The Red Sea as a Space In-Between the Wider Afro-Eurasian World

Deadline: Aug 31, 2021

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Special Issue of The Medieval Globe: “Trade, Travels and Transformations: The Red Sea as a Space In-Between the Wider Afro-Eurasian World”

A special issue of the peer-reviewed journal The Medieval Globe, edited by Andrea Achi (The Metropolitan Museum of Art), Verena Krebs (Ruhr-Universität Bochum) and Vera-Simone Schulz (Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz - Max-Planck-Institut)

For a special issue of the The Medieval Globe, to be published in December of 2023 in digital and print versions, we invite proposals for articles on topics related to “Trade, Travels and Transformations: The Red Sea as a Space In-Between the Wider Afro-Eurasian World.”

When the container ship Ever Given was stuck, blocking the Suez Canal in March 2021, the world’s eyes were directed at a nodal point and passageway between the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean that is recognized as vital to current-day international trade and commerce. This special issue looks at the extended Red Sea region from a historical perspective. While the study of the medieval Mediterranean has long been established within the field of Medieval Studies, and the Indian Ocean World has also become the subject of increasing scholarly attention, this special issue brings a more neglected but critical region of literal centrality into focus: the Red Sea as an interspace between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean, linking three continents and the wider Afro-Eurasian world.

Bringing together new research at the micro-, meso-, and macro levels, this special issue (also to be published as stand-alone volume with full index) opens a window onto connectivity and disjunction, relations between the coast and hinterland, and inter-faith encounters among European and African Christians, Jewish communities, and the wider Islamic world. It investigates the extended Red Sea region as an environmental threshold and zone of encounter joining political realms, peoples, objects, knowledge, and ideas throughout the Middle Ages, broadly defined. Finally, it aims to provide a new approach to Afro-Eurasian dynamics, focusing both on actual connectivity and contacts through trade and travel and on visualizations, imaginations, and conceptions of the Red Sea and its peoples, wares, and geography from afar.

Examining the extended Red Sea region as a space in-between is an inherently interdisciplinary endeavour. The special issue intends to bring research results from different disciplines into conversation with one another. Analyses of visual and material culture ranging from maps to architecture, portable artefacts, and paintings will be juxtaposed with historical studies of trade and reli-

gion and brought into dialogue with textual adaptations and transformations of literary materials from Islamic, Jewish, and Christian traditions. We therefore invite doctoral candidates, early career researchers, and senior scholars from art history, archaeology, history, material culture studies, literary studies, philology, religious studies, heritage studies, and related disciplines to submit an abstract.

With this interdisciplinary approach, the issue contributes to a more in-depth understanding of the extended medieval Red Sea region on both an empirical-historical level and through methodological examinations of premodern transcultural exchange. In specifically centering a space that has hitherto been at the very margin of Medieval Studies, the issue builds upon the momentum of the recent global turn and a more intense scholarly focus on the Global Middle Ages. Presenting a template for all medievalists who work on similar issues in other regions, the issue seeks to make a significant contribution to studies of connectivity throughout the Afro-Eurasian world. What is more, the editors invite contributors interested in the sedimentation of the region's various cultural layers and the afterlives of the medieval built environment and material culture across time and space, including under colonial regimes or military occupation, and their relevance to local communities today.

Proposals for articles of about 7000 words (inclusive of notes) are invited (but not limited) to focus on the following issues:

• The role of objects and materials in cross-cultural exchanges
• Inter-faith encounters
• Travel and mobility
• Connectivity and its limits
• The diverse land- and waterscapes of the Red Sea region and their impact on travel, trade, communication, and migration
• Historiographies of the built environment and material culture in the extended Red Sea region
• Critical heritage studies

If you are interested in contributing to this special issue, please submit the proposed title of your article and an abstract of 500 (maximum) words on or before 31 August 2021 to these three email addresses:

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Submissions by junior and senior scholars based at institutions in the extended Red Sea region are particularly welcome!

For more informatation on The Medival Globe and previous issues, please visit https://arc-humanities.org/our-series/arc/tmg/
or contact Carol Symes, Executive Editor: medievalglobe@illinois.edu.

Reference:

CFP: The Red Sea as a Space In-Between the Wider Afro-Eurasian World. In: ArtHist.net, Jul 6, 2021

(accessed Nov 27, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/34533>.