

The Black Indian Ocean

**Slavery, Religion, and Expressive
Cultures (1400-1700)**

April 2-3, 2025, 9:00 AM EST

Organized by Janie Cole



Arab dhow with East Africans from Al-Ḥariri *Maqāmāt* (13th century)

A two-day webinar and interdisciplinary conference organized by [Dr. Janie Cole](#) (University of Connecticut) as a second exploration into the Black Indian Ocean following the groundbreaking [Yale ISM symposium](#) in 2024

The conference explores new perspectives on the impact of slavery, religions, migration and displacement across the Indian Ocean on Afro-Asian communities and their expressive cultures in the early modern world (1400-1700). It aims to uncover the untold musical histories of migration and migratory histories of artistic and material cultures of Afro-Asian communities in the Indian Ocean world and its diasporas, how these mobilities can be identified in various cultural manifestations, and how expressive cultures and ritual articulated identity, self-fashioning, community and resistance to human rights' violations.

The event will culminate in a live performance by the Afro-Asian [Kukutana Ensemble](#) (founded by Janie Cole) of *Gabriel's Odyssey*, a musical and visual narrative of slavery, conversion, persecution, and resilience from a 16th-century Indian Ocean world, at Yale Luce Hall on April 4, 2025, 7.30pm.

Gabriel's Odyssey is a vibrant narrative that tells the true 16th-century story of Gabriel, a Beta Israel Ethiopian Jew, who was abducted as a young child and sold into slavery in the Arab world, and his woeful wanderings between faiths, love and persecution in Asia to his final encounter with the Portuguese Inquisition in Goa, as based on historical reconstructions by [Matteo Salvatore](#). Drawing on imaginary and sumptuous soundscapes, visuals and voices of an early modern Indian Ocean world, Gabriel's life represents a universal story of oppression, faith, migration and self-fashioning like the experiences of countless other early modern Africans.



Register Here

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