

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

مَرْكَزُ الْأَقِيرِ الْوَلَيِّنِ طَالِلِ اللَّدِّ لِسَانِ الْإِسْلَامِيَّةِ

HRH PRINCE ALWALEED BIN TALAL  
CENTRE OF ISLAMIC STUDIES



ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12

مَرْكَزُ الْأَقِيرِ الْوَلَيْدِ بْنِ طَالِلِ الدِّرْسَاتِ الْإِسْلَامِيَّةِ

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## FROM THE DIRECTOR



The year 2011/12 saw the Centre develop and deepen its key initiatives. The Alwaleed Centres meeting in February 2012 at Harvard University enabled us to connect with our colleagues in the United States and the Middle East to learn more about their programmes and to discuss the possibility of joint initiatives. This was followed by a successful 'Cambridge in Morocco' visit in April which took fourteen scholars from Cambridge to partner scholars in three Moroccan universities in a joint programme of talks and round table discussions.

This visit served as a platform for further strengthening the Centre's relationship with Morocco and the development of a plan to sign a three year agreement with The Moroccan-British Society and the British Council, Rabat to launch a series of workshops, symposia and conferences on Morocco, as well as academic exchanges involving scholars and graduate students in both directions.

This burgeoning relationship would not have happened without the support of Martin Rose, OBE who, with his British Council colleagues in Rabat, have played a crucial role in negotiating the mercifully few nuts and bolts of the agreement which we hope to sign in London next year. I am grateful to Martin for his friendship and leadership and to The Moroccan-British Society for their enthusiasm for this collaborative initiative.

In May 2012 I led a delegation of Cambridge scholars on a 'Cambridge in China' visit for a joint symposium involving Arabic and Middle Eastern specialists from Peking University and other universities in Beijing. This was a memorable visit. Not only did we have a great symposium, but we were warmly welcomed by our Chinese colleagues who spared no effort to show us their great cultural heritage. Their friendship and generosity have left a lasting impact on all members of the Cambridge team. We hope to nurture this relationship into the future. The fact that we are hosting more and more Chinese scholars as visitors to the Centre has meant that sustained personal relationships are being formed as the basis for continuing the relationship with China.

One of the highlights of the academic year was the joint conference 'Acknowledging a Shared Past to Build a Shared Future: Rethinking Muslim non-Muslim Relations' in which the British Council, USA took the lead. The conference was held in Cambridge from 28 – 30 March with support from the Carnegie Corporation, Vodafone Corporation, Woolf Institute, Alwaleed Centre at Edinburgh University, the Institute for Strategic Dialogue and the Association of Muslim Social Scientists, ending with a sumptuous dinner at Corpus Christi, Cambridge. The conference aimed to bring academics and media specialists together to help coordinate efforts in taking inclusive messages about relations

between Muslims and non-Muslims in the West to wider audiences. We were delighted to welcome to the conference colleagues from Morocco and Sarajevo who participated with us in the first two 'Cambridge in ...' programmes. The conference further served as a venue to launch the Centre's report 'Contextualising Islam in Britain II'. This report concludes the work of the Centre on this topic.

Two programmes continued from 2010/11 into this year: The Azhar-Cambridge project and the Narratives of Conversion to Islam: Female Perspectives. These two programmes show the wide-ranging work of the Centre: the former in terms of building relationships with external partners, as we have done with Morocco and China, and the latter the continuation of projects that deal with the life of Muslims in the UK. Both projects are expected to continue next year.

Information about the above activities and a great deal more – including a project on faith-based social action in the UK, the lecture series 'Beyond the Arab Spring', and the start of educational visits to local schools – can be found on the Centre's new website which I encourage you to visit from time to time to learn about the pioneering work that is being done in Cambridge.

On a personal note, the highlight of the year for me was a visit to Buckingham Palace in December 2011 to receive a CBE from Her Majesty the Queen. Shahla and my two sons, Tamir and Sinan, joined me on this occasion. And what a memorable occasion it was: two kilted sons acting as a joint father to the Director of the Centre, telling him what and what not to do. And what an obedient 'son' I was!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yasir Suleiman', with a horizontal line underneath.

Professor Yasir Suleiman CBE, FRSE  
**Founding Director**

# ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PRINCE ALWALEED BIN TALAL ACADEMIC CENTRES

Harvard University  
7–8 February 2012

Professor Nicholas Burns moderated a discussion with the Alwaleed Academic Centre Directors. The event reflected on the current state of the relationship between the world of Islam and the West, as seen from the diverse locations of the Prince Alwaleed Centres.



Princess Ameerah speaking at the Gala dinner in the presence of former President Jimmy Carter & Prince Alwaleed at The Annual Meeting of the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Academic Centres



The Loeb House, Main Hall



Prince Alwaleed & Princess Ameerah with the Directors of the six Prince Alwaleed Academic Centres during the Annual Meeting in Boston

*From left:*

**Dr Magda Shahin:** Director of the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Abdulaziz Alsaud Center for American Studies, American University in Cairo

**Professor Hugh Goddard:** Director of the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Centre for the Study of Islam in the Contemporary World, University of Edinburgh

**Professor Yasir Suleiman:** Director of the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Centre of Islamic Studies, University of Cambridge

**HH Princess Ameerah Al-Taweel,** Vice-Chairwoman of the Alwaleed Bin Talal Foundation

**HRH Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Bin Abdulaziz Alsaud,** Chairman of the Alwaleed Bin Talal Foundation-Global

**Professor Ali Asani:** Director of the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Islamic Studies Program, Harvard University

**Professor John Esposito:** Director of the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Georgetown University

**Dr Alex Lubin:** Director of the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Bin Abdulaziz Alsaud Center for American Studies and Research, American University of Beirut

# CONTENTS

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION	9
ACTIVITIES	11
Narratives of Conversion	
Cambridge in Morocco	
Cambridge in Beijing	
Acknowledging a Shared Past to Build a Shared Future	
Muslims and Political Participation in Britain	
Gulf Research Meeting 2012	
Eighth Islamic Manuscript Conference	
Codicology Scholarship	
Beyond the Arab Spring	
Social Action in an Age of Austerity	
British-Kuwaiti Friendship Society Book Prize Ceremony	
VISITING FELLOWS AND SCHOLARS	33
REPORTS	43
Contextualising Islam in Britain II	
Narratives of Conversion	
PARTNERS	45
APPENDICES	49
CENTRE STAFF 2011/12	55



## 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 promoted Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies 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 and communication between academics, the media and the public.

The Centre of Islamic Studies was officially opened on 23rd March 2011. During the academic year 2011/12 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.

