

# Book Reviews

*JTMS* publishes short summaries of all books received and complete reviews of selected books. Parties interested in reviewing books not listed here should contact the book review editor. Authors or publishers interested in having a summary or review of a maritime and territorial studies related book appear in our journal should send a complimentary copy to the book review editor. All reviews should be sent to the book review editor, Samuel Dodge ([jtmsbookreviews@gmail.com](mailto:jtmsbookreviews@gmail.com)) and cc'd to the managing editor, Dr. Lonnie Edge ([jtmsjournal@gmail.com](mailto:jtmsjournal@gmail.com)).

## 2025:

- Anderson, Nicholas. (2025). *Inadvertent Expansion: How Peripheral Agents Shape World Politics*. Cornell University Press.
- Barker, Nicholas. (2025). *States, Secessionists and De Facto Control after Separatist Wars: Strategies for Controlling Territories and Populations after Conflict*. Routledge.
- Ó Beachain, Donnacha. (2025). *Unfinished Empire: Russian Imperialism in Ukraine and the Near Abroad*. Agenda Publishing.
- Bueger, Christian, Christian Mendenhall, and Rebecca Strating. (eds.). (2025.). *The Politics of Global Ocean Regions*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Koktsidis, Pavlos I. (2025). *Ethnofederalism in Cyprus: Territory, Power and Security*. Routledge.
- König, Daniel. (2025). *Entangled Worlds: 600–1350*. Harvard University Press.
- Ringbom, Henrik, and Åbo Akademi. (eds.). (2025). *The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships: A Commentary*. Elgar.
- Thaler, Kai. (2025). *When Rebels Win: Ideology, Statebuilding, and Power After Civil Wars*. Cornell University Press.
- Wejnert, Barbara. (2025). *The Global Rise of Autocracy: Its Threat to a Sustainable Future*. Routledge.
- Wigen, Kären (ed.). (2025). *Territorial Imaginaries: Beyond the Sovereign Map*. University of Chicago Press.

## 2024:

- Bueger, Christian, and Timothy Edmunds. (2024). *Understanding Maritime Security*. Oxford University Press.
- Carballo Piñeiro, Laura. (2024). *The Elgar Companion to the Law and Practice of the International Maritime Organization*. Elgar.



---

Journal of Territorial and Maritime Studies / Volume 13, Number 1 / Winter/Spring 2026 / pp. 138–145 /  
ISSN 2288-6834 (Print) / DOI: 10.2307/JTMS.13.1.138 / © 2026

---

- Gerber, James. (2024). *Border Economies: Cities Bridging the U.S.-Mexico Divide*. University of Arizona Press.
- Hall, Ian, Troy Lee-Brown, and Rebecca Strating. (2024). *Blue Security in the Indo-Pacific*. Routledge.
- Ho, Jeong Dan. (2024). *Environmental Damage Caused by Marine Litter: International Regulation and Responsibility*. Elgar.
- Mihaylov, V. (2024). *Bulgarian Geopolitics in a Balkan Context: Imagining the Space of a Nation*. Routledge.
- Moyo, Inocent. (2024). *Cross Border Security in the Southern African Region: Transcending Statolatry*. Routledge.
- Vergnano, Cecilia. (2024). *Alpine Border Conflicts: Migration and Social Polarization in the Everyday Life of Intra-EU Borders*. Lexington Books.

### **2023:**

- Caverley, Jonathan D. and Peter Dombrowski. (2023). *Security Studies in a New Era of Maritime Competition*. Taylor & Francis.
- Chandra, Vivek. (2023). *The Law of the Sea and Maritime Boundary Disputes in Areas of Hydrocarbon Potential: A Review of Global Hot Spots*. *Routledge Research in Law of the Sea Series*. Routledge.
- Kaplan, Robert D. (2023). *The Loom of Time: Between Empire and Anarchy, from the Mediterranean to China*. Random House.
- Larsen, Jessica. (2023). *Counter-Piracy Law in Practice: An Ethnography of International Security Governance*. Routledge.
- Peña, Juan Cayón, and J. Martín Ramírez. (2023). *Threats to Peace and International Security: Asia Versus West: Current Challenges in a New Geopolitical Situation*. Springer Nature Switzerland.
- Shimada, Ryuto, and Radhika Seshan. (2023). *Connecting the Indian Ocean World: Across Sea and Land*. Taylor and Francis.
- Vrancken, Patrick. (2023). *State Ocean Jurisdiction*. *Routledge Research in the Law of the Sea Series*. Routledge.

