2012/2013 was a packed year for the Centre with the publication of our major research project on conversion to Islam, the development of new ties to universities around the world and a full programme of seminars and outreach activities.

I was very pleased to sign in January 2013 a ‘Memorandum of Understanding’ with Abdelkrim Benani of the Moroccan British Society and Martin Rose from the British Council in Morocco. The Memorandum formalises our commitment to strengthening academic ties between the UK and Morocco through a series of academic conferences to be held in both countries. Following the Memorandum, we brought UK and Morocco-based scholars to Cambridge on the 16 and 17 May for a very successful two-day conference exploring ‘Morocco from WWII to Independence’. We look forward to future events in the coming year.

We have continued to develop the Centre's ties to universities through the ‘Cambridge in…’ series. In March a party of Cambridge academics were joined by scholars from around the world at the American University of Sharjah, UAE, to explore ‘Perspectives on Middle Eastern Studies’. Across ten panels, scholars participated from the United States, Bosnia, Israel, China, the United Kingdom and throughout the Middle East, highlighting the success of the Centre's ‘Cambridge in…’ programme in drawing together an international network of scholars working on the Middle East.

The highlight of the year for me was the publication of the Narratives of Conversion to Islam in Britain: Female Perspectives report in May 2013. The report received major coverage in all the UK’s broadsheet newspapers and I am delighted that to date (October 2013) it has been downloaded over fifty thousand times – and rising. The Project Manager, Shahla Suleiman, and I, have been invited to talk to community groups and universities across the UK, and as far as the United States and Australia. I also shared the pleasure of discussing the report with Batool Al-Toma, Co-Chair of the project, and two of the report’s participants on Radio 4’s Women’s Hour. We will shortly begin work on male perspectives.

A very exciting development over the past year has been the expansion of the Centre's outreach programme. As the Centre's work has grown we are increasingly being invited by schools and community groups to deliver talks on Islam and Muslims in the UK. This year saw a busy programme of events with several visits to schools in the local area and London. My thanks go to Shahla Suleiman and Harriet Hine for their efforts in developing this important aspect of the Centre’s work.
We have continued to support the activities of our partner organisations. The Fourth Gulf Research Meeting in July 2013 was a great achievement, bringing close to three hundred scholars to Cambridge and maintaining its status as one of the preeminent conferences on the Gulf in the world. I am also very pleased that we have again been able to support the annual Codicology Workshop organised by our partner, The Islamic Manuscript Association, by offering a full bursary to Jamal Austa from Birzeit University library to attend.

In May 2013 we held the last of our ‘Beyond the Arab Spring’ seminars. It has been a very successful series attracting scholars, students and members of the public from all disciplines to Pembroke College on Thursday evenings. We plan to continue where we left off with our forthcoming series ‘Turbulent World: Maghrib, Mashriq and Gulf in the New Era of Uncertainty’ which will explore the new realities and uncertainties facing the Arab World today.

We were sad to say farewell in October 2012 to Saeko Yazaki, Outreach and Project Manager, who had done so much for the Centre in its first few years. I wish her all the best in her new post at Glasgow University. We were very fortunate, however, to have Harriet Hine join us at the Centre in November 2012 and, earlier this year, Philip Rushworth as Administrative Assistant. My thanks go to Paul, Shahla, Harriet and Philip for their hard work and I look forward to working closely with them and new members joining the team over the coming year.

On a final note, there are new ways of keeping up-to-date with all the things taking place at the Centre. To see everything we are doing please check our website regularly, join our mailing list or ‘like’ us on facebook. We hope to see many of you in the exciting year ahead.

Professor Yasir Suleiman CBE, FRSE
Founding Director
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BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Centre of Islamic Studies

The Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Centre of Islamic Studies (CIS) was established in 2008 as a successor to the Centre of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies (CMEIS). CMEIS was founded in 1960 by Professor Arthur Arberry to foster an interest in the Middle East, particularly the modern Middle East, amongst Cambridge scholars, students and the general public, and to support research.

CMEIS played an active role in promoting Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies amongst academics and the public through lectures, seminars and conferences. The Centre also helped to establish and develop links between individuals and institutions with an interest in Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies. The Centre further encouraged communication between academics, the media and the public.

The Centre of Islamic Studies was established as the successor to CMEIS and was officially opened on 23rd March 2011.

During the academic year 2012/13 the Centre, in partnership with the British Government and other key organisations and institutions, has played an active role in facilitating and promoting dialogue and discussion on a range of topical subjects for a wide international audience. Senior officials, scholars, and faith and community leaders have engaged actively in the Centre’s Outreach programme, the primary aim of which has been to advance tolerance, mutual understanding, and cross-cultural dialogue between Islam and the West.
ACTIVITIES

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A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between The Centre of Islamic Studies, The Moroccan-British Society and The British Council in Morocco on 16 January 2013. The signing took place at the Moroccan Ambassador’s residence in London and was generously hosted by H.H. Princess Lalla Joumala Alaoui. This agreement formally records the mutual interest of all three parties in promoting and furthering academic links for a period of three years.

The purpose of the project is to encourage and support the development of academic links in research, teaching and publishing between universities in Great Britain and Morocco. The programme of academic cooperation is designed to provide an interdisciplinary forum for research, scholarly partnerships and knowledge dissemination focusing on the history, culture, politics and society of the Maghreb area, its international relations and relevant transnational trends.

The first in a series of conferences was held in May 2013, please see page X.
Scottish Launch

Contextualising Islam in Britain II

21 – 22 JANUARY, 2013

The Centre launched *Contextualising Islam in Britain II* in Scotland at the University of Glasgow and the Scottish Parliament in January 2013.

The views of leading British Muslims on the role of Muslim communities in contemporary British society have been published in the second phase of this ground-breaking project. Organised by the Centre of Islamic Studies at the University of Cambridge and funded by the UK Government’s Department for Communities and Local Government, in association with the universities of Exeter and Westminster, the Contextualising Islam in Britain II project brought together a wide range of leading British Muslim scholars, activists and community leaders to discuss what it means to live as a Muslim in contemporary Britain. The report outlines a profoundly positive role for Muslims as a creative minority in Britain as well as engaging with a number of pressing issues facing British Muslims today.

Glasgow University

**Date:** 21 January 2013  
**Time:** 17:30–19:00  
**Venue:** Seminar Room 1, Wolfson Medical School Building, University Avenue, University of Glasgow

The event was introduced by Dr Saeko Yazaki (University of Glasgow) and featured contributions from Professor Yasir Suleiman (Project Leader), Dr Jeremy Henzell-Thomas (Report Compiler) and Professor Hugh Goddard (Director of the Alwaleed Centre at the University of Edinburgh).

Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh

**Date:** 22 January 2013  
**Time:** 18:00–19:30 (followed by a reception)  
**Venue:** Committee Room 3, Scottish Parliament

The event comprised a roundtable discussion reflecting on the report and exploring the questions it raises from a Scottish perspective. The event was kindly sponsored by Hanzala Malik MSP with contributions from Professor Yasir Suleiman CBE, FRSE (Project Leader), Dr Jeremy Henzell-Thomas (Report Compiler) and Dr Shainool Jiwa (Institute of Ismaili Studies, Scottish contributor to Contextualising Islam in Britain II).
Conference

Cambridge in Sharjah: Perspectives on Middle Eastern Studies

10 – 11 MARCH, 2013

Parody as resistance, religious broadcasting in the Arab world and China’s relationship with the Gulf all came under scrutiny as academics from Cambridge’s Centre of Islamic Studies gathered in the Gulf on March 10.

As part of the Centre’s continuing efforts to bring the scholarship and expertise from Cambridge to an ever-increasing global audience, a dozen academics and PhD students from Cambridge went to the American University of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates for a two-day symposium.