**Since October 2011, the Centre's activities have included:**

Narratives of Conversion  
Cambridge in Morocco  
Cambridge in Beijing  
Acknowledging a Shared Past to Build a Shared Future  
Muslims and Political Participation in Britain  
Gulf Research Meeting 2012  
Eighth Islamic Manuscript Conference  
Codicology Scholarship  
Beyond the Arab Spring  
Social Action in an Age of Austerity  
British-Kuwaiti Friendship Society Book Prize Ceremony

***Visiting Fellows:***

Dr Shana Cohen  
Dr Abdelwahab El-Affendi  
Dr Yousef Meri  
Dr Jeremy Henzell-Thomas  
Dr Ahmad Jamil Azem Hamad  
Mr Mohammed Abdul Aziz

***Visiting Scholars:***

Professor Helge Daniëls  
Ms Leila Samadi Rendy  
Mr Malek Abou Hamdan  
Mr Mohammad Ayatollahi Tabaar  
Mr Yuval Evri  
Dr Jing Min

***Reports:***

Contextualising Islam in Britain II  
Narratives of Conversion

## ACTIVITIES

Narratives of Conversion	12
Cambridge in Morocco	14
Cambridge in Beijing	21
Acknowledging a Shared Past to Build a Shared Future	23
Muslims and Political Participation in Britain	24
Gulf Research Meeting 2012	24
Eighth Islamic Manuscript Conference	25
Codicology Scholarship	26
Beyond the Arab Spring	27
Social Action in an Age of Austerity	28
British-Kuwaiti Friendship Society Book Prize Ceremony	29



Keith Roper

## Narratives of Conversion to Islam: Female Perspectives

*Narratives of Conversion to Islam* brought together fifty female Muslim converts to discuss aspects of their conversions to Islam, to reflect on their journeys and experiences and to produce a report to inform Muslims and non-Muslims about the topic. The participants reflected on the personal and social aspects of their experiences, including the impact on the individual and the family. The preliminary meeting commented on the generally shallow treatment of the topic in the media despite a rising interest in women converts to Islam. The underlying assumption in most media reporting is a sense of surprise, to put it mildly, that women would want to convert to a religion that oppresses them. While the reasons for female conversion are not the motivation for the project, it is still an important part of the context against which it was conceived.

The project opened with a symposium in 2010, with the theme 'Family, Appearing as a Muslim & Lifestyle'. In the academic year 2011/12, two further symposia were held, 'Intra Muslim-Relations, Marriage & Media' (December 2011) and 'Genders and Sexuality, Identity, Citizenship and Political Engagement & Struggles within the Faith' (January 2012).

The *Narratives of Conversion to Islam: Female Perspectives* project is now complete and the report will be published in March 2013. There are plans to extend this project to explore the narratives of other converts in Britain, including Muslim men and those converting to other religions.

The themes and questions explored in the 2011/12 symposia are set out below.

### December 2011. Symposium II: Intra Muslim Relations, Marriage & Media

#### 2.1: Intra Muslim Relations

- How do converts sustain a presence in the Muslim community? To what extent are they accepted as authentic Muslims? What are the barriers to inclusion?
- To what extent do heritage Muslims question converts' interpretations or practice of Islam and what impact does this have on the notion of 'believing as ourselves'?

- Is there any evidence to suggest that heritage Muslims and Islamic organisations want to have a degree of domination and control over new Muslims?
- How do anti-Western sentiments held by elements of the Muslim diasporas impact on the convert's understanding of citizenship?
- How do converts negotiate an unfamiliar religious infrastructure, particularly one that presents itself as not designed for women or for converts?
- With theology derived solely from Muslim countries, how can theological approaches develop to incorporate Islam in a British context so that scholars can respond appropriately to the needs and concerns of converts that are specific to the UK?
- Do converts make a conscious choice to adopt Shia, Sunni, Ismaili etc. perspectives?
- To what extent do converts move between Sufi, Salafi, Deobandi etc. representations of Islam presented by the heritage Muslim community?

#### 2.2: Marriage and forms of marriage

- How are marriages convened for converts, who facilitates marriage for converts, can converts facilitate their own marriages successfully?
- Where can converts find support and assistance both before and during marriage?
- To what extent does the apparent lack of family and community support impact on the Muslim marriage?
- How do the children of converts to Islam fare – what impact does their parents' conversion make on their future decisions regarding their religious faith, how does it affect their ability to integrate into British society and affect their life chances?
- Are there differences in experience according to whether one or both parents are converts, where one parent is born into the faith and the other is a convert or, if the parents convert during different stages of the child's life?
- Is polygamy more inherent among converts than the wider Muslim population?
- To what extent can polygamy be accepted in a Western context?

### **2.3: Media**

- How do media representations affect and impact on converts' self-perceptions and how do they influence the views of wider society?
- Does the media amplify representations of converts as radicals, potential or actual terrorists and as such anti-Western?
- In the mixture of 'curious fascination and incomprehension' that is the media portrayal of conversion what aspects of conversion are emphasised and which aspects fail to be acknowledged through media outlets?
- What can we do to challenge Islamophobia or media hype about Islam and Muslims?
- To what extent are relationships between converts to Islam and heritage Muslims portrayed by the media as deviant or culturally inappropriate?
- Is there a particular use of language by the media to raise concerns about the rate of conversion in the UK as a scare tactic?
- Is it possible that the media could present conversion to Islam as a vital tool in anchoring one's lifestyle in a more normative manner?

Summing up ways forward – What changes can we suggest in order to bring about a more constructive and supportive environment for converts?

### **January 2012. Symposium III: Genders and Sexuality, Identity, Citizenship and Political Engagement & Struggles within the Faith**

#### **3.1 Genders and Sexuality**

##### **3.1.1 Gender**

- Can a Western view of gender coexist with the Islamic faith?
- Does conversion to Islam necessitate a re-evaluation of a convert's attitude towards gender equality?
- Does conversion provide a form of empowerment or a form of oppression for a woman?
- How does the process of conversion affect the way women are viewed by the non-Muslim community?

- Does the experience of being a Muslim woman differ from what converts think Islam offers women?
- How do converts perceive the representation of Muslim women by their own (convert community) AND the heritage Muslim community?
- Some heritage Muslim communities may possess misogynistic attitudes towards women, which are not only based on double standards, but also operate against the tenets of Islam. How do these views impact on female converts?
- Does a female convert have a more difficult experience in conversion than a male convert?

##### **3.1.2 Sexuality**

- How do notions of the norms of Western sexual activity impact on female converts?
- To what extent do attitudes towards female sexuality affect intimacy within marriage?
- In a society which places so much emphasis on a woman's attractiveness, does opting out of this game empower or disempower her?
- How has the process of conversion impacted converts views on sexual orientation?
- How should British Muslims deal responsibly and compassionately with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual converts to Islam?
- Does a distinction between acts and identities enable a more tolerant and compassionate approach to the LGBT community?

#### **3.2 Identity, citizenship and political engagement**

##### **3.2.1 Identity**

- How do converts present their identity as Muslims?
- Do converts' experiences enable full acceptance of their identities when they come into Islam?
- Conversely, do converts feel pressured to compromise their identity when they come into Islam?
- Does a convert have to empty out some of their existing Western identity when converting?
- If so, does this hollowing out of an identity make them susceptible to multiple and conflicting identities presented by Muslim communities?

### **3.2.2 Citizenship and Political Engagement**

- Does conversion affect converts' interaction or relationship with the state? (ability to be politically, civically or locally engaged/ converts' political leanings etc.)
- Does conversion change the type of roles converts can play in local communities or in national politics?
- Where accepted norms held by wider society conflict with Islamic values, how does a convert respond to these?
- Is it more difficult for a convert to engage with the non-Muslim community or state as a 'representative' of the Muslim community?
- With far-right politics being ever more focused on Muslims, do converts find themselves more politically active or aware after conversion?
- How does a convert experience politics within the Muslim community?
- To what extent are converts under pressure to accept conservative or even extremist political views, for example, those who hold that political engagement in a non-Muslim society is a form of impiety?

