

Call for Papers
to Session 154

on the XVth World Economic History Congress, Stellenbosch, 9-13 July, 2012:

TRAVERSING THE CURRENTS: INDIAN OCEAN EXCHANGE NETWORKS, 16TH - 18TH CENTURIES

The Indian Ocean world has undoubtedly been the focus of much research. Building up on what has already been studied, this panel seeks to expand our understanding of the networks that operated in the Indian Ocean world. M.N. Pearson had advocated a renaming, so as to refer to the Arabian Sea and the 'Western Ocean' and the Bay of Bengal as the 'Eastern Ocean'. In the light of this kind of an understanding, how do we locate the movements of people, commodities, currency and ideas across these worlds? The Indian Ocean world has usually been treated as a single one, but it may be possible to trace three distinct, though overlapping, segments within it. These consist of the African-India, the Indian-southeast Asian, and the Southeast Asian-Chinese segments. The internal dynamics of these segments, as well as the connections between and within them, are areas of potential research. Prasenjit Duara has argued that "In the national model of space, there is an effort to make culture and political authority congruent." His argument has, of course, to do with the colonial world(s), but given that the period of this panel encompasses both the entry of the European national states into Asia, and the emergence of large empires with Asia, the congruence between 'culture and political authority' would be interesting to examine.

The panel proposes to examine some of these issues within three broad themes

1. Currency Networks
2. Movements of People(s) and Commodities;
3. Ideas and Cultures.

We welcome papers that fit broadly within these three sub-themes.

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