# Oceanic Histories: A Roundtable

David Armitage, Alison Bashford and Sujit Sivasundaram, eds., *Oceanic Histories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

*Oceanic Histories* opens a new series for Cambridge University Press. By bringing world history, maritime history and environmental history into one conversation, it presents the very latest work on the plural oceans and seas of the world, as well as analysis of a singular "world ocean." This edited book is intended as a state-of-the-ocean address and historiographical summary, setting a 2018 benchmark for the monograph series Cambridge Oceanic Histories.[1] Like the series, this book covers multiple oceans and seas, over many historical periods and periodizations. The book, also like the series, is global in geography, ecumenical in historical method, and wide in temporal coverage, and it is intended as a key repository for innovative transnational and world histories. It brings maritime history into conversation with other strands of historical research, including colonial history, environmental history, legal history, intellectual history, labour history, cultural history, economic history and the history of science and technology. In time, the editors hope, the book will shape the teaching and research that will inform the monographs that constitute the Cambridge Oceanic Histories series.

In March 2018, *Oceanic Histories* was launched in Cambridge, UK, with a roundtable commentary and discussion, published here. The editors were joined by historian of the English Channel Renaud Morieux, historian of the Indian Ocean Clare Anderson, and historian of the Pacific Ocean Jonathan Lamb.

[1] http://www.cambridge.org/us/academic/subjects/history/regional-and-world-history-general-interest/series/cambridge-oceanic-histories#lTmblx7LeLTrSX8t.97 (accessed 1 June 2018).

**Comment: Renaud Morieux, University of Cambridge**

The powerful metaphor of the wave, in the introduction, beautifully sums up the project of *Oceanic Histories*. Trying to "fix" the wave or the ocean, which is by definition and nature ever-changing, is impossible. There is a tension here that cannot be resolved, but precisely for that reason, oceanic history tests the limits of historical analysis, historical explanation and history-writing.

These contributions offer a reflection on time as much as on space. One of the many merits of the book is to give us a sense of the plurality of past, present and future approaches to oceanic history. One of these temporalities is the *longue* or very *longue durée*—although Braudel's Mediterranean features here more like an anti-model, than a model. There is a deep history of the Pacific or Indian Oceans, which we can uncover by using a broader variety of primary sources than those we are used to, such as oral history, legends, archaeological, geological or botanical evidence. By contrast, another temporality explored here is the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the age of colonialism, decolonization, and the Cold War, when the first academic histories of oceans were written. The book demonstrates that it is impossible to understand the emergence of the field of oceanic history without thinking about redefinitions of the world order. It has been shown to be the case, by David Armitage among others, with respect to Atlantic history, but the book argues that the politics of academic knowledge are intertwined with geopolitics. If one turns to a "young" ocean like the Arctic, beautifully studied by Sverker Sörlin, it is the future as much as the past that is relevant. To quote Sörlin, the Arctic "emerges as a historical and meta-geographical entity through high modernity rather than high imperialism." Rather than the sailing ship, it is the ice-breaker and the nuclear submarine that we associate with this ocean. As Sörlin argues, the Arctic is not a "mediterranean" in the Braudelian sense: it was never a human whole.

As we know, Fernand Braudel has cast a long shadow on oceanic and maritime studies, and this is a genealogy that the authors of the book explicitly want to distance themselves from, with good reasons. Even historians of the Mediterranean, as Molly Greene demonstrates, should interrogate Braudel's assumptions, and question *the*

Mediterranean as a legitimate unit of analysis—the category is, until late in the nineteenth century, not relevant in the Muslim or Ottoman worlds.

Definitional issues are at the heart of the book. While it is structured by examining separate oceans, "the pull of adjoining waters," to quote Sujit Sivasundaram, is always on the horizon (105–8). There has always been, explicitly or not, a historiographical dialogue between most of the spaces examined here: for instance, Atlantic slavery has for a long time been the main model for explaining slavery in the Indian Ocean. But these intellectual importations have a cost: instead, one can try to grasp what is specific about South-Asian forced labour, where the distinction between slavery and indentured labour does not work in the same way.

The geographical terminology we use is never neutral: choosing a name to designate an ocean or a sea is political, as shown by Alexis Dudden's article on the Sea of Japan/Korea's East Sea. Issues of naming underpin deeper questions. Tracing the different names given to the same body of water over time (although it's never the same body of water) gives us a sense of political, social and economic processes. Writing the history of place names or toponyms is not just a story about states fighting for territories; it also tells us about vernacular conceptions and experiences of the sea.

