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## Mocha Coffee in Four Ways: Beans, Plant, Brand, and Blend

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## Chapter 1 Mocha Coffee in Four Ways: Beans, Plant, Brand, and Blend

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### Introduction

Commercially and culturally, coffee is a significant global commodity that originated in the Indian Ocean region. Presently, many coffee producing regions worldwide are centred in the “coffee belt,” although it is widely accepted that coffee drinking originated in either Ethiopia or Yemen, with the use of *Coffea arabica* L. (hereinafter Arabica coffee) which was originally grown in the highlands of Ethiopia. “Mocha” is familiar to people who talk about coffee today, particularly its history. Mocha (al-Mukhā) is the name of a port on the western coast of the Arabian Peninsula, and it was the major entrepôt in the earliest stages of the coffee trade, particularly to European markets. Despite the fact that the coffee-producing region eventually expanded almost beyond imagination and the port of Mocha later lost its commercial significance, its name has retained its resonance as a synonym for coffee all over the world.

Therefore, abundant mention of “Mocha coffee” is found in historical and contemporary records. However, it is difficult to answer the question, “what is Mocha coffee?” particularly after noticing such abundant mention. Some references to “Mocha coffee” in the documents can be clearly identified as describing coffee beans exported from Mocha or other nearby ports, however, these were of different types and from different places of production. Simultaneously, other mentions of “Mocha coffee” clearly indicate beans that were actually produced far from the Red Sea/Gulf of Aden region. Furthermore, the name “Mocha coffee” is found abundantly in advertisements in Europe and North America in the late 19th and the early 20th centuries. However, much of what was advertised was derived from beans that were not “Mocha coffee” in any sense. Numerous examples of “Mocha coffee” in the documents reveal the existence of different meanings of “Mocha coffee” both in the physical sense and in the imagination. Thus, the question, “what is Mocha coffee?” has multiple answers. However, these various types of “Mocha coffee” do not exist in isolation, but reveal certain connections. This chapter aims to categorise the various “Mocha coffee” into four flows, and then examine each and also consider the relationships among them. This is an opportunity to consider the dynamics of how one product has created multiple flows, or gyres, in both the physical and imaginary senses, and how they have connected commercial and cultural practices in

different locations within and beyond the geographical limit of the Indian Ocean. Thus, tracing the various “Mocha coffees” allows us to understand the extent of the Indian Ocean World not as a geographical entity, but rather as a mutually influential accumulation of flows or gyres, both in physical sense and in imagination, using that one entity as a lens.

This chapter traces four different flows of “Mocha coffee” and explores how they intersect. First, is its flow as beans, and second as a plant, including both the cultivar and the beans harvested from it. Coffee beans exported from Mocha and other ports in the Red Sea/ Gulf of Aden can be regarded as “Mocha coffee” in the literal sense. However, carefully examining even such “genuine” Mocha coffee reveals the existence of its various types. As a cultivar, *Coffea arabica* L. remains the most important of the genus *Coffea* and is cultivated in many places worldwide. Its spread from the Ethiopian highlands to the Yemeni highlands, along with the history of its transplantation and expansion of coffee cultivation, reflects colonial endeavours and struggles with both the natural environment and epidemic diseases, as well as the pressures of growing consumer demand. The third flow examined in this chapter is that of “Mocha coffee” as a brand. A careful reading of the documents reveals that many beans circulating in the market as “Mocha coffee” were actually not produced in the area surrounding the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. Therefore, to fully understand its background it is necessary to consider “Mocha coffee” as a brand, and to understand why “Mocha coffee” became a brand it is necessary to refer back to the first two flows. Finally, there is much to learn about “Mocha coffee” in blended coffee powder, and again, in order to understand the appearance of “Mocha coffee” in the blended powders, other three flows aforementioned should be considered.

## I. “Mocha Coffee” as Beans

### I-1. Varieties of “Mocha Coffee” Bean from Ports along the Red Sea/Gulf of Aden

In historical sources, the term “Mocha coffee” is not always limited to beans exported actually from Mocha itself. Various ports along the Arabian coast of the Red Sea/Gulf of Aden such as Jeddah and Hodeida contributed to the circulation of coffee, and historically it has been widely accepted to call all these beans “Mocha coffee” (with the exception discussed later). The major producing region of these coffee beans was Mocha’s mountainous hinterland centring on Bayt al-Faqih from where coffee beans were carried to the ports. Various beans were recognised during the 18th and 19th centuries. Table 1 lists the coffee beans exported from these ports from the middle of the 18th century to the 19th century.

The information in Table 1 can be divided into two categories: A to E and F to R. A to E categorises according to the quality of the beans. Each source of reference sorts the beans into A, B, C or A, D, E, and in both cases A is the finest. B and C are categorisations devised by and for traders and consumers in the European market such as France, whereas D and E are categorisations by and for merchants and consumers in the Middle Eastern market. No further information can be obtained on these categories. F to

Table 1 “Mocha coffee” exported from the Red Sea/Gulf of Aden between the middle of the 18th century to the 19th century

