

ISLAM AND THE SPICE TRADE: PROFIT AND PROPHECY IN THE GLOBAL MIDDLE AGES



Léon Belly, *La Dahabieh Engravée, Égypte* (1877)

Shipwrecks, smuggling, and... Islam? What if we retold the story of the spice trade—oft appreciated as a catalyst for Europe’s “Age of Discovery”—through the eyes of the late medieval Muslim merchants and scholars who mixed Islam and business across the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean? And what might the maritime corridor that linked the world of the 13th-16th centuries have to teach us about the “moral economy” in Islamic thought, and the complex relationship between religion and the birth of global capitalism more broadly? Offering a preview of his second book project, Joel Blecher will take up these questions by examining a few episodes from this understudied chapter in the history of Islam and explain why it can help us better understand our world today.



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2-3 PM Keene-Flint 005
University of Florida

Joel Blecher (Ph.D. Princeton) is Assistant Professor of History at George Washington University. He is the author of *Said the Prophet of God: Hadith Commentary across a Millennium* (University of California Press, 2018). His current book project

on Islam and the Spice Trade has been awarded fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Council of Learned Societies, and the Library of Congress.

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