodoxy: Sufi and Shari Traditions in Colonial Malabar," unpublished M.Phil dissertation (Kolkata: Center for Studies in Social Sciences Calcutta, 2014), 8-14.

3. In his introduction to a recent study on "*Kappapattu*" in Malayalam, K. Aboobakkar argues that a "Tamilization" of the poetic language is one of the most outstanding features of the "*Kappapattu*." Zakeer Hussain, *Kunjayin Musliyarude Kappapattu: Oru Darshanika Pandanam* (Kodotty: Mahakavi Moyinkutty Vaidyar Mappila Kala Academy, 2014), 22.

4. The Portuguese assault had a huge impact in the sea trade with Arabs and Mappila economy facing decline from the 17th century. Stephen Dale, *Islamic Society in the South Asian Frontier: The Mappilas of Malabar 1498-1922* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908).

5. This work provides an encyclopedic description of most works that have been produced by Mappila Muslims from the 16th to the 20th century and has been a major source for historians of this area.

6. This is the Mappila Pattu scholar K. Abubakkar's estimation. In his opinion, Kunjayin Musliyar had lived between 1738 and 1786 CE. Hussain, 18.

7. Unlike in the north Indian case, where works such as Muhammad Qasim Zaman's *The Ulama in contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change* have enhanced our understanding of the category substantially. KN Panikkar, writing in the context of Mappila outbreaks in the 19th century, understands the Ulama who interpreted and mediated religious texts for the masses as the "traditional intellectual." K.N. Panikkar, *Against Lord and State: Religion and Peasant Uprisings in Malabar, 1836-1921* (Oxford:

Oxford University Press, 1989), 65. I am not trying to evoke such a category to understand Kunjayin Musliyar's role in the precolonial world, which is radically different from Panikkar's focus.

8. Born to a *Palli Mukri* or *muezzin* (who takes care of functions in Masjid including calling azan, cleaning Masjid etc.).

9. Evident from texts including "*Nul Madh*" (a poem in praise of Prophet Muhammad) and "*Nul Mala*" (a song in praise in of Abdul Qadir Jeelani, eponymous founder of Qadiri Sufi order).

10. J. Rejikumar, ed., "The Joint Commissioners' Report on Malabar, 1792-1793," 227.

11. Ponnani was also known as "Little Mecca" in Malabar. Hussain Randthaani, "Maqdoomum Ponnaniyum," (Mal, Magdooom and Ponnani) (Ponnani: Jumath Palli Committee, 2010).

12. The stereotype of misery could not be fixated to any castes in the popular stories of here, but in the story I consulted the caste identity of the Hindu neighbor is a Nair -who were the dominant Shudra caste of Malabar region- and which would be important to the changing Nair Muslim relation in the region as I demonstrate further in this essay.

13. I quote some more stories from the oral tradition here for a better understanding. In one story Musliyar was said to have had amicable relations with his wife. But when she became pregnant, Musliyar was willing to provide for only half the cost. According to him this was a shared business and he and his wife were equal partners. Musliyar's act was against the prevalent custom where women used to receive the entire expenditure incurred during their pregnancy from the husband. For three months after she had given birth, Musliyar did not visit the child and mother. When he finally turned up, his wife handed the child over to him and disappeared into the house. Soon the child urinated on Musliyar's clothes and he called his wife to help him. Much to his surprise, his wife replied that since they were equal partners in this business, she expected him to take care of the child by himself for the coming three months. This is shown as the only

instance where Musliyar's humor failed and he was forced to repay the costs incurred to his wife and the child.

14. On a detailed discussion of "little Kingdoms" in Malabar conquest see Margaret Frenz, *From Contact to Conquest: Transition to British Rule in Malabar, 1790-1805* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

15. C.M. Naim, "Popular Jokes and Political History: The Case of Akbar, Birbal and Mulla Do Ryaza," *Economic and Political Weekly* 30, No. 24 (June 17, 1995), 1456-1464.

16. Buchanan, 350.

17. M.M.D.L.T. whose account is important for later historians like William Logan is considered to be a European officer in Mughal army. However, C.K. Kareem has expressed doubts on his historical identity and see the work as probably fabricated. C.K. Kareem, "Kerala under Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan," Kerala History Association: Paico Publication House, 1973, xii.