### *Cultural Influences on the Law of the Sea: History, Legacy, and Future Prospects*

Kraska, James (ed.) and Hayoun Ryou-Ellison (ed.) (2025). Oxford University Press. 352 pages. ISBN: 978-0-19-894413-3, hardcover, \$130; ISBN: 978-0-19-894415-7, e-book, \$130.

The book, “*Cultural Influences on the Law of the Sea: History, Legacy, and Future Prospects*,” edited by James Kraska and Hayoun Ryou-Ellison, debuts at a time when maritime disputes, seabed mining, and ocean governance dominate global headlines. Amid these challenges, the law of the sea becomes crucial to resolve geopolitical weight and existential urgency. Contemporary scholarship has explored the law of the sea through legal, geopolitical, and institutional approaches. This book argues that values, histories, and norms are equally influential in shaping maritime law. The book investigates how maritime law at any given point in time, particularly UNCLOS, is deeply colored by regional and national culture.

The editors assemble a diverse range of voices from eight regions of the world and one country. Together, they present a comprehensive global analysis of how diverse

cultural traditions and historical legacies have impacted negotiations, interpretation, and application of the law of the sea. The book has eleven chapters. The opening chapter establishes that culture serves as a lens for interpreting human behavior and global interactions. However, the authors warn that the inherent contrasts and contradictions among cultures, such as East vs. West and North vs. South, complicate attempts for a unified international law.

From the second chapter onwards, the book explores regional perspectives. The second chapter examines the influence of Western European countries in shaping the law of the sea. It argues that Roman law, Greek philosophy, the Enlightenment, science, capitalism, and language influenced the codification of law, navigation, and scientific reasoning through technological advances across the globe. The third chapter, on Eastern Europe, explores the influence of the Vikings, Christianization, Cold War divisions, and reliance on Baltic trade routes, leading landlocked countries to defend their freedom of navigation and access to high-seas resources. Thus, Europe's influence on the freedom of navigation holds a firm grip and a lasting imprint on global law, shaped by cultural, capitalist, and historical traditions.

The book then turns to Russia. Its maritime culture, initially rooted in Orthodox Christianity and Viking-Byzantine traditions, stressed collective justice and universal norms. Western European influence in the 18th-century introduced naval modernization and codification. The 20th-century Soviet rule added an ideological and political interpretation of the sea. It maintained its "healthy pragmatism" policy with the West at UNCLOS and argued for strait access and sovereignty protection. The Soviet breakdown led to "anti-culture lawmaking" and "dependent independence" of Russia, with it becoming assertive and pragmatic only after 2010.

From the fifth chapter onwards, the book focuses on colonized countries. These chapters reveal how colonial impositions reshaped, silenced, and marginalized indigenous traditions of ocean governance. They explore their struggles negotiating between their cultural visions of the sea and the European legal frameworks imposed upon them. The fifth chapter examines East Asia, where cultural roots in Confucian, Buddhist, and imperial traditions shape approaches to international law. While China views it as an oppression of the West, Japan mirrors the Western attributes and laws in all aspects. China challenged Western dominance at UNCLOS discussions, while Japan seconded the Western proposal on the three-mile limit. Highlighted was the stark difference in approach to maritime dispute resolution: East Asians prefer mediation to the West's formalized judicial process. As a result, the author rightly describes the "Asian approach is multifaceted rather than unified in nature" and distinct from the European understanding (p. 125).

