



## Invitation

Tuesday, 16 October 2018, 4 pm

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### Buying Time. Debt and Mobility in the Western Indian Ocean

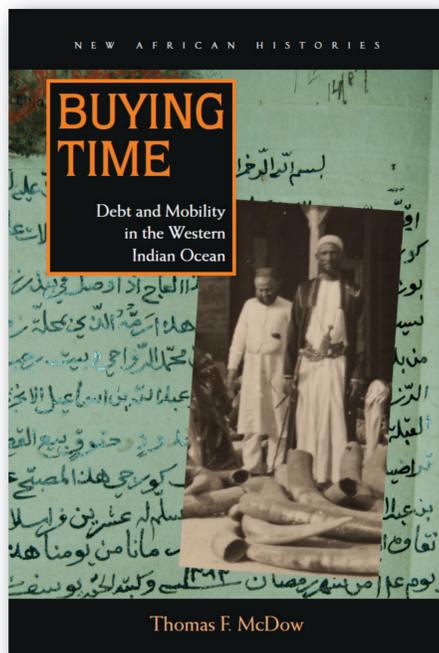
Book Presentation by **Thomas F. McDow** (Ohio State University)

In *Buying Time*, Thomas F. McDow synthesizes Indian Ocean, Middle Eastern, and East African studies as well as economic and social history to explain how, in the nineteenth century, credit, mobility, and kinship knit together a vast interconnected Indian Ocean region. That vibrant and enormously influential swath extended from the desert fringes of Arabia to Zanzibar and the Swahili coast and on to the Congo River watershed.

In the half century before European colonization, Africans and Arabs from coasts and hinterlands used newfound sources of credit to seek out opportunities, establish new outposts in distant places, and maintain families in a rapidly changing economy. They used temporizing strategies to escape drought in Oman, join ivory caravans in the African interior, and build new settlements.

The key to McDow's analysis is a previously unstudied trove of Arabic business deeds that show complex variations on the financial transactions that underwrote the trade economy across the region. The documents list names, genealogies, statuses, and clan names of a wide variety of people — Africans, Indians, and Arabs; men and women; free and slave — who bought, sold, and mortgaged property. Through unprecedented use of these sources, McDow moves the historical analysis of the Indian Ocean beyond connected port cities to reveal the roles of previously invisible people.

**Thomas F. McDow** is an associate professor of history at Ohio State University. He teaches courses on the history of Africa, the Indian Ocean, and the world.



#### Venue

Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient  
Kirchweg 33  
14129 Berlin

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