	Name	Appearance	Notes
A	Bahouri, <sup>1,2,3,3,5,6</sup> Bokoury <sup>7</sup> =AR. Bakhūrī (“of incense”)		The highest quality beans; these were reserved for the local rulers and government officials. <sup>1,2,3,5,6</sup> The name known in Istanbul. <sup>6</sup>
B	Café Alexandrie, <sup>1</sup> Café Cairo <sup>1</sup>	Green small beans <sup>1</sup>	Sent to the European market <sup>1</sup>
C	Although it is mentioned as one of major “Mocha coffees” along with A and B, the exact name is unknown. <sup>1</sup>	Light yellow and larger than B <sup>1</sup>	
D	Saki, <sup>2,3,5,6</sup> Sargi (as called in Hodeida) <sup>4</sup>		The same type of beans as E; Sold in Levant (Armenia and Persia <sup>3</sup> ) and Europe. <sup>3</sup> In Hodeida, this name was applied to beans of higher quality than D. <sup>4</sup> The name known in Istanbul. <sup>6</sup>
E	*Galabi, <sup>2</sup> *Salabi, <sup>3,5,6</sup> *Sharabi (as called in Hodeida) <sup>4</sup>		The same type of beans as D; sold in the Levant (Armenia and Persia <sup>3</sup> ) and Europe. <sup>3</sup> In Hodeida, this name was applied to beans of lower quality than D. <sup>4</sup> The name known in Istanbul. <sup>6</sup>
F	Café Ouden (=Aden) <sup>6</sup>	The beans are larger, greener, and heavier than others. <sup>6</sup>	Produced in the mountainous region near Aden and the highest quality produced in Arabian Peninsula, but the price was too high for Europeans. <sup>6</sup>
G	Café Moka <sup>6</sup>	Beans brought directly from Mocha; larger than others and whitish coloured, those via Cairo smaller, greenish and fresher with better flavour; <sup>6</sup> beans from Alexandria are smaller and much greener with a stronger aroma. <sup>6</sup>	The same type of beans as H, but the name reflected where the French purchased the beans; the quality is slightly higher than that of H; <sup>6</sup> brought via Cairo, Alexandria or directly from Mocha to France. <sup>6</sup>
H	Café du Levant <sup>6</sup>		The same type of beans as G, but the name reflected where the French purchased the beans; quality slightly lower than G. <sup>6</sup> Brought to France via Aleppo and Izmir <sup>6</sup>
I	Café de Samaa <sup>6</sup>		Lower quality than K <sup>6</sup>
J	Café de Galbany <sup>6</sup>		Lower quality than K <sup>6</sup>

K	Café de Betelfaguy (Bayt al-Faqih) <sup>6</sup>		Higher quality than I and J <sup>6</sup>
L	Chardji <sup>2</sup>		
M	Habbat <sup>2</sup>		Small bean with large demand <sup>2</sup>
N	Oddeimi <sup>2</sup>		N, O, P, Q, R are difficult to distinguish <sup>2</sup>
O	Matari <sup>2</sup>		N, O, P, Q, R are difficult to distinguish <sup>2</sup>
P	Harrazi (Harraz) <sup>2</sup>		N, O, P, Q, R are difficult to distinguish <sup>2</sup>
Q	Haimi <sup>2</sup>		N, O, P, Q, R are difficult to distinguish <sup>2</sup>
R	Chirazzi <sup>2</sup>		N, O, P, Q, R are difficult to distinguish <sup>2</sup>

1. Matthyssens 1866: 251–252; 2. Jardin 1895: 66; 3. Aulagnier 1839: 130; 4. Hunter 1877: 100–101; 5. Valmont de Bomare 1764: Vol.1, 388; 6. Coubard d’Aulnay 1832: 104–112; 7. Prisse d’Avennes 1852: 59.

R are based on the locations of the exporting ports, entrepôts and producing region. According to Hunter, coffee produced in Arabia was referred to in Aden as either “Jebeli” (Jabalī= “mountainous”) or “Mukha”, whereas in Hodeida beans were named according to where they were produced.<sup>1)</sup> Thus, beans listed from L to R, are named after the production area; and those listed from F to K, are based on the Encyclopaedia of Coubard d’Aulnay, and are categorised according to the exporting ports and entrepôts. For instance, G: café Mocha provides further information according to transit point. Those from L to R except M, are from the French coffee encyclopaedia published at the end of the 19th century, which categorises according to the producing region, and entrepôt and “i” at the end of each name indicates that these names are derived from Arabic terms. The author, Jardin, confessed that some were difficult to distinguish, which reflects the views of French consumers. As all the different names reveal, European consumers recognised varieties of “Mocha coffee” exported from the Red Sea/Gulf of Aden and categorised them based on what they knew of them, some from their own experience, others from knowledge obtained from the Red Sea/Gulf of Aden.

## **I-2. The Coffee Trade from the Red Sea/Gulf of Aden in Post-Coffee Century**

According to Tuchscherer, the trade volume of Yemeni coffee reached its zenith during the first quarter of the 18th century and was estimated at 12,000 to 15,000 tons annually, the volume of trade being maintained at almost the same level throughout that century, while consumption increased rapidly.<sup>2)</sup> Eventually, coffee exported from the Red Sea/Gulf of Aden, which once supplied almost the entire global market, provided only 2% to 3% of it by 1840.<sup>3)</sup> This significant loss of global market share of “Mocha coffee” or coffee exported from the Red Sea/Gulf of Aden needs to be explained with both internal and external factors. A significant internal factor was political instability after the turn of the 19th century, as the Qasimi dynasty lost control to local tribal uprisings, and the Wahhabi movement gained ascendancy, followed by Ottoman control.<sup>4)</sup> A significant external factor was the rise of new coffee producers in regions that are now part of the coffee belt. Regarding this second point, which is explored further in the following sections, there was a notable difference in production methods between Yemeni producers and these emerging producers. New producers such as Reunion Island, Saint-Domingue (Haiti), Cuba and Brazil relied on slave labour on plantations, and a forced cultivation system was employed on islands of the Dutch East Indies, such as Java.<sup>5)</sup> Coffee was cultivated in Ceylon, as it was then under the Kangani system. Contrary to labour-intensive systems, coffee production in Yemen was based on a non-organized system of peasant producers.<sup>6)</sup> In the 1830s, it was observed that each peasant household produced 0.45 to 1.34 tons annually.<sup>7)</sup> While there were also large-scale farms organized under the waqf system,<sup>8)</sup> even considering these larger operations, newly emerged producing centres continued to operate on a much larger scale than those in Yemen. Eventually, even in the Middle East markets such as Istanbul, “Mocha coffee” or coffee exported from the Red Sea/Gulf of Aden was replaced by cheaper West Indies coffee, which was transported via Marseille.<sup>9)</sup>