The emphasis is placed here on plural historiographical traditions, not just Western and modern ones. Following from this, oceans are not considered in their connective role only. Modernity is also a story of separation, of disintegration, not just a story of encounters, hybridity, syncretism and integration. Many of the chapters emphasize the violence, coercion, forced displacement inherent to the process of "globalization." Slaves, convicts and pirates, not just merchants and travellers. In Alison Bashford's text, forced labour is a form of connection between the Atlantic, the Pacific and the Indian Ocean (77). This tension between unity and disjunction is one of the main threads of the book. In this way, these authors invite us to write a different kind of global history, one which is attentive to the diversity of human experiences. This is a new take, and an important one, on an old debate between world/global history and area studies.

The book also invites us to think about the scales of historical analysis, from the micro—for instance the ship, or the beach—, to the meso—for instance the port—, to the macro. What is more, the authors tell us, the ocean must be considered in its multiple dimensions, and not just the horizontal one. Alison Bashford writes about the "vertical axis" from the sea-beds to the winds (71), and David Armitage proposes the notion of "sub-Atlantic history" (102–5). New modes of writing oceanic history mean paying attention to what goes on under the surface (18–19). Here oceanic history is deeply linked to the rise of new fields in the discipline, such as animal studies or environmental history, but also more traditional ones, such as the history of fishing or oceanography. One can write oceanic history by focusing on cod, the monsoon or the sonar. Or to deconstruct the ocean as a coherent unit, as Sujit Sivasundaram does with the Indian Ocean, to look at small seas or straits. One shouldn't follow conventions: as demonstrated here, oceanic histories are spaces of historiographical creativity.[2] Oceanic spaces as they have been imagined, mythologized, fantasized across hundreds of years, sometimes millennia, feature in good place in the book.[3] The knowledge of the sea as a sensory experience, its salinity, its colours, the different nuances of sea ice well-known to Indigenous populations, is another theme which I found inspiring.[4]

In the end, the book suggests that it is the very style of history-writing that can be reinvented. If we approach these oceans and seas as always in the making, then we have to ask, as Sörlin does about the Arctic, what is an ocean and how do we write the histories of such spaces. The Arctic can be defined in the negative: it is "the opposite of a 'mediterreanean,'" "a black hole," a blank canvas. The Arctic has not been sailed across until recently, and never on a massive scale, writes Sörlin. Does it mean, however,

[2] With regard to new frames of historical understanding, Bashford identifies six "axes" across the Pacific, which encompass different people, chronologies, activities, and actors (69).

[3] For example, Sakhalin Island, contested between Russia and Japan in the first half of the twentieth century, or "Lemuria," the land of the Tamils, stretching across the Indian Ocean.

[4] In this regard, Sivasundaram disputes both "syncretic knowledge" and the "national" maritime museums that contest such syncretism.

that the Arctic is a human desert? The Arctic appeared in seventeenth-century narratives, first as a space to be discovered or explored, where whales can be hunted, and later nickel or copper can be mined; more recently, the Arctic has stood for global climate change, symbolized by its melting ice. The main protagonist in this new story is the polar bear. But there are absences too: the Indigenous populations, for whom the Arctic is a lived space, a hunting ground, where the ice is a territory, not an obstacle. If there is a take-home message, I think it is precisely this invitation to combine different types of historical methods and approaches, without erasing the experiences of the actors who have lived from and on these spaces, and still do.

**Comment: Clare Anderson, University of Leicester**

In his chapter on the Atlantic Ocean, David Armitage reflects on his often-cited 2002 statement: "We are all Atlantic historians now," and notes his usually omitted codicil, "or so it would seem." With the publication of *Oceanic Histories*, which for the first time brings into dialogue the three oceans and the two poles, with a range of seas, we now must ask: "Are we all oceanic historians now?"

One of the key concerns of the volume is to decolonize the study of oceans and seas, by moving beyond US/European-dominated studies. The authors call this a history of "extra-European worlds on their own terms," noting their desire to recalibrate scholarly influence. This is a powerful move for those of us who are concerned with the more general absence of histories of gender and subaltern studies in global history. Indeed, the underpinning rationale for this collection, and the book series that it inaugurates, is to explore the relationships between world history and the world's oceans. Their idea of "the world ocean" has enormous potential to add to a new kind of non-terracentric and decolonized world history.

