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**John Kleinen and Manon Osseweijer, eds. *Pirates, Ports, and Coasts in Asia: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*. The Netherlands: International Institute for Asian Studies and Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2010. 299 pp. ISBN 978-981-4279-07-9 (soft cover). \$74.90.**

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valuable contribution to our understanding of early encounters and the great divergence debate.

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John Kleinen and Manon Osseweijer, eds. *Pirates, Ports, and Coasts in Asia: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*. The Netherlands: International Institute for Asian Studies and Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2010. 299 pp. ISBN 978-981-4279-07-9 (soft cover). \$74.90.

The past few years have seen an increasing interest in piracy, not all of it sparked by the recent spate of piracies involving the Somali pirates. The present compendium is the fourth in the Series on Maritime Issues and piracy in Asia, and as with this volume, the previous volumes too have been jointly published by the IIAS, The Netherlands, and the ISEAS, Singapore. The current volume is as concerned with historical as contemporary dimensions of piracy.

The compendium contains thirteen papers divided into three broad sections—Introduction (with two papers), East Asia (four papers), and Southeast Asia (seven papers). The first piece by the editors examines the complexities inherent in the use of the terms “pirate” and “piracy.” Piracy has a long history, but the words have often been used as a label to designate those who oppose a given system. Piracy has been in the news again in recent times, but as the editors say, “the absence of thorough research may have led to such a romanticization and a consequent misunderstanding of piracy that ‘fiction’ has overtaken reality” (6).

The second paper in the Introduction is that of Michael Pearson, who goes further into the problems of defining piracy. Historically, the pirate has been difficult to clearly identify, for the same person could be “trader, fisherman, pirate and naval employee by turns” (15). Drawing on his own research on the Portuguese in Asian waters in the sixteenth century, he demonstrates how piracy was used as often as a label as it was to designate someone who actually committed robbery on the high seas. Who exactly were the pirates? Asian shipping that came up against the attempted monopoly of the Europeans were termed by the latter as pirates; but on the other hand, Asian states as often designated them as pirates. For example, early in the eighteenth century, the Mughals accused the English of piracy in the Red Sea area, and of attacking Indian shipping. Pointing out that the extent to which coastal poverty played a part in inducing the people of these zones to take to piracy is something that needs to be much more researched, he concludes by arguing that there are other factors, much more serious than piracy, which affect world trade, including protectionist policies and smuggling.

The next four papers are concerned with East Asia. The first, by Robert J. Antony, focuses on the port of Giang Binh on the China-Vietnam border. A port with a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural population, it flourished as a “pirate port” particularly between 1780 and 1802. Antony has pointed in particular to the economic significance of this port, for it provided employment, not necessarily as pirates, to a number of people. Equally important, it was linked to the larger world of trade through the connections with the more legitimate trade, for pirates sold their goods in other ports, where merchants purchased them, irrespective of their rather dubious provenance.

Paola Calanca concentrates on the multiple power struggles over control of maritime activities in Fujian in the eighteenth century, placing these struggles both in the context of the conflicts between local authorities, secret societies, and the great lineages, as well as the Qing/Manchu rulers. John Kleinen takes the issue of the ambiguous nature of Qing relations with the maritime world further in the context of the hijacking of the SS *Namoa* at the end of the nineteenth century, and examines this famous case with reference to the Foucaultian

discourse on torture and public execution, and the links between social and economic upheaval and piracy.

The next seven papers deal with Southeast Asia, with Adrian Lapien studying piracy in the Indonesian seas. He has provided an interesting typology of different kinds of sea power: legitimate (*Raja Laut*), illegitimate (*Barak Laut*) and the “sea gypsies” or sea nomads (*Orang Laut*), not exactly a power, but important for the extent of their knowledge of the sea. In the nineteenth century, with indigenous states of different kinds and with the beginnings of colonialism, and of course the lack of any fixed boundaries at sea, piracy was both a reality and a label that was used particularly by the colonial powers to designate those who challenged their position. The thin line between sea people and sea robbers is further illustrated in the next paper, that of Gerrit Knaap, who studies seventeenth century Papuan piracy within the context of the expanding Dutch power in the Indonesian Archipelago, and the economic problems of the Papuan hinterland as compared to the rest of Southeast Asia. James Warren continues the theme of slave trade that Knaap studied, to examine the international slave trade that was centred on the island of Jolo. Spanish fears about Dutch and British encroachment led to a war on slavery and the ultimate incorporation of the entire zone into the Spanish colonial empire centring on the Philippines. Esther Velthoen takes the study of the expanding colonial sphere further, by studying the impact of this colonial maritime expansion on raiders and their networks. Again, this paper concentrates on the shifting local alliances, and the shift of local elites, earlier involved in raiding, to become intermediaries between the new colonial powers and the local people.

The last three papers deal with contemporary piracy. Stefan Amirell concentrates on the development and suppression of piracy in the Sulu region, while Caroline Liss studies piracy in the waters near Sabah. Ikuyu Tokoro shifts the focus from the state to the pirates themselves, to try and analyse the options and motivations of those who took to piracy.

Piracy can be studied in two ways—as an option to the loss of traditional livelihood in times of socio-economic upheaval and political shifts, or as a response of some of the marginalised to the prosperity or perceived prosperity of a particular region. Connections between state formation and piracy, the role of the states, in first getting pirates on their side, at the time of the establishment of the state, and the later suppression of the same pirates in the process of asserting the authority of the state that have been drawn in some of the papers are of particular interest.

The collection is undoubtedly a useful one. However, though the title talks of the historical dimensions of piracy in Asia, the book restricts itself to East and Southeast Asia. There is nothing about piracy in Indian and African waters. There is thus no basis for comparison, to see what differences there were between piracy in these areas and in East and Southeast Asia. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw a marked increase in piracy; but it would be worthwhile to examine this increase with reference to both, the entry of capitalism and the new market forces, and the loss of the traditional worlds and livelihoods as a result of the new market forces.

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T.K. Venkatasubramanian. *Music as History in Tamil Nadu*. Delhi: Primus Books, 2010. xvi + 157 pp. ISBN: 978-93-80607-06-1. Rs. 695.

The premise of T.K. Venkatasubramanian's *Music as History in Tamil Nadu* is that music is the cultural foundation of *Dakshina Pradesh*, or south India. In a geographical area comprised of four linguistic states the idea of a single, unifying musical culture with deep historical roots is a powerful one. In this collection of theoretically overlapping essays, Venkatasubramanian traces the development of music in the Tamil-speaking region that today comprises Tamil Nadu from the mythical Sangam age through the Marathi courts of Tanjore.