The seventh and tenth chapters on South Asia and Oceania explore how the colonizers' arrival changed indigenous peoples' relationship with the ocean. What was once an open sea now had territorial imaginaries ingrained in it, alienating the indigenous practices of the ocean. India's ruin of its shipbuilding empire and ignorance of the Pacific islander's indigenous rights in the UNCLOS reflects how the colonial empire restricts their culture and traditions. Colonialism is responsible for depriving them of old connections, and the maritime geography became scrambled, territorialized, and monopolized, converting the oceanic visioned countries into a continental turn. Both regions had an interesting way of accommodating their interests in UNCLOS. While India's leadership and collaborations

with the developing world helped push for EEZs up to 200 nautical miles and for the recognition of the deep seabed as the “common heritage of mankind,” the Pacific Islands pursued regional collaboration, forming the Oceania Group to defend island interests. New Zealand, too, supported the notion that even the most minor islands deserved full EEZs. The eighth chapter explores Africa’s Ubuntu philosophy, which shaped their discussions at UNCLOS, calling for interdependence, collective welfare, and equity. Their efforts helped bring the deep seabed regime as “common heritage of mankind,” championed the inclusion of landlocked states in maritime rights, etc.

The chapter on South America reflects how its colonial experiences led to sovereignty and control. They drew global attention to illegal fishing and conservation, linking environmental protection with sovereignty, and advanced concepts of EEZs and contiguous zones. The ninth chapter on North America presents an interesting case. Despite being a former colony of a European power, it did not resist European law but instead reworked and embraced it. Rooted in Greek philosophy, Roman law, Enlightenment ideals, Christian ethics, and liberalism, the movement promoted freedom of navigation, free trade, and exclusive flag-state control, while later advocating coastal control and continental self-protection to serve national interests. The eleventh and final chapter synthesizes the book’s core findings, highlighting the ongoing tension between *mare liberum* and *mare clausum*, and between individual rights and collective interests.

The book succeeds in providing an almost global canvas. However, it ignores Central Asia and the Middle East. Including Russia instead of the USSR limits understanding of the interests of the Central Asian region. As both regions played a vital role in the Spice and Silk Routes linking their oceanic connections, not incorporating them leaves a critical gap in understanding how inland and intermediary regions shaped ocean governance. Additionally, the book narrowly focuses on the role of culture in forming the territorial and resource-centric dimensions of maritime governance. It overlooks the role of cultural traditions in codifying provisions on humanitarian rescue, cooperative norms of seafaring communities, etc., which are prominent among the Indian and the Pacific Island communities. This omission narrows understanding of culture to a state-centric, exploitative lens and marginalizes the other existing maritime traditions as well as ecological and cooperative dimensions of maritime law. Another limitation is the uneven treatment of regions. Asia, Russia, and Western Europe are explored with significant historical grounding. However, the maritime history of South America, North America, and Africa remains underexplored, especially that of indigenous peoples pre-colonization. Furthermore, the book flattens North America’s distinct trajectory by aligning it with Western Europe through a shared colonial legacy, thereby risking the overlooking of nuanced differences in law, strategy, and maritime thought.

The thoughts of Mahan [maritime theorist Alfred Thayer Mahan] remain remarkably underexplored, creating an imbalance in the comparative depth of the analysis. Another underexplored area is how lived experiences, customary practices, and community-based norms have influenced maritime law. The book primarily focuses on state legislation and emphasizes the Westphalian concept of statehood, only examining evidence from regions recognized as states. Overlooked is the role of communities, indigenous groups, and non-state actors who have historically played a vital role in shaping maritime practices.

Rescue-at-sea operations, for one, have more to do with coastal communities' religious and customary values than with directives from rulers or state directives.

The book provides a deep historical analysis, tracing the roles of diverse civilizations and epochs in shaping maritime law, revealing how cultural traditions, ancient practices, colonial legacies, and postcolonial struggles shape maritime law, making it a space of continuity and change. It serves as a reservoir of historical and cultural knowledge and helps debunk the myth that international maritime law is a unilateral Western invention. The book shows that maritime law has been shaped by centuries of negotiation among competing cultural logics and is not a static, monolithic Western construct. The editors have successfully demonstrated that the law of the sea is the outcome of centuries of contestation, accommodation, and synthesis. The book also highlights how the geopolitics of navigation and geoeconomics of trade have played a key role in maritime law since ancient times. It has also traced the colonial legacy influencing maritime law in colonized states and colonizers, as elaborately highlighted in the chapter on South Asia, where the idea of freedom of the seas is rooted in the colonizers' vision, driven by their fear that restrictions would hinder the free flow of trade. Moreover, the colonized states' push for sovereign rights, EEZs, etc., is driven by their struggle to reclaim control over resources and resist exploitation. The book also exemplifies how colonial impositions restructured indigenous maritime practices and how the UNCLOS failed to integrate indigenous rights. It also traces how it reshapes people's relationship with the sea, which in turn shapes culture. Moreover, the book successfully sheds light on the agency of colonized countries in shaping UNCLOS, such as Africa's Ubuntu in shaping the "common heritage of mankind." By highlighting how small oceanic countries have pursued their interests, the book reinforces their agency and underscores their significance. Thus, the book creatively reveals how colonial legacies disrupted and inspired innovations in maritime governance. It establishes that maritime law is not the triumph of the West or the East, but a joint effort of negotiation, clash, and collaboration between both.