Connected to the idea of decolonization is Armitage, Bashford and Sivasundaram's preference for descriptive terms such as "trans-local," "inter-regional" or "inter-area" in preference to "transnational." The de-linking of oceanic history from the territorial unit of analysis that is usually at the centre of global history, "the nation,"

enables the studies of numerous other spaces within the framework: not just oceans, poles and seas but littorals and islands. This is potentially a much more capacious theoretical base from which to explore the issues of concern in this volume, including mobility, ships, trade, empire, identity and experience. In this, water is not just an empty space, but *the* canvas on which history is enacted. It is interesting to consider, in this regard, how methodologically speaking we might break free from the nation and its archives.

Third, we come to the history of the environment. It is this, the editors suggest, that distinguishes oceanic history from maritime history. The elements (waves and storms), ocean life and human activity come together, and there is enormous scope here for opening up further studies of human/non-human (or other-than-human) relationships. The editors call this "putting the ocean into history," historicizing "the blue humanities." History, sociology and literature engage in the imagination and cultural production of the sea, in the past and the present. We are left wondering what the multi- or interdisciplinary basis of this work might be.

Finally, we come to the issue of space. Generally speaking, as the editors show, global history has adopted a "view from above," even where global historians take a "history from below" approach. A key proposition of the volume is fascinating: what would its proposed "under-seas viewpoint" look like? Is the history of the view from the seabed possible? Where would our archives be? And, how does such sub-oceanic history relate to intra- or extra-oceanic history?

Reflecting on my own work on the subaltern Indian Ocean world, and some of these themes—decolonization, the trans-local, human/other-than-human relationships, and space—I thought back to a wonderful but little known report, in the India Office collections of the British Library, on the subject of the recruitment of indentured labour.[5] The British first introduced Asian indentured labour in 1834 (in Mauritius), later

[5] British Library, India Office Records (IOR) P/2057 (India public proceedings), "Major Pitcher's report on the result of his inquiry into the system of recruiting labourers for the colonies &c." (1882); IOR P/2058 (India public proceedings), *Major Pitcher and Mr Grierson's Inquiry into Emigration* (1883).

suspended it, and then reintroduced and extended such migration to the Caribbean colonies. In 1882, the Government of India commissioned a major report on the subject. One of the officers in charge, Major D.G. Pitcher, interviewed one man in Lucknow, known to us as Ganga Din Misr, who had returned from the sugar plantations of Demerara in British Guiana in 1868. He asked him what he thought about his journey to the Caribbean. At the time, many British people believed that Indians lost caste when they travelled across the *kala pani* (or black water). Ganga Din Misr spoke of storms, weeping and seasickness, and a stop in the island of St Helena. He appeared confused at the idea of crossing the *kala pani*, telling Major Pitcher that he had also gone over white, red, blue and green water. In his confusion of the experience and natural history of colour, Pitcher noted what I interpret as layers of connection between Asian indentured labour and Asian convict transportation.[6] He wrote of several emancipated Indian convicts from the Andaman Islands penal colony who were either about to migrate under contracts of indenture, or whose status as "transportee" or "migrant" were confused in the minds of their fellow villagers. Pitcher's report, clearly, can be interpreted within the rich theoretical framework proposed by *Oceanic Histories*. We find a subaltern voice speaking back against the grain of colonial representations; connections between seas and oceans (Bay of Bengal, Indian Ocean, Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea); relationships between the elements and ships that constitute human experience; and trans-local linkages including over land Lucknow to the port of Calcutta, Andaman Islands, St Helena and ultimately British Guiana.

**Comment: Jonathan Lamb, Vanderbilt University**

The essays in this volume orbit around two foci, the local and the global. The first is a congeries of stories of changing patterns of labour, tools, diet, navigation and exchange told in vernacular from within the confines of shared experience of a particular area of one of the world's oceans. The second is a much larger composite, consisting of a vast network of information expanding to fill the spaces and times not already occupied by the assemblage of oceanic knowledge; a cosmopolitan and expert narrative bounded only by

[6] Clare Anderson, "Convicts and Coolies: Rethinking indentured labour in the nineteenth century," *Slavery and Abolition*, 30/1 (2009): 93–109.

the limits of the earth itself. The local and regional focus is narrow, partial and centripetal in proportion as the other is extensive, panoptic and centrifugal; but together they form an ellipse that seems to reconcile their contradictions.