Although Arabica coffee originated in the Ethiopian highlands, Ethiopian coffee’s

contribution to global supply began after Yemen's century of coffee (the 16th century). In the Ethiopian highlands, Coptic clergymen spread the belief that coffee was something for the Oromos and Muslims, and thus, the Copts avoided drinking it. Consequently, there could be no large-scale cultivation of the plant, which meant it was limited to such places as Harar, where it was grown by Muslims.<sup>10</sup> Thereafter, production increased from the middle of the 19th century onwards, particularly during the reign of Menelik II (r. 1889–1913), while the locals gradually began to consume coffee.<sup>11</sup> It is estimated that at Kaffa, a major production area where slaves were employed to grow coffee, 50 to 60 tons per year were being produced in the early 1880s.<sup>12</sup> On the other side of the Gulf, the British occupied Aden and established it as its protectorate in 1839. The Ottomans abandoned the port of Mocha in the middle of the 19th century, leading to a shift in major entrepôts to Aden and Hodeida.<sup>13</sup> Coffee production did not expand significantly in Yemen, however, Ethiopian coffee increased its production. By the middle of the 1910s, more than half the coffee exported from Aden was brought from the African side of the Red Sea/Gulf of Aden region, notably via Djibouti.<sup>14</sup>

## II. “Mocha Coffee” as Plant

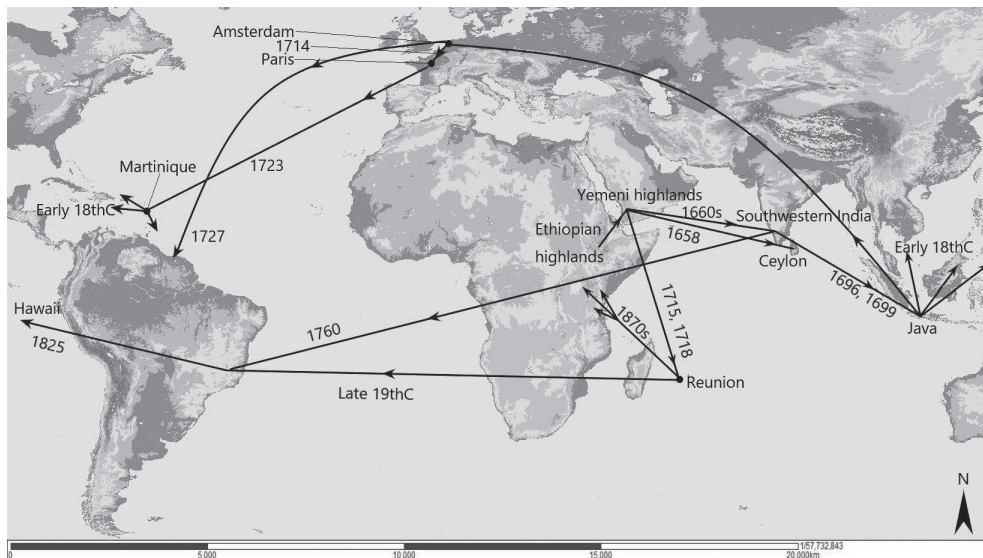
### II–1. The Spread of *Coffea Arabica* L.

Currently, 124 species of the genus *Coffea* in the family *Rubiceae* are known.<sup>15</sup> However, only three species are exploited commercially, 65% of global circulation being taken up with *Coffea arabica* L. (Arabica coffee); *Coffea canephora* Pierre ex Froehn. (generally known as Canephora or Robusta coffee) constitutes 34% of production; while a third species, *Coffea liberica* Bull. ex Hiern (generally known as Liberica coffee) constitutes the remaining 1%.<sup>16</sup> Arabica coffee not only occupies the largest share in the global market, but is also the most widely cultivated, reflecting that this species has the longest history of being transplanted worldwide. The success of such transplantation led to a boom in coffee cultivation elsewhere, made possible by the unique genetic characteristic of Arabica coffee plant—self-fertilisation or autogamy<sup>17</sup>—which allows the plant to flower and produce self-fertile seeds. All other species of the *Coffea* genus are allogamous which means that two parent plants are required for fertilisation and reproduction. Thus, Arabica coffee plants have a significant advantage of transplantation. Another significant characteristic of Arabica coffee is that the species is extremely sensitive to its habitat, meaning that the flavour of the beans changes according to its growing environment.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, owing to spontaneous mutations, as well as cross-fertilisation, the number of cultivars has exceeded those of other species.

