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# 1 Trade and Port Cities in the Red Sea–Gulf of Aden Region in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century

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A favored trade route between the regions surrounding the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean, the Red Sea–Gulf of Aden area permitted contact between Mediterranean and Asiatic networks onto which regional and local networks were grafted. Port cities developed where these various networks came together as a result of both regional and more distant changes. Here I propose to analyze the elements that made the coherence of this area possible, as well the functions provided by the port cities, and then provide a chronology for this region's evolution in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

## The Diverse Function of Port Cities over Time

The area comprising the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden and their hinterlands forms a coherent environment organized around two complementary waterways, long and narrow appendages of the Indian Ocean oriented toward the Mediterranean. This interior sea separates the African shore from the Arabian Peninsula, though the opposite shores are never far apart. It is also inhospitable to shipping, as it provides few anchorages or harbors. The littoral borders desert and is usually narrow and sparsely populated, mostly by nomads. This region is poor in men, food, and resources, and as such not well suited to the development of either ports or cities.

Behind these coastal zones so ill-suited to human activity, there are relatively well-watered mountains and fertile oases where people have settled and

states whose resources are essentially agricultural have developed. Though not attuned to the sea, these political entities have not been able to live in total autarky. With their continental borders on vast desert wastes or, in the case of Ethiopia, on vast marshes, they have always been keen to maintain the outlets to the sea to ensure communication with the outside world.

This physical coherence is reinforced by a certain number of common cultural traits shared by the region's inhabitants. They almost all speak Semitic languages; they have maintained close relations since ancient times, to the north and south as well as from shore to shore; and they are marked by the three great monotheistic religions that developed near the Red Sea.

### *Commercial Activities*

Although this region is coherent at both the physical and cultural levels, its trade displays a hierarchical pattern. At the highest level is long-distance trade, often dominated by networks of usually foreign merchants who have adopted sophisticated commercial practices. In ancient times this trade followed two routes: a sea route between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean south of the Red Sea and along the Arabian coast, and a land route in the north following the caravan routes in the Arabian Peninsula or the Nubian Desert. Until the nineteenth century, there was an almost continuous flow of gold and silver along this route from the Mediterranean to India and China to compensate for the consistently limited flow of goods. This trade was based on hard cash. The Ottoman dinar and Venetian ducat dominated transactions right up to the end of the sixteenth century, but during the first quarter of the seventeenth century American silver minted into Sevillian piasters or Dutch guilders also became common.

Until the middle of the nineteenth century, this long-distance route remained subject to the implacable whim of the winds—the monsoons of the Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden, the trade winds over the Red Sea. Isthmuses and straits were a hindrance, as well. In the vicinity of Bab al-Mandab, shifting from navigation on the high seas to coastal trade generally required the transfer of merchandise to other ships. The incoming ships preferred to discharge their cargo at Shihr or Aden, and, after the second half of the sixteenth century, at Mokha, rather than to undertake the long and risky voyage on the Red Sea. Near the Sinai Peninsula, shifting from sea to land required another transfer. In the upper latitudes of the 20th and 22nd parallels, a change in the prevailing winds often imposed another transfer.

From the eleventh century under the Fatimids until the end of the fourteenth century under the Mamluks, ships unloaded their cargoes at Aydhab<sup>1</sup> on the African shore or sometimes at Suakin. From there, caravans carried the merchandise to the Nile Valley and then down the Nile River by felouque to Cairo, where it was carried by ship again to the ports of the Mediterranean.