Each however produces a different sort of knowledge. The local is dependent on sensory perception, seasoned with imagination, ancestral custom and folkloric memory, while the global relies on the collection and processing of data—economic, navigational, technical, oceanographical, glaciological, meteorological and so on. On the one hand, for instance, we are given the physical repulsiveness of the Red Sea—dangerous, salty, rimmed by scorching deserts, subject to capricious winds and humid discoloured air—and on the other is displayed an arena of brisk circulation of people, goods and ideas, cosmopolitan and wealthy, whose ships ply the world's seas.

The distinction between empirical and statistical information appears sometimes quite abruptly in the text. In his essay on the Arctic Ocean Sverker Sörlin marks the difference between a scientific knowledge of ice and the "deeply sensory, tactile experience [of it] that cannot be treated separately from one's life world, personal or local temporalities, or from society" (286). He salutes William Scoresby for his proto-scientific knowledge of sea-ice, Sörlin apparently seeing no barrier between close personal observation of the Arctic Ocean and the technological sampling of its important variety; but that is not how Molly Greene reacts to "the loss of context dependent knowledge" to globalism (145). This is owing, she says, to "a closing of the divide between materialist and cognitive accounts of the past" which has placed culture at a disadvantage vis-à-vis economic history (137). Despite Alison Bashford's determination not to "prioritise the spatial scale of the global over the micro-regional" (17), even Sörlin has not managed quite to convince himself this is the case, when he concludes his paean to the "silent patience of the historical enterprise" with this enigmatic addition: "Slowly but surely [it is] covering every space of the globe with some kind of meaningful narrative, which will surely be immediately contested" (292). No less vatic is the conclusion of Stella Ghervas' essay on the Black Sea: "Indeed, geopolitical stakes,

national ambitions and past military glories appear ephemeral when placed next to the relative permanency of the grey-green waves of the Black Sea" (264).

These notes of dissent from the globalist perspective introduce the possibility of an extra narrative focus: first, there is direct or reported personal testimony from specific contexts; second, objective analyses of the data from panoptic surveys; and third, the implied personification of the ocean itself. Emphasizing what he calls granular and charged histories at the end of his essay on the Indian Ocean, Sujit Sivasundaram responds to this third possibility by insisting that "no singular mode of writing this ocean will survive these waves and its navigators… the Indian Ocean teases its narrators by dissolving and cohering in turn, never appearing as an easily isolatable or standardized subject" (60). The idea of oceanic history as appropriately fluid, unsusceptible to frames or templates, seems to occur in the essays that hew more closely to the materialist, empirical and cultural approaches rather than the cognitive model of processed data. In his revised tripartite division of oceanic history as infra, sub, and extra (testimony itself to the rise and fall of historiographies) David Armitage assigns to the infra-Atlantic a kind of particularity inimical to integration because it arises from the unpredictable events typical of oceanic spaces or surfaces; similarly his category of the sub-Atlantic explores the "variable and shifting entity" (102) of the ocean itself. But the extra-Atlantic promises a panoptic assemblage leading to the conclusion, "We are all global oceanic historians now" (108). More interested in the patterns of amalgamation and dispersal, Molly Greene suggests that the history of disintegration has been neglected, and has lots of room for growth. She identifies three disintegrations of the Mediterranean, with another possibly on the way. The most extreme form of disintegration is war, and Eric Tagliacozzo points to the South China Sea, Sverker Sörlin to the Arctic, and Alexis Dudden to the Sea of Japan/Korea's East Sea as possible scenes of conflict.

Amidst the wave-like action of aggregation and disaggregation, it is as well to consider how smoothly the elliptical foci of global and regional, and their cognitive and empirical forms of knowledge, accommodate a third possibility of oceanic prosopopeia. There is Sörlin's example of the deeply sensory, tactile experience of ice shared by the

Inuit and William Scoresby, the product of direct observation; and its counterpoint is found in the category of the extra-Atlantic, which will emerge "as a subset of world history viewed through the lenses of oceanic history" (108). So the advantages derived from being well *in*, *at* and *under* the world oceans, alert to the incalculable flow and surge of their billows, must nevertheless yield to a schema pointing to aggregation. So where might the voices of the oceans themselves be heard, and on what account? And what kind of wobble might they provoke in the elliptical symmetry of the local-global orbit?