It is widely accepted that Arabica coffee originated in the Ethiopian highland and spread to the eastern part of the Great Rift Valley. Approximately from the 14th century onwards, Muslims in the south-eastern Ethiopian highlands began to consume coffee. Subsequently, in the first part of the 15th century, coffee became accepted in Yemen, an area with which Ethiopian Muslims had enjoyed a strong commercial connection since the middle of that century.<sup>19</sup> The Yemeni highlands also provided a suitable environment to grow coffee, and while demand grew in the Middle East, in the 16th century the

market extended towards Europe as well. At the time, the Ethiopian highlands were experiencing political instability, therefore, as Yemeni production could cater to the growing demand, the 16th century became the century of coffee in Yemen.<sup>20)</sup>

Throughout the later 17th century and until the early 18th century, coffee plants were transplanted to several places in the western Indian Ocean, leading to several new variants and more transplanted. *Coffea arabica* L. var. *bourbon* Rodr. ex Choussy (generally known as the Bourbon variant) and *Coffea arabica* L. var. *typica* Cramer (generally known as Typica), both of these variants of Arabica coffee, are the originators of most of the currently existing cultivars.<sup>21)</sup> The Bourbon variant appeared on the island of Reunion, where the French East India Company made three attempts to transplant Arabica coffee from Yemen, in 1708, 1715, and 1718; the second and third bore fruit,<sup>22)</sup> and became the origins of the Bourbon variant. While Reunion began exporting coffee in 1726,<sup>23)</sup> further transplants were made, most remarkably through catholic missionaries of *Congrégation du Saint-Esprit et du Saint-Cœur de Marie*, who established a mission to the island during the middle of the 1820s. They transplanted coffee to Bagamoyo, at the foot of Mount Kilimanjaro and to Nguru, Nairobi, as well as to Morogoro when they extended their activity on the African mainland during the 1870s.<sup>24)</sup> However, the Typica variant probably originated in plants brought from the Arabian peninsula to the Malabar Coast by the Maccan pilgrims sometime before the middle of the 17th century, and it was again brought to Batavia by the Dutch East India Company in 1696, and probably again in 1699 after an earthquake on Java Island. This particular cultivar was eventually brought to Amsterdam in the early 18th century<sup>25)</sup> and to Paris in 1714, in celebration of the conclusion of the Utrecht Treaty.



Map Distribution of Arabica Coffee<sup>26)</sup>

## II-2. The Indian Ocean as the Graveyard of Arabica

The coffee beans which were cultivated on an increasingly large scale after the 18th century were either Arabica or its hybrids; in all cases they were derived from Arabica coffee. As aforementioned, one of Arabica's characteristics is self-fertilisation, which made it easy to transplant. However, another characteristics is that it is extremely susceptible to disease, particularly coffee rust disease. The effect of the disease was devastating for the coffee planters.

Coffee rust disease is caused by a fungus known as *Hemileia vastatrix* and is propagated when spores of *Hemileia vastatrix* are deposited on coffee leaves. The spores germinate and infect the leaf tissue, causing the leaves to shrivel and fall from the plant before they mature, thus preventing photosynthesis. The process causes orange-coloured lesions resembling rust to appear on the leaf. Thereafter, the fungus spreads to other leaves, eventually killing the whole plant. The first reference to the disease was from Ceylon in early 1869, when it was found in only a few trees; however, by the middle of the year it had spread over several acres, and within two years it was everywhere on the island.<sup>27)</sup> There was a boom in coffee plantations in Ceylon during the 1840s, and by the late 1860s the island became the world's third largest exporter of coffee.<sup>28)</sup> Initially, when the disease was reported, colonial officers and scientists attributed its cause to a unique fungus local to the island, however, today this is not the case. The widely accepted hypothesis today is that *Hemileia vastatrix* was actually brought in with Arabica coffee plants. Rain in Ceylon which is heavier than that in the Ethiopian and Yemeni highlands facilitated the proliferation of *Hemileia vastatrix*, while strong monsoon winds helped spread it widely. This outbreak of coffee rust disease was an important background in that it demolished coffee production in Ceylon before the end of the 1880s. Furthermore, the fungus was not limited to the island of Ceylon, and between 1885 and 1905, rust disease outbreaks significantly damaged various plantations elsewhere around the Indian Ocean and in the Pacific area. As McCook recalls, the outbreak changed the plantations in the Indian Ocean and the Pacific from once-thriving drivers of a coffee boom to an "Arabica graveyard".<sup>29)</sup>

For example, coffee cultivation on the Malabar Coast was initiated by Murdoch Brown at his plantation at Anjarakandi and another thousand-acre plantation called Randattara, which the British East India Company leased to him in 1797.<sup>30)</sup> Others followed Brown, and a coffee boom reached its zenith by the 1840s. However, in 1865 an infestation by the *Xylotrechus quadripes* Chevrolat beetle almost annihilated the coffee plantation in this region, and despite some recovery, by 1875 coffee rust disease had spread throughout the region. Moreover, Malabar coffee cultivation faced international competition, therefore, from 1893 to 1903, coffee cultivation in the region decreased dramatically, from 20,000 acres to approximately 5,500 acres.<sup>31)</sup>

Following this tumultuous situation, cultivators began to seek new coffee species and commercial cultivation of such potentially viable species was tested elsewhere. As a result, while only four species were scientifically recognised in the *Coffea* genus in 1834, 34 species had been recognised by 1901.<sup>32)</sup> Two of the most successful species were Canephora and Liberica, owing to their resistance to coffee rust disease and that they

could be successfully transplanted. Although *Liberica* could not be successfully grown in many places, *Canephora* cultivation did succeed in various locations and its range was extended. Consequently, currently on Java Island, *Canephora* is the major cultivation species, and in Malaysia, *Liberica* cultivars have retained a significant position in cultivation. Arabica coffee has maintained its major position in Ethiopia, Yemen, and South America as it was transplanted there in an earlier phase and is less affected by coffee rust disease there than in the Indian Ocean and the Pacific. Nonetheless, genetic studies in Ethiopia, where Arabica coffee originated, reveal that many currently cultivated plants are cultivars deriving from either *Typica*, *Bourbon*, or *Híbrido de Timor* variants.<sup>33)</sup> Thus, although the Ethiopian highland is the birth place of Arabica coffee, most of the cultivars growing there today are those which have returned to their “homeland” after hybridisation and cross-breeding elsewhere.