### **3.3 Struggles within the faith**

- What facets of Islam do converts find difficult to reconcile with their previously held beliefs?
- How do converts maintain their faith and what difficulties may cause their faith to waiver?
- How difficult is it to differentiate between the behaviour of Muslims and the tenets of Islam?
- Is leaving Islam an option or even possible?
- Do people remain as Muslims because of the perceived penalties associated with leaving Islam?
- Questioning Islam – is this possible?
- To what extent do stories about the Prophet and his marriages contribute to misunderstandings, hostility and the leaving of Islam?
- To what extent does the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and Islamophobia contribute to converts wishing to leave Islam?
- Does the converts' lack of Qur'anic exegesis contribute to intolerance towards non-believers?
- Can gender differences and the notions of control and authority as perceived by male Muslims be a contributory factor to converts leaving Islam?

A news story is given in Appendix I.

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## **Cambridge in Morocco: Perspectives on Islamic and North African Studies**

**16–20 APRIL 2012**

The symposium "Cambridge in Morocco: Perspectives on Islamic and North African Studies" was held from 16th to 20th April 2012 in Fes, Rabat and Casablanca, organised by the British Council in partnership with the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Centre of Islamic Studies at the University of Cambridge,

University Hassan II in Casablanca, University Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah in Fes, University Mohamed V in Rabat and the Moroccan British Society. The Cambridge and Moroccan scholars gave presentations of their research, bringing together an intellectual community of scholars with cognate interests.

## MONDAY 16TH APRIL

University Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah – Fès

**14.30–16.00 Public Lecture:** George Joffe, Walter Harris: *The Liberal Imperialist Vision of Morocco.*

**16.00–16.30 Coffee Break**

**16.30–18.30 Concurrent roundtable sessions:**

### **Roundtable 1: History of Morocco and Andalucia**

- David Abulafia, *Maritime History: The Straits of Gibraltar*
- Abdellah Ammari, *Unity Aspects between Al Andalus and Morocco during the Middle Ages*
- Khalid Bekkaoui, *Moroccans beyond Borders: Multiple Itineraries.*
- Mostapha Taher
- Mohammed Bokbot, *The Archive and Current Morocco History.*
- Samir Bouzouita, *Issues in the Moroccan – British Relations During the Sixteenth Century*
- Abdellatif Merroun

### **Roundtable 2: Anthropology and Politics**

- Shana Cohen, *Politics and the Transformation of the Middle Class in Morocco*
- Ahmad Hamad, *Conflict Management Theory and Application in the Arab World (Morocco: A Case Study)*
- Alice Wilson, *The Meaning of Marriage payments in the Hassanophone Ouest Saharien*
- Omar Jadia, *The Islamic Movement in Morocco and Political Participation.*
- Sadiq Rddad, *Moroccan Sufism: Youth and Politics*
- Mohammed Lebbar, *The Woman and Child Share in the Social Solidarity in FEZ City through (the Habous) and Traditions*
- Fatima Amrani, *Gender and Politics in Morocco*

**20.00 Dinner**

## TUESDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> APRIL

University Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah – Fès

**09.00–11.00 Roundtable: Intellectual History**

- Khalid Hroub, *Jabri's Model and the Rise of the 'Critical' Intellectual in the Arab World*
- Paul Anderson, *Leaving Room for Failure: Optimism in the Thought of Mohamed Talbi*
- Said Meghnaoui, *Common religious links between Morocco and Andalucia*
- Moussa Aouni, *An Answer from the Moroccan-Andalusi Legacy*
- Abdelhamid Nfissi, *Reading on the Modern Cultural Scene in Light of the New Constitution*
- Abdellatif Khayati, *Moroccan Cinema*
- Amina Mouaid, *Women and Power in Moroccan History*  
University Ibn Toufail – Kénitra

**13.00–14.00 Lunch**

**14.30–16.30 Humanities and Social Science Workshop**

**18.00** **Welcome Reception** Hosted by the Moroccan British Society

**18.30–19.45 Public Lecture:** George Joffe, *Walter Harris: The Liberal Imperialist Vision of Morocco*. In partnership with the Moroccan British Association

**20.00** **Dinner**

**WEDNESDAY 18TH APRIL**

Mohammed V University – Agdal Rabat

**09.00–11.00 Roundtable 1: Intellectual History**

- Khalid Hroub, *Jabri's Model and the Rise of the 'Critical' Intellectual in the Arab World*
- Paul Anderson: *Leaving Room for Failure: Optimism in the Thought of Mohamed Talbi*
- Kamal Abdellatif, *Adapting Heritage to Modernity: Reading into the Quadruple of Arabic Mind Critique*
- Mohamed Mesbahi, *Critique in the thought of Aljaberi, Aragon and Alaroui.*
- Nourredine Affaya, *Aljaberi on Culture and Politics*

**11.00–11.30 Break**

**11.30–13.30 Roundtable 2: History and International Relations**

- David Abulafia, *Maritime History: The Straits of Gibraltar*
- George Joffe, *EU Policy in the Mediterranean: At the Crossroads*
- Abdullah Baabood: *Morocco and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC): From Membership to Economic Package?*
- Abdelmajid Al Qadouri, *The Straits of Gibraltar and the Formation of the Moroccan Historical Personality*
- Hassan Bouqantar, *Morocco and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)*
- Ahmed Tazi, *The Road Map of the Partnership between Morocco and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)*

**13.30–15.00 Lunch**

**15.30–17.00 Public Lecture:** David Abulafia, *Understanding the Mediterranean from an Historical Perspective*

**19.00** **Dinner**

## THURSDAY 19TH APRIL

University Hassan II – Casablanca

### 09.00–11.00 Roundtable 1: History

- David Abulafia, *Understanding the Mediterranean from an Historical Perspective*
- Mohammed El Ayadi, *The State of Historic Research in Morocco*.
- Lotfi Bouchentouf, *History and Politics: Problematic of the Current Time*
- Moderator: Driss Ksikes

### 11.00–11.30 Break

### 11.30–13.30 Roundtable 2: Intellectual History

- Paul Anderson, *Leaving Room for Failure: Optimism in the Thought of Mohamed Talbi*
- Khaled Hroub, *Jabiri's Model and the Rise of the 'Critical' Intellectual in the Arab World*
- Mohammed Mouquit, *Limits and Usages of the Jabiri's Model*
- Abdellah Labdaoui, *The Concept of the Organic Intellectual in the Arab World*
- Moderator: Yasmine Berriane

### 13.30–14.30 Lunch

### 14.30–16.30 Roundtable 3: International Relations

- Abdullah Baabood, *Morocco and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) – from Membership to Economic Package?*
- George Joffe, *EU Policy in the Mediterranean: At the Crossroads*
- Ahmed Jamil Azem, *Conflict Management in the Arab World: Peace and State-Building, with Special Reference to the Case of Morocco*
- Mohamed Bennani, *Morocco in International Relations*
- Abdelwahab Maalmi, *Geopolitical Dimensions of the Mediterranean question*