18. In his account, Mappilas were growing economically, particularly in maritime trade and naval strength. This in turn created jealousy and competition with the Nairs, who earlier possessed land and dominated the economy. The author sees Mappilas as also practicing usury. M.M.D.L.T., *The History of Hyder Sha Alias Hyder Ali Khan Bahadur and of his son Tippoo Sultan* (W. Thacker and Co., 1855), 61-63.

19. Ruchira Banerjee, "A Wedding Feast or Political Arena?: Commercial Rivalry between the Ali Rajas and the English Factory in Northern Malabar in the 18th Century" in Rudrangshu Mukherjee & Lakhshmi Subramanian, ed., *Politics and Trade in the Indian Ocean World: Essays in Honor of Ashin Das Gupta* (Delhi, 2000), 83-112.

20. Ali Raja was the lone Muslim/Mappila chiefs in pre-colonial north Malabar. Ibid..

21. This is a Sufi usage. For poems which gives importance to *alif* (first letter in Arabic language but used as metaphor for the praise of Islamic monotheism

in these poems) in Sufi literature *Allafal Alif* written by Tamil Arabic poet Umar Valiyullah (Born 1740) could be the best example. C. Hamza, *Allafal Alif Vikvarthanavum Vyakhyyanavum* (Kozhikode: Book Trust of India, 2007).

22. Zainuddin Maqdoom's *Hidayath-Al-Adkiya*, a Medieval Sufi Manual explains this concept. For further reference see V. Kunhali, *Sufism in Kerala* (University of Calicut, 2004).

23. I. Vladimer Braginsky, "Sufi Boat Symbolism: Problems of Origin and Evolution," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 26, no. 74 (1998), 50-64.

24. Annemarie Schimmel, *And Muhammad is his Messenger: the Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985).

25. Originally poems celebrating the birth of the Prophet, they later also included the hagiographical poetry of Sufi saints. Marion Holmes Katz, *The Birth of the Prophet Muhammad: Devotional Piety in Sunni Islam* (London: Routledge, 2007).

26. Of following "Prophet as a beautiful example."

27. While most of South Asia follow Hanafi jurisprudence, Malabar is largely Shafi and an exception to the general South Asian case.

28. An inland medieval town of North Malabar.

29. The history of this Masjid in Korom of present day Wayanad was came to my notice during my research work in December 2014. The Masjid of Korom is one of the oldest mosques in this are as I understood from a series of interviews.

30. For Hadhrami roots of Malabar Muslims, see LRS Lakshmi. L.R.S. Lakshmi, *The Malabar Muslims: A Different Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 1-32.

31. Susan Bayly, *Saints, Goddesses and Kings: Muslims and Christians in South Indian Society, 1700-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 98.

24

32. The Arakkal dynasty which owned twenty-two ships during this time was emerging as a major naval power in the 18th century. Philip MacDougall has located an emerging naval resistance to the English East India company in the 18th-century Malabar coast. The book titled *Naval Resistance to Britain's Growing Power in India* deals with the Mysore resistance to the company in the Malabar coast in chapter 6. Cited from a description of the book in academia.edu, uploaded by Philip MacDougall. The unprecedented approach of Kunjayin Musliyar in taking an already existing tradition of ship symbolism into his writings in as late as the 18th century explains the new challenges Mappilas were facing, I argue. Philip MacDougall, "Naval Resistance to Britain's Growing Power in India, 1660-1800," Academia.edu (2016), https://www.academia.edu/9547261/Naval_Resistance_to_Britains_Growing_Power_in_India.

33. P.K. Yasser Arafath, "Malapattukal, Charithram, Rashtreeyam, Prathirodham," (Mala Songs, history, politics, and resistance), in Jameel Ahmad, ed., *Kerala Muslim History Conference – Proceedings* (Kerala Muslim Heritage Foundation, 2015), 436.

34. Shaheen, 46-58.

35. Partha Chatterjee, *The Black Hole of Empire: History of a Global Practice of Power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 73-94.