### III. “Mocha Coffee” as a Brand: Many “Fake” “Mocha Coffees”

At the beginning of the 19th century, “Mocha coffee” beans exported from the Red Sea/Gulf of Aden had already lost a significant share of its global circulation. As new producers appeared worldwide, each provided their own flavours to consumers, which led to diversity of preference among them. In addition, demand for each cultivar and variable transport costs led to different prices from each producer, which affected consumer preference. For example, New Yorkers generally preferred “Mocha coffee”, meaning beans from the Red Sea/Gulf of Aden, however, traders stocked other beans too, from various places. Although France was certainly the largest importer of beans from the Red Sea/Gulf of Aden, it imported even more from Rio de Janeiro, Ceylon, and Jamaica. The Netherlands was the largest importer of the beans from the Dutch East Indies—the “Java Coffee”—while in Britain people preferred beans from Ceylon, or from Blue Mountain in Jamaica. It is noteworthy that particularly in Europe during Napoleon’s closure of the continent, various alternative coffee-like beverages were created from seeds, cereals, and roots; chicory and even date coffee were widely accepted and successfully commercialised. However, the popularity of “Mocha coffee” did not decline despite the diversification and expansion of coffee production and consumption. Thus, “Mocha coffee” had established itself as the brand of the highest quality, such that in the 19th century European and American literature, it was frequently praised as the best, followed by beans from Reunion and Java Islands.<sup>34)</sup> Therefore, “Mocha” is the name representing the finest brand among the various sorts of coffee worldwide.<sup>35)</sup>

As the brand “Mocha coffee” began to gain popularity, various forms of “fake” “Mocha coffee” began appearing in markets elsewhere. For example, a 1792 publication from London cites a letter from Stephen Fuller, a representative for British Jamaica in London, to coffee planters in Jamaica.<sup>36)</sup> In his letter, Fuller advised the planters to produce beans as small as possible, because smaller beans could be sold as “Mocha coffee”. It is unclear how much effect Fuller’s advice had, but he was not the only one with such an idea. According to an accusation in an American journal article from the 1880s, certain merchants in Aden were exporting “Mocha coffee” that had been mixed

with Brazilian beans from Rio de Janeiro and Santos.<sup>37)</sup>

The 1900 annual trade report of the British consul general in Rio de Janeiro confirmed such adulteration. According to this report, local producers were discontent because lower-quality beans were being exported as “Brazilian coffee”, whereas higher-quality beans were being sold under different names, notably as “Mocha coffee”. This was understandable considering the price difference in Europe between well-known beans such as “Mocha” and the newly emerging Brazilian beans. However, this was not limited to Europe. For instance, Egyptian merchants obtained Brazilian coffee beans from Europe, transported them to Arabia via Aden and Jeddah, repacked them in genuine Mocha coffee bags, and dispatched them to Syria and Egypt. According to the same report, high quality beans from Santos, for example, was sold in Brazil for 6 francs per 10 kilograms, but once transported to Egypt, the same beans were sold wholesale for 8.5 francs and retail for 10.50 francs. However, when labelled as “Genuine Arabian Mocha” and repacked in genuine Mocha packaging, the price rose to 50 francs per 10 kilograms.<sup>38)</sup> British naturalist Clarke, who travelled through the Levant in the early 19th century, also recorded that coffee beans from the West Indies were sold as “Mocha coffee” in Izmir.<sup>39)</sup>

The June 1887 issue of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, a popular monthly magazine in the United States, included an article about the New York coffee trade.<sup>40)</sup> According to the article, New York imported about 1059 tons of coffee beans from Aden which was more than 99% of the beans sent from Aden to the United States, and most of them were brought by regular lines from London where the P&O Company carried them directly from Aden. Beans were packed in 40lb or 80lb boxes and four 40lb boxes or two 80lb boxes were bound together and called a “bale”. Boxes made of Arabian glass appeared gorgeous and exotic, which made people imagine the rich exotic commerce of Arabia. Exclusive shops in uptown New York sold genuine “Mocha coffee” and beans from ports on the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, while reputedly, five times more fake “Mocha coffee” was sold throughout the city.

Although in some cases it is possible to distinguish beans of one cultivar from another, it is unrealistic for anyone to identify each bean in the bag. For wholesalers, such identification was more than unrealistic, which may explain the following incident. In the 1852 edition of *The French Society for Medicinal Chemistry*, it was reported that a merchant in Antwerp presented a sample of “Mocha coffee” to a local military hospital for identification. It was found that 40% of the beans were not coffee beans at all, but seeds of *Ricinus communis* Linn,<sup>41)</sup> a plant well known for containing the highly potent toxin, ricin.

Therefore, during the 19th century, the importance of “Mocha coffee” in the global market lay not in the actual flavour of “Mocha coffee” exported from ports in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, but in the name.

#### IV. Mocha Coffee as a Blend: Frequently Mislabeled

“Mocha coffee” beans produced in the Red Sea/Gulf of Aden became rare and valuable

as demand for coffee grew globally; however, Yemeni producers could not meet the growing demand. An article titled “Mocha Coffee” in the December 1882 issue of *the Coffee Public-House News and Temperance Hotel Journal (CPN)*, admitted that in the United Kingdom, owing to scarcity and overpricing, “the consumption of pure Mocha coffee by the general population is an impossibility, without reckoning the almost prohibitory prices now ruling”; instead, beans from Red Sea/Gulf of Aden were principally used for blending with other coffee beans.<sup>42)</sup> For the same reason, a French Ph.D. thesis on coffee published in 1853 suggests blending 2.5kg of Martinique coffee, 2.5kg of Bourbon coffee, 2kg of Java coffee, and 2kg of Mocha coffee.<sup>43)</sup> Blending became the commonest way for the public to acquire a taste of “Mocha coffee”, that is, beans from Red Sea/Gulf of Aden.