### 18.30–20.00 Public Lecture: David Abulafia, *Understanding the Mediterranean from an Historical Perspective*

## FRIDAY 20TH APRIL

University Hassan II – Casablanca

### 09.00–12.00 Roundtable: Social Transformations

- Shana Cohen, *Politics and the Transformation of the Middle Class in Morocco*
- Alice Wilson, *The Meaning of Marriage Payments in the Hassanophone Ouest Saharien*
- Rachik Hassan, *The State of Anthropological Research in Morocco*
- Driss Ksikes, *Presentation of the Study on Middle Class in Morocco*
- Leila Bouasria, *Middle Class in Sociology Research*
- Moderator: Kamal Feriali

## **Abstracts**

### **Abstracts of Keynote Addresses**

#### **Understanding the Mediterranean from a Historical Perspective**

Professor David Abulafia

The study of Mediterranean history involves the investigation of connections between societies separated by extensive physical space, laying particular emphasis on commercial networks, the building of empires encompassing a variety of peoples, the movement of peoples, whether en masse or as pilgrims, slaves and (latterly) as tourists, and the spread of religions into new continents. These phenomena can be traced across the surface of the sea across which Europe, Africa and Asia meet one another and over which Christianity and Islam have vigorously competed for dominion. The history of the Mediterranean Sea is not quite the same as the history of the Mediterranean lands, though the two have generally been confused. In this presentation, my emphasis is on the sea itself, in the belief that this permits a deeper understanding of how the Mediterranean has functioned as a network connecting very diverse societies, economies and polities. Classical and medieval cartographers understood the known world to revolve around the meeting-point of Europe, Asia and Africa, in the Mediterranean Sea. It was in the Mediterranean that religions, economies and political systems met, absorbed one another and clashed. Only in the sixteenth century did the Mediterranean gradually begin to become subsidiary to Atlantic networks of trade and politics. The religious dimension must not be forgotten, for the Mediterranean has been a principal meeting-point for the three Abrahamic religions.

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#### **Walter Harris: The Liberal Imperialist Vision of Morocco**

George Joffe

Walter Harris was the Times correspondent in Morocco at the start of the twentieth century, based in Tangier. He was also a prolific author on the country, as well as being an intimate at court. Although he started out as an opponent of France, he eventually enthusiastically endorsed Hubert Lyautey's

plans for the Protectorate and was appalled by the way in which the Rif War destroyed the Marechal's career. He was, in essence, a late example of the liberal imperialism that came to characterise British self-justification for its colonial ambitions. As such, his two studies, *Morocco that was* and *France, Spain and the Riff*, provide us with a literary insight into how that imperial vision matured and, to an extent, became aware of its own self-deceptions.

### **Abstracts of Academic Presentations**

#### **Jabiri's Model and the Rise of the 'Critical' Intellectual in the Arab world**

Khaled Hroub

Many writers in the post-colonial developing world, including Arab writers, identify themselves with the notion of 'socio-organic' and 'neo-Gramscian' intellectuals. Adhering to Gramsci's perception of the 'organic intellectual', these writers conceive of themselves as defenders of the class and/or people they belong to, aspiring to be the vanguard for the interests and causes of their community. In many cases this organic and committed adherence is overstretched to the extent of bringing the intellectual into areas of false consciousness and rhetoric. Their blind defense of a society, its culture, tradition and even shortcomings in the face of real or imagined enemies becomes an overriding practice that nullifies self-criticism and rigorous enquiry.

This socio-organic perception of the intellectual is common to nationalist, Islamist, leftist, independent and, more or less, to liberal Arab writers. If these intellectuals diverge and perhaps attack each other within the circles of their 'inside' battles, they converge and join forces when debating 'outside' battles, such as regional and global changes and challenges.

Within this context Jabiri's significance as a pioneering critical intellectual in the Arab world can easily be identified. His ground-breaking work critiquing Arab reason, which consumed most of his life, has revolutionised the concept of the 'organic intellectual' in contemporary Arab thought. Jabiri's critical scrutiny into previously uncharted territory

in Arab thought started a school of enquiry in Arab circles where self-criticism replaced criticism of the other, elevating understanding and rectifying one's own weaknesses to become the gateway to genuine intellectual thinking.

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### **Leaving Room for Failure: Optimism in the Thought of Mohamed Talbi**

Paul Anderson

This paper will compare the work of Mohamed Talbi, a contemporary Tunisian intellectual, to other trends of modernist or reformist thought in Islam. It will argue that it is crucial to understand the diverse notions of history and time that undergird the work of different Islamic modernist thinkers: the way that they bring past and present into a distinctive relationship in their work.

Employing a distinction between secular and monotheistic understandings of the way that time unfolds, I will argue that tensions between these two modes of historicity are a distinctive feature of early Salafi attempts to come to terms with the trope of "progress". By contrast with this early progressivism, a pessimistic and apocalyptic reading of history underlies Sayyid Qutb's late thought.

The Tunisian intellectual Mohamed Talbi, a professional historian and Islamic modernist, bases his reading of Islam on quite another theory of history. Drawing on Sufi ideas of the *azal* or pre-existence, he asserts a distinction between the eternal and the historical which underlies his method of Qur'anic exegesis. I argue that this method of exegesis is not simply more liberal than Salafi "fundamentalism"; it is also more optimistic because it based on a reading of history that leaves room for failure.

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### **Between the Great Sea and the Ocean, between Africa and Europe: the Straits of Gibraltar in History**

David Abulafia

Gibraltar and Ceuta, embodying the 'Pillars of Hercules', don't merely mark the frontier between two continents, divided by a narrow but often intractable stretch of water. They also mark the boundary

between two very different seas: the Mediterranean, *Mare Nostrum* to the Romans, 'the Great Sea' or *Yam gadol* to the Jews, 'the White Sea', *Akdeniz*, to the Turks, the 'Sea of Seas' to the Arabs, on the one hand; and, on the other, the wide spaces of the Ocean Sea, whose modern name of 'Atlantic' serves as a powerful reminder of how it was defined in specific relation to the great pillars held up by the giant Atlas. I shall concentrate on some key moments in the history of the Straits, and particularly of Ceuta (Sebta) and Gibraltar, and shall focus on the medieval period when the Straits were re-opened to commercial traffic linking northern Europe and the eastern Atlantic shores to the Mediterranean. The period culminates in the Portuguese capture of Ceuta in 1415.

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### **EU Policy in the Mediterranean: At the Crossroads**

George Joffe

This paper will present an overview of my research which consists in analysing the implications of European Union Mediterranean policy for the countries of the South Mediterranean basin. Over the past seventeen years that policy has evolved from holistic engagement to bilateral relations and, finally, to an attempt at creating co-ownership. Behind articulated policy, however, lay clear security concerns, first over migration into the European space and latterly over spillovers from global terrorism within the South Mediterranean region. Now the events of the last year in the South Mediterranean have called into question virtually all of the assumptions behind such policies and the European Union, together with its member-states, must confront their epistemological failures. Since this involves questioning basic philosophical as well as policy principles and assumptions, the European Commission finds itself in a dilemma as to how to proceed and it is in these areas that I am currently engaged.

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### **Morocco and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) – From Membership to Economic Package?**

Abdullah Baabood

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) took everyone by surprise when they unexpectedly invited both Morocco and Jordan to join the Gulf regional organisation. This surprising announcement

perplexed the Moroccan government and its people. The Moroccan government initially declared its firm commitment to the Arab Maghreb Union but nevertheless moved to explore the GCC offer only to find that it was subsequently withdrawn and an economic aid package was offered instead!

This presentation will discuss and analyse the motives and the implications of the GCC offer to Morocco in light of regional changes.