Another significant strength of this book is its firm empirical grounding. The book backs its claims by grounding abstract ideas and concepts in substantial evidence, including historical evidence, concrete case studies, and cross-regional examples. By integrating theory with empirics, the book strengthens the persuasiveness of its claims and enhances its academic credibility. Moreover, the book is easy to read, even for non-legal scholars. By integrating philosophies, values, and traditions, it reminds the reader that cultural legacies are as influential and powerful as geopolitics in determining the law of the sea and the fate of the countries at sea. It also opens an avenue to reassess problems at sea through a cultural lens beyond a technical legalistic framework.

Despite these limitations, the book is well worth reading as it presents an alternative understanding of maritime law through culture. It is an easy-to-read book for scholars who wish to understand the voices and representations in lawmaking. Moreover, it provides a convincing, timely, comprehensive, and empirically rich understanding of maritime law that helps one broaden their understanding beyond the narrow geopolitical and legal context. This book is strongly recommended for scholars, policymakers, and anyone interested in how culture shapes the governance of the oceans, as it offers a rich interdisciplinary approach and global coverage, providing innovative solutions to contemporary issues such

as climate change, indigenous rights, and human rights at sea. Additionally, this book is strongly recommended for scholars in the Global South, as it elaborates on colonial disruptions at sea, postcolonial states reclaiming their agency, and how small countries influence these debates, helping readers appreciate underrepresented voices.

*Reviewed by: Rudrani Garg, Research Intern, Vivekananda International Foundation, Assam, India, email: rudranigarg222@gmail.com*

### *Connecting the Indian Ocean World: Across Sea and Land*

Radhika Seshan (ed.) and Ryuto Shimada (ed.) (2023). New Delhi: Routledge India. 142 pages. ISBN: 978-1-032-24832-5, hardcover, \$170; ISBN: 978-1-032-43929-7, paperback, \$49.99; ISBN: 978-1-003-36248-7, e-book, \$49.99.

Seshan and Shimada's volume moves with quiet authority across time-slices and geographies, ports, spice forests, and dusty market towns, then returns to the archive with sharper questions. The introduction reads less like scaffolding than a manifesto: commercial circuits are never singular but constantly braided, diverging and rejoining, so any "Indian Ocean world" worth the name resists a master plot and instead yields a mosaic of partial, sometimes contradictory scenes whose coherence lies in their productive messiness.

The editors' own trajectories earn that stance. Radhika Seshan, a historian of early-modern India's maritime and urban economies and former head of History at Savitribai Phule Pune University, has long mapped port-hinterland linkages and provincial markets; her recent coedited *Wage Earners in India 1500–1900* presses readers to place granular labor regimes alongside long-distance trade.

Ryuto Shimada, an associate professor of Asian history at the University of Tokyo, has traced intra-Asian commodity networks with particular acuity in *The Intra-Asian Trade in Japanese Copper by the Dutch East India Company*, showing how VOC-era flows hinged on Asian intermediaries as much as on European firms. That combined expertise on coastal-interior ties, labor and urban worlds, and the intra-Asian logistics of commodities underwrites the book's refusal of neat arcs. It also explains its archive-forward method: Dutch *dagregisters*, Marathi Modi records, Persian travelogues, French factory letters, and zakat accounts are treated not as corroboration for big theses but as engines of interpretation, capable of unsettling scale and sequence.