While blending is an effective method for reducing the price per cup, it is widely accepted that blending different type of beans also enables totally new flavours to be created and it has become one of the highlights of coffee culture today. It is widely accepted that the first successfully commercialized blend was named “Mocha Java”;<sup>44)</sup> a modern coffee guidebook explains that Mocha Java is “blended to balance the wildness and acidity of a Yemen-style coffee with the heavy body and earthy richness of Indonesian coffee”.<sup>45)</sup>

The origin of coffee blending is unclear, as is the origin of the Mocha Java blend. Although the Mocha Java blend is believed to have originated in 18th century Europe, early references in the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century cite several blending recipes, not limited to only Mocha and Java, but different types of beans as cited in the aforementioned French Ph.D. thesis.<sup>46)</sup> As far as English references are concerned, the Mocha Java blend was more frequently mentioned after the 1880s, and the most frequently-mentioned preferred ratio was one-third Mocha to two-thirds Java.<sup>47)</sup>

In addition to creating a new taste and aroma in a cup while controlling its cost using differing ratios of various beans, blending helped to disguise the identity of beans. Popular but overpriced “Mocha coffee” beans, that is, those from Red Sea/Gulf of Aden were not always included in “Mocha Java” blends as labelled. Mocha Java blends with no beans from Red Sea/Gulf of Aden could circulate because in the United Kingdom, “Mocha coffee, like Havannah [sic.] Cigars, can be grown anywhere, and with those who have never tasted the genuine product the imitation will pass”.<sup>48)</sup> The situation in the United States was more or less similar as “[t]he names Java and Mocha were indelibly stamped on the mind of the consuming public ... In this manner there began a cutting in price which finally ended in a straight Santos and even Santos mixed with chicory being termed the finest Java and Mocha coffees”.<sup>49)</sup>

In the United States, the situation changed drastically with the Pure Food and Drug Act (also known as Pure Food Law) approved in 1906. The Act was partly intended to ban mislabelling of foods, coffee being no exception. However, the tricky definition of “Mocha coffee” remained common in legal debates. In the early 20th century, if rigorous discussion was attempted, this definition became further tricky. If “Mocha coffee” denoted the beans produced in the hinterland of Mocha, Yemeni highlands, at the time the major coffee producing region in the Red Sea/Gulf of Aden had shifted from the

Arabian side to the Ethiopian highlands, on the African side. Furthermore, by that time the port of Mocha was no longer exporting coffee to the European and American markets, therefore, if “Mocha” denoted the port of dispatch, there clearly could be no more “Mocha coffee”. Thus, the majority of coffee exported from Red Sea/Gulf of Aden ports could not any longer be termed “Mocha coffee”. Coffee dealers in the United States categorised and sold beans from both sides of the Red Sea/Gulf of Aden as “Mocha coffee”, however, they simultaneously distinguished between Yemeni beans as “Short-berry Mocha” and Ethiopian beans as “Harari coffee” or “Long-berry Mocha”.<sup>50</sup>

In the United States, following the introduction of the Pure Food and Drug Act, the Board of Food and Drug Inspection issued Food Inspection Decision 91 in 1908 which concerned the labelling of “Mocha coffee”.<sup>51</sup> Referring to the report from the Consulate in Aden, the Board stated that, “the term ‘Mocha’, as applied to coffee, should be restricted ... to coffee grown in that part of Arabia (i.e. Aden) to the north and east of Hodeidah [sic.], known as Yemen”. The effect of the Pure Food and Drug Act and Food Inspection Decision 91 must not be underestimated. A government coffee expert, William B. Harris, reported that the Bureau of Chemistry (established in 1901 using Congressional appropriations to inspect adulteration and misbranding of food and drugs) examined 826 suspicious samples of coffee and found that 584 of them (nearly 70%) did not comply with the law.<sup>52</sup> The situation improved gradually, for Harris noted that only 7% was reported as authentic among the first 100 samples, however, two years later 33% was reported as authentic. It is unclear as to how many Java Mocha cases were included. However, in another report published in 1910, various Mocha Java blends appeared among 37 samples that Harris identified as misbranded. Many of these were products of leading traders, such as San Francisco’s Hills Brothers’ “Hills Brothers Vacuum Packed Highest Grade Coffee, Java and Mocha flavour”; Chicago’s Thomson and Taylor Spice Company’s “Java and Mocha Gold Band Coffee”,<sup>53</sup> which contained no “Mocha coffee” at all; and many other “Mocha Java” blends that contained Brazilian beans, such as those from Santos, instead of Mocha or Java beans. Exposure of unlawful labelling of inferior coffee as Mocha Java continued nationwide.<sup>54</sup>

Thus, many coffee products mislabelled as “Mocha coffee” including Mocha Java blend were eliminated. However, it remained uncertain whether it was proper to refer to Harari coffee as “Longberry Mocha”, and consequently, in 1912, the Federal test case of the United States v. The Thomson and Taylor Spice Company of Chicago focused on this. Witnesses included leading coffee traders and experts such as William H. Ukers, author of a highly reputed coffee encyclopaedia titled *All about Coffee* (first published in 1922). The witnesses’ testimonies revealed their knowledge and experience of the coffee business including many details. Judge Landis issued his decision, ruling that considering the historical process, both Arabian and Ethiopian coffees may be referred to as “Mocha”, but the actual country of origin must be stated, that is, “Arabian Mocha” and “Ethiopian Mocha”. This decision overturned the Drug Act and Food Inspection Decision 91 which limited “Mocha coffee” to that produced in Yemen. However, as Ukers notes, the general acceptance afterwards was in accordance with the Food Inspection Decision 91.<sup>55</sup>

After the elimination of various product mislabelling and debates over what

constitutes “proper ‘Mocha coffee’”, blended coffee gained much more popularity in the U.S. during the 1920s. According to McCook, many blended coffees were sold by brand name rather than by the origin of the beans.<sup>56)</sup> Although the term “Mocha” did not disappear, it was now used more carefully. However, coffee remained closely associated with Arabia in the American imagination, through advertisements and company trademarks such as “Coffee Taster” of Hills Brothers, or a school play, featuring a history of coffee, produced by the Joint Coffee Trade Publicity Campaign, which circulated 50,000 copies. The play featured Arabian characters in traditional Arab costumes.

## Conclusion

This chapter traces a number of flows of “Mocha coffee” in different forms as beans, plant cultivars, brands, and blends. Each flow has a different geographical extent; for instance, while cultivars were circulated in the coffee belt, the major market for the beans was mostly outside that belt as Mocha Java blend was primarily circulated in the European and American markets. However, all of those flows were mutually influential. As a plant, coffee circulated beyond the geographical limit of the Indian Ocean as early as the 17th century and its popularity in Europe encouraged the transplantation of coffee bushes both within and beyond the Indian Ocean. However, coffee rust disease destroyed many plantations of Arabica coffee which shared the same root as “Mocha coffee” as beans around the Indian Ocean, therefore, alternative varieties were sought. Coffee growers discovered the Liberica and Robusta cultivars which became widespread as a modern coffee belt was established. Moreover, transplantation of Arabica and discovery of Liberica and Robusta diversified the flavour of coffee. Subsequently, the term “Mocha coffee” became the accepted highest quality brand, once true “Mocha coffee” beans, that is, beans from Red Sea/Gulf of Aden became a rarity on the market, partly as a result of different modes of production between Yemen and other newly emerging producers, as well as political instability in Yemen. As the original flavour of coffee, and owing to its relatively small-scale production in comparison with other genera, beans from the Red Sea/Gulf of Aden were highly valued by European and American consumers, resulting in “Mocha” as the synonym for the most admired coffee. Branding of coffee as “Mocha coffee” resulted in a considerable amount of mislabelled “Mocha coffee” circulating in the market, and coffee blending techniques were developed to thoroughly hide the true identity of imitation “Mocha coffee”. A substantial amount of the mislabelled “Mocha coffee” actually originated from newly emerging, cheaper coffee production in Brazil, where the Arabica cultivar was grown; however, it managed to avoid the Coffee rust disease pandemic in the Indian Ocean and the Pacific. Thus, the “Mocha coffee” brand ironically contributed to the consumption of coffee beans from sources other than the Red Sea/Gulf of Aden to a certain extent. During the early 20th century, the Pure Food and Drug Act introduced in the United States to prevent mislabelling, was successful to a certain extent. However, uncertainty continued regarding the definition of true “Mocha coffee”. Since the turn of the century, the majority of coffee exported from the Red Sea/Gulf of Aden had shifted from Yemen to Ethiopia. However, after a US court case

defined “true Mocha coffee”, dealers and consumers in the United States gradually agreed to limit the use of the term “Mocha coffee” to beans produced in Yemen. It is noteworthy that the detailed categorisation during the 18th and 19th centuries as presented in Table 1, did not appear in the court testimonies in the United States v. The Thomson and Taylor Spice Company in 1912. As blended powdered coffee gained popularity, dealers sold it without referring to the source of the beans, instead simply selecting a suitable brand name. Nonetheless, the dealers continued to use vague images of Arabia in their advertising.

The geographical limit of the Indian Ocean could not fully contain the interconnecting flows of “Mocha coffee”. The circumstances under which Yemeni peasants grew coffee affected consumers in the Middle East, Europe, and the United States, while emerging producers such as those in Ceylon, Indonesia, Cuba, and Brazil also had a significant effect on “Mocha coffee”. Fake Mocha Java blend emerged from the well-established branding of “Mocha coffee”, popular for its high quality, rarity, and originality.

Stimulated by that psychologically important feature, it is certain that fake Mocha Java blended coffee was produced using other cheaper beans. Considering both producers and consumers, as well as physical and imagined features of various coffee beans, within and beyond the Indian Ocean, the different paths of the various “Mocha coffees” in different forms can be comprehended; and the author suggests that it is their interconnected paths considered together that represent a part of the Indian Ocean World.

## Notes

- 1) Hunter 1877: 100.
- 2) Tuchscherer 2003: 55.
- 3) Tuchscherer 2003: 55. Estimation made at the end of the 1850s indicates 0.7% which is much lower than Tuchscherer’s estimate (Gardner 1859: 168).
- 4) Um 2009: 7.
- 5) Dion 2006: 19–27; Ohashi 2010.
- 6) Tuchscherer 2003: 54.
- 7) Bréon 1832: 567 mentions that each family produced three to five boxes per year. The weight calculation here is based on Straus 1874: 159 which mentions that at Bayt al-Faqih, a centre of coffee trade in Yemen, one box of coffee weighed 197.1094 lbs. (about 89.4kg).
- 8) Bréon 1832: 567; Tuchscherer 2003: 54.
- 9) Burckhardt 1829: Vol.1, 31–32; Macgregor 1844: Vol.2, 244; Eldem 1999: 75; Richards 2004: 207. For example, Olivier who travelled around the Middle East at the end of the 18th century reported that in the region around the Black Sea, coffee beans from the Americas were more welcome than those from Yemen (Olivier 1800: Vol.1, 367–368).
- 10) Pankhurst 1968: 198; Aregay 1988: 20–21.
- 11) Pankhurst 1968: 198; Aregay 1988: 20–21, 24–25. Allegedly, Menelik II consumed coffee himself, and Abuna Matewos X who became the Patriarch of Ethiopian Orthodox Church when

- Menelik II enthroned, repeatedly denied the belief among the priests that coffee was the beverage for Muslims. Pankhurst highlighted that this encouraged the Copts to weaken their prejudice against coffee (Pankhurst 1968: 198).
- 12) Pankhurst 1968: 199; Fernyhough 2007: 221.
  - 13) Um 2009: 7.
  - 14) *Supplement to Commerce Reports* 52a (1920), 13. The United States consular reports summarised a French report from 1899 stating that two types of coffee were sold in the market of Harar, one called “Abyssin” characterised by its small earth-coloured beans and brought from Kaffa, Leka, and Djimma; and the other called “Harari” which was a longer berry and was brought from the area surrounding Harar and was sold at a price higher than “Abyssin” (*Consular Reports: Commerce, Manufactures, etc.* 60–227 (1899), 756). Harari particularly earned a good reputation in London markets where it was known as “long-berry Mocha” to be compared with those from Arabia which was called short-berry Mocha (*Diplomatic and Consular Reports* 3747 (1907), 7).
  - 15) Davis et al. 2011: 369–371. These species include those previously included in *Psilanthus* spp. Apart from *Psilanthus* spp., 104 species are included in the genus *Coffea*.
  - 16) Anzueto et al. 2005: 21.
  - 17) Clarindo and Carvalho 2008.
  - 18) Haarer 1958: 96.
  - 19) Tuchscherer 2003: 50–52.
  - 20) Tuchscherer 2003: 52–53.
  - 21) Haarer 1958: 14–15; Pruvot-Woehl et al. 2020: 326–327; Montagnon et al. 2021: 2415–2416.
  - 22) Campbell 2003: 67–68.
  - 23) Coubard d’Aulnay 1832: 45.
  - 24) Kieran 1969. However, they brought not only the Bourbon variant, but also that of *Typica*, from Aden (Kieran 1969: 64).
  - 25) Cramer 1957: 5; Glamann 1981: 192, 207; Bhattacharya 2017: 58–59.
  - 26) All the maps in this volume are created by Hideaki Suzuki. Exceptionally, the map in Chapter 5 is modified by the author of that chapter.
  - 27) McCook 2019: 36.
  - 28) McCook 2019: 37–38.
  - 29) McCook 2019: 65–89.
  - 30) Logan 1887: Vol.2, 272; Innes 1915: 228. Brown originated in Mahé (Mayyali), a French colony on Malabar Coast, and succeeded in his own business in the complicated regional politico-economic situation and ran his own cinnamon plantation at Anjarakandi and later extended his business to coffee. As to Brown, see, Buckland 1906: 55–56; Nightingale 1970: 76–77, *passim*.
  - 31) Innes 1915: 228–229.
  - 32) Anthony, Dussert and Dullo 2007: 12.
  - 33) Clarindo, Carvalho, Caizeta et al. 2013; Benti et al. 2021: 161. Híbrido de Timor was discovered in 1927 at the plantation in Timor where the *Typica* variant was cultivated; Timor hybrid is supposed to have been produced naturally by hybridisation between *Arabica* and *Canephora*.
  - 34) See, Milburn 1813: Vol.1, 105; Vialardi 1854: 548; Brożowsky 1859: 7–11; Hartwig 1863: 193;

- Matthyssens 1866: 251–259; Larousse 1867: 59; Schneider and Vogl 1880: 214; Nelli 1880: 951.
- 35) For example, the *Oxford English Dictionary* notes that the term Mocha was used for coffee as early as 1762.
- 36) Moseley 1792: 36.
- 37) Riggs 1887: 664.
- 38) Rhind 1900: 19.
- 39) Clarke 1824: Vol.2, 468. Similar stories are frequently found, such as one in “The ‘Times’ on Coffee and Coffee-Making,” *CPN* 1882 October: 115.
- 40) Riggs 1887.
- 41) Orman 1852: 50.
- 42) *CPN* 1882 December: 143.
- 43) Macé 1853: 10.
- 44) Davids 2001: 249; Morris 2013: 218; Thurston et al. (eds.) 2013: 386.
- 45) Kummer 2003: 266.
- 46) Anonymous 1732–1752: Vol.6 (Supplément), 462; Giraud 1846: 51–52.
- 47) Beecher 1880: 367; Thurber 1881: 31; Walsh 1894: 245. However, a cookery book published in 1898 cautions as follows: “the ordinary mixture of two thirds Java and one third Mocha is misleading, as there are an indefinite number of inferior qualities of both ‘Mocha’ and ‘Java’” (Ronald 1898: 551).
- 48) *CPN* October 1882: 115.
- 49) Harris 1913: 36.
- 50) See various testimonies by coffee dealers in the federal court for the test case of the United States v. The Thomson and Taylor Spice Company of Chicago (“Important Case involving Word ‘Mocha’”, *The Spice Mill* 1912 March, 204–210).
- 51) For the full text of the decision, see. *Expenditures in Department of Agriculture 2* (22 August 1911): 1081–1082.
- 52) Harris 1913: 37.
- 53) “Memorandum of Coffee Samples examined by William B. Harris and Reported for Prosecution”, *Expenditures in Department of Agriculture 2* (22 August 1911): 967–969.
- 54) See for example, United States Department of Agriculture, “Notice of Judgment No.275, Food and Drug Act” (19 March 1910); “Notice of Judgment No.275, Food and Drug Act” (6 May 1910); Thornton 1912: 369–374.
- 55) Ukers 1922: 337.
- 56) McCook 2013: 252.

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