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### **Politics and the Transformation of the Middle Class in Morocco**

Shana Cohen

This presentation critiques conventional notions of social stability in North Africa (Waterbury 1977; Hammoudi 1997) by analysing changes in identity and political behaviour among educated men and women in Casablanca and Rabat, Morocco. The paper looks at how social action and progress have become associated with NGOs, transnational social movements, and community development that operate in distinction or even in opposition to the State.

Though Morocco has not experienced the same political violence as other North African countries, the presentation shows that economic insecurity in the region has led to the transformation of the middle class from ally of the State to an alienated, even revolutionary population anxious to re-make its role politically and economically within globalization. The presentation draws upon both older research conducted in Morocco through the nineties with younger generations of educated Moroccans, now in their forties and fifties, and more recent research conducted in 2009 on social activists, health professionals and teachers.

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### **Conflict Management in the Arab World: Peace and State-Building, with Special Reference to the Case of Morocco.**

Ahmad Jamil Azem

The field of Conflict Studies as an academic, interdisciplinary specialization is relatively new.

It is believed that Conflict Studies started as an independent academic field in the West in the 1940s. Although it is difficult to claim that this field is widely-known in the Arab academic world, the second half of 1990s saw the beginning of several programs and special centres dealing with conflict management. The difference, however, is that most, if not all of these programs and centres bypass the need for an academic or theoretical foundation, moving immediately to practices that aim to contain and transform conflict, or to deal with its negative consequences.

Very little work has been done in the Arab world to introduce the competing theories, concepts and methods of study and practice. This paper discusses the literature of the field in countries such as Palestine, Lebanon, Sudan, Yemen, Iraq and Morocco. All have centres and programs concerned with "Conflict Management". Conflict Management programs in Morocco, namely those concerned with spreading nonviolent methods of action, can be classified as a model for what is known in the Conflict Management concepts as "Conflict Transformation", and seen as part of the process of state building.

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### **The Meaning of Marriage Payments in the Hassanophone Ouest Saharien**

Alice Wilson

Marriage payments in hassanophone North Africa go beyond those from the groom to the bride, the "*mahr*", and extend to post-marital payments from the bride's family to the groom's family and to the bride, known as "*fuskha*" and "*irheel*". Anthropological theory in the Arab world in general has focused on *mahr* marriage payments and their relationship to inter- and intra-tribal stratification. This paper will consider through historical material the implications of *fuskha* and *irheel* for our understanding of social stratification in the region.

A news story is given in Appendix II.

## **Conference**

### **Cambridge in Beijing: Peking University and University of Cambridge Arabic Studies Joint Conference,**

**9TH–14TH MAY 2012**

This joint conference exploring Chinese perspective on Islam and the Middle East brought together researchers from the Centre of Islamic Studies,

University of Cambridge and Peking University, Beijing to discuss themes that cut across politics, history, literature, language and linguistics.

A news story is given in Appendix III.

#### **MAY 11TH (FRIDAY)**

*Topic One: History, Political Science, Sociology, Anthropology, International Relations; Relations between China and the Arabic Countries*

##### **Section 1**

*Modulator of Section One: Professor Fu Zhiming*

**9:00–9:30 Delegates sign-in**

**9:30–10:00 Opening Ceremony**

- 10:00–10:40**
- China's Policy in Recent Changes of Situation in the Middle East Ambassador, Yang Fuchang
  - Arab Revolutions: Causes and Futures, Khaled Al-Hroub

**10:40–10:55 Tea Break**

**10:55–11:35** Reflection on the Change in the Middle East, Wu Bingbing  
Economies of Desire: Justifying and Deriding State Intervention in Syria, Paul Anderson

**11:35–12:00 Discussion**

**12:00–14:00 Lunch** at Changchun Yuan Restaurant

##### **Section 2**

*Modulator of Section Two: Dr. Paul Anderson*

- 14:00–15:00**
- The Crystallization of Civilization and Harmony – A Thinking on History of the Hui Nationality, Wang Xiaofu
  - China in Search For A Strategy in Sudans, Dr. Jafar Ahmed Kerar
  - The Collapse of Mamluk System in the 19th century, Xiao Kun

**15:00–15:15 Tea Break**

- 15:15–16:35**
- The Development of the Situation in Syria, Ambassador Hua Liming
  - China-GCC relations (the New Silk Route), Abdullah Baabood
  - Chinese View of Salafi Party in Egypt, Wang Suolao
  - The Rising Trend of Islamic Powers in the Middle East and its Influence, Li Rong

**16:35–17:00 Discussion**

**18:00–20:30 Dinner** at Quanjude Restaurant

## MAY 12TH (SATURDAY)

*Topic Two: Arabic Linguistics and Literature*

### Section 3

*Modulator of Section Three: Professor Yasir Suleiman*

- 9:30–10:30**
- ةينامعل ا ةيخصلا ةينيصلأا ةيخلراتلا ةقلاعلا Mohammed Saad Al-Muqadam
  - Seismography of identities: reflections of Palestinian identity evolution in Israel between 1948 and 2010, Manar Makhoul
  - The Berberism in Algeria Huang Hui

**10:30–10:45 Tea Break**

- 10:45–11:25**
- Writing 'Over' History: Literature, Propaganda and Collective Memory during the Iran-Iraq War, Mrs Hawaraa Al-Hasan
  - Revolution Literature and Arts after Arab Spring, Lin Fengmin

**11:25–12:00 Discussion**

**12:00–14:00 Lunch** at Shao Yuan Restaurant

### Section 4

*Modulator of Section For: Professor Wu Bingbing*

- 14:00–15:00**
- Language, Conflict and Inter-Cultural (Mis)Understanding, Yasir Suleiman
  - On the Interaction between Arabic Intransitive Verbs and Transitive Construction, Chen Zheng
  - The formation of the 'Arabic Language Academy' discourse on Arabisation, Lian Chaoqun

**15:00–15:15 Tea Break**

- 15:15–16:00**
- Both Present Absentees: Arabic Language and Arab People in Israel, Yonatan Mendel
  - On the Principles for Determining the Anaphoric Forms in Arabic Text, Lu Yingbo

**16:00–16:30 Discussion**

- 16:30–17:00**
- Professor Xie Zhirong makes a concluding speech to the conference.
  - Closing Ceremony

**18:00–20:00 Dinner** at Yanlan Lou Restaurant

## **Conference**

### **Acknowledging a Shared Past to Build a Shared Future**

**28–30 MARCH 2012**

*Møller Centre, University of Cambridge*

Presented by the British Council and the Centre of Islamic Studies.

This conference invited participants to articulate narratives and messaging that reflect an inclusive approach to relations between Muslims and non-Muslims, divided into five themes with associated groups of participants:

1. Citizenship and identity
2. Political participation
3. Islam, knowledge and innovation
4. Religion and the public space
5. The power of words and images

#### **Conference Objectives**

- Develop and articulate balanced and informed arguments that will help address divisive narratives about relations between Muslims and non-Muslims
- Recommend areas of research and partnership opportunities among institutions in the US, Europe and the MENA region that can help shed light on deep connections and reciprocal influence between Muslim and non-Muslim societies in the fields of culture, the arts, humanities and science
- Forge partnerships and propose initiatives to advance public understanding of diversity

within Muslim communities, and of constructive interactions between Muslims and non-Muslims

- Develop messages, arguments and dissemination strategies aimed at improving understanding of Muslim/non-Muslim relations among the media and the general public.