The event, Cambridge in Sharjah: Perspectives on Middle Eastern Studies, was held on the 10–11 March 2013 and was the latest conference in the Centre’s ‘Cambridge in…’ series after previous visits to Bosnia, Morocco and China.

For more information, please see Appendix I.

Programme

DAY ONE – SUNDAY, 10 MARCH

09:00–10:30  Narratives of Conversion to Islam in Britain: Female Perspectives (Lecture Hall B)

Lectures

• Yasir Suleiman, Director of the Centre of Islamic Studies, Cambridge
• Batool Al Toma, Personal Testimony of Conversion
• Kevin Gray, Assistant Professor of International Studies, CAS, AUS

Moderator: Nawar Al-Hassan Golley, Associate Professor in Literary Theory & Women Studies, CAS, AUS

10:30–11:00  Coffee Break

11:00–11:15  Opening Address

• Yasir Suleiman, Director of the Centre of Islamic Studies, Cambridge
• Mark Rush, Dean of College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), AUS
11:15–12:30  Panel 1: Gulf Cooperation Council & Beyond

Lectures
• Abdullah Baabood Gulf Cooperation Council Integration: from Cooperation to a Union
• Othman Wu Bingbing China-Gulf Relations
• Mona Hamade Emiratisation, Gender and Emirati Youth
  Moderator: Mark Rush

12:30–14:00  Lunch Break – AUS Main Building

14:00–14:45  Panel Two: Syria

Lectures
• Paul Anderson Syria’s Social Imaginary in 2009: Spheres of Solidarity?
• Line Khatib The Desecularization of Syrian Society
  Moderator: James Toth

14:45–15:45  Panel Three: Broadcast Media in the Middle East

Lectures
• Mohammed Ayish The Future of Public Broadcasting in the Middle East
• Khaled Hroub Religious Broadcasting in the Middle East
  Moderator: Abeer AlNajjar

15:45–16:00  Coffee break

16:00–17:15  Panel Four: Doing Business the Islamic Way

Lectures
• Ismail Genc The Concept of “Equity” in Islamic Economics Literature
• Mohammed Ibahrine Glocalisation and Islamic Branding
• Abdelaziz Chazi Doing Finance the Islamic Way
  Moderator: Ismail Genc

DAY TWO – MONDAY, 11 MARCH

09:00–10:30  Panel Five: The Shaping of Arab Cultural Identity in Different Contexts.

Lectures
• Alice Wilson The Anthropology of Customary law in the Middle East and North Africa
• Yonatan Mendel Putting the Arab back into the Arab: Israeli Strategies of Rearabisation
• Ishaq Tijani The Ladies’ Fitting Room: Exploring Cultural Issues in Contemporary Emirati Women’s Fiction
• Hawraa Al-Hassan Parody as Resistance in Sinan Antoon’s Debut Novel I’jām
  Moderator: Nuha AlShaar

10:30–11:00  Coffee Break
11:00–12:15  Panel Six: Rethinking Heritage in the Arabian Peninsula: Intangible and Tangible Cultural Heritage Reconsidered

Lectures
• Zaki Aslan The Role of the ATHAR Regional Centre in Rethinking Heritage in the Arabian Peninsula: Dimensions of Authenticity for the Protection of Cultural Heritage in the Arab Region Reconsidered
• Manal Ataya Developing New Heritage Museums in the Gulf: The importance of local community involvement in articulating a collective memory
• Seth Thompson Digitally Preserving Heritage of the Arabian Peninsula: Al Jazeera Al Hamra Considered

Moderator: Sarina Wakefield

12:15–13:00  Panel Seven: Urban Studies in the Middle East

Lectures
• Wendy Pullan Conflict in Cities and the Contested State
• Harris Breslow Dubai: City of Flow

Moderator: Amer Mustafa

13:00–14:30  Lunch Break AUS Main Building

14:30–15:45  Panel Eight: Language & Identity

Lectures
• Yasir Suleiman Language Anxiety and the Arabic Language
• Chaoqun Lian Language (counter-) Modernisation in the Discourse of Arabic Language Academies
• Ilhem Allagui Wikipedia Arabic and Narratives of Identity

Moderator: Imed Nsiri

15:45–16:00  Coffee Break

16:00–17:15  Panel Nine: Islamic Spirituality

Lectures
• Mirza Sarajkic Sufi Ghazals in the Bosnian Poetic Tradition in Arabic: The Case of Ahmad Khatam Akowalizade
• John J. Curry From Bosnian Sipahis to Sufi Institution: Revelations from the Personal Library of the Nasuhi Branch of the Khalwati Tariqa
• Gavin Picken Is there really a ‘spiritual jihad’ or are the Sufis ‘faking it’?

Moderator: Imed Nsiri

17:15–18:00  Panel Ten: Maritime Studies in the Middle East & Beyond

Lectures
• David Abulafia New Approaches to Maritime History
• Joseph Gibbs Towards Piracy Studies: ‘New’ Sources and Modern Interpretations

Moderator: David Lea
Launch

Narratives of Conversion to Islam in Britain: Female Perspectives

16 MAY, 2013

The UK launch of the Centre’s report, Narratives of Conversion to Islam in Britain: Female Perspectives, took place from 18.00 – 20.00 on 16 May 2013 in The Khalili Lecture Theatre at The School of Oriental & African Studies (SOAS) in London.

After introductory speeches from Professor Yasir Suleiman, Director of the Centre of Islamic Studies, Mrs Batool Al-Toma, Director of the New Muslims Project and Professor Muhammad Abdel Haleem, SOAS, there was a question and answer session from the audience. The event was chaired by Ms Kristiane Backer.

Press coverage

‘A ground-breaking report examining the experiences of nearly 50 British women of all ages, ethnicities, backgrounds and faiths (or no faith) – who have all converted to Islam – was launched in London yesterday by the University of Cambridge.’ (Cambridge Research News)

The report received much press coverage in Britain and around the world. To read articles from the Huffington Post, The Times and others, please see the Centre’s website.

For the ‘Cambridge Research News’ article, please see Appendix II.

Interviews Online

Interviews were organised with the Project Leader, Professor Yasir Suleiman, and six of the participants of the Narrative of Conversion report to celebrate its release. They explore some of the many ‘talking points’ from the report and include reflections from the participants on their personal experience of conversion to Islam in Britain. The interviews are available on the Centre’s website.
Conference

Orientality: Cultural Orientalism and Mentality

17 – 18 MAY 2013

The event was organised by Firuza Melville (University of Cambridge) and the Orientalist Museum in Doha, Qatar in partnership with the Centre of Islamic Studies. The event was well attended, including delegates from countries in Central Asia. The conference is part of the wider goal of bringing more people to Cambridge and helping to forge new interdisciplinary links.