When Jiddah later secured control of most of the trade,<sup>2</sup> two different routes were possible. Ships carried merchandise by sea up to the tip of Sinai, where it was brought ashore at Tur<sup>3</sup> and transported to Cairo by caravan. This avoided risking the difficult journey up the Gulf of Suez against winds that were almost always contrary. The port of Qusayr was also popular for the same reasons: from there, merchandise could be brought up the Nile Valley to Cairo.<sup>4</sup> In the other land route, from Jiddah, caravan merchandise went across the Arabian Peninsula to either Cairo or Damascus before reaching the Mediterranean.<sup>5</sup>

Although large-scale commerce crossed the entire zone from the Mediterranean to the Gulf of Aden, other commercial activity developed at a lower level among different regional entities built around political units that had formed in the hinterland beyond the inhospitable desert coasts. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Mamluks still controlled Egypt. Ethiopia was divided into a Christian kingdom established on the high plateau and a Muslim emirate in the southeast.<sup>6</sup> In the Arabian Peninsula, the sharifs of Mecca controlled the Hijaz, but Cairo was under the suzerainty of the Mamluks.<sup>7</sup> The Yemen was divided among the Zaydite imams on the high plateau, the weakened Tahirid state in the southern part,<sup>8</sup> and the Kathiri sultanate consolidating in the Hadramawt.<sup>9</sup> These entities carried on an active bilateral trade to alleviate chronic food shortages resulting from the arid climate. In Arabia, which was largely desert, the rare oases in the north and mountains of the south with very irregular rainfall were never able to meet food needs, especially of the coastal cities that could not be nourished by the meager resources of the local hinterland. The African shore, however, was in a much better position, and the immense Nile Valley nourished the holy cities of the Hijaz, mainly through waqfs.<sup>10</sup> The Ethiopian steppes and high plateau also produced abundant quantities of grain and animal products for the Hijaz, as well as for the Yemen.<sup>11</sup> The African side could thus support the needs of the people on the opposite shore.

This regional commerce was largely run by local merchants. Products supplied by the African side were exchanged for the plentiful merchandise

coming from the large-scale transit commerce from the port cities of the Arabian side. Money, which was common in the ports, yielded to barter or nonmetallic money in remote areas: peppercorns in Hadramawt,<sup>12</sup> salt or cloth in Ethiopia.<sup>13</sup>

Trade in the Red Sea–Gulf of Aden area was also stimulated by the pilgrimage routes, especially those that carried the faithful of the Muslim world to the holy sites of the Hijaz.<sup>14</sup> But Christians from Ethiopia and the Nile Valley also went to Jerusalem,<sup>15</sup> and numerous saints' tombs attracted far-flung pilgrims, such as Isma'ili Indians going to Haraz in the mountains of Yemen, and Muslims traveling to Mecca.<sup>16</sup> The Mecca pilgrimage, held according to the calendar of the Hegira, only rarely coincided with the arrival in Jiddah of ships from Egypt, India, or Yemen, whose movements were determined by the seasonal patterns of the winds, and so even if the coming of thousands of pilgrims to the Hijaz greatly stimulated commerce, trade was still governed by natural factors such as the monsoons of the Indian Ocean, the harvest seasons of spices in Malabar and Sumatra, the manufacture of textiles in Gujurat,<sup>17</sup> and, at the end of the sixteenth century, by the coffee harvest in the mountains of Yemen.

### *Transfer, Taxation, Distribution, and Export*

Large-scale transit commerce and regional exchanges gave rise on both shores to port cities that performed specific functions. They were junction points between the caravan routes and sea lanes, or between sea routes and interior-coastal trade. Grain and animal products or dried fruits and pulses went to the inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula; incense, gum, ivory, gold dust, horses, slaves, and madder joined the flow of merchandise crossing the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean.<sup>18</sup> Some of the port cities served as markets for the local distribution of goods. Jiddah, Aden, and Mokha, in particular, lay at the intersection of multiple merchant networks.

The port cities also contributed to the financing of the state apparatus in the hinterland. Rulers would levy taxes and assorted fees on transiting merchandise, which permitted them to enforce their superiority over their subjects. The sharif of Mecca split the revenue with the pasha of Jiddah,<sup>19</sup> thereby managing to calm the ambitions of rival clans by granting them important subsidies. In Yemen, revenue from ports made up one-fourth of the income of the Ottoman administration at the end of the sixteenth

century.<sup>20</sup> After the expulsion of the Turks from Yemen in 1635, the Qasimite imams derived most of the revenues needed to pay their tribal troops and mercenaries from ports, particularly Mokha.<sup>21</sup> The Ottomans maintained their presence on the coasts of Ethiopia by relying entirely on the revenues from Massawa and Suakin.<sup>22</sup>