Sörlin points out that the Arctic is singularly lonely in this respect, having a small population and bearing a history with very little agency because it is composed of events rather than actions. Its voice is proportionate to the human presence on its shores, notwithstanding its rapid loss of ice and the eagerness of extractive industries to raid its mineral wealth. The Black Sea is ultimately indifferent to the evanescence of human triumphs, and so is the Mediterranean, with its oscillations between order and disorder. As for the Red Sea, it has at different periods vomited out humans on one shore, and expectorated them on the other (179). But the Pacific of all the oceans has most to complain of and, given its size, a very small voice in which to utter its protest. Alexis Dudden calls the North Pacific gyre "the Great Pacific Garbage Patch," conservatively estimated as the size of France, but probably much larger and consisting of the plastic waste of three continents, floating in a thick pack north of the Marshall Islands. There are now hardly any fish caught in the Pacific that do not contain traces of polymers. Meanwhile the great nursery of the Pacific's stocks of fish and crustaceans, the Great Barrier Reef, is suffering the worst bleaching of its history this last season, and is scheduled to be dead within the next 25 years.

Whether one lists under an environmental banner or not, these are disintegrations on a scale that will affect everyone and radically disorient all historical perspectives when their effects are fully felt. Doubtless most of them are anthropogenic—why did the French use the island of Mururoa in the Tuamotu archipelago for so many nuclear explosions that the atoll is now dangerously close to splitting? Why has the Australian

government reinstituted a scheme for two new vast coal terminals that will dump 5m tonnes of spoil on to the Gladstone Reef, as if it weren't sufficiently stressed already? It is doubtful that any human action will be able to stem the consequences of this abuse. Any enquiry into the joint history of humans and oceans will have to take the scale of these disasters into account, not least because human time and geological time are now running at the same speed.

Alison Bashford mentions these enormities in her chapter on the Pacific, along with others such as the forced migration of island populations, the effects of European diseases and the enslavement and near-extinction of the people of Rapanui. The human catastrophe presently most imminent is the submersion of part of the Kiribati archipelago and some of the Marshall Islands owing to the rise in ocean levels. It is a question where the refugees from sunken atolls will go. New Zealand is making some arrangements, but Australia's immigration policies make no allowance for that kind of migrant. The ocean as the last resource of desperate refugees is discussed by Molly Greene in the context of the recent emigrations to Europe from the Middle East and North Africa, heralding future shifts of population owing to war and rises in ocean levels so extensive that no hinterland will escape the consequences, and no panoptic vision will render them intelligible. The globalist optimism expressed in Bruno Latour's *Inquiry into the Modes of Existence,* recently authorizing John Gascoigne's cheerful account of human convergence in the Pacific, deserves to be seasoned by the reflections of his mentor, Michel Serres, who believed that every attempt we have made at mastery of the world escapes us.[7] He told Latour, "We do not yet control the unexpected road that leads from the local pavement, from good intentions, towards a possible global hell."[8]

[7] Bruno Latour, *An Enquiry into Modes of Existence: An anthropology of the modern,* trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013); John Gascoigne, *Encountering the Pacific in the Age of Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).
[8] Michel Serres and Bruno Latour, *Conversations on Science, Culture, and Time,* trans. Roxanne Lepidus (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 171.

**Editors' Response: David Armitage, Harvard University; Alison Bashford, University of New South Wales; Sujit Sivasundaram, University of Cambridge**

Territoriality has been the ground and the model for most historical writing, across much of the history of the historical profession. Whenever a historian speaks of her "field," she reproduces and affirms the terracentric assumptions that its concerns are earthbound, fixed and horizontal. As our commentators note, the guiding metaphor of *Oceanic Histories* is not the field but the wave: a fluid, moving, fluctuating accumulation of energy that cannot be fastened down, confined within limits or divorced from nature or humans' varied experiences and perceptions of it, and one that moves up and down scales, from its depths to its crests. A field may be tilled, within determined limits, but a wave can be ridden, with unpredictable but exhilarating consequences.

In this regard, *Oceanic Histories* disrupts orthodoxies in the fields of colonialism and colonial history and global or world history as much as it draws upon them. These existing "fields" may—paradoxically and unwittingly—sometimes keep European geographies and histories centre-stage in the very act of critique, or more accurately in what can seem like acts of repetitive critique. More like a wave, *Oceanic Histories* deliberately starts elsewhere, from alternate energies and with branching possibilities. The chapters in our book—all of which can be read independently, but we hope they might be read cumulatively—are built afresh from an Indian Ocean and a Pacific Ocean beginning. Bucking convention, the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea follow them, both historically and historiographically. This creates new connections but also sets up productive turbulences.

As editors, we have been keen to foreground an ecumenical and multi-sited world history of oceans, not one that is an historical or historiographical cascade from European maritime empires or from the Middle Sea's own self-referential geography as Middle Earth. The way our book draws from and disrupts established orthodoxies is well illustrated by the fact that it doesn't follow either Braudel or Bailyn, as Morieux notes; rather, it casts them within a different intellectual ecology altogether. This is in keeping with the CUP series itself. The first two monographs in Cambridge Oceanic Histories are

studies of vast maritime geographies that operated in times and places in which various European maritime powers were largely irrelevant. Sebastian Prange's *Monsoon Islam: Trade and faith on the medieval Malabar Coast* (2018) is a trans-oceanic history of Islam between the twelfth and the sixteenth centuries; Ronald Po's *The Blue Frontier: Maritime vision and power in the Qing Empire* (2018) re-interprets the Manchu court as centrally engaged with the implications of its enormous coastline, as its vast interiors.[9] With histories such as these (and many more to come), like *Oceanic Histories* itself, our series will not so much map an existing field as catch a host of accelerating waves that carry across time and space, always in new directions.

The volume collects a sequence of seas of different scales and with different histories of integration and disintegration, as a way of getting around the by-now tired dyad of the local and the global. For a sea is neither local nor global; its dimensionality, materiality and spatiality question the very dichotomy and force us to consider different relations—among them, the translocal and the sub-regional; the horizontal and the vertical; the organic and the kinetic—and intersecting analytics for the past, such as the micro, the meso and the macro Renaud Morieux so neatly enumerates. As our authors consistently argue, changeable seas present difficulties for terracentric cartographers as much as for ideological nominalists. With this in mind, we sought to refresh the concerns of historians by moving creatively between scales and perspectives without essentialising particular stretches of water as either canonical or coherent over the long term. Likewise, we did not seek to present a universal, supra-planetary view of the sea as "global"; rather we sought to move between scales, from straits and bays to the World Ocean, and across different traditions of historiographical writing from the poles to tropical waters, as a way of generating creative potential in the field. Such movements certainly generate "wobble," to use Lamb's evocative phrase: for seas by their materiality, from storms to currents, unsettle global histories but also infuse them with new energies. It is just this wave-like force, of oscillation and dynamism, that we endorse.

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[9] Sebastian Prange, *Monsoon Islam: Trade and faith on the medieval Malabar Coast* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Ronald Po, *The Blue Frontier: Maritime vision and power in the Qing Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

*Oceanic Histories* takes the materiality of the seas seriously by its insistence that oceanic history is an environmental project of research; this means that it is an urgent form of academic critique, tied to contemporary concerns from the poisoning of reefs and the accumulation of plastics to the tragedy of the oceanic commons and the claims of climate refugees. Our project is certainly not a way of wrapping the world up again; looking at the seas and how they have endured change but been shaped by it, and how they are now driving human history as climate changes, is a way of assessing the relative agencies of the human and the non-human. The disconnection and violence over the waters comes as garbage spreads and as people flee their water-facing homes, as Lamb ominously notes.

Vast, deep and fluid as they are, the oceans are sensitive indicators of the impact of modern histories of production and consumption, that moment—our moment—when human and geological timescales increasingly interfere and intersect. By seeing such processes through an oceanic lens, our book contributes to the decolonization of historiography, as Anderson notes: to decolonize history now is not only to include marginalized human agents but nonhuman ones, too. Carrying this decolonial enterprise forward will require collaboration across fields: archives alone may be insufficient. For archives will need to be read alongside other kinds of evidence, scientific, archaeological and oral-historical. The tools of digital history will be critical to make such collaborations effective, especially if we are to escape from history's default horizontality, to respond to the invitation to write undersea histories. It will be important to work across multiple time-scales, a point that Morieux nominates as one of the achievements of our book. And historians will need to attend not just to great bodies of water, the world's oceans and seas, but its lakes and bays, gulfs and fjords, straits and rivers as well. That way, we can add to existing histories of Planet Earth, focused on its 30 percent land-surface, new histories of Planet Ocean, 70 percent composed of water. History as a field might then discover its full potential as a wave.