Programme

FRIDAY, 17 MAY

Nihon Room, Pembroke College

9.30–9.45  Coffee and registration

9.45–10.00  Opening and welcome (Professor Jean Michel Massing, Dr Olga Nefedova, Dr Firuza Melville)

10.00–11.00  Chair: Professor Deborah Howard (University of Cambridge)
Marinika Babanazarova (The Savitsky Karakalpakstan Art Museum, Nukus) “The Desert of Forbidden Art”
Dr Olga Nefedova (Museum of Orientalism) “The Art of Travel: Bartholomeus Schachman”

11.00–11.15  Coffee break

11.15–12.15  Chair: Professor Richard Tapper (SOAS, University of London)
Dr Firuza Melville (University of Cambridge) “From les Ballets Russes to les Ballets Persans”
Dr Razia Sultanova (University of Cambridge) ‘Sofia Gubaidulina’s Orientalism in chamber music’

12.15–1.30  Lunch

13.30–14.30  Chair: Professor Charles Melville (University of Cambridge)
Dr. Edhem Eldem (Boğaziçi University) “Osman Hamdi Bey”
Dr Harold Lacom (Independent scholar) “Slavery and captivity Ottoman Hapsburg Wars”

15.00  Screening and discussion of the film “The desert of forbidden art”

19.30  Dinner in the Old Library, Pembroke College
SATURDAY, 18 MAY
Nihon Room, Pembroke College

10.00–11.00  Chair: Professor Yasir Suleyman (University of Cambridge)
Robert Irwin (SOAS, University of London) “Reflections on Orientalist Photography”
Dr Elena Andreeva (Virginia Military Institute) “Military Orientalist art of Karazin”

11.00–11.15  Coffee break

11.15–12.15  Chair: Professor Anna Contadini (SOAS, University of London)
Professor Jean Michel Massing (University of Cambridge) “Bezoar Stones and Carpets: Portuguese Luxury Trade in the North of the Indian Ocean and in the Gulf”
Dr Tim Stanley (Victoria and Albert Museum) “A Circular Journey: Iranian lacquer and its travels in Europe”

12.15–1.30  Lunch

13.30–15.00  Roundtable and closing remarks

15.00–17.00  Tour at the Fitzwilliam Museum

19.30  Dinner in Saltmarsh Room, King’s College
Outreach

Azhar-Cambridge Project

25 – 26 MAY, 2013

The Cambridge component of The Azhar-Cambridge Programme 2013 took place on 24–26 May 2013. The event was organised by the Centre of Islamic Studies and held at the Moller Centre, Cambridge.

SATURDAY 25 MAY

09.30  Session 1: Introduction to Cambridge, the Centre and debrief from Azhar
11.00  Break
11.30  Session 2: Enlightenment and reformation
13.00  Lunch
14.30  Session 3: (group workshop): Modern day challenges to Islam/religion in the public realm
16.00  Break
16.15  Session 4: Muslims in the European context – past and present
17.30  Free time
19.00  Dinner

SUNDAY 26 MAY

08.30  Session 5: Diversity and multiculturalism in Britain (1)
10.00  Break
10.30  Session 6: Diversity and multiculturalism in Britain (2)
11.30  Session 7: Human rights and equality in Britain (1)
13.00  Lunch
14:00  Session 8: Human rights and equality in Britain (2)
15:00  Conclusions and wrap-up
15:15  Break
15:30  Evaluation Focus Group
17:30  Depart
Conference

Morocco: from World War II to Independence

24 – 25 MAY, 2013

The Centre of Islamic Studies, together with The Moroccan-British Society, The British Council Morocco and The Woolf Institute at Cambridge held its first Morocco Research Workshop, titled ‘Morocco: From WWII to Independence’, at the University of Cambridge on 23-25 May 2013. The conference is the first stage in a programme of events to improve academic links between the UK and Morocco, as part of the Memorandum of Understanding.

Starting with a keynote address, the workshop was organised around four panels: Morocco in the International System; The Moroccan Jewish Experience; Moroccan Nationalism and International Politics; and Representing the Nation.

The May event was the first of a series of workshops and conferences designed to illuminate aspects of Morocco and the relationship between Morocco and Britain that have, until now, remained obscure.

A news story is given in Appendix III.

Programme

FRIDAY 24 MAY

08:50  Registration
09:20  Welcoming remarks

Panel 1: World War II: Morocco in the International System
Chair: Dr Amira Bennison, University of Cambridge

09:45  The American Landing in Morocco (November 1942): A Turning Point in the Country’s Contemporary History – Prof. Jamaâ Baida, Director of Moroccan Archives
10:10  The Goumiers in World War II: History and Colonial Representation – Dr. Driss Maghraoui, Al Akhawayn University
10:35  Race, Empire, and Vichy Slave Labour Camps in the Western Maghreb – Prof. Susan Gilson Miller, University of California & Visiting Fellow, The Woolf Institute
11:00  Discussion
12:00  Lunch
Panel 2: World War II: The Moroccan Jewish Experience
Chair: Dr Shana Cohen, The Woolf Institute

13:00 Moroccan Jews and the Vichy regime, 1940–1942 – Prof. Mohammed Kenbib, Mohammed V University
13:25 Moroccan Jewish Elites During World War II – Prof. Mohammed Hatmi, Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University
13:50 The Body as a Site of National Identities in Morocco, 1942–1956 – Samir Ben-Layashi, Tel Aviv University
14:15 Discussion

15:15 Coffee break

Panel 3: Moroccan Nationalism and International Politics
Chair: Martin Rose, British Council Morocco

15:30 The Spanish Zone from 1945 to 1956: High Commissioner Varela’s Repressive Policy against Moroccan Nationalism versus High Commissioner García Valiño’s pro-Arab Policy – Dr. Maria Rosa de Madariaga
15:55 Networking for Independence: The Moroccan Nationalist Movement and its Global Campaign against European Colonialism – David Stenner, University of California
16:45–7:45 Discussion

19:30 Dinner

FRIDAY 25 MAY

Panel 4: Representing the Nation
Chair: Dr. Andrew Arsan, University of Cambridge

09:30 From Puppet to Hero: The Transformation of Muhammad V and the Endurance of the Moroccan Monarchy – Dr. Moshe Gershovich, University of Nebraska
09:55 The Depiction of World War II and Independence in Moroccan Textbooks – Katherine Maye-Saidi, University of Cologne
10:20 Discussion

11:00 Coffee break

11:15–11:35 Concluding remarks – Prof. Susan Gilson Miller, University of California & Visiting Fellow, The Woolf Institute
Publication

Cambridge in Morocco: Perspectives on North African and Islamic Studies

Cambridge in Morocco: Perspectives on North African and Islamic Studies was published in 2013 from the proceedings of the ‘Cambridge in Morocco’ series of symposia held in April 2011, bringing together the University of Cambridge, University Hassan II Casablanca, University Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah Fez, and University Mohammed V – Agdal Rabat.

The publication features articles by Professor George Joffé, Professor David Abulafia and other members of the Cambridge team.
The Gulf Research Meeting is an annual three-day conference that aims to foster an academic climate for Gulf Studies and encourage cooperation and exchange between scholars working on or interested in developments in the Gulf. This year the Meeting took place from the 2 – 5 July and involved close to three hundred participants across eleven workshops:

**Workshop 1:** The GCC States-Turkey Relations: Opportunities and Challenges  
Directors: Ozden Oktav & Dr. Birol Baskan

**Workshop 2:** The Relationship between the Gulf Countries and Latin America: The Role of Non-State Actors  
Director: Alejandra Galindo Marines

**Workshop 3:** The Gulf and Asia Political Relations and Strategic Options in a Developing Scenario (China, India, South Korea and Japan)  
Directors: Yang Guang & Professor Tim Niblock

**Workshop 4:** Saudi Arabia and the Arab Uprisings: National, Regional, and Global Responses  
Directors: Paul Aarts & Saud M. Al Tamamy

**Workshop 5:** The Rentier State at 25: Dismissed, Revised, Upheld?  
Directors: Steffen Hertog & Giacomo Luciani

**Workshop 6:** Gulf Cities as Interfaces  
Directors: George Katodrytis, RIBA & Sharmeen Syed

**Workshop 7:** Sustainable Development Challenges in the GCC – Sponsored by the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS)  
Directors: David Bryde, Yusra Mouzugh, Turki Al Rasheed

**Workshop 8:** Educational Challenges in the GCC in the 21st Century  
Directors: Khadijah Bawazeer, Tariq Elyas, Ahmar Mahboob

**Workshop 9:** GCC Relations with Post-War Iraq: A Strategic Perspective  
Directors: Omar Al Ubaydli, Bashir Zain Al Abdin

**Workshop 10:** Boundaries and Territory in the Gulf Region  
Directors: Richard Schofield & George Joffe

**Workshop 11:** Challenges Facing the GCC Oil & Gas Industry  
Directors: Dr Naji Abi Aad & Dr Christian Panzer
Conference

The Ninth Islamic Manuscript Conference

2 – 4 SEPTEMBER 2013

The Ninth Islamic Manuscript Conference: Manuscripts of the Mamluk Sultanate and its Contemporaries

Magdalene College, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom

The Islamic Manuscript Conference is hosted by The Islamic Manuscript Association in cooperation with the Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation and the Centre of Islamic Studies.