36. Dilip M. Menon, "Houses by the Sea: State-Formation Experiments in Malibar, 1760-1800," *Economic and Political Weekly* (1999), 1995.

37. Buchanan in his highly biased narrative calls Tipu the destroyer of Calicut. Buchanan adds that Tipu deported the inhabitants of Calicut to the new capital. In Buchanan's account the new capital is called Nellore which Tipu later changed to Farukhabad and interestingly adds here Buchanan said, "Like all the Musalman rulers of India, he was a mighty changer of old Persian names." I shall try to explain this shift differently from Buchanan. Buchanan, 420.

38. Z.A. Desai, "A Topographical List of Arabic and Persian Inscriptions of South India," Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR) (Delhi, 1989).

39. See Arafat (2013) for the hinterland turn of the Mappilas after the Portuguese assault. P.K. Yasser Arafath, “Malabar Muslims: History, Hangover, and Silences,” *Social Scientist* 41, no. 3-4 (March-April 2013), 85-93.

40. To explain further, Ahmad Sherrif has contributed to our understanding of western Indian maritime economy after the Portuguese in his *Dhow Cultures of the Indian Ocean: Cosmopolitanism, Commerce and Islam*. One could argue that smaller ships such as dhows were a regular sight in Malabar coasts during this period. For example, Buchanan notes that vessels such as *pathermaris* or smaller vessels frequented between Talachery and Calicut coasts in the late 18th century. Ethan R. Sanders says that in Abdul Sherrif’s analysis, the latter follows Michael Pearson’s

argument that after 1500 CE there was a time when the western Indian Ocean was a “free sea” where there was no state to regulate. Ahmad Sheriff crucially notes the strong relations that existed between the maritime coast and the mainland, which one could see with growing evidence in 18th-century Malabar, as I attempted to point earlier. See Ethan R. Sanders’s review of *Dhow Cultures of the Indian Ocean: Cosmopolitanism, Commerce, and Islam in Africa Today* 57, no. 4 (Summer 2011), 133-135.

41. Yumna Fatima, “For Ayesha Jalal, Islam is an Ocean,” *The Express Tribune Report* (March 27, 2015), <http://tribune.com.pk/story/860073/a-sense-of-belonging-for-ayesha-jalal-islam-is-an-ocean/>

42. Menon, 1999.

The Panopticon Comes Full Circle?¹

Sarah Schneewind, University of California, San Diego

Everyone working in the humanities, social sciences, or technology policy in the last three decades has encountered the panopticon. To take three random recent examples from the 2,417 articles a JSTOR word-search produces, the panopticon has been invoked in a proposal on laws to protect consumers in the *University of Chicago Law Review*; in a critique of an art exhibition called “Utopia” in *Science Fiction Studies*; and in a discussion of police relations with poor black Brazilians.² The building became famous as the key metaphor in Michel Foucault’s (1926-1984) account of the machinery of modern state power as it categorizes and surveys atomized individuals.

At the center, a tower; this tower is pierced with wide windows... the peripheric building is divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building; they have two windows, one on the inside, corresponding to the windows of the tower; the other on the outside, allows the light to cross the cell from one end to the other [so that] by the effect of

backlighting, one can observe from the tower, standing out precisely against the light, the small captive figures in the cells of the periphery.³

Foucault’s traced his own metaphor to British utilitarian and reformer Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832). Bentham had proposed the design in his *Panopticon; or, the Inspection-House: Containing the idea of a New Principle of Construction applicable to any sort of establishment, in which persons of any description are to be kept under inspection; and in particular to penitentiary-houses, prisons, poorhouses, lazarettos, houses of industry, manufacturies, hospitals, work-houses, mad-houses, and schools: with a Plan of Management adapted to the principle: in a Series of Letters, written in the year 1787, from Crecheff in White Russia, to a Friend in England*. As Foucault reports, Bentham’s design combines a tower with individual cells in a circular building around it. Supervisors could see into every cell without being seen, while no cell could have a view of any other cell. The key point is that the inmates know that supervisors could observe any prisoner at any time while remaining themselves unobserved.⁴ Experiments with variations on the form took place from the early nineteenth century: a prison in the Andaman Islands, for instance, had seven wings, like spokes, extending from the central tower.⁵ In art, philosophy, history, and

social theory both high and practical, the conception of the panopticon has become divorced from the particular form of hub and axle.⁶ It is the idea of total surveillance of atomized individuals, not the circular configuration, that grips the imagination. And this essay speculates that the original panopticon may have been rectangular, and real.

