

The Maritime Silk Road: An Introduction

Franck Billé, Sanjyot Mehendale, and James Lankton

The term “Maritime Silk Road” (MSR)—just as its terrestrial counterpart “Silk Road”—is highly fraught and politically laden. In recent years it has been actively mobilized by China in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as a powerful narrative framing and underlying China’s global economic clout (see Frankopan 2018; Winter 2019; Zheng et al. 2018). As a result, academics have largely been reluctant to use the notion of Silk Road as a framework for their research. Indeed, even before its recent political reactivation, the term was seen as a romantic and orientalist construct, as well as an oversimplification of forms of cultural exchange across Eurasia, and poorly suited to scholarly discussion. The concept of “Silk Road,” coined in 1877 by geographer Ferdinand von Richthofen, was employed to discuss the early period of trade between the Roman Empire and Han China, specifically the route described by Marinus of Tyre, and it is only later that its reach was expanded to other trade routes and involving other material goods (Chin 2013).

Given its origins, cultural assumptions, and political reverberations, it might seem counterintuitive to adopt it here. Yet, as Susan Whitfield has recently noted (2018, 252), the fact that the term was coined narrowly around exchange focused on silk between China and Rome should not distract scholars from more productive investigations of the interregional networks trading in commodities other than silk (see also Frankopan 2015).¹ Along similar lines we argue in this volume that rather than eluding the concept, it is precisely the *constructed* nature of the Silk Road that makes it such a fertile organizing concept for scholarship: by (constructed) definition, it

¹ For a study of contemporary connectivities through networks and informal institutions beyond and separate from those driven by nation states, such as China’s Belt and Road Initiative, see Marsden (2021).

both permits and encourages transnational, transregional, cross-cultural, and cross-disciplinary approaches to research. Much too often, scholarship remains pigeonholed and constrained by disciplines and regions of expertise. By contrast, the notion of “Silk Road,” problematic as it might be, resists national and regional encompassment. As such, it constitutes a potent vector of cross-regional and cross-disciplinary exchange and can shed a light on the mechanics of border-making—what we refer to as “bordering” as well as, following anthropologist Madeleine Reeves (2014), “border work.” Bringing together the scholarship of world-renowned archaeologists and promising younger scholars under the rubric of “Silk Road,” this edited collection presents a unique picture of early global trade in all its complexity (see also Seland 2021).

The Maritime Silk Road proposes to foreground the numerous networks that have been woven across oceanic geographies, tying world regions together often far more extensively than land-based routes. The Maritime Silk Road is in fact much more than just a seaward extension of overland trading networks. Unlike the latter which connected nearby regions to each other and which was often a staggered process of exchange, ocean trade was capable of spanning the entire route, linking previously disconnected regions more directly. If ocean-faring vessels also had to face numerous perils, notably weather and piracy, maritime routes were less affected by political instability and could more easily circumvent conflict zones (Park 2012). Ships are also more amenable to transporting larger cargoes, leading to greater impact on cultures and economies. The types of commercial and cultural exchange carried by sea thus differed from overland routes in extent and in scope. This had a consequential impact for the way in which the world was imagined. While the modern concept of borders did not have currency in the premodern period discussed in this book, people traveling along the maritime Silk Road were, possibly for the first time, confronted with forms of spatial, social, and cultural discontinuities that echo the inflexible partitioning characteristic of modern borders. The existence of large port-cities was also decisive in bringing different ethnic groups together (Bellina 2017), and similarly offered a view of the world that was culturally and ethnically very diverse rather than continuous.

This collection of essays offers a unique perspective on the commercial, cultural, and social exchanges fostered and sustained by the Maritime Silk Road. Routes and sites in broad expanses of dry land tend to leave much better-defined traces than those on or next to water. However new information has emerged in the last two decades in the form of archaeological findings, as well as through new techniques such as geographic information

system (GIS) modeling. On the strength of this new data, what the authors collectively demonstrate is the existence of a very early global maritime trade. From architecture to cuisine, and language to clothing, evidence points to early connections both within Asia and between Asia and other continents—well before European explorations of the Global South.