Most port cities did not provide all these functions, however; Suez and Tur were hardly more than transshipment points, with trade and taxation taking place mostly in Cairo.<sup>23</sup> Jiddah was an important redistribution market and taxation point for rulers of Cairo and the sharif of Mecca, but it offered almost no production for export from its own hinterland. Zayla' was only a transit and taxation point.<sup>24</sup>

### *Cities with Transient Populations*

Most port cities had very cosmopolitan but unstable populations. A motley mix of traders from the regional shores or more distant lands of the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean filled the streets, the markets, and the ports of Mokha,<sup>25</sup> Jiddah,<sup>26</sup> Massawa, and Zayla'. When the trading season came to an end, most of them returned to Egyptian or Indian cities, or the cities and towns of the hinterlands. In addition to the merchants, these ports attracted Yemeni sailors, Turkish captains, Egyptian oarsmen and masons, Bedouin caravaniers, Somali porters, Anatolian carpenters, Indian money-changers, and many others. The population of these ports varied considerably, both over the course of the year and from year to year. The cities of Qusayr and Berbera were practically deserted during the off-season: in Suez, traders and their agents would retire to Cairo during the summer, which was a slow season for sailing in the northern part of the Red Sea. The heart of the trading networks was not, therefore, in the Red Sea–Gulf of Aden area, but elsewhere, in Cairo, in Gujrat, or some other city. The Red Sea was only an extension.

There was also instability over the long run. Ports would rise, develop, and decline at the whim of political, economic, or technological changes. Aydhab probably disappeared at the end of the fourteenth century, a victim of the northward shift of the great trading routes. This not only made it possible to avoid the growing insecurity of Upper Egypt,<sup>27</sup> but also reinforced the monopoly of the spice trade instituted by the Mamluk sultans in the first quarter of the fifteenth century. If Mokha developed rapidly from the second half of the sixteenth century, it was because the Ottomans wanted to make

it a naval base,<sup>28</sup> and because their governor in San'a diverted trade to the port to obtain the benefits of customs duties.<sup>29</sup> The prosperity of Tur, at the extreme end of the Sinai Peninsula, was short-lived; it declined in the sixteenth century as traders began to go up the Gulf to Suez without difficulty.

### *Crisis in the Pepper Trade and Struggle Against the Portuguese*

Trade between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean declined abruptly at the end of the fifteenth century. By the first quarter of the next century, traffic had declined by 50 to 75 percent.<sup>30</sup> The trouble began in 1496 with a shortage of gold and silver, which seriously hampered trade in the eastern Mediterranean and the Red Sea.<sup>31</sup> This was aggravated by the arrival of the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean, where they tried to influence the flow of spices through the Red Sea.

The difficulties were not just economic. In the eastern Mediterranean, Mamluks, Ottomans, and Safavids were engaged in a life-and-death struggle that ended with the Ottoman conquest of Egypt and the development of new Muslim empires. The Mughals and Safavids were continental powers, but the Ottomans had both a powerful modern army and a powerful navy,<sup>32</sup> and were thus the only ones with the necessary means to combat the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean. The Ottomans helped the Mamluks construct a fleet in Suez (1504–15) and lead an expedition against the Portuguese in India. The Ottomans renewed their efforts against the Portuguese after they took Egypt in 1517, but in the end they committed relatively few resources to it.<sup>33</sup> Until 1529, Süleyman the Magnificent was too intent on fighting the Hapsburgs, mobilizing all the forces of the empire on the European and Mediterranean front; it was only after 1530 that his galleys turned to the southern Red Sea and the coasts of southern Arabia.

The defeat of the Ottoman fleet before Diu on October 1538 and the failure of the retaliatory Portuguese expedition in the Red Sea of 1541 created a new situation in the Indian Ocean. The Ottomans realized they did not have the means to expel the Europeans from the region, and the Portuguese were compelled to cope with the presence of the Turks in the Indian Ocean,<sup>34</sup> because the Ottomans were asserting their authority not only in Yemen as far as Shihir, but also in the southern part of the Gulf. The sultan's agents were reported as far away as the court of the sultan of Aceh, at the western end of Sumatra.<sup>35</sup> A delicate but durable balance was maintained between the Portuguese and the Ottomans.