The Conference explored the full range of manuscript production that occurred from the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries CE with a focus on cataloguing, conservation, digitisation, and research of the manuscripts.
Codicology Scholarship

The Centre provided a scholarship for Mr Jamal Austa from Birzeit University Library to participate in this year’s Introduction to Islamic Codicology Short Course, held from the 23 – 27 September 2013. Here is his report:

At the beginning of this report I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation the HRH Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Centre of Islamic Studies at the University of Cambridge and its Director, Professor Yasir Suleiman, I would like also to thank the staff and the Executive Director of the Institute Dr Davidson McLaren for inviting me to this course and the full coverage of the stay and study expenses in Cambridge University. I would also like to thank Cambridge University’s University Library and its staff for all their efforts.

Professor François Déroche, instructor of the course, introduced us to many aspects of Islamic codicology over the five intensive days of the course, including the writing, production, binding and decoration of manuscripts, showing us centuries of development and achievements in Islamic manuscripts and teaching us how to verify and to describe manuscripts in an organized standardized method.

The second session of the course was held at Cambridge University’s University Library for hands-on study of Islamic manuscripts where we had the opportunity to handle these treasures of Islamic civilization and culture.

I am involved in a project planned between Birzeit University and The Palestinian National Archive to establish the Palestinian National Museum on the grounds of the University. I am positive the knowledge acquired during this course will be extremely useful.

Finally, I would like to thank Professor François Déroche for his huge contribution to the Islamic heritage preservation studies and his generous efforts throughout the course, the staff of The Islamic Manuscript Association for their warm reception, and the staff of Cambridge University Library for their hard work and fruitful support, especially Mrs. Yasmin Faghih, for her dedication to delivering her experience and knowledge to all the participants of the course.
Lecture Series

Beyond the Arab Spring 2012 – 2013

At the end of 2010 a series of demonstrations shook the Arab world from Iraq to Morocco. They began as desperate protests against sudden escalations in food and energy prices which, by the beginning of 2011, had been transformed into demonstrations of frustration and rejection of the autocratic governments that had dominated Arab countries since the end of the colonial period sixty years before. The demonstrators called for dignity, respect and democracy in place of the repression and intolerance that had characterized the region in which they lived, often with covert support from the developed world.

Today, two years later, we face a region where politics have been dramatically transformed. Some regimes have disappeared, either relatively peacefully or through outright war. In others, despite apparent change, regimes have held on to power, adjusting to popular demand and even co-opting it to ensure their control. In Syria, in the heart of the Levant, a civil war rages, with incalculable implications for the states that surround it, whilst in the Gulf, change has been successfully resisted – at least for now. Meanwhile surrounding states – Turkey and Iran chief amongst them – face a diplomatic environment which is unpredictable and uncertain.

These changes have been so radical and, in some ways, so unpredictable (and unpredicted), that understanding the new contours of the Arab world calls for constant reassessment of established paradigms and conventional interpretation. The Seminar series ‘Beyond the Arab Spring’ is an attempt to do this by examining the themes and patterns that are emerging in the Arab world as the lengthy and often painful process of transition evolves. The seminars take place every second week of term and are held in Pembroke College at 5.15pm on Thursday evenings. Each seminar lasts for one-and-a-half hours and refreshments are provided. Do join us!

Professor Yasir Suleiman; FAMES, Centre of Islamic Studies and King’s College, Cambridge
Professor George Joffe; POLIS, CIRMENA

MICHAELMAS TERM

1 October 2012 (Nihon Room, Pembroke College)
Raphaël Lefèvre (University of Cambridge)
The fragmentation of Syria

25 October 2012 (Nihon Room)
Dr Avi Raz (Oxford University)
The roots of failure in the West Bank: the Eshkol government in the immediate aftermath of the June 1967 War

8 November 2012 (Thomas Gray Room, Pembroke College)
Professor George Joffe (University of Cambridge)
Libya – a security crisis

22 November 2012 (Thomas Gray Room, Pembroke College)
Dr Salah Edin Elzein (Aljazeera)
Sudan in the era of Arab Uprisings

29 November 2012 (Room S1, Alison Richard Building, Sidgwick Site)
Dr Toby Dodge (LSE)
Left behind? Iraqi politics, the Arab Spring and the consequences of exogenous regime change
LENT TERM

24 January 2013 (Thomas Gray Room, Pembroke College)
Professor Paul Stevens (Chatham House)
The Arab Uprisings and the Implications for the International Oil Market

14 February 2013 (Thomas Gray Room, Pembroke College)
Dr Khaled Hroub (Northwestern University)
Religious Broadcasting in the Middle East before and after the Arab Spring

21 February 2013 (Thomas Gray Room, Pembroke College)
Dr Hazem Kandil (University of Cambridge)
Soldiers, Spies, and Statesmen: Egypt’s Road to Revolt

EASTER TERM

25 April 2013 (Thomas Gray Room, Pembroke College)
Joint Lecture: Dr Adam Higazi (University of Cambridge) & Dr Yvan Guichaoua (University of East Anglia)
Nigeria and Mali Beyond the Arab Spring

2 May 2013 (Thomas Gray Room, Pembroke College)
Dr Philip Robins (Oxford University)
Jordan, the Arab Awakening and Pressure from all Sides: A Case of ‘Dual Ambiguity’?

16 May 2013 (Thomas Gray Room, Pembroke College)
Professor Nur Masalha (St Mary’s University College)
Predicting Palestinian Uprisings in Historical Perspective
The Wright Lecture Series addresses topics of relevance to the study and understanding of the Middle East, Iran and India, ancient and modern, and is open to the public. William Wright (1830–1889) was Sir Thomas Adams’s Professor of Arabic in the University of Cambridge and was renowned as a Semiticist and a philologist. The Wright Lecture Series, named in his honour, is run by the Department of Middle Eastern Studies in the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies in association with the Centre of Islamic Studies and reflects the spread of the Department’s academic interests.

**MICHAELMAS TERM**

**27 October**
Meanings of Moralia: Mirrors for Princes and Ethical Instruction at Court and in Society in Western Asia  
Prof. Louise Marlow, Wellesley College  
Prof. James Montgomery, University of Cambridge  
Dr Christine van Ruymbeke, University of Cambridge

**8 November**
Religious Minorities in Iran’s Legal System  
Prof. Houchang E. Chehabi, Boston University

**22 November**
Persian Culture and Indian Medicine in Pre-Modern South Asia  
Dr Fabrizio Speziale, University Sorbonne Nouvelle – CNRS, Paris

**LENT TERM 2013**

**24 January**
Different Matter, Same Pattern: Direct Object Marking in Northwest Semitic  
Prof. Holger Gzella, Professor of Hebrew & Aramaic, Leiden University

**14 February**
Arab identity in the Making: The ‘Unique Necklace’ in Umayyad Andalusia  
Dr Isabel Toral-Niehoff Marie Curie Senior Research Fellow, Aga Khan University in London, Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilizations

**28 February**
How ‘Mongol’ was the Mongol Empire?  
Prof. David Morgan Emeritus Professor of History and Religious Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Outreach Programme

Part of the remit of the Centre of Islamic Studies is to use the expertise of the University of Cambridge to enrich and inform education, debate and discussion beyond traditional boundaries. As well as holding public events and lecture series, the Centre continues to build relationships with schools, youth and civil society initiatives, the further education sector in the UK (including those graduating from Muslim seminaries or darul ulooms in the UK), and Higher Education institutions worldwide.