The second day of the event provided participants with the opportunity to work with media professionals to develop effective messaging around the inclusive narratives as well as valuable skills for engagement with online, print, and broadcast media.

Partner organisations who contributed to the event included the Woolf Institute; Association of Muslim Social Scientists (UK); Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Centre for the Study of Islam in the Contemporary World, University of Edinburgh; the Carnegie Corporation of New York; the Vodafone Foundation; the Institute for Strategic Dialogue.

#### **E-Book Series on Islam in the US & Europe**

The event also led to the publication of four e-books addressing themes in public dialogue about Islam: 'The Power of Words and Images', 'Citizenship and Identity', 'Islam, Knowledge and Innovation', and 'Religion, Politics and the Public Sphere'. These e-books are thematic collections of essays, and are available for download from the Centre's website.

### **Conference**

#### **Muslims and Political Participation in Britain**

**20–21 APRIL 2012**

*John McIntyre Conference Centre, Edinburgh*

Muslims play a prominent role in British political life and this conference showcased current research into Muslim participation both in terms of electoral politics and civil society initiatives. The conference was organised by the Alwaleed Centre

at the University of Edinburgh in partnership with the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Centre of Islamic Studies at the University of Cambridge and the Muslims in Britain Research Network (MBRN).

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### **Conference**

#### **The Gulf Research Meeting**

**11–14 JULY 2012**

The Gulf Research Meeting is an annual event run by the Centre's partner organisation *The Gulf Research Centre-Cambridge*, with the support of the Centre of Islamic Studies. It provides an academic environment to foster Gulf studies and promote scholarly exchange. This year, the following workshops were held:

- 1 The Arab Spring: Impacts and Consequences on the GCC
- 2 Asia and the Gulf: Comparative Analysis of the Roles of Asian Countries
- 3 Gulf charities in the 'Age of Terror' and the 'Arab Awakening'
- 4 Socio-economic Impacts of GCC Migration
- 5 A Growing Gulf: Public and Private Sector Initiatives and the Realities of Youth Employment Outcomes
- 6 International Tourism Development in the GCC countries: Opportunities and Challenges
- 7 The Impact of Globalization on Women in the GCC
- 8 An assessment of opportunities and possibilities: The Gulf and Latin America

- 9 Visual Culture in the GCC
- 10 The Impact of Large-scale Datasets on Evidence-based Educational Policymaking and Reform in the Gulf States
- 11 Environmental Cost and Changing Face of Agriculture in the Gulf States
- 12 Gulf Energy Challenges
- 13 Housing Markets and Policy Design in the Gulf Region
- 14 Structure, Conduct, and Performance: Case of GCC Banks
- 15 State-Society Relations in the Arab Gulf Region: Religion, Intellectuals and New Media
- 16 The Political Economy of Clean Energy Solutions in the GCC
- 17 Healthcare Policies In GCC: Challenges And Future Directions – Sponsored by the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS)
- 18 Islamic Finance in the GCC
- 19 The India-Gulf Strategic Partnership in a Pan-Asian Cooperative Paradigm

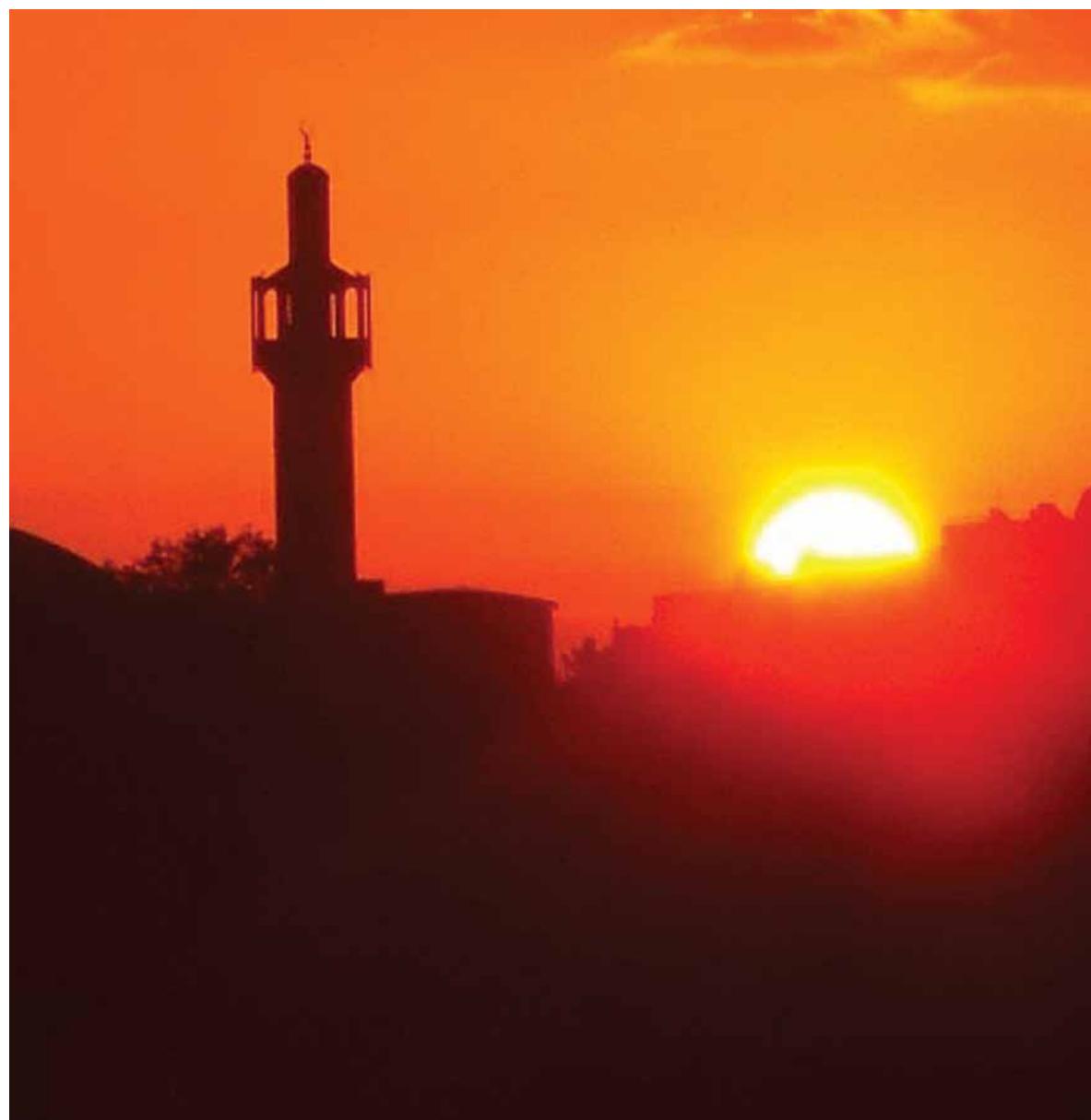
**Conference**

**Eighth Islamic Manuscript Conference**

9–11 JULY 2012

The Islamic Manuscript Association, with the support of the Centre, held the Eighth Islamic Manuscript Conference at Queen's College

from 9–11 July 2012. The Conference was hosted in cooperation with the Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation.