Most studies have tended to take this connectivity for granted, overlooking the spatial and physical dimension of exchange (see, for instance, Acri, Blench & Landmann 2017). In addressing the materiality of the ocean, the *Maritime Silk Road* speaks to a growing border studies literature seeking to place in productive tension notions such as terrain, territoriality, borders, and material space (Braverman and Johnson 2020, Billé 2020, Peters, Steinberg and Stratford 2018). As the contributions illustrate, not only did early exchange span vast distances, it was also subject to seasonal weather systems, hazardous waters, arid and sparsely populated coastlines with few suitable harbors, as well as limits imposed by technology and infrastructure (see in particular Seland, Chapter 1, this volume). While these early maritime networks were very extensive, they were also, like indeed all networked systems, restricted by frictions, obstructions, chokepoints, and disconnects in spite of their global reach (see Tsing 2004; Starosielski 2018; Carse, Cons, and Middleton 2018). The development of long-distance maritime exchange linkages, including what we gloss in this volume as the Maritime Silk Road, went hand-in-hand with improved maritime technologies, including shipbuilding and navigation (Kimura 2016), the ability to produce goods that were scarce either because of their natural ingredients or the special technology required for their manufacture, and the identification or production of people's desire to possess these goods far from their place of origin (see Park, Chapter 2, this volume; Lankton, Chapter 3, this volume). The evolution and development of seaworthy watercraft for mass shipment in particular enabled the broader distribution of both seaborne commodities and people throughout this vast region (see Kimura, Chapter 4, this volume).

The tripartite division of the book, separating the contributions into global, regional, and local scales of analysis, is primarily organizational; if each contribution tends to privilege one scalar aspect, they all speak to the entanglement between global and local perspectives. As the material presented in the various chapters demonstrates, transoceanic exchanges were made possible thanks to extensive established regional networks while, conversely, local cultures were shaped by commercial exchanges reaching thousands of miles. The collection charts nonetheless an overall narrative arc taking the reader from the general to the specific, and from the macro to the micro. Our decision to present the data along this particular axis

reflects our ambition to tell the story of the Maritime Silk Road as one of early, truly global, exchange yet simultaneously seeking to challenge the implicit linearity and simplicity of the concept to paint a fuller, multiscalar, and multidirectional, model.

The book's first section, "Global Connectivities," focuses on the trans-continental scale of these commercial and cultural exchanges, able for the first time to link directly distant parts of the world such as Asia, Europe, and Africa. The chapters in this section illustrate how progress in material transportation coincided with, and greatly facilitated, the rise of maritime commerce in Asia and beyond during the last quarter of the first millennium. The increase in volume of maritime trade was the result of the integration of subregional networks, the rise of maritime polities and port-cities, and the maturity of shipbuilding technologies (Kimura, Chapter 4). In his chapter, Eivind Seland contests the prevalent view that the Indian Ocean before the establishment of European transoceanic trade was a nonterritorial, cultural void. Theorizing his material through Ed Soja's notion of "thirdspace" (1996), he demonstrates that it was in fact a highly integrated and culturally dense space. More than simply a medium for long-distance transport, it was a place of everyday social interaction, as testified by the semantic equivalencies in the names of salient geographic nodes in Greek and Arabic, or the approximately 200 inscriptions left by merchants and sailors on the remote island of Socotra off the coast of Yemen. While most of these were written in a Western Brahmi script dating from the second to the fifth century CE and suggest an origin in western India, others, whether in South Arabian, Ethiopian (Aksumite), Palmyrene, or Greek, indicate multiple origins and mixed populations (Strauch 2012). Thinking in terms of spatiality, Seland argues, allows us to relocate the Indian Ocean to the center of its own world rather than as a periphery to the Mediterranean world.

In the following chapter, Hyunhee Park discusses the establishment, as early as the eighth century CE, of a transoceanic route spanning the Indian Ocean to become the longest, most regularly, and most heavily traveled sea route in the world until at least 1492, i.e., before the advent of global European travel. Building and maintaining regular interaction between China and the Islamic World—two highly developed societies that have left behind abundant written and cartographic records—she argues, demanded a shared conception of sea-space that could only be achieved by regular exchanges of ideas and convergences of interests among maritime societies developed over centuries. Indeed, examining Chinese and Islamic attempts to gain geographical knowledge through cross-cultural exchange and then leveraging it to theorize the shape of the oceans, Park identifies

patterns of continuity and change in the spatial understandings displayed by these authors. As she then demonstrates, these exchanges produced bodies of knowledge about the maritime realm that came to shape popular worldviews in both societies for centuries.

Making a case for the study of material culture as a way to track not only the exchange of finished products and raw materials but also the movement of people along the same long-distance maritime routes, James Lankton provides in Chapter 3 a fascinating overview of the glass trade. In doing so, he explores the early development of the Maritime Silk Road, going from regional circuits in the second half of the first millennium BCE to the first phase of exchange along the full expanse of ancient maritime routes from the Roman Empire to India, Southeast Asia, China, and northeast Asia during the first half of the first millennium CE. The author demonstrates that the trade in Roman glass to India built on a tradition of Hellenistic and Roman Mediterranean maritime exchange; the exchange of Roman products within Asia, particularly beyond India to Southeast and Northeast Asia, being based on preexisting maritime networks. On the strength of these early networks, Roman products could be rapidly incorporated, allowing the spread of both Roman and Chinese goods to Southeast Asia and beyond. As Lankton convincingly argues, these earlier maritime links provided the infrastructure, not only in terms of maritime technologies but also in the imagination of what long-distance trade could be, for what would become the Maritime Silk Road discussed in this volume.

The second section of the book, “Regional Nodes,” complicates the narrative in that the maritime Silk Road was in fact plural and diverse. In spite of its global reach, this was a heterogeneous environment, constituted of interconnected regional nodes—each with its own social and cultural specificities. This heterogeneity can be seen in the several types of shipbuilding that coexisted across the expanse of the MSR, as discussed by Jun Kimura in Chapter 4. While some of the earliest extant shipwrecks provide tantalizing evidence of construction similarities between a ship found on the western Thai coast and Phoenician and Greco-Roman vessels, by the mid-first millennium CE there were distinct Indic and Southeast Asian shipbuilding traditions indicating regionality in technology if not in the scope of sea voyage. The latter may be suggested by the early fifth-century travel record of the Chinese Buddhist monk Faxian, who crossed the Indian Ocean on an Indic ship but the South China Sea on a Southeast Asian vessel during his return from Sri Lanka to China. In shipping, as elsewhere, the regionality of shipbuilding technology is challenged, for example by the seventh-century Phanom Surin shipwreck found in Thailand; while the

sewn-construction technique was decidedly Indian, most of the wood was from Southeast Asia. By the thirteenth or fourteenth century, there is clear evidence for hybridization of regional construction techniques, for example in the blending of East China Sea and South China Sea shipbuilding methods.

Port-cities of the same time period, and to some extent the hinterlands that they served, exhibit similarities in their material cultural matrix even if they are separated by space (see also Heng, Chapter 8). As crucial nodal points in the Maritime Silk Road trade network, port-cities prospered and often developed into international and even global trade centers. Port-cities as far apart as Guangzhou and Siraf had ethnically and culturally diverse merchant populations that were in many ways comparable in their heterogeneity—though every port-city had its own specific *raison d'être* and was beholden to particular local demands and circumstances.

Yet even if port-cities of the same time period, and to some extent the hinterlands that they served, exhibit similarities in their material cultural matrix, the picture we get at that level of analysis is one where each node in the network was demographically, socially, and economically unique, impacted by such factors as geography, politics, and ethnicity. The different patterns of trade, dependent on the socio-political and cultural background of each region, are in fact traceable through a spatial analysis of the artifacts that were imported, exported, or imitated (see also Seland, Chapter 1, this volume). Goods traveling across vast spaces would frequently end up taking on new cultural values or be replicated using different techniques or materials.