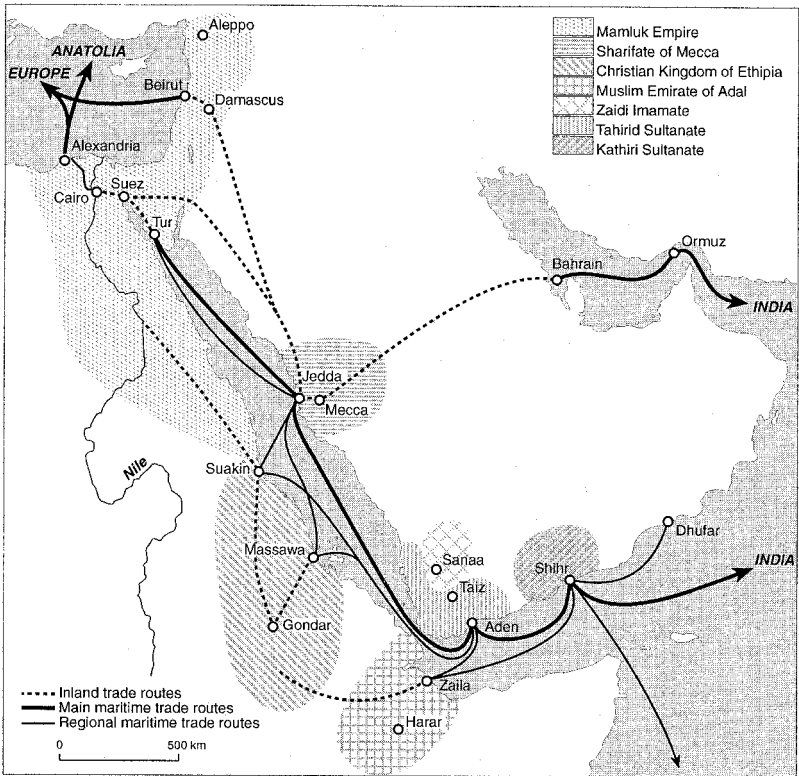


FIGURE 1.1 The Red Sea area around 1510.

### The Ottoman Red Sea (1547–1626)

The conquest of San'a by the Ottomans consolidated their hold on the southern Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. A few years later, around 1554, Mokha became the seat of a second Ottoman admiralty, after that of Suez.<sup>36</sup> Control of the Red Sea was completed between 1555 and 1557 with the creation of the province of Habash and the Ottoman conquest of the entire Ethiopian coast up to Bab al-Mandab.<sup>37</sup> The Red Sea was thus transformed into an Ottoman lake closed to any Portuguese incursion, and for the first time in its history all the coastal regions were subject to a single authority.