Where did Bentham's idea come from? Foucault suggests that the origin was the former menagerie at Versailles: an octagonal glass pavilion that allowed the king to look into seven cages.⁷ But Bentham very clearly credits his adored brother Samuel with the panopticon's design.⁸ Bentham penned his initial proposals in Russia, where Samuel was working for Prince Potemkin on several projects.⁹ The panopticons in England, which never materialized, were planned as a joint venture of the two brothers. As Inspector-General of Naval Works (including buildings) in England, Samuel designed a glass-and-iron panoptic "House of Industry" for England; it too was left unbuilt. But Samuel did build one in the service of Czar Alexander, in St. Petersburg in 1805.¹⁰ So: the panopticon was initially invented by Sir Samuel Bentham, although his fond elder brother greatly expanded on it and may have exaggerated his role.

How did Samuel come to think of so extraordinary a design? A man of many good, practical ideas, he was open-minded and imaginative. Saliently for this essay, he campaigned actively for British naval ships to use bulkheads creating watertight compartments in the hold, which work well to prevent foundering if only one or two are breached (less so if one entire side of the ship is ripped open, as in the Titanic). In 1795 the Admiralty commissioned him to design and build six new sailing ships "with partitions contributing to the strength and securing the ship against foundering, as practiced by the Chinese of the present day." Samuel made no secret of his Chinese source – Ben Franklin and others were well aware of it – and he borrowed other Chinese nautical ideas as well.¹¹ Furthermore, in 1782, before designing the panopticon, he had traveled through Siberia to the borders of China, met with Chinese officials, and observed shipping and other matters. He wrote a long description of a Chinese temple that noted which god was looking towards which – thinking about lines of sight.¹² It is possible that he also saw, or heard described, the unique buildings used to hold the Chinese competitive examinations for the qualification

to hold public office.

Even if he did not see an examination compound in China, Samuel might have read about them. Quite apart from any preparatory reading for his journey, the Bentham's contemporaries were studying many aspects of Chinese life and technology, often as reported by Jesuits long resident in China. Josiah Wedgwood (1730-1795), for instance, derived his assembly-line process from the description of Chinese porcelain production.¹³ After the panopticon proposal, Jeremy Bentham read George Staunton's account of the 1793 MacCartney mission to the Qing court, as we know because he applauded – as a way to save money and restrain the young – the Chinese family customs of early marriage and multi-generational cohabitation that Staunton reported.¹⁴ Among many topics, the Chinese civil service examinations had long been of interest: for instance, Pufendorf commented on them in 1672.¹⁵ As historian Ssu-yü Teng showed in 1942, nineteenth-century arguments both for and against the adoption of civil service examinations show their Chinese origins.¹⁶ Bentham and his disciple-by-upbringing J. S. Mill, among others, recommended their adoption in Britain as an anti-corruption measure, to undermine political patronage.¹⁷ Jeremy Bentham must have read about Chinese examinations, and Samuel may have done so too.

My focus is on the physical layout of the examination compounds, which were unlike all other Chinese buildings. Not all descriptions of the Chinese system available to European readers dwell on their architecture. But one early and well-known work on China does. Written by an Italian resident of Ming China, Father Alvaro Semedo (1585-1658), *The history of that great and renowned monarchy of China* had been available in English translation for a century before the inquiring Bentham brothers were born. Early in his book, Semedo describes the provincial examination compounds. They vary in size across the country according to the local number of examination candidates, he writes, but have a fairly standard design. (Bentham stressed the scalability of the panopticon.) A great wall surrounds the whole complex; a great court divides the outer and inner gates. At each of the four corners stands a tower to sound alarms or make announcements as needed. Before admittance, the candidates are strip-searched. Beyond the second gate, a bridge spans a pond. Beyond that stands yet another gate, closely guarded. Semedo describes the examination cells, with boards

for table and bench, and a gagged soldier to watch and serve the candidate seated beneath each table:

After this gate followeth another very spacious Court, having on each side rowes of little houses or chambers for the persons that are to be examined; placed on the East and West side thereof. Every chamber is ... in height about the stature of a man...; within each of them are two boards, the one fastened to sit downe on, the other moveable for a Table... There is a narrow entrie, which leadeth to [the row of cells], that admitteth but of one man a breast, and that hardly too; the doors of one row open toward the backside of the other...

And he describes the surveillance tower:

At the end of this narrow entrie I spake of, is raised a Tower upon foure Arches with Balusters without on all sides, within which there is a *Salone* or great Hall, where do assist some officers and persons of respect, who stay there to give account of what passeth in all the little chambers, which they have placed in their sight.¹⁸

Rows of cells open on one side are overlooked by a central tower open on all sides. A man in any one cell can see into no other cell. The overseers can view them all from the central tower.¹⁹

Similarly, present-day China historian Benjamin Elman describes the strip search for cribs (tiny books and shirts covered with the classics in tiny characters). He describes the soldiers under the tables, and the layout of the examination compounds of Ming-Qing times:

...double walls surround[ed] the grounds. The individually divided cells for the candidates radiated out east and west from the main south to north entry passage in a series of parallel rows that were separated by alleys no more than four feet wide... the entry to each cell was open from top to bottom for easier

surveillance from a single pavilion raised high above the ground.²⁰

Elman argues that the civil service examination system as a whole disciplined society sufficiently to obviate the need for gulags and reformatories. Even though, unlike prisoners, candidates voluntarily entered them, having worked all their lives for the privilege, Elman labels the examination compounds “cultural prisons,” calling them “a coercive technology” in which atomized candidates subjected themselves to the total gaze of overseers. And Elman footnotes Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish* without comment.²¹ Yongguang Hu therefore identifies Elman’s “pessimistic” assessment of the examination system as rooted in Foucault, concluding, “Elman may exaggerate the power of ‘late imperial cultural regime’ when he labels the examination hall as a cultural prison... it is also possible to portray it as an effort aiming to improve fairness and transparency in the pre-industrial society.”²² Mill had pointed to both the examination system’s oppressive uniformity and its transparency and meritocracy in selecting office-holders, and so vast and complex a cultural formation indeed had a myriad of purposes and results, as Elman’s own work shows. Passing judgment is not my intention here.

Rather, the focus of this essay is the surveillance architecture of the examination compound and the panopticon. I speculate that the one may have sparked the idea for the other. As with the transmittal of gunpowder from the Mongols to Ambassador William of Rubruck to his friend Roger Bacon, there is no smoking gun. But as shown above, we know that many educated innovators of Bentham’s day read about China; that Bentham promoted examinations on the Chinese model; that Samuel Bentham – whom his brother credited with the architectural conception of the panopticon – had been to China; and that Samuel had borrowed other ideas from Chinese construction. I speculate, therefore, that thinking of the exams in Foucauldian terms may be an example of a historical circle. Bentham’s initial plan concludes with a panoptic design for schools, offered in the spirit of amusement, he says: but he does point out that it would prevent cheating with cribs.²³ Perhaps that was the original panopticon’s function. Perhaps it traveled full circle: from observed reality in China, to reform proposal in Europe, to social theory in Europe, and back to the historical interpretation of a real Chinese institution.

Notes:

1. I would like to thank the following Bentham scholars for their generous help, without claiming that they agree with my hypothesis: Fred Rosen, Michael Quinn, Philip Schofield, and Zhai Xiaobo (who sent some relevant photos). I also thank the editor and anonymous reviewer.

2. Lauren E. Willis, "Performance-based Consumer Law," *The University of Chicago Law Review* 82, no. 3 (2015): 1309-1409; Rhys Williams. "Radical Politics, Recent Exhibitions, and Utopianism Now," *Science Fiction Studies* 43, no. 1 (2016): 183-187; Halifu Osumare, Ph.D.. "Keeping it Real: Race, Class, and Youth Connections Through Hip-hop in the U.S. & Brazil," *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations* 37 (2015): 6-18.

3. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, orig. 1975; translated by Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1979) 200ff.

4. Jeremy Bentham, *The Panopticon Writings*, edited by Miran Božović (London: Verso, 1995), 29, 34-7, 43. But as Foucault recognizes in passing, Bentham's design is very complex, with special doors and windows, blinds, gratings, lamps, speaking tubes, belfry, heating tubes, running water in each cell, etc., and Bentham worried considerably over the practical details of lines of sight and sources of light (35-41 (Letters II and III), 101-114 (Postscript I)).

5. Choi Chatterjee, "Imperial Incarcerations: Elaterina Breshko-breskovskaia, Vinayak Savarkar, and the Original Sins of Modernity," *Slavic Review* 74, no. 4 (2015): 850-872, 862.

6. Jerome E. Dobson and Peter F. Fisher, "The Panopticon's Changing Geography," *Geographical Review* 97, no.3 (2007): 307-323, 307-308.

7. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 203. (The eighth side had a door.)

8. Bentham, *Panopticon Writings*, 33, 34, 39, 76 et multos.

9. Janet Semple, *Bentham's Prison: A Study of the Panopticon Penitentiary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 99, 106.

10. Semple, *Bentham's Prison*, 214.

11. Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China: Volume IV, Physics and Physical Technology: Part 3, Civil Engineering and Nautics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 420-22. See also John Hobson, *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 215-6.

12. Lady M[aria] S[ophia] Bentham, *The Life of Brigadier-General Sir Samuel Bentham, K.S.G., formerly Inspector-General of Naval Works, lately a Commissioner of His Majesty's Navy with the Distinct Duty of Civil Architect and Engineer of the Navy* (London: Longman, Green Longman, and Roberts, 1862), 53f. Samuel Bentham later spent more time working on the Siberian-Russian border, but that was after the first panopticon letters.

13. Lothar Ledderose, *Ten Thousand Things: Module and Mass Production in Chinese Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 100-101.

14. Michael Quinn, personal communication June 12, 2009, citing Bentham, *Writings on the Poor Laws*, volume 2, forthcoming. Cited by permission.

15. Benjamin E. Wallacker, "Review of Victoria Tin-Bor Hui, War and State Formation in Ancient China and Early Modern Europe," *Journal of Asian History* 42, no. 1 (2008): 97-8.

16. Ssu-yü Teng, "Chinese Influence on the Western Examination System," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 7 (1942-1943): 267-312, 305.

17. J.S. Mill, *On Liberty, Utilitarianism and Other Essays*, edited by Mark Philip and Frederick Rosen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 527 note 353. Mill also deployed the examination system to warn against uniformity in thought, however: "On Liberty," in Philip and Rosen, 70-1.

18. Alvaro Semedo, *The History of that great and renowned monarchy of China: wherein all the particular provinces are accurately descried: as also the dispositions, manners, learning, laws, militia, government and religion of the people. Together with the traffick and commodities of that country* (London:

E. Tyler for I Crook, 1655), 38-9, 42, 44. Semedo marvels that some who may go home triumphant, able to build a family “Palace,” enter the examinations still “daubed with clay, wherewith they lately were mending of their cottages:” such was the opportunity for social advancement the system presented, in contrast to the Europe of his day. On the way in which such sixteenth- and seventeenth- century comparative observations on China echo and become magnified into exaggerations as Western standards change, see Sarah Schneewind, “A Brief Comment on Early European Treatments of Ming Taizu,” in *Long Live the Emperor! Uses of the Ming Founder Across Six Centuries of East Asian History*, edited by Sarah Schneewind (Minneapolis: Society for Ming Studies, 2008).

19. Semedo, *History*, 49, 42.

20. Benjamin Elman, *Civil Examinations and Meritocracy in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 228 and note 39. Benjamin Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 195 and note 44.