The Kaetsu Educational & Cultural Centre, Cambridge

13 OCTOBER 2012

A lecture on Islam, diversity and Abrahamic tradition given at the Kaetsu Centre by Dr Saeko Yazaki, as part of the Academic Outreach programme.

Torridon Junior School, London

25 FEBRUARY 2013

Shahla Suleiman and Harriet Hine delivered a full day of teaching to Year 5 pupils (9–10 year olds) at Torridon Junior School in South East London. Each of the three Year Groups was given an hour long session combining a presentation on Islam with interactive activities in order to contribute informed, balanced and contextualised understanding of Islamic culture, religion and history.
Shahla Suleiman and Harriet Hine delivered a talk on Islam to Year 8 students (12–13 year olds) at Soham Village College. Identical presentations were given to two groups of approximately 130 students. After each session there was an opportunity for students to raise questions.

Paul Anderson delivered a talk about Syria at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, focussing on events since the early 1980s. The talk was well attended by Foreign and Commonwealth Office staff.

Dr Paul Anderson held a session on Syria for students at Hills Road Sixth Form College as part of the Hills Road Festival. As a regional expert, Paul was able to provide a behind-the-headlines look into the current crisis, with background on Syrian society, religion, politics and economy. Students were invited to make policy recommendations using the information packs provided including press cuttings and policy analysis. The students worked in small teams to devise three policy recommendations for government officials which they presented at the end of the session.
VISITING FELLOWS AND SCHOLARS

Visiting Fellow

Dr Shana Cohen
Stone Ashdown Director, Woolf Institute

Research interests: public services; non-profit organizations; political alienation in North Africa; inequality; comparative values of social justice and social good.

Research at Cambridge: contemporary values and practices of social good and society within Judaism, Islam, and Christianity.

Dr Yousef Meri
Academic Director, Centre for the Study of Muslim-Jewish Relations, Woolf Institute
Fellow, St Edmund’s College, Cambridge

Research interests: medieval Islamic history and civilisation; Jews of Arab lands in pre-modern and modern times; academic study of Muslim-Jewish relations; memory and history; history of religions, ritual studies; pilgrimage, saints and sacred objects in Islam, Judaism and Christianity; sacred space.


Dr Jeremy Henzell-Thomas
Writer and researcher
Founder and formerly Executive Director, The Book Foundation (2000–2010)

Research interests: comparative linguistics; Islam and pluralism; cross-cultural education; shared values.

Research at Cambridge: human faculties in the Qur’an and Islamic tradition and their implications for the reform and development of authentic Islamic education.

Dr Abdelwahab El-Affendi
Reader in Politics
University of Westminster

Research interests: democracy and Islam; violence; democracy and insecurity.

Research at Cambridge: violence; democracy and insecurity.
Research Associates

Visiting Fellows and Scholars and Research Associates are at the heart of the Centre of Islamic Studies’ intellectual community. They contribute to our research and outreach activities, while benefiting from contact with the University of Cambridge’s wider community, its library and research facilities. Research Associates are usually appointed by invitation only.

Mr Mohammed Abdul Aziz
Mohammed Abdul Aziz was the founding CEO of the Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism and the British Muslim Research Centre, and the founding Director of FaithWise Ltd. He subsequently worked for 8 years in central government as Advisor and Senior Advisor to senior civil servants and ministers in race and religion. He has held various public appointment positions, including Commissioner at the Commission for Racial Equality, the Equal Opportunities Commission and TUC’s Commission on Vulnerable Employment. He has also been a Chair of the European Network Against Racism and is presently a Vice-Chair of the Equality & Diversity Forum. Mohammed is the Director of the Centre for Public Education at the Woolf Institute in Cambridge and a Nohoudh Scholar/PhD Candidate at SOAS in London.

Dr Abdullah Baabood
Dr Abdullah Baabood’s research interests focus on the states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), primarily their economic, social and political development and their external relations. He has published widely on these topics. Abdullah is a graduate in Business and Economics and holds a master’s degree in Business Administration (MBA), a master’s in International Relations (MA), and a PhD from the University of Cambridge. He is also a member of several academic and professional bodies.

Dr Khaled Hroub
Dr Khaled Hroub’s areas of research include the contemporary history and politics of the Middle East with a focus on Islamism and its political manifestations; the socio-political and cultural impact of the ‘new’ media in the Arab world; the role of public intellectuals; and the Arab novel. He has published widely on Hamas and political Islam. Currently he is writing a book critique of the Arab renaissance project. He also publishes weekly articles in leading Arab and world media.
Mr Dilwar Hussain
Dilwar Hussain has research interests in social policy, Muslim identity and Islamic reform in the modern world and blogs at: www.dilwar.org. He is founding Chair of New Horizons in British Islam a charity that works for reform and contextualisation of Muslim thought and practice, Director of Pacata Consulting, a Senior Programme Advisor to the Institute for Strategic Dialogue and a Research Fellow at the Lokahi Foundation. Dilwar is a Trustee of the Three Faiths Forum (3FF), the Islamic Society of Britain, the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust and Maslaha. He was Head of the Policy Research Centre at the Islamic Foundation (2007–2013), a Commissioner at the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) (2006–2007) and served on the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Commission on Urban Life and Faith (2005 – 2006).

Dr Yonatan Mendel
Dr Yonatan Mendel completed his doctoral studies in the Department of Middle Eastern Studies at Cambridge University. His thesis examined the history of Arabic studies in Jewish schools in Palestine/Israel from 1935 to 1985, and focused on the politicisation and securitisation of the language. His research deals with topics such as language policy and war, security considerations and language planning, and the interrelationship between political conflict and foreign language studies in Israel/Palestine. His book, The Creation of Israeli-Arabic: The Political History and Securitisation of Arabic Language Studies in Israeli-Jewish Society, will be published in 2014 (Palgrave Macmillan). Mendel is a regular contributor to the London Review of Books and has published widely on Israeli society and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in English, Arabic and Hebrew.

Dr Saeko Yazaki
Dr Saeko Yazaki was the Outreach and Project Manager of the Centre of Islamic Studies from 2010 to 2012. Her areas of research include the mysticism and epistemology of religion, the Judaeo-Islamic tradition in al-Andalus, and their continuing relevance to the present. She is also pursuing comparative study of monotheistic and non-monotheistic faiths. In her forthcoming monograph, Islamic Mysticism and Abu Talib al-Makki: The Role of the Heart (Routledge, 2012), she addresses the complexity of the Sufi-Hanbali interaction on the one hand, and the Muslim-Jewish nexus on the other, through an exploration of the religious image of the heart in the works of the tenth-century Sufi preacher al-Makki, and specifically his book on ethics, Qut al-qulub (‘The Nourishment of Hearts’). Currently she is carrying out research on the deep connections between Jewish and Muslim spirituality. Saeko has now taken up the post of Lord Kelvin Adam Smith Fellow at Theology and Religious Studies, University of Glasgow.
Visiting Scholars

Miss Juan Chen
PhD Candidate
Shanghai International Studies University

Research interests: Arabic language and literature; Arabic teaching methodology; politics and culture in the Middle East.
Research at Cambridge: the League of Arab States; language policies and institutes in the Arab World; Arab-Islamic pedagogies and compiling teaching materials in British universities; British diplomatic policy in the Middle East over the past decade.