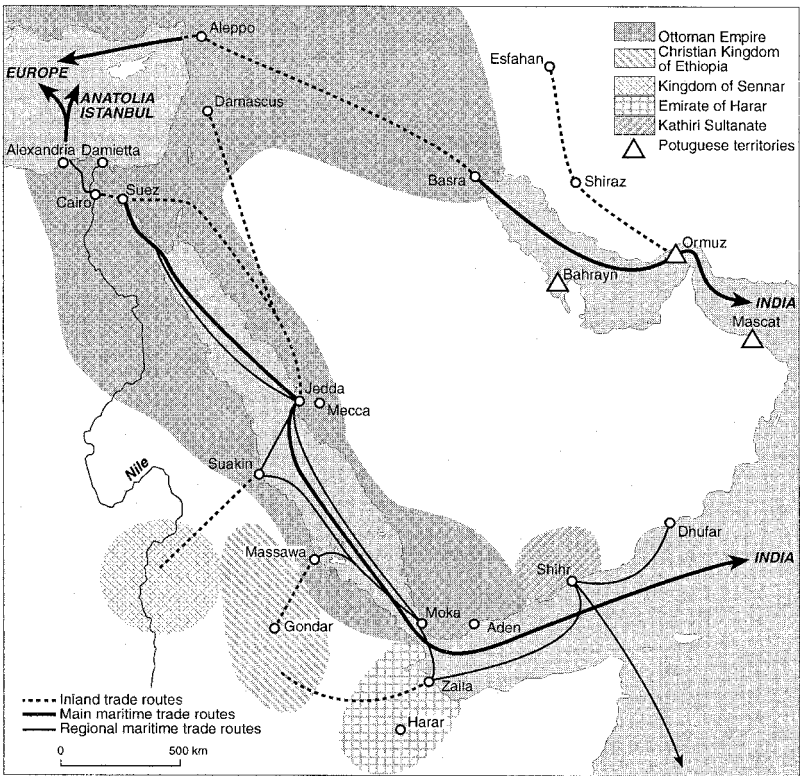


FIGURE 1.2 The Red Sea area around 1600.

The closing of the Red Sea and the establishment of a real, if precarious, balance of forces in the Indian Ocean created favorable conditions for a renewal of vigorous trade between the Mediterranean and southern Asia. According to European sources, by 1543, pepper and spices were plentiful in the Levantine ports,<sup>38</sup> though the revival probably took place earlier. The Portuguese had understood that they did not have the means to prevent spices from reaching the Mediterranean, but they also understood it was in their interests to allow a certain amount to make its way to the Ottomans because they did not have the means to furnish the coral, the gold dust, the copper, the gold and silver specie, the opium, the madder, or the brocades needed by India and that Indian merchants could not obtain elsewhere than



at the ports of the Red Sea.<sup>39</sup> Nor were the Portuguese in a position to finance the administration, the garrisons, and the ships of the Estado da India other than by levying a tax on Asiatic commerce. That is why, from the middle of the sixteenth century, they multiplied the *cartazes*, or passes, granted to ships going to the Red Sea or the Gulf.<sup>40</sup> Finally, the Portuguese were unable to prevent the development of direct navigation from Sumatra all the way to Arabia.<sup>41</sup> In 1550, the amount of pepper and spices shipped through the Red Sea equaled the high point of the trade a hundred years earlier.

This revival was accompanied by a restructuring of the old networks. Near Bab al-Mandab, Mokha developed rapidly. It was an insignificant anchorage around 1520; a century later, it was a prosperous port.<sup>42</sup> It was a safe place, sheltered from the ever-possible Portuguese attack. It was also a market in which merchants enjoyed a great measure of autonomy in the conduct of their business. Non-Muslim communities, Indian or European, could set up there without local objection. The authorities, content with collecting taxes to finance the administration of Yemen, hardly interfered with their commercial activities. After 1570, coastal trading in the Red Sea was centered at Mokha, which brought about the decline of Aden and probably of Shihr. Most transshipments came from the Indian Ocean. Mokha also attracted regional traffic, especially with neighboring Ethiopia. When the merchants of Gujarat relocated their activities on the western side of the Indian Ocean around 1600, Mokha naturally became their base for their Red Sea trade.<sup>43</sup>

Mokha was in a special situation at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries. A veritable emporium,<sup>44</sup> it was also the hub where various networks of the Mediterranean and the regions of the Indian Ocean met. The city was the heart of a vast transoceanic network reaching from Suez to East Africa, India, and Sumatra, involving all the ports of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden.<sup>45</sup>

At the other end of the Red Sea, Suez also grew. At first the Ottomans developed transport to bring troops, materiel, and foodstuffs to the Hijaz, Yemen, and Ethiopia, but these new facilities soon captured part of the caravan traffic as well, which had previously used routes emanating from Jiddah. Direct maritime links with Mokha also developed.<sup>46</sup> Every year, at least one large ship belonging to the sultan left Suez loaded with large sums of money and merchandise. At Mokha, these were exchanged for spices and drugs from South Asia, textiles from India, and porcelain from China. The development of Suez and especially Mokha was responsible for the sharp

decline of Jiddah, as the sharif reported in the 1580s to the authorities in Istanbul, complaining of a substantial fall in revenues.<sup>47</sup>