Matt Brown

## Codicology Scholarship

The Centre provided a scholarship in support of a participant's attendance at the Intensive Islamic Codicology Short Course, 3–7 September 2012. This year the scholarship was awarded to **Kun Xao** of Peking University. Here is her report:

At the beginning of this report, I would like to thank the HRH Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Centre of Islamic Studies at the University of Cambridge and its Director and His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Sa'id Professor of Modern Arabic Studies, Yasir Suleiman for inviting me to the course and covering the full cost of my stay in Cambridge. I thank them for providing me with such a valuable learning opportunity.

Under the patronage of the Centre of Islamic Studies, I had the honour of participating in the Sixth Intensive Islamic Codicology Short Course and respective seminars, held at the University of Cambridge between 3rd and 7th of September 2012. This course was organized by The Islamic Manuscript Association to introduce basic knowledge and methodology of Islamic codicology. Professor François Déroche, the leading instructor on the course, introduced us to aspects of Islamic codicology, including the writing, production, binding and decoration of manuscripts, showing us centuries of development and achievements in Islamic manuscripts.

The afternoon practice sessions held in Cambridge University Library gave us opportunities to touch part of this precious heritage. Apart from hands-on practice, we also watched some restoration work of ancient manuscripts. More than forty manuscripts were used, including *Tarikh al-Ya'qubi* by Ibn Wadih al-Ya'qubi, dated 1684 (Qq.10); a work on letter-writing by Ahmad b. 'Ali Qalqashandi from the Burckhardt collection (Qq.36); an unbound prayer book and its carrying satchel, whose style originates from Saharan Africa (Or. 2251); and an early Qur'an written in kufic script (Add.1115). I was particularly impressed with this Qur'anic manuscript, which is

made up of 60 small leaves of parchment bound between thick wooden boards. In addition to this, The Islamic Manuscript Association also arranged seminars in the evening to broaden our knowledge of Islamic codicology.

My research is about Egyptian history. This course was my first experience of Islamic codicology, which will help to expand and enrich my knowledge. During the course, I learnt how to compare and analyse manuscripts in order to capture historical threads and characters therein, which can be further used to explore broader historical themes. The knowledge acquired from this course will help to enhance my current research in the field of medieval Egyptian history.

The course offered a unique combination of theoretical and practical aspects of Islamic codicology, covering a wide range of issues, from material analysis of manuscripts (such as parchment, paper, binding, tools) to the more in-depth examination of folios (such as codex, page setting, scripts, decorations). I will share with my teachers, colleagues and students the experience and knowledge I have acquired from this course, and my experience at Cambridge will enable me to investigate the Islamic holdings at Peking University Library. Despite their significance in Islamic studies these holdings are little known even to specialists in China, and I hope to contribute to the development of Islamic codicology in China in the future.

Lastly, I would like to thank Professor Yasir Suleiman, Director of the Centre of Islamic Studies and Mr Davidson MacLaren, Executive Director of The Islamic Manuscript Association for inviting me to the course. My deep gratitude is also due to Professor François Déroche for his careful guidance 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 kind support.

## Lecture Series

### Beyond the Arab Spring

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, some eighteen months 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 looms, 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 at Pembroke College at 5.15pm on Thursday evenings. Each seminar lasts for one-and-a-half hours and refreshments are provided.

**Professor Yasir Suleiman;** FAMES, Cambridge Centre of Islamic Studies and King's College, Cambridge

**George Joffe;** POLIS, Cirmena



University of Cambridge

## **Workshop**

### **Social Action in an Age of Austerity**

**11 SEPTEMBER 2012**

*University of Cambridge*

This one-day workshop and networking event organised by the Centre of Islamic Studies and the Woolf Institute, in association with Faith-based Regeneration Network, took place on 11 September 2012. Faith-based community organisations, policy-makers and academics were invited to discuss how communities are responding to austerity policies and economic pressures. Panels covered basic welfare provision, youth and children, and social and economic development, as well as the role of faith and faith-based community in addressing these needs.

#### **University of Cambridge Research News article on Social Action in an Age of Austerity:**

The Centre of Islamic Studies at the University of Cambridge and the Woolf Institute are organising the workshop which brings together community activists, academic experts and policy makers.

The academics are interested in finding out not just how community organisations around the UK are faring in austerity Britain, but how they are changing to meet new demands and whether faith-based organisations are playing new roles within their communities.

The focus of the event is faith-based social action groups – from different Christian, Muslim and Jewish constituencies – that either meet basic welfare needs, support youth and children, or promote social and economic development. Participants will explore the role that faith plays in motivating and shaping social action in these areas across different parts of the country.

Much of the community sector, faith-based or not, is faced with a "double whammy" – not only do many of these organisations struggle to maintain

their services in the current financial climate, but they are also trying to meet higher levels of demand and more complex needs within their communities.

But the result is not all doom and gloom. Dr Shana Cohen, Deputy Director of the Woolf Institute and co-organiser of the workshop, said: "Times are tough for the community sector and there is no substitute for proper funding. But many community organisations are incredibly resourceful. There are, for example, cases of innovative cooperation between mosques, church food banks and Jewish community organisations in order to meet local needs. These cases rarely make the headlines but may be reshaping the face of local communities".

The organisers also want to explore questions like whether austerity is changing the way that people express their faith and religious identity, and whether it is having an impact on the relations between and beyond faith-communities.

Dr Paul Anderson, Assistant Director of the Centre of Islamic Studies and co-organiser of the event, said: "We are interested in finding out whether people are 'doing community' in new ways in a climate of austerity. Is this leading to a new approach to faith-based identity or community in British cities?"

The workshop is being held in association with Faith-Based Regeneration Network, a community development organisation. It is the first stage in a phased project which will include a publicly available report, the creation of a network of academics and practitioners, and a bid for more in-depth research into the effects of austerity on community and faith within Britain.

## **Book Prize**

### **British-Kuwaiti Friendship Society Book Prize**

The Centre and Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies has taken responsibility, from this year, for the British-Kuwaiti book prize, which is awarded for excellence in Middle East studies. The judges decided to split the award between a runner up and two joint first prizes. The joint-first prize winners received £4000 pounds each. The runner up received a prize of £2000.

Runner Up: *Hamas and Civil Society in Gaza: Engaging the Islamist Social Sector* by Sara Roy (Princeton University Press). This book promises to impact both the academic analysis and international policy towards Islamic charities in the Palestinian Territories and beyond. It is based on meticulously detailed ethnographic research spanning decades. It is a thoughtful and conceptually rich book. The reviewer describes it as an outstanding book of original scholarship, depth, nuance and insight. The reviewer adds that the book is written in a lucid and accessible manner and it wears its extensive scholarship lightly.

#### **First Prize Winners**

*Persia in Crisis: Safavid Decline and the Fall of Isfahan* by Rudi Matthee (IB Tauris) deals with the history of Iran from the death of Abbas I in 1629 to the fall of Isfahan to Afghan invaders in 1722, covering issues such as monetary policy, military politics the centre and the provinces, religion, and the intervention of eunuchs, women and

clerics in government. The book demonstrates the author's unrivalled mastery of the primary sources for Safavid history in Persian and in all of the major European languages. The author draws confidently on scholarship ranging from ancient Rome to modern Asia in defining and refining his theoretical and conceptual armoury. The reviewer describes the book as an exceptional work of scholarship, a very important contribution to the field of Iranian history and a study whose relevance and interest extend far beyond the boundaries of its immediate subject.

