Seafaring in the Arabian Gulf and Oman
The People of the Dhow

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Abstract
This is a study of the seafaring communities of the Arabian Gulf and Oman over the last one hundred and fifty years. It focuses on the cultural, material and commercial significance of the dhow and its role in the life and interaction of coastal communities with a long tradition of seafaring. Drawn from archival material, extensive field research and interviews that capture the voices and memories of the mariners, the work presents an integrated and dynamic study of dhow activity in the area bringing together history, geography and material culture. The sea, the ships and the people who sailed them are examined within the context of the wider culture of the Indian Ocean, as expressed in boat-building traditions, navigational techniques, crew organization and port towns. The Arabian Gulf and Oman have traditionally shared a common destiny within the Western Indian Ocean. The seasonal monsoonal winds were fundamental to the physical and human unities of the seafaring communities, producing a way of life in harmony with the natural world, a world which abruptly changed with the discovery of oil. What remains is memories of a seafaring past, a history of traditions and customs recorded here in the recollections of a dying generation.

Reviews
“… a well-balanced fusion of literary sources, oral testimony and published volumes … Besides offering the reader a comprehensive overview of the maritime world and culture of the Arabian Gulf, it is also a precious record of a fast-disappearing world.” Timothy Gambin, International Journal of Nautical Archaeology, 35, ii (2006): 347-348.

“…. Equally important is the contribution it makes to the reconstruction of Arab seafaring by offering a well-researched and well-documented study on Muslim Arab seafaring in the Gulf and the Indian Ocean, one which will now be relevant to further comparative studies of the Arabs’ Mediterranean activities”. Maya Shatzmiller, Bulletin of the Society for Arabian Studies, 11 (2006): 48-49.