Ottoman expansion into the Mediterranean and the Red Sea and the increase in trade traffic was of considerable benefit to Cairo.<sup>48</sup> The city was at the crossroads of networks that extended to the Maghreb, Anatolia, Istanbul, Rumelia, and Syria. These networks were controlled by traders native to the regions involved; they established themselves in Cairo, but in separate communities in the city.<sup>49</sup> Their business extended to the Red Sea, but rarely further than Mokha.

Rare indeed were the traders whose commercial operations reached as far as the Indian ports during the second half of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century. From then on, the Cairene network in the Indian Ocean began to lose the power it had known under the *karimi* merchants in the Middle Ages and to shrink to the benefit of Muslim India. As indicated by documents in the Cairo archives, the Ottoman governing elite—provincial governors and military officers in particular were heavily into commerce in the Red Sea as early as the last quarter of the sixteenth century. An example is Hasan Pasha, governor of Yemen in 1597, who sent from Mokha to Simon Borreo, the French consul in Alexandria, various goods (pepper, spices, indigo, muslins, and even coffee beans) for the goodly sum of 10,000 dinars.<sup>50</sup>

The renewal of commerce in the Red Sea, which depended for the most part on the revival of the spice trade, remained fragile and in the end ephemeral. During the second half of the sixteenth century, the Portuguese were in a position to hamper the arrival of ships in the area near southern Arabia. To this was added, from the last quarter of the sixteenth century, danger from pirates—at first Malabars, Baloutches, and Arabs,<sup>51</sup> and, from the second decade of the seventeenth century, Europeans. But the most important factor was the development of an alternate route, when the growing presence of the Ottomans in the northern Gulf after 1546 and the end of the wars with the Safavids in 1555 allowed trade there and siphoned off part of the traffic through the Red Sea. Aleppo, located at the end of caravan routes bringing silk from Iran, rapidly expanded during the second half of the sixteenth century.<sup>52</sup> The route through the Red Sea still had many advantages however, foremost of which was that it was less expensive than the Gulf.<sup>53</sup>

Starting in 1580, there were signs of decline in the spice trade. Ottoman merchants, especially in Cairo,<sup>54</sup> had difficulty obtaining pepper from Malabar and Kannara in southern India; it increasingly went to East Asia and

China instead.<sup>55</sup> The problem increased in the seventeenth century with the establishment of new European companies. In less than a quarter century, the *Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* succeeded in capturing all of the pepper and spice trade for the European market. After 1625, only the domestic Ottoman market was supplied from the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden.<sup>56</sup>

Meanwhile, coffee from Yemen had become an important enough commodity to compensate for the declining trade in spices. Even before the fall of the Mamluks, coffee drinking had spread from Yemen to the Hijaz and Cairo. By about 1545, coffee cultivation had been introduced into the mountains of Yemen from southern Ethiopia, perhaps by the Ottomans, but its consumption increased only slowly in the Ottoman Empire, partly because of religious proscriptions.<sup>57</sup> It did not become fashionable until 1570–80, when it spread through all the social classes in the principal cities of the empire, and even reached isolated hamlets in Anatolia.<sup>58</sup> Demand then grew rapidly, and coffee became the object of intensive trade with Yemen, at that time its almost exclusive provider. Taxes on coffee were introduced to the trade in Suez in 1573.<sup>59</sup> By the end of the sixteenth century, the coffee trade equaled spices and Indian textiles in importance among the Cairene merchants.<sup>60</sup>

### The Red Sea under Ottoman Control and the Indian Ocean under Gujurati Influence (1626–1700)

The fighting between the Ottomans and the Zaydites in Yemen in 1626 led to the total withdrawal of the Ottomans from the country nine years later. After that, the Qasimite imams soon extended their domination over a vast territory from Najran to the Hadramawt, which was for the first time in its history united under a native dynasty. On the African shore, the port of Zayla' also fell under the domination of the imams of Yemen.

Despite the loss of Yemen, the Ottomans were able to stay on the Ethiopian shore, but only to serve as protectors against the West. When the new emperor Fasiladas decided to expel all the Catholic missionaries in 1632, he required the Ottomans to forbid passage through his territories to Europeans on pain of death.<sup>61</sup> Further north of Suez, Ottoman power was also showing signs of decline. The number of ships was shrinking, and the condition of the fleet deteriorating.<sup>62</sup> After the fall of Mokha, the Ottomans no longer had any authority in the southern half of the Red Sea.

Important changes also took place in the Indian Ocean. Gujurat, a part of the Mughal Empire since 1573, redirected its commercial activities to the ocean's western basin after the arrival of the Dutch and English in the region. After 1618, Gujurati traders ceased to visit Aceh,<sup>63</sup> but at the same time they became the principal commercial power in western India by eliminating most of their rivals, in particular those of Dabhol.<sup>64</sup> In a few years they made the Red Sea their major market for the ordinary cottons produced by the rapidly growing Indian textiles industry, which they traded for gold and especially the silver coins that were in great demand in the Mughal Empire after the monetary and fiscal reforms undertaken by Emperor Akbar. In their turn, the European trading companies lost no time in looking to the Red Sea. In 1618, the English East India Company established a counter in Mokha, and in 1621, the Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie followed. They hoped to obtain part of the specie needed to finance their Asiatic purchases of Indian printed fabrics, Javanese spices, and Chinese porcelain destined for European markets.<sup>65</sup>

All these changes taken together resulted in the division of the Red Sea–Gulf of Aden maritime region into two clearly defined zones. Jiddah, a mandatory stop since the Ottoman retreat from Yemen, became the point of contact. To the north, the Cairene traders tried to maintain their nearly absolute monopoly between Suez and Jiddah by relying on Ottoman authority, which remained uncontested. With a fleet of about forty ships, in part built in Suez with materials from Anatolia and in part purchased from Indian merchants<sup>66</sup> in Jiddah, they dominated trade between Egypt and the Hijaz. They were able to exclude Europeans from the zone behind Jiddah until 1773 on the grounds that they were too near the holy sites. They were just as intransigent toward Indian traders. In 1699, a rich Muslim merchant from Surat, Mullah Abd al-Ghafur, sent one of his ships directly to Suez; authorities, at the instigation of the Cairene merchants, discouraged him from repeating this initiative.<sup>67</sup>

Beyond Jiddah, the southern parts of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden had fallen under the domination of Gujurati merchants of Surat. Based in Mokha, they commanded a network of commercial agents, often Hindus or Jains, and compromised a commercial class known under the Sanskrit name of Banians. They could be found not only in all the port cities, but often also in the hinterland, especially in Yemen. Nonetheless, the Gujurati merchants did not enjoy hegemony in the region; they had to contend with competition from numerous Indian merchants, and especially with the thousands of Indian pilgrims who brought with them a few bales of cotton stuffs

to pay their expenses for travel to the holy sites.<sup>68</sup> Less threatening was the competition from the European companies. Up to the end of the seventeenth century, the English and the Dutch were hardly in a position to compete with Indian merchants, whose costs could be kept low and who could also rely on highly efficient local networks. Faced with disappointing returns, the English closed their counter in 1664, followed twenty years later by the Dutch. Europeans did not return to Mokha until the end of the century, when demand for coffee in London and Amsterdam made direct purchases from Yemen profitable.

Indian merchants had to take into account regional and local networks in the hands of native merchants. During the second half of the seventeenth century, a large part of the commerce between the Red Sea and the Gulf passed through the hands of Omanis and coastal trade between the African and Arabian shores was in the hands of Yemeni sailors who used numerous small boats or *djalbas*<sup>69</sup> to bring coffee to Jiddah from the Yemeni ports of Hodeida and Luhayya, which grew rapidly in the seventeenth century as a result. Commerce from Massawa with the kingdom of Ethiopia seems to have been in the hands of Christian Abyssinians and Yemenis, but from Zayla' and the interior it was in the hands of Muslim Ethiopia, at least as far as the borders of the Christian kingdom.<sup>70</sup>

The retreat of the Ottoman fleet to the northern part of the Red Sea left the field open to pirates near the straits of Bab al-Mandab. Whether European or Omani, piracy reached such proportions that the Mughals were forced to place their ships under the protection of the Dutch fleet after 1698.

The establishment of Ottoman hegemony in virtually all the Red Sea–Gulf of Aden area and of a balance of power in the Indian Ocean allowed the vigorous recovery of commerce between the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean toward the middle of the sixteenth century. The particular geography of the Red Sea, however, mandated two emporia: to the north, Cairo asserted itself anew as the terminal for all the Mediterranean networks; to the south, Mokha underwent spectacular development at the expense of Aden and Shihr.

The military retreat of the Ottomans from Yemen had the immediate effect of shrinking the network of Cairene merchants and reinforcing the Indian, especially Gujurati, presence in the Red Sea. The decline of the pepper and spice trade after the end of the sixteenth century hardly affected commercial activity, at least in the long term, as other products took up the

slack. However, the nature and the flow of goods changed. Luxury items, small in size but high in value, were replaced by heavy goods, especially coffee, but also indigo and ordinary goods such as Indian cottons, used as much by a Yemeni coffee-tree planter as by a sailor in Suez, an Ethiopian shepherd, or a Bedouin in the Sinai. A single long-distance trade flow between Asia and the Mediterranean was replaced by more limited traffic, such as Yemeni coffee to the Mediterranean or Indian textiles to the Red Sea or Egypt. Massive cash purchases at Mokha of coffee by the European companies was a harbinger of later changes. They made it more difficult to supply coffee to the Ottoman Empire, which retaliated by forbidding export from Alexandria to Europe, thus throwing into doubt the flow of specie from Europe and the Mediterranean to southern Asia and the Far East. This anticipated the decline, or at least stagnation, of commercial activity in the Red Sea.

### Notes

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2. Garçin, *Un centre musulman*, pp. 413–25; “Jean Leon l’Africain et ‘Aydhab,” *Annales islamologiques* 11 (1972): 189–209; Labib, *Handels-geschichte Ägyptens im Spätmittelalter*, p. 130.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 128; Garçin, *Un centre musulman*, p. 415.
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5. Halil İnalçık, with Donald Quartaert, *Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire 1300–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 345.
6. John Spencer Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia* (Oxford, 1952), pp. 82–90; Joseph Cuoq, *L’Islam en Ethiopie des origines au XVIe siècle* (Paris: Nouvelles Editions latines, 1981), pp. 147–88.
7. Richard Mortel, *al-Ahwāl al-siyāsiyya wa-l-iqtisādiyya fi Makka* (Riyadh, 1983); “Aspects of Mamluk Relations with Jeddah during the 15th Century: The Case of Tunraz al-Mu’ayyadi,” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 6, 1 (1993): 1–13.
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10. For the Mamluk period, see Heinz Halm, *Ägypten nach den mamlukischen*

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11. Emerich Van Donzel, *Foreign Relations of Ethiopia 1642–1700: Documents Relating to the Journeys of Khodja Murad*, vol. 46 (Istanbul: Dutch Institute, 1979), p. 203, n. 21; Evliya Çelebi, *Siyahatnamesi*, vol. 10: *Misir, Sudan, Habes* (Istanbul, 1938), p. 942.
  12. R. B. Serjeant, *The Portuguese off the South Arabian Coast. Hadrami Chronicles* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), p. 77.
  13. Van Donzel, *Foreign Relations of Ethiopia*, pp. 18, 93.
  14. For routes in the Ottoman period, cf. Suraiya Faroqhi, *Pilgrims and Sultans: The Hajj under the Ottomans* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1994), pp. 32–45.
  15. Cuoq, *L’Islam en Ethiopie des origines au XVIe siècle*, pp. 215–16, mentions the pillaging near Massawa of a caravan of Ethiopian pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem.
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