In Chapter 5, Ariane de Saxcé's discussion of commercial and cultural exchange in the western Indian Ocean contrasts the long-distance nature of trade coming from the Red Sea and northeast Africa with the importance of regional nodes and networks within the Indian subcontinent. Not all goods were welcomed in every region, and port-cities like Barygaza on the west central coast and Muziris in the south had an important role to provide physical and conceptual borders between the grand sweep of ocean travel and distinct regional zones showing important differences in the distribution and adoption of imported containers, ornaments, and valuables. In addition to the cultural determination of desired trade goods, archaeological and textual evidence points to regional differences in how foreign traders and others might pass through or be restrained to border zones.

The chapters in this section, as well as other chapters in the book (see Heng, Chapter 8; Miksic, Chapter 7, both in this volume) discuss the ways in which trade circuits and spheres of influence were bounded in specific ways, politically and culturally. As these authors demonstrate in their analyses, linkages between China, India, the Middle East, and Africa were supported

by very dense networks of local and regional exchanges that were deeply enmeshed in one another. There is a tendency for instance to overemphasize the importance of Chinese trade with Southeast Asia during the Song–Yuan period (960–1367) and argue that it led to the political dominance of ports in the Straits of Melaka. Instead, data indicate that the hinterland of Sumatra remained a center of political and economic power until the early colonial period (*Miksic, Chapter 7*). Similarly, a focus on Euro- and Sinocentric prestige goods, such as gold for instance, has created the impression that places such as southern Africa, where copper was a material more valuable than gold, were merely receiving peripheries. A reconsideration of circulatory knowledge involved in the Indian Ocean exchanges reveals that communities in southern Africa had agency in selecting what objects to incorporate, reject, or give away, as Shadreck Chirikure argues in Chapter 6.

While laying bare the destructive legacy of colonialism, Chirikure refutes the monotheistic application of core-periphery theory to understand the interaction between people in the African interior and foreign merchants at ports along the coast. Emphasizing the role of local agency and internal trade in both everyday and precious commodities, the author centers the development of social complexity seen at such sites as Great Zimbabwe and Mapungubwe on regional and local factors rather than on the simplistic notion that Indian Ocean trade in foreign exotics resulted in the development of coastal and inland elites. Instead, the regional trade networks for grain, cattle, salt, metals, ornaments, and ivory already developed between communities spatially and culturally distinct provided the framework by which Indian Ocean products might also be exchanged. Here, local agency was paramount in establishing which goods were accepted and how these were used in localized cultural contexts. While the South African littoral formed a geographic boundary between the coast and the hinterland, the resulting coastal borderland was not only permeable to objects coming in and those, like ivory, going out, but communities between the coast and the interior likely played a role as well, introducing fluidity and local complexity into how external borders might be understood.

Over the past several decades, considerable academic research has focused on the impact of globalization on local cultures and societies at a granular level, including material culture and social and cultural norms. Less attention has been paid, particularly in archaeology, to the ways in which exogenous materials were embedded differently in various specific locales, and how these differentiations could make for great variation in the uses and accompanying meanings of objects, and therefore in their value and significance, from their original design and/or intent.

The essays collected as Section 3, “Localities,” expand on the argument that communities along the MSR were not merely passive recipients of foreign goods and ideas but active participants in the nature and extent of their inclusion and exclusion and were central participants in the process of cross-fertilization engendered by early globalization. Building on aspects alluded to by Chirikure (Chapter 6, this volume) and turning to specific archaeological and art historical datasets from sites along the MSR, the authors in this section focus on the power of “place” in discourses on ancient globalization where social, cultural, and economic practices that anchor communities to particular locales, and that provide those communities with a sense of belonging (Harmanshah 2014), are defining factors. Though not explicitly, the arguments informing the contributions in this section thus dovetail with Edward Casey’s (2010) statement that “space,” much too abstract and general, can only be experienced by human beings as “place.”