21. Elman, *Civil Examinations and Meritocracy*, 219-21.

22. Yongguang Hu, “Review of Elman, *Civil Examinations and Meritocracy*,” *Ming Studies* 70 (2014), 79-80.

23. Bentham, *Panopticon Writings*, 33, 86.



Qing Examination Hall.

Image courtesy of Charles Poolton and Historical Photographs of China, University of Bristol.

Book Review: Edward Beatty, *Technology and the Search for Progress in Modern Mexico* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015)

Edward Beatty’s monograph, *Technology*

and the Search for Progress in Modern Mexico, is an incisive study of Mexico’s technological trajectory, one that was heavily import dependent over the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. It elaborates at length upon the avenues of technological transfer,

its components, successes, and failures. Using various examples of both small and large-scale technologies, Beatty analyzes how, in spite of the post-1870 acceleration in technological adoption, Mexicans gained little of the expertise necessary for the growth of indigenous industries and local innovation, and instead continued to rely heavily on foreign knowledge and prowess.

Beatty argues that 19th century Mexican elites were quick to consider their own country “backward” compared to the industrialized North Atlantic world, and ardently supported the adoption of foreign technology. To many Mexicans, mechanization held the key to socio-economic improvement. In contrast, one can look at the contemporaneous example of colonial India, another major site of technology transfer. In British India, some technologies such as bicycles and cars were used to distinguish colonizers from the colonized. In reaction, some machines came to be seen by Indian nationalists as embodiments of colonial subjugation. As a part of the Swadeshi independence movement against the British, numerous Indians boycotted the use of British manufactured goods, to instead promote indigenous manufacturing and a regeneration of local crafts. In the Mexican context, foreign entrepreneurs, and the expertise and machinery that they brought with them, largely drove technology transfer. However, because of a dearth of knowledge transfer to the local population, Mexico lacked the local entrepreneurship that had made for the successful assimilation of foreign technology in India. This caused what Beatty describes as “the apparent paradox of high adoption and low assimilation.”¹

Economists have traditionally viewed technology transfer as a means for developing nations to catch up to their counterparts in the developed world. Beatty observes that economic historians such as Alexander Gerschenkron have followed suit. Gerschenkron in particular spoke of a technology gap between developed and “backward” states that can be efficiently bridged by the transfer of the latest technology from one to the other.² Beatty, however, challenges this notion through his analysis of Mexico’s travails with technology transfer. In his view, the Mexican case was one of successful technological adoption but poor assimilation and learning. In essence, Beatty argues, it was the lack of technical colleges, the small number of engineers, and easily available supply of foreign expertise that hindered the growth of a homegrown, skilled labor force

necessary for local innovation and the widespread assimilation of technology. This ultimately maintained the technological gap between Mexico and the North Atlantic, leaving Mexico in a state of dependence into the 20th century. Beatty skillfully highlights how the increasing dependence on imports “dictated low tariffs which decreased incentives to invest locally, yielding continued dependence,” resulting in a vicious cycle.³

With its many references to Mexico’s purported “backwardness” and belittling jabs at its predominantly subsistence-agricultural economy, the book fails to question its technocratic protagonist’s patronizing motives. However, by highlighting how widespread technological transfer precluded an effective transfer of skills and know-how to the native population, spurring the vicious cycle of dependence on the North Atlantic industrial forerunners, the author delivers on his promise in providing a lucid explanation of Mexico’s “search for progress.”⁴

The current historiography on the topic of technology transfer has increasingly sought to probe the agents, processes, and risks of technological transfer, while assiduously heeding the socially constructed nature of technology. There remains, however, the potential to elaborate on the role of technology in our visions of prosperity and bring our analytical and methodological tools to bear on the telos of American- or Eurocentric development. Even as our understandings of what defines development, what constitutes progress, and what is modern change, they change differently in different places and our technologies change with them. That technology continues to be applied in our unending quest for a “better life” is, perhaps, something that does not change; neither does our desire to “share” that “better life” with others.

Abeer Saha, University of Virginia

Notes:

1. Edward Beatty, *Technology and the Search for Progress in Modern Mexico* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), 8.
2. Alexander Gerschenkron, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962).
3. Beatty, 175.
4. Beatty.

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