Mr Mitchell Hanley: A report is included below
Harvard University

Research interests: Approaches to Muslim integration across countries, cultures.
Research at Cambridge: Focusing on second-generation British Muslims and investigating tensions at the intersection of social marginalization and civic engagement/national pride

Dr Jianping Jia: A report is included below
Centre for Religious Research
State Administration for Religious Affairs of China

Research interests: Islam
Research at Cambridge: Islam and Muslims in the UK; Islamic theology; the future relationship between Judaism, Christianity and Islam

Dr Ammar Nakhjavani
Lecturer in Islamic history
Exeter University

Research interests: early Islamic history; Islamic theology; Islamic law; Quranic exegesis; Shi'i history/law
A Report by Visiting Scholar Jia Jianping

Research Fellow
Centre for Religious Research of China

18 OCTOBER 2012 – 1 OCTOBER 2013

As I am about to say goodbye, I am very glad to report the following.

The University of Cambridge is an ideal place for learning and research. In the past year, I have been to a number of lectures on religious studies, especially Islamic studies, and I’ve participated in several international academic conferences. I have met many well-known scholars and wonderful people. Luckily for me, many of them are now good friends.

I have spent a great deal of time in the libraries, particularly the libraries of the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies and the Faculty of Divinity. I love these two very much. I have read many wonderful books on Islamic studies, collected a lot of materials on Islamic theology and finished my reports on UK Islam and Muslims and Muslim immigrants in Europe and the learning opportunities for China.

Besides the busy but happy life of learning and research, I have contributed to improving connections between some Chinese and British organisations, including the Centre of Islamic Studies. I believe that the mutual relationship between them will deepen and flourish in the future.

Cambridge is beautiful and peaceful. Life here is so nice, happy and fruitful, and how time flies! I hate to leave and I will definitely miss you, Cambridge.

Finally, I’d like to sincerely thank all the kind people who have helped me. In particular, I’d like to thank Professor Yasir Suleiman for giving me the opportunity to come here, Dr Paul Anderson for being supportive and welcoming and Harriet Hine and Philip Rushworth for being so lovely, kind and good at their work.
A Report by Visiting Scholar Mitch Hanley

Harvard University

SEPTEMBER 2012 – AUGUST 2013

My research’s large question asks whether State counter-terrorism measures do more harm than good, with a specific focus on Schedule 7 of the 2000 Terrorism Act. I spent time at the Parliamentary Archives studying the history of the law, tracking its progression through Parliament under various guises, and conducting interviews with several key stakeholders representing every point of contact between the State and a person examined under Schedule 7.

Schedule 7’s profile soared after the recent detainment of a journalist’s partner, en route from Germany to Brazil, who was suspected of transporting data belonging to UK intelligence agencies, though not suspected of any connection with terrorism. It is the power to stop and search anyone passing through an airport, and its origins can be traced back to the Prevention of Violence (Temporary Provisions) Act’s attempts to curb IRA violence in 1939. Though temporary in name, the act was renewed every year until 1954.

Under the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act, passed in the aftermath of the 1974 Birmingham Pub Bombings, the power to stop and search at ports of entry and borders was known as Section 16. The PTA was renewed annually until 2000, when the Terrorism Act made the provision permanent. In one form or another, Schedule 7 has been on the books for the last 39 years. Most Britons, however, have never heard of it.

Schedule 7’s powers are formidable. If stopped, a traveller passing through a British port must answer all questions posed, and does not have the right to remain silent. Failure to answer a question is considered as impeding the process of the examination and can result in jail time and/or fines. The law does not require that the examining agent have reasonable suspicion, or any reason beyond a “hunch,” to stop someone. In my interviews, several Muslims told me that the hunch was merely that they appeared to be Muslim, a subjective qualifier indeed.

Interviewees include: David Anderson, QC; Lord Alex Carlile; Tufyal Choudhury (Durham University); Mary Hickman (London Metropolitan University); Paddy Hillyard (Queen’s University Belfast); Lord Anthony Lloyd; Matthew Ryder, QC; Massoud Shadjareh (IHRC); Clive Walker (University of Leeds); and a border agent requesting anonymity. My interviews, documentation and reporting will be available on Schedule7.co.uk in the coming months.

I am indebted to the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Centre for Islamic Studies for their support of my research, and I would like to thank especially Harriet Hine, Philip Rushworth, Dr Saeko Yazaki, Dr Paul Anderson and Professor Yasir Suleiman for their guidance and efforts on my behalf.
Narratives of Conversion to Islam in Britain

Project Leader: Yasir Suleiman

MARCH 2013

The first report in the Centre’s project on conversion to Islam in Britain produced in association with The New Muslims Project.

Description:
‘The report is exclusively about female converts to Islam in Britain. Conversion implies continuity and change, association, and, at times, disassociation. It looks back, and it looks forward in a journey with meanings which vary with time and from person to person. Female conversion to Islam in particular challenges the binaries of tradition versus modernity and faith versus secularism, by combining in the person of the convert – and her body – both the insider and the outsider, and doing so in a way that has the capacity to dilute the rough and ready distinction between ‘us’ and ‘them’. In the person and the body of the female convert the ‘twain shall and do meet’. The in-betweenness of female converts poses challenges to our mental and social taxonomies, being insiders/outsiders and intimate strangers at one and the same time, to both the non-Muslim majority and the Muslim minority in Britain’.

All Centre reports are available to download for free from the Centre’s website.
PARTNERS
The Gulf Research Centre Cambridge (GRC-C) is the Gulf Research Center office in Cambridge, UK. GRC-C is a registered UK Charity, cooperating closely with the Centre of Islamic Studies at the University of Cambridge. The prime directive of GRC-C is to advance education and research on political, economic, social and security issues and other matters relating to member countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council and other countries of the Gulf region including Iran, Iraq and Yemen.

The Gulf Research Centre Cambridge organises the annual Gulf Research Meeting (GRM) which seeks to provide an academic environment to foster Gulf studies and promote scholarly exchanges among scholars working on/or having familiarity with the Gulf region. GRM identifies subjects of importance to the Gulf region, stimulates research in these subjects, and provides a forum for broad dissemination of the research results. Motivated by the same objectives underlying the Gulf Research Meeting, GRC-C also serves as a platform for other events throughout the year and provides a focal point for students dedicated to carrying out and promoting critical research related to the Gulf.

The Gulf Research Centre Cambridge is a registered charity organization under the Charity Commission for England and Wales and can therefore receive tax deductible donations.
The Islamic Manuscript Association (TIMA)

The Islamic Manuscript Association (TIMA) is an international non-profit organisation dedicated to protecting Islamic manuscript collections and supporting those who work with them. It was formed in response to the urgent need to address the poor preservation and inaccessibility of many Islamic manuscript collections around the world.

The Islamic Manuscript Association:

- Articulates standards and guidelines for best practice in cataloguing, conservation, digitisation and academic publishing so that Islamic manuscript collections may be made more accessible and preserved for posterity.
- Promotes the highest ethical and professional standards in the care and management of Islamic manuscript collections.
- Promotes excellence in scholarship on Islamic manuscripts, particularly Islamic codicology and disciplines related to the care and management of Islamic manuscript collections.
- Provides a platform for presenting scholarship on Islamic manuscripts, particularly Islamic codicology and disciplines related to the care and management of Islamic manuscript collections, at its annual conference at the University of Cambridge.
- Provides a wide range of online resources about manuscripts and their care.
- Awards grants to support the care of Islamic manuscript collections and advance scholarship on Islamic manuscripts.
- Organises regular training workshops in cataloguing, conservation, digitisation and academic publishing as well as an annual workshop on Islamic codicology in cooperation with Cambridge University Library.
- Facilitates dialogue between individuals with scholarly and professional interests in Islamic manuscripts and institutions holding collections of Islamic manuscripts.