Examining the local distribution pattern of Chinese ceramics, which were shipped widely along the MSR and are useful for the reconstruction of various global and regional trading networks out of China, John Miksic outlines the growth of trade in such objects, in particular during the first half of the second Millennium CE, in what he defines, leveraging Willem van Schendel’s concept of Zomia (2002), as four ecological zones across South East Asia. He demonstrates how similar items were discovered in varied elite and nonelite contexts in different locations, including as auspicious objects in temples, funerary goods, and ritual objects but also for mundane, quotidian use, arguing that specific symbolic functions which became attached to these ceramics were detached from their original functions. As a consequence, these markets not only spurred increases in volume of production but also the creation of different types of ceramics to meet distinct local demands. In this regard, “places” were not only influenced by foreign trade but in their turn also helped determine the specific ways in which objects and attendant ideas could penetrate these regions.

Also moving from the general (the wide distribution of imported goods) to the particular (localization), Derek Heng’s use of spatial analysis of data from two sites in the Malay region provides another micro-level approach to the study of places and the relationships between them. Looking at the distribution pattern of both foreign and domestic artifacts, he shows how certain assemblages could be associated with different types of economic activity, be informed by aesthetic taste, and/or result from asymmetrical access, providing insight into sociocultural and socioeconomic distinctions and interactions between groups that inhabited port-settlements and hinterland sites. Relatedly, port-cities of the MSR are often viewed as

sharing similarities with their counterparts across regional and international trading networks, defined by specific types of mixed communities and by their administrative and redistributive functions. At the same time, however, the contributions in this section argue that port-cities are not to be seen as entirely separate from their neighboring hinterlands, and that the margins (borders) between them functioned as important places of movement or interaction.

As part of their embeddedness in “place,” artifacts acted as important cultural vectors for ideas, philosophies, and religions. The coins, ceramics, pottery, glassware, and seals that facilitated global trade were themselves supports for religious iconography, thereby disseminating worldviews and philosophies well beyond their points of origin and even beyond the bounds of the mercantile networks. As articulated by Matthew Canepa (2010, 14), “while an art object, architectural form, or ornamental motif had no meaning outside the uses and estimation of a patron, consumer, or viewer, visual material itself could introduce new ways of seeing, or ‘visualities,’ to a host culture.”

Osmund Bopearachchi, in the ninth and last chapter, demonstrates how religious iconographies, developing in a cross-fertilized context, frequently incorporated the sentiments and aesthetics of each of their respective populations. In particular, he outlines the close relationship between Buddhism and trade and demonstrates how trading networks were not only important for the distribution of goods across maritime Asia but also for the spread of Buddhism from its place of origin in India to Sri Lanka and beyond. Buddhist monks often accompanied these mercantile journeys and many Buddhist traders became patrons of Buddhist monastic and cultic sites. As patron-donor-practitioners, they were important purveyors of Buddhist art and iconography which in turn, through “object agency” (Canepa 2010), inspired local artisans to create their own new forms of art. Analyzing the various artistic components that appear in a variety of places allows one to reconstruct the expansion of the maritime networks and to view them as vectors not only for the transmission of religion but also for its local transformation. The maritime trade networks of the Silk Road were in this sense highly syncretic, complicating the assumptions of unidirectional exchange that have been put forth by various nationalist discourses—in China and elsewhere.

With its three-pronged approach—global, regional, and local—*The Maritime Silk Road* seeks to challenge the linearity and one-sidedness of these exchanges. Unlike the majority of analyses that focus on cross-linkages between two regions, or on one country’s relations to the rest of the world,

this collection brings together diverse regions of the world (China, Korea, Japan, East Africa, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Malaysia, the Persian Gulf, Egypt, and Rome) and sheds light on the multimodal and multidirectional nature of historical exchanges. Separating myth from fact, the *Maritime Silk Road* looks at maritime exchange globally, on the basis of GIS modeling and other new technologies. The essays in this book are therefore implicitly critical of nationalist narratives positing one particular country as central to these exchanges.

The data and analyses in this book also support the view that the global trade of the Maritime Silk Road was not simply a story of connectivity and mutually beneficial cultural exchange. The central place occupied by Asia in this collection, as a hub of exchange links reaching as far as Europe and Africa, makes the book a story of *truly global* exchange. But it is also, as mentioned earlier, a story embedded in extant trade circuits and social networks, and also one that was organized around the material realities of oceanic space (sea currents; the existence of islands and archipelagoes, etc.), and narrated through dominant cultural paradigms and hierarchies. As Steve Mentz reminds us (2015: xxviii), the “eruption of global maritime trade and the integration of European, American, African, and Asian economies and ecologies created wealth *and* poverty, winners *and* losers” (our emphasis). The connectivity made possible by European (and to some extent Asian) global expansion felt downright disastrous to a large portion of the world population. The trope of the shipwreck, for Mentz, is in this sense a more accurate representation of the disruptive new world of global connectedness than the ship itself (2015). In Chapter 6, Shadreck Chirikure touches upon this imbalance as he offers an analysis of this global exchange through an African perspective, suggesting that the name “Maritime Ivory Route” might be used in parallel with “Maritime Silk Road” in order to restore both African agency and a narrative which has long been forcefully silenced, yet continues to haunt its descendants (see Sharpe 2016).

Finally, another fundamental contribution *The Maritime Silk Road* seeks to make is to shed an important light on early cross-regional exchanges—exchanges taking place well before the advent of modern political borders and in that sense offering a glimpse into premodern understandings of bordering. Of course, as Anne-Laure Amilhat Szary (2020, 25) has recently argued, attempting to read back borders transhistorically is potentially dangerous and risks anachronism. Because political borders have become second nature and it is now difficult if not impossible to imagine our world without them (Ludden 2003), we can easily forget that they are a modern

concept. The pre-Westphalian political order looked very different, with fuzzier borders and political formations frequently melting into one another (Billé 2021; Gellner 1997). Yet the idea of spatial division is not new, and people have always drawn lines of separation between themselves and others (see Amilhat Szary 2020, 32–36; Friedman 2000). What the contributions in the book suggest is that the forms of spatial division along and across the Maritime Silk Road were more complex than simple lines on the ground. The concatenation of global linkages, regional hubs, and local enmeshments call for a reimagining of bordering, a more dynamic template that is indeed emerging in geography and anthropology, where spatial models such as the fractal (Green 2009), the spiral (Sur 2019), the eddy (Richardson 2019), as well as the three-dimensional (Billé 2020) are challenging, in a contemporary context, a static view of geography.

The data-led analyses provided in this book shed important light on human stories which had not, and could not, be told until the advent of new technologies like GIS modeling and satellite imagery (McCoy 2020). As Patrick Ellis has recently argued (2021, 14–15), archaeology has habitually (and historically) ignored boundaries of nation and state. As such, it is uniquely equipped to make a valuable contribution to the growing field of border studies. The human stories presented here offer insights into both the extent and limits of global exchange, showing how goods and people traveled vast distances, how they were embedded in regional networks, and how local cultures were shaped as a result.

References

Acri, Andrea, Roger Blench, and Alexandra Landmann. 2017. *Spirits and Ships: Cultural Transfers in Early Monsoon Asia*. Singapore: ISEAS Publishing.

Amilhat Szary, Anne-Laure. 2020. *Géopolitique des frontières: Découper la terre, imposer une vision du monde*. Paris: Le Cavalier Bleu.

Bellina, Bérénice. 2017. *Khao Sam Kaeo. An Early Port-City Between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea*. Mémoires Archéologiques 28. Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient.

Billé, Franck. 2020. *Voluminous States: Sovereignty, Materiality, and the Territorial Imagination*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Billé, Franck. 2021. “Auratic Geographies: On Backyards and Concorporeality.” *Geopolitics*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2021.1881490>

Braverman, Irus, and Elizabeth R. Johnson. 2020. *Blue Legalities: The Life and Laws of the Sea*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Canepa, Matthew. 2010. "Theorizing Cross-Cultural Interaction among the Ancient and Early Medieval Mediterranean, Near East and Asia." *Ars Orientalis* 38: 7–29.

Carse, Ashley, Jason Cons, and Townsend Middleton. 2018. "Preface: Chokepoints." *Limn* 10. <https://limn.it/articles/preface-chokepoints>

Casey, Edward. 2009. *Getting Back Into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Chin, Tamara. 2013. "The Invention of the Silk Road, 1877." *Critical Inquiry* 40 (1): 194–219.

Ellis, Patrick. 2021. *Aeroscopics: Media of the Bird's-Eye View*. Oakland: University of California Press.

Frankopan, Peter. 2015. *The Silk Roads: A New History of the World*. London: Bloomsbury.

Frankopan, Peter. 2018. *The New Silk Roads: The Present and Future of the World*. London: Bloomsbury.

Friedman, John Block. 2000. *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

Gellner, Ernest. 1997. *Nationalism*. London: Phoenix.

Green, Sarah. 2009. *Notes from the Balkans: Locating Marginality and Ambiguity on the Greek-Albanian Border*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Harmanshah, Omur. 2014. "Introduction: Towards an Archaeology of Place" in *Of Rocks and Water: Towards an Archaeology of Place*, edited by Omur Harmansha, 1–12. Havertown, PA: Oxbow Books.

Kimura, Jun. 2016. *Archaeology of East Asian Shipbuilding*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Ludden, David. 2003. "Maps in the mind and the Mobility of Asia," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 62 (4): 1057–1078.

Marsden, Magnus. 2021. *Beyond the Silk Roads: Trade, Mobility and Geopolitics across Eurasia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McCoy, Mark D. 2020. *Maps for Time Travelers: How Archaeologists Use Technology to Bring Us Closer to the Past*. Oakland: University of California Press.

Mentz, Steve. 2015. *Shipwreck Modernity: Ecologies of Globalization, 1550–1719*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Park, Hyunhee. 2012. *Mapping the Chinese and Islamic Worlds: Cross-Cultural Exchange in Pre-Modern Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Peters, Kimberley, Philip Steinberg, and Elaine Stratford. 2018. *Territory beyond Terra*. London: Rowman and Littlefield.

Reeves, Madeleine. 2014. *Border Work: Spatial Lives of the State in Rural Central Asia*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Richardson, Paul B. 2019. "Eddy," *Society & Space*, March 17. <https://www.societyandspace.org/articles/eddy>

Seland, Eivind Heldaas. 2021. *A Global History of the Ancient World: Asia, Europe and Africa before Islam*. London: Routledge.

Sharpe, Christina. 2016. *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Soja, Edward W. 1996. *Thirdspace : Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Starosielski, Nicole. 2018. "Strangling the Internet." Special issue on chokepoints, edited by Ashley Carse, Jason Cons, and Townsend Middleton, *Limn* 10, 4–7.

Strauch, Ingo. 2012. *Foreign Sailors on Socotra: The inscriptions and drawings from the cave Hoq (Vergleichende Studien zu Antike und Orient 3)*. Bremen: Hempen Verlag

Sur, Malini. 2019. "Spiral," *Society & Space*, March 17. <https://www.societyandspace.org/articles/spiral>

Tsing, A. 2004. *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

van Schendel, Willem. 2002. "Geographies of Knowing, Geographies of Ignorance: Jumping Scale in Southeast Asia." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 20 (6): 647–668.

Whitfield, Susan. 2018. "On the Silk Road: Trade in the Tarim?" In *Trade and Civilisation: Economic Networks and Cultural Ties, from Prehistory to the Early Modern Era*, edited by Kristian Kristiansen, Thomas Lindkvist, and Jansen Myrdal, 251–278. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Winter, Tim. 2019. *Geocultural Power: China's Quest to Revive the Silk Roads for the Twenty-First Century*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Zheng, Chongwei, Ziniu Xiao, Wen Zhou, Xiaobin Chen, and Xuan Chen. 2018. *21st Century Maritime Silk Road: A Peaceful Way Forward*. Singapore: Springer.

