

African history, his citations often do not include the latest scholarship, and therefore the bibliography is outdated. In his discussion of the Sokoto Caliphate, for example, he cites the pioneering and indeed important scholarship of Murray Last and Melvyn Hiskett, which dates to the 1960s, but nothing more recent. Even for the Bight of Benin, an area of specialization for Manning early in his career, the references to the best scholarship are thin, and there is no explanation why he accepts interpretations that doubt that Olaudah Equiano was born in Africa. The book leaves us with the stereotype that North America has been the center of the African diaspora, more because of the undergraduate market than because that is what happened. Fraser and Herskovits are discussed as if this was the only debate in the Americas, once again reflecting the bias of Anglophone scholarship, which will be surprising for most Africanists who have to deal with the debates and contributions of scholars from various backgrounds and where the English language is not the filter. Students are exposed to the literature through a lens that reinforces an image that if research is not published in English then it does not matter. Moreover, the choice of literature within the English-language tradition is also selective. Manning pioneered an early online journal to explore slavery and diaspora, which has subsequently ceased to exist. Yet that initiative was associated with important breakthroughs that subsequently spawned a very large literature on ethnicity and trans-Atlantic continuities and disjuncture, which unfortunately is overlooked in this volume.

While Manning considers the African diaspora experience throughout the world, there is still a concentration on North America, which is perhaps inevitable given the market there. While crucial, the experiences of slavery, emancipation, and renaissance in North America are privileged, even though fewer than 5 per cent of Africans went there during the era of slavery. By contrast, considerably more people of African descent have migrated to the United States since the ending of slavery, which now shapes the contours of the African impact there.

As Manning demonstrates, there was an extensive migration of Africans and people of African descent beginning in the medieval period and continuing to the present. Slavery was a central feature of this migration for centuries. How the world has responded to the continuing migration of free Africans since the ending of trans-Atlantic slavery adds dimensions to our understanding of the African diaspora and emerges as a major problem of analysis. Manning's study is a superb attempt to bridge the gap between our understanding of the forced deportation of Africans into slavery and the continuing emigration due to economic, educational, and other opportunities outside of continental Africa, and indeed for the migration within Africa, since the ending of the Atlantic slave trade.

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EXPLORING TRANS-SAHARAN TRACKS

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On Trans-Saharan Trails: Islamic Law, Trade Networks, and Cross-cultural Exchange in Nineteenth-century Western Africa. By GHISLAINE LYDON. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. Pp. xxviii + 468. £55/\$95, hardback (ISBN 978-0521-88724-3).

KEY WORDS: Sahara, Islam, law, markets, trade.

On Trans-Saharan Trails is a book on African economic history that speaks to both Africanists and economic historians in general. Lydon portrays the

Sahara as a realm connecting the Maghreb to West Africa through networks of trade, faith, and political economies, which places the book in a growing body of connection-oriented scholarship, appreciative of Braudel's magnum opus on the Mediterranean. Lydon successfully reconciles the rich variety in written and oral sources on the trans-Saharan trade, using Arabic-, English-, French-, and Spanish-language sources and informants. She rightly points to the oral basis of Islam and its influence on the scripted form of Islamic legal praxis, a point well known to Muslim scholars but not always considered by Islamologists and historians who remain based in philology. The trade networks that Lydon describes can be partly traced through contracts, legal rulings, correspondence, or external descriptions. But fuller knowledge of the history of the trans-Saharan trade can only be gained through oral histories of the day-to-day practice of caravaning, of the lineage structures that shaped the trade networks, or of traded goods that no longer exist. The book is refreshing for its exploration of lightly trodden trans-Saharan tracks, such as the involvement of women and the presence of Jewish merchants in Timbuktu.