TIMA includes among its members libraries and museums possessing collections of Islamic manuscripts as well as individuals with scholarly and professional interests in Islamic manuscripts. Over 150 persons from 25 different countries are members. Members have the right to vote, hold office, apply for grants and receive members’ rates for the annual conference and training workshops.

TIMA is an affiliated project of the Centre of Islamic Studies and is one of the principal projects of the Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation.
APPENDICES

APPENDIX I:
Cambridge in Sharjah

APPENDIX II:
Narratives of Conversion

APPENDIX III:
Cambridge in Morocco Conference
Parody as resistance, religious broadcasting in the Arab world and China’s relationship with the Gulf will all come under scrutiny as academics from Cambridge’s Centre of Islamic Studies gather in the Gulf on March 10.

Attempts to bring the work of the Centre to an ever-increasing global audience will see more than a dozen academics and PhD students travel to the American University of Sharjah, in the United Arab Emirates, for a two-day symposium.

The March 10/11 event – Cambridge in Sharjah: Perspectives on Middle Eastern Studies – is the latest attempt to foster new dialogues, partnerships and knowledge exchange beyond the boundaries of Cambridge after previous Centre visits to Sarajevo, Morocco and China.

Director Professor Yasir Suleiman believes his approach of ‘taking the mountain to Muhammad’ is the surest means of building long-standing and meaningful partnerships around the world.

He said: “We care about engaging with people on their home turf, not just ours; people who want to come together and work with us as a team. This is all about connections and conversations.

“We believe Cambridge is globally recognised as a leading centre for Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies. Cambridge in Sharjah is a celebration of the best traditions of learning and scholarship between the River Cam and the shores of the Arabian Gulf.”
“By holding these seminars and symposia abroad, we can talk to people and engage in discussions in different parts of the world; interacting with people from the host countries on a much wider scale – not just with academics.

“We can have conversations that we would not have in Cambridge, with people we might otherwise never meet – and build networks that have foundations all over the world. To Sharjah we’ll be taking speakers from our prior visits to Sarajevo, China and Morocco – and so it will go on.”

The programme for Sharjah is wide-ranging. Professor Suleiman himself will speak about the Arabic language and ‘language anxiety’, examining how concerns about the influence (or waning influence) of the language can become politicised in times of stress, tension or crisis in society.

Other speakers include Hawraa Al-Hassan, who looks at parody and irony in the literature of Iraqi writer Sinan Antoon, and Dr Khaled Hroub, who will examine the social, political and cultural impact of religious satellite broadcasting in the Arab world.

Added Professor Suleiman: “The American University of Sharjah (AUS) is one of the leading institutions of higher education in the Middle East and beyond. Its international student body and faculty make AUS an excellent partner in our effort to build a network of institutions that can share intellectual pursuits across different regions of the world. The Ruler of Sharjah and President of the University, His Highness Sheikh Dr Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qassimi, is a friend of Cambridge. Holding ‘Cambridge in Sharjah’ at AUS pays tribute to this friendship.”

Dr Paul Anderson, Assistant Director of the Centre of Islamic Studies, who will also speak at the symposium, said: “This is an international symposium with a difference. Last month saw the Centre of Islamic Studies sign a three-year agreement with the British Council and Moroccan British Society to further academic cooperation with Moroccan universities. This came out of the “Cambridge in Morocco” symposia which the Centre initiated in 2012. We hope that bringing Cambridge to Sharjah will also be the start of continuing friendship there.”

Meanwhile, the Sharjah event will also feature the first public presentation of the Narratives of Conversion to Islam in Britain project – ahead of its full UK launch later this spring.

The landmark project has sought to map out the different routes through which women convert to Islam, and describe their experiences on entering the faith.

It is being run at the Centre of Islamic Studies in association with the New Muslims Project at Markfield, Leicester, collating the views and narratives of female converts in an effort to provide an insider’s view of what the experience is really like.
Meanwhile, the British Council in the United Arab Emirates will host a reception in honour of the visiting Cambridge delegation.

Gordon Slaven, Director of the British Council, United Arab Emirates, said: “On behalf of the British Council it is a great pleasure to welcome the Director and academic staff of HRH Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Centre of Islamic Studies at Cambridge to the UAE and Sharjah.

“Cambridge’s initiative in reaching out to academics in other countries through in-depth collaboration and sharing is to be applauded, and I hope that this initial visit to the UAE will plant the seeds of a blossoming relationship between Cambridge and Universities in the UAE.”

APPENDIX II
NARRATIVES OF CONVERSION

Female conversion to Islam in Britain examined in unique research project

A ground-breaking report examining the experiences of nearly 50 British women of all ages, ethnicities, backgrounds and faiths (or no faith) – who have all converted to Islam – was launched in London yesterday by the University of Cambridge.

The report, produced by the University’s Centre of Islamic Studies (CIS), in association with the New Muslims Project, Markfield, is a fascinating dissection of the conversion experience of women in Britain in the 21st Century.

The first forum of its kind held in the UK, the study concludes with a series of recommendations for the convert, heritage Muslim, and wider British communities. The 129-page report also outlines the social,
emotional and sometimes economic costs of conversion, and the context and reasons for women converting to Islam in a society with pervasive negative stereotypes about the faith.

Project Leader and Director of CIS, Yasir Suleiman, said: “The consistent themes flowing through the report is the need for increased levels of support for the convert community – and the converts’ own potential to be a powerful and transformative influence on both the heritage Muslim community and wider British society. “Another of the recurring themes was the overwhelmingly negative portrayal of Muslims and Islam in the UK media and what role the convert community might have to play in helping to redress the balance.

This report seeks to dispel misapprehensions and misrepresentations of female converts to Islam.”

A key revelation of the study was the heavily disproportionate attention, bordering on obsession in some cases, given to white, female converts to Islam by both the Muslim and non-Muslim communities alike.

This is often to the detriment of African-Caribbean converts, thought to be the largest ethnic group of converts to Islam, who are often ignored and left feeling isolated by both the Muslim and non-Muslim communities.

Added Suleiman: “White converts can be regarded as ‘trophy’ Muslims and used in a tokenistic fashion by various sections of society, including the media. African-Caribbean converts remain largely invisible, uncelebrated and frequently unacknowledged. They can feel like a minority within a minority and this is something that must be addressed. I found this part of the conversion narratives hardest to bear.”

Meanwhile, the project also reveals the complex relationship between female converts and their families, ranging from exclusion, disbelief and denial - to full and open acceptance of their faith. It also brings to light responses of converts to issues of sexuality and gender including homosexuality, ‘traditional’ roles of women and transgenderism.

Project Manager Shahla Suleiman said: “Considering the stereotypical and largely negative picture Islam has in the media and society at large, and considering that quite a lot of this revolves around the position of women in Islam, we wanted to understand the seemingly paradoxical issue of why highly educated and professionally successful Western women convert to Islam.

“The basis of conversion is faith and spirituality – but conversion is also a social phenomenon that has become political. In this sense, conversion concerns everyone alike in society.
“The debate is just starting and we need to have more informed studies about conversion to Islam that directly address public interest and concern. The struggle for a better future relies on overcoming the politics of exclusion and absolute difference based on an ideological dislike for multiculturality, not just multiculturalism. Fear of immigration, Islam and conversion to it are a proxy for views on race, prejudice, anxiety and fear.”

The converts explored the issues of women’s rights and dress etiquette at some length, with the issue of wearing the hijab and other Islamic forms of dress heavily discussed. Although all views were represented in the debate, a common approach among many coverts was the adaptation of Western style dress to accommodate Islamic concepts of modesty and decency.