*The Climate of Rebellion in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* by Sam White (Cambridge University Press) demonstrates persuasively how the climate fluctuations caused by the Little Ice Age influenced the Eastern Mediterranean territories and led to the Celali Rebellion of 1596–1610, arguably the worst crisis in Ottoman history from the invasion of Tamerlane to World War I. The great achievement of this book is its impressive interdisciplinary approach that not only establishes the relationship between climate and rebellion but also discusses convincingly how the 'Little Ice Age' triggered a crisis in Ottoman history whose impact was felt in the Ottoman lands and beyond. The author employs and analyses meticulously a wide range of sources, including comprehensive climatic data, to produce an innovative study on the new field of environmental history in the Near East.

#### **Award Speech:**

### **British-Kuwait Friendship Society Book Prize 2012**

#### **Professor Yasir Suleiman, CBE**

Chair, Panel of Judges  
University of Cambridge

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests and Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen

A warm welcome to Cambridge, home of the British-Kuwait Friendship Society Book Prize which is administered by the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at the University. This is the second year of the Prize from its new home, but the first year that the Prize Award-Ceremony

is held in Cambridge. I would like to thank the Master of Corpus Christi, Stuart Laing, and College staff for making the College available to us. Corpus is the College of Sir Howard Walker who was Chair of the Panel of Judges for a number of years before I took over from him. And Corpus is not far from Pembroke where Sir Roger Tomkys, one of the longest serving members of the Prize, was Master. Pembroke is also the College of one of the Judges: His Excellency Sheikh Mubarak Abdullah Al Sabah, representative of the Abdallah Al Mubarak Al Sabah Foundation who have generously funded the Prize through the British-Kuwait Friendship Society. On behalf of the Judges and the Middle Eastern Studies community in the UK I would like to extend my warm thanks to Sheikh Mubarak, a champion supporter of the Prize, and to the great Foundation he represents for their generous gift to Middle Eastern Studies.

And I would like to extend my sincerest thanks, on behalf of the Judges of the Prize and scholars of the Middle East, to His Excellency Mr Khalid Al Duwaisan, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps and Chairman of the British-Kuwait Friendship Society for championing the Prize from its inception. His Excellency is a great standard-bearer of what the Prize represents: friendship, understanding, openness and excellence in researching the Middle East. Perhaps the Prize will one day become the Deanery of the Scholarly Corps of which His Excellency will, naturally, be Dean.

And this is the first time the Prize Award-Ceremony is held in conjunction with the Gulf Research Meeting at Cambridge. The Gulf Research Meeting is the biggest scholarly festival on the Gulf outside the Gulf region. Celebrating a British and Gulf Partnership in the form of the Prize at this premier Gulf academic event, from its home in Cambridge, is a source of great pride and pleasure for me personally. In this context, I would like to thank Mr Abdul Aziz Al Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Centre and of the Gulf Research Centre, Cambridge for cooperating with us on this joint venture. The remit of the Prize extends beyond the Gulf, but the Gulf is central to it in very

many productive ways. This is why today's Award Ceremony is a cause for double celebration.

The Panel of Judges for 2012 consisted of myself; Sheikh Mubarak Abdullah Al Sabah; Sir Roger Tomkys; Professor Carole Hillenbrand, Professor Emerita at the University of Edinburgh; Professor Charles Tripp, Professor of Politics with reference to the Middle East at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London; and Alastair Newton, President of the British Society of Middle Eastern Studies who serves on the Panel in a personal capacity. I would like to extend my thanks to my fellow judges for their commitment to the prize, their time, wisdom and unfailing sense of duty in ensuring that the work of the Panel is conducted with integrity and collegiality. The panel is assisted ably by Louise Haysey as Secretary to the Prize. I wish to record my thanks to Louise for her help and to Candida D'Souza, Sheikh Mubarak's PA, and Widad Bishara, His Excellency Khalid Al Duwaisan's PA for assisting the work of the Prize with their usual efficiency.

The Judges are assisted in their work by reviewers whose critical readings and evaluations of the submitted entries are important in helping the Panel reach their final decisions. I would like to thank these reviewers, some of whom are long-standing supporters of the Prize, for their help and generosity. The judges, of course, continue the practice of reading extensively and intensively to ensure consistency of assessment across reviewers. As I said last year, this is a long and time-consuming process, but the Panel believes it is the only way to ensure fairness, quality and confidence in this premier Prize in Middle Eastern Studies.

More than 500 books have been submitted to the Prize since 1998 when the competition had its debut appearance in Middle Eastern Studies. In its early years, the tally of books for the Prize was around 23–28 per year, but this number increased steadily in recent years. Forty two books were submitted for consideration in 2012. The books we received this year covered the humanities and social sciences, including art and architecture, anthropology, history, international relations,

language, law, politics, the media and religion. Twelve publishers submitted books, including university presses and independent publishers.

The Panel of Judges would like to thank the editors of two series for producing books which, each in its way, has brought aspects of the Middle East to different and expanding reading constituencies. The first is the Oxford University Press 'Very Short Introductions' series that has submitted books to the Prize on several occasions, including Jonathan A C Brown's *Muhammad* for this year's competition. The second series is the Arcadian Library in Association with Oxford University Press. This series is to be commended for producing richly illustrated books of exquisite quality including, for this round of the competition, Robert Irwin's *Visions of the Jinn: Illustrations of the Arabian Nights* and Alistair Hamilton's *Western Appreciation of Arab and Islamic Civilization*.

**The Panel of Judges selected two entries as highly commended which I list by alphabetical order of their authors:**

*The Ornament of Histories: A History of the Eastern Islamic Lands AD 650–1041* (The Persian Text of Abu Sa'id 'Abd Al-Hayy Gardizi), translated by Edmund Bosworth (IB Tauris). This is as an excellent translation of a work that will enrich the corpus of materials available to historians of Iran. The second entry in this category is *The Emergence of Minorities in the Middle East* by Ben White (Edinburgh University Press). The reviewer says that this excellent book is well-researched, based on a wide range of archival materials and builds and develops the work of previous scholars. It is also a timely book, although it is mainly concerned with Christians in Syria only.

**The Panel of Judges selected the following items for honourable mention which I commend to you by alphabetical order of their authors:**

*Orientalists, Islamists and the Global Public Sphere: A Genealogy of the Modern Essentialist Image of Islam* by Dietrich Jung (Equinox) explores the intricate links between Orientalism and Islamic thought, and how they reinforced each other, by

taking issue with Edward Said's radical critique of Orientalism. The author argues that Orientalism was an aspect of the multi-faceted character of modernity in which Modernist Islamic reformers were participants who adopted some of its themes and reinforced others. The reviewer says that this is a meticulous, enlightening and significant work, both in its arguments and findings.

*Cosmopolitans and Heretics: New Muslim Intellectuals and the Study of Islam* by Carool Kersten (Hurst) discusses the careers, writings and impacts of three influential Muslim thinkers: Nurcholish Madjid from Indonesia, Hasan Hanafi from Egypt and Mohammed Arkoun from Algeria. The author uses a wide range of languages, including sources in Arabic, Indonesian, French and German to produce a masterly narrative. The reviewer commