

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

The editors are pleased to present the ninth volume of the *Journal of Indian Ocean World Studies*. This issue contains two original research articles and one conversation. The research articles take novel approaches to history and its applicability to the present. In ‘Crafting the Divine Ship,’ Maya Vinai, Lakshmi Krishnan, and Bhasura Sangeetika highlight the importance of indigenous traditions as both historical sources and current-day cultural performances. In so doing, they shed new light on indigenous shipbuilding on the South India’s Malabar Coastline, which has largely been studied from documentary and archaeological sources. Similarly, in ‘Knowledge Without Borders,’ Omer Awass counters conventional perspectives by contextualises current trans-oceanic Islamic scholarly networks in a longer-term timeframe. Through the lens of ‘epistemic communities,’ he shows both the continuity and changes in Islamic learning between Southeast Asia and the Middle East since the late sixteenth century. Collectively, the two articles highlight the potentialities of historical and ethnographic research that use multiple source types.

The conversation is with one of our managing editors, Alastair McClure, who discusses his book, *Trials of Sovereignty: Mercy, Violence, and the Making of Criminal Law in British India, 1857–1922* (Cambridge University Press, 2024). In conversation with Associate Editor, Philip Gooding, he explains the origins, development, and impact of his work, which has been well received. As one reviewer stated, *Trials of Sovereignty* ‘reinterprets India’s history through the overlooked relationship between mercy and law, shedding much-needed light upon how the post-1857 colonial state’s search for legitimacy ran through deployed discretion, courtrooms and criminal codes.’¹ We are thrilled to highlight Alastair’s ground-breaking volume in our Conversations section’s interactive format.

The JIOWS Editorial Team

¹ Hayden J. Bellenoit, “Alastair McClure. *Trials of Sovereignty: Mercy, Violence, and the Making of Criminal Law in British India, 1857–1922*. Cambridge University Press, 2024. Pp. 386. Cloth \$135.00,” *American Historical Review*, 130, 4 (2025), 1734.