Women’s rights are a highly charged political issue within Muslim communities and while participants were not unanimously supportive of feminism as defined in the West, the need to raise the status of women within Muslim communities was fully acknowledged. Attempting to realise the practise of these rights has proven more difficult to achieve. Participants were especially critical of the concept of Sharia Council/ courts operating in Britain in terms of the courts’ potential to jeopardise the rights of women.

The report says: ‘Converts serve to confound and challenge negative racist or clichéd narratives depicted in the media of heritage Muslims because their culture and heritage is intrinsically reflective of British culture.

‘But we also find that not all conversions are equal socially in the eyes of some members of the heritage Muslim community. The conversion of white women seems to be more socially valued than African women by some. There is also greater depth to the hijab than is thought to be the case among heritage Muslims and the non-Muslim majority in Britain. There is a distinction to be made between wearing the hijab and being worn by it. This puts the convert women in control. The hijab signals modesty, but it is not intended to hide beauty.’
APPENDIX III
CAMBRIDGE IN MOROCCO CONFERENCE

Morocco in the Modern Era: Exploring an enigma

An international group of scholars will explore the roots of Morocco’s political landscape in a foundational, but little understood, period of its modern history at an event this week.

The Arab Spring has brought social and political change to much of the Middle East and North Africa. Despite this, the region’s monarchies, notably in Morocco, have so far proved to be remarkably resilient. This week’s roundtable workshop, *Illuminating the Dark Years: Morocco from World War Two to Independence*, will discuss the momentous events that characterised the prelude to independence in 1956, and how these events continue to shape the country.

“Amidst the renewed interest in political change and stability in the Middle East and North Africa, there is surprisingly little research into this foundational period of Moroccan history”, said Dr Paul Anderson, Assistant Director of the Centre of Islamic Studies. “We hope to shed more light on this crucial era: the social dynamics that brought about Morocco’s independence, how the monarchy emerged as a national institution, and why it has endured.”

Understanding the roots of Morocco’s modern politics has become all the more significant in recent times of historic political change. In contrast to the drastic political upheaval experienced by many Arab Spring countries, the Moroccan monarchy, which has introduced tentative political reforms and constitutional revisions, still enjoys a degree of legitimacy.

“Monarchies have shown greater staying power compared to other kinds of regimes challenged by the Arab Spring. In many ways, the dynamics behind the emergence of nationalist movements and independent regimes are the key to understanding stability in more recent periods”, Dr Anderson explained.
The workshop is part of the University’s Cambridge Morocco Project which brings together scholars from Moroccan institutions with other regional and international experts from the rest of the world. Pioneered by the University’s Centre of Islamic Studies, in partnership with the Moroccan British Society, the British Council in Morocco and the Woolf Institute in Cambridge, the Project is dedicated to reviving academic links between the UK and Moroccan institutions, with Cambridge at its heart.

The Cambridge Morocco Project will run initially for three years, with upcoming events due to examine employment, livelihoods and poverty, and youth culture.

The workshop runs from Friday 24 – Saturday 25 May 2013 at the Moller Centre. The full workshop programme can be accessed here. For more information on the Centre of Islamic Studies’ work please visit www.cis.cam.ac.uk.
Director

Professor Yasir Suleiman, CBE, FRSE

Professor Yasir Suleiman is the Director of the Centre of Islamic Studies, His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Sa’id Professor of Modern Arabic Studies, and a Fellow of King’s College, Cambridge. His research covers the cultural politics of the Middle East with special focus on identity, conflict, diaspora studies and modernisation in so far as these issues relate to language, modern Arabic literature, translation and memory. He also conducts research in Arabic grammatical theory and the Arabic intellectual tradition in the pre-modern period.

Professor Suleiman is Chair of the Panel of Judges, British-Kuwaiti Friendship Society Book Prize in Middle Eastern Studies (read more about book prize ceremony on 14 July 2012). In 2013 Professor Suleiman was elected as Chairman of the International Prize of Arabic Fiction (IPAF) popularly known in the Arabic-speaking world as the ‘Arabic Booker’. He serves as Trustee on the Boards of the following organisations: Arab-British Chamber Charitable Foundation, Banipal Trust for Arab Literature and is Trustee of the Gulf Research Centre-Cambridge. He is also Board Member of the Islamic Manuscript Association, Chair of the Centre for the Study of the International Relations of the Middle East and North Africa (CIRMENA), Cambridge and Member of the Advisory Board of Our Shared Future, a joint project of the British Council, USA and Carnegie Foundation. He is a member of the editorial boards of a number of journals and book series. In October 2013 Professor Suleiman was made Ambassador of the University of Sarajevo for his outstanding contribution to promoting the University internationally.

Professor Suleiman is Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE), a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and formerly Head of the Department of Middle Eastern Studies, the University of Cambridge.

Professor Suleiman’s publications include:
Arabic in the Fray: Language Ideology and Cultural Politics, 2013
Arabic, Self and Identity: A Study in Conflict and Displacement, 2011
Living Islamic History: Studies in Honour of Professor Carole Hillenbrand (ed.), 2010
Language and Nation in the Middle East (ed.), 2006
A War of Words: Language and Conflict in the Middle East, 2004
The Arabic Grammatical Tradition: A Study in Tal’ili, 1999
Language and Society in the Middle East and North Africa (ed.), 1999
Arabic Grammar and Linguistics (ed.), 1998
Assistant Director

Dr Paul Anderson

Dr Paul Anderson is the Assistant Director of the Centre of Islamic Studies and the Prince Alwaleed Lecturer in the Department of Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Cambridge. He gained his PhD in social anthropology at the University of Edinburgh and his BA(Hons) in Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Oxford.

Research Interests:
- Social and political anthropology of the Arab world (especially Syria), particularly issues of language, agency, ethics, religious piety, trust and personhood.
- Islamic modernism
- He is currently working on a monograph on trust, intimacy and state power in the lives of contemporary traders in Syria.

Courses:
He teaches courses on the anthropology of the Middle East, the anthropology of Islam and on modern Islamic thought in the Arab world, combining an anthropological approach with a close study of modern Islamic texts in Arabic.

Dr Anderson’s research publications include:


2013 Leaving room for failure: optimism in the thought of Mohamed Talbi, in “Cambridge in Morocco”. Rabat: Editions et Impression Bouregreg


Conference and Seminar Papers:
2013 ‘The politics of scorn in Syria’, Department of Anthropology and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Manchester, February.


2012 ‘Leaving Room for Failure: Optimism in the Thought of Mohamed Talbi’, Universities of Casablanca, Fes and Rabat, April.


Reports:
2011 Reforms in Islamic Education (with Y. Suleiman and C. Tan)
2009 Contextualising Islam in Britain (with Y. Suleiman)
2008 Arabic on Campus and Beyond (with Y. Suleiman)
2007 Conducting Fieldwork in the Middle East (with Y. Suleiman)
Outreach and Project Co-ordinator

Ms Harriet Hine

Harriet Hine is the Outreach and Project Co-ordinator. She gained her MA in Art History at the Courtauld Institute of Art and her BA in History of Art and Architecture at the University of Reading. Harriet has experience of public education and administration working under the Keeper of the Asian Department at the Victorian & Albert Museum in London which has one the world’s largest collections of Islamic Art.

Administrative Assistant

Mr Philip Rushworth

Philip Rushworth is the Administrative Assistant. He holds a BA in International History from the London School of Economics and has a keen interest in the history of the Middle East and a basic level of Arabic. He has lived and worked in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia.

Committee of Management 2012–2013
Professor Simon Franklin (Chair)
Professor Yasir Suleiman
Professor Christopher Hill
Professor Geoffrey Khan
Dr Christine van Ruymbeke
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Mr Omer Totonji
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Ms Alanoud Al-Mohammadi (2013)