However, Lydon's work is placed squarely in a growing body of scholarship on Saharan history proving the growth, rather than the decline, in trans-Saharan trade in the nineteenth century. This has already been done for the eastern and central trade roads, but only to a small extent for the trade between West Africa and present-day southern Morocco. The book focuses on the Wad Nun region and its inhabitants, the Tikna: a confederation of cosmopolitan Tashelhit-speaking caravaners and traders. In the long nineteenth century (stretching to 1934 in this area), Spain, France, and Morocco competed for political and economic dominance over an essentially autonomous area, ruled by the Bayruk family of the Tikna confederation. Their trading diaspora, departing from their hometown of Guelmim, stretched into the Senegal basin, via Trarza in present-day Mauritania, to Timbuktu and the oases of present-day Algeria. The Tikna diaspora collaborated with the Awlad bu Siba'i federation and the Jewish community of Guelmim. It is therefore not surprising that, throughout the book, Jewish commercial networks – from the Mediterranean down to Timbuktu – receive special attention. The general growth of trans-Saharan trade in the nineteenth century was influenced by larger geopolitics – Islamic state formation in the western Sudan, French occupation of the Senegalese and Algerian coasts, and the reconstruction of Ottoman power in Libya – as well as by the growing connection with trans-Atlantic and Ottoman trade networks, exchanging cotton and weapons for slaves, gum arabic, ostrich feathers, and paper. The latter allowed for better legal and logistic organization, thus building a 'paper economy of faith', which is at the heart of this book.

The essence of Lydon's argument on the 'paper economy of faith' is that, in the absence of reliable state authorities in the Sahara enforcing law and order, individual entrepreneurs sought knowledge of Islamic law to regulate their trans-continental trade in what Lydon calls a 'legal culture'. The legal order was upheld by local religious authorities – *qadis* and *muftis* – providing legal services, and enforced by personal faith and social norms within the 'community of believers'. This regulation and structure of the trading society were put to paper, hence the connection between the increasing availability of paper and the renewed increase in trans-Saharan trade from the eighteenth century onwards. Although a tradition of book purchase and production already existed in the region, the relative mass import of paper in the nineteenth century led to increasing contractual trade and trade administration, facilitating secure transactions and trade growth. This was in part financed by the export of book-binding leather, used in Europe in the ever-expanding book industry, and by the booming trade

in gum Arabic, used in Europe in (book-binding) glues, and locally in the production of ink. Thus, West Africa and the Sahara were integral parts of a global production of literature, further connecting traders and communities worldwide. Of course, the one snag in this reasoning could be a discrepancy in paper traded in bygone centuries and the volume of paper left to us in the Sahara from the nineteenth century, but this is easily dismissed by the general rise of paper production and use in paper economies worldwide, with which the Saharan trade was simply in line.

This is a rich book. Its scope ranges from a discussion of terminology of directions and the meaning of ‘Sahel’, via a history of tea consumption in the Sahara, to theoretical arguments on early modern trade networks. As a Saharan would say, ‘Lydon has drunk deep’.

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A COSMOPOLITAN RED SEA CITIZENRY

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Red Sea Citizens: Cosmopolitan Society and Cultural Change in Massawa.

By JONATHAN MIRAN. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2009.

Pp. xvi + 380. £58/\$75, hardback (ISBN 978-0-253-35312-2); £18.99/\$27.95, paperback (ISBN 978-0-253-22079-0).

KEY WORDS: north-eastern Africa, Eritrea, political culture, trade, urban.

This is a history of Massawa, the Red Sea port of what is now the independent state of Eritrea, over the period 1800–1910. Chapter One traces the history of the *na'ibs* or governors of Massawa, to whom the Ottomans – who had first conquered the city in 1557 – transferred power in about 1650. In the political space that opened up as a result of indirect and distant Ottoman rule and the absence of a strong, central Ethiopian state (especially during the period 1769–1855), the *na'ibs* of Massawa expanded their political authority and economic wealth by regulating and taxing the import and export trade. Egypt ruled the island port of Massawa and its hinterland during three different periods, twice under the aegis of the Ottomans (1813–41, 1846–9) and once on its own authority (1865–85), this last being a period of transformation of the Red Sea trade because of the opening of the Suez Canal. Caught between a revitalized Ethiopian state and expansive European powers, the families associated with the position of *na'ib* lost much of their political authority but not their economic wealth and influence.

In the era of the steamship (from the 1830s onwards) and under the direct rule of Egypt – which initiated a building boom in Massawa, stimulated agriculture in its environs, and modernized the administration of trade – the city developed into a flourishing center of regional (rather than only long-distance) trade and a significant terminus for the caravan trade from both the Ethiopian highlands and the Sudanese hinterland of Kassala. If gold, ivory, and slaves had dominated trade until the 1860s, now the local and regional products of livestock herders, fishermen, and pearl divers became prominent exports. This led, as Miran explains in Chapter Two, to a commodification and monetization of the regional economy, whose consequences, however, remain unexplored. Chapter