The volume's first half, given over to maritime arenas, fulfills that promise with measured confidence. Shohei Okubo's reconstruction of opium routes from Bihar to Batavia treats monopoly less as an achieved structure than as a fragile aspiration, constantly unsettled by smugglers, private traders, and the sheer unpredictability of monsoon logistics. Tomoko Morikawa's study of the 1685 Safavid mission to Siam has an almost novelistic sense of pace: Persian diplomats drift between ports, note the prayer habits of shipmates and the texture of coastal bazaars, and, in doing so, expose the shrinking horizon of Safavid ambition. Kazuo Kobayashi deftly links Pondicherry's modest textile mills to Senegambian gum forests, showing that the rebirth of a French Indian port after 1816 depended on demand curves that curved well beyond the Bay of Bengal. Hideaki Suzuki's

itinerant Kachchhi Bhatiya merchants, forever departing Kachchh, forever returning, supply a human counterpoint to the commodity histories, reminding us that circulation is also emotional labor carried in accents and account books.

If the sea chapters evoke movement, the landward essays dwell on the granular mechanics that enable it. Neelambari Jagtap's portrait of Tal Konkan in the 17th century is quietly revisionist: provincial ports such as Rajapur are shown to feed, and often frustrate, the strategies of European companies, yet their rhythms remain tuned to hinterland markets like Raibag rather than to imperial metropolises. Sumitra Kulkarni extends that sensibility into the eighteenth-century Konkan, tracing how war, toll-barriers, and new postal timetables re-strung older coastal-interior linkages. Michihiro Ogawa's detailed mapping of Indapur pargana's customs houses supplies the local state its due; bullock-loads of salt and jaggery become, in his reading, data points in a Maratha fiscal geography that was anything but static.

Throughout, the editors allow their contributors to linger over archival eccentricities, a Persian scribe's irritation with Buddhist "infidels," an auction ledger's fluctuating opium prices, the sketch of a Konkan salt-warehouse's night halt. That tolerance for the anecdotal is one of the collection's understated strengths: it prevents smooth narratives and foregrounds contingency. Yet the essays converse with one another more by resonance than by design; a reader might yearn for an explicit cross-chapter dialogue on, say, the social afterlives of monopoly or the emotional vocabularies of itinerant traders. The introduction gestures toward such themes, but subsequent signposting is sparse.

Methodologically, the book is unapologetically eclectic. Quantitative graphs of opium auctions rub shoulders with micro-philological readings of Persian travelogues; GIS-style maps of Konkan trade routes sit beside more impressionistic sketches of French warehouse accounts. The effect is enriching, though occasionally disorienting. Works that favor *longue durée* economic patterns are placed alongside chapters that hover within a single diplomatic episode; the shifts in scale require, and repay, close attention. Importantly, the plurality of sources, Dutch *dagregisters*, Marathi Modi records, French factory letters, de-centers Anglo-imperial perspectives without trumpeting the fact.

One might query what remains outside the frame. East African voices appear primarily through European mediation; the ecological terms of exchange, forests felled for ship-timber, fields rewritten by cash-crop demand receive less sustained treatment than budgets or correspondence. Gender surfaces briefly in Suzuki's note on male Bhatiya migration taboos but is not pursued further. These silences are perhaps inevitable in a slim volume that attempts a broad canvas, yet they signal directions for future work rather than weaknesses of execution.

In the end, *Connecting the Indian Ocean World* wins you over not by hammering its sea into a single, airtight thesis, but by letting it breathe. Across its seven chapters, the ocean shape shifts—now a highway for merchants, now a tariff wall for treasurers, now a rumor's favorite playground, and occasionally the moody monsoon hazard that ruins your travel plans. The land, meanwhile, refuses to play the quiet background. Pepper vines curl into the narrative, postal runners pound dusty roads, and Maratha tax-farmers keep the inland ledgers humming, reminding us that, as Michael Pearson warned, the tang of ozone is never far from the grit between your toes. It's this refusal to let either sea or shore sit still

patiently documented, free of historical chest-thumping, that makes the book's contribution to Indian Ocean historiography feel both persuasive and oddly intimate. The work will be of particular value to scholars and graduate students in maritime history, South Asian studies, and global history, as well as to advanced readers seeking a nuanced, source-rich account of the region's interconnected worlds.

*Reviewed by: Vishal Singh Bhadauriya, Banaras Hindu University,  
Uttar Pradesh, India, email: vishal1996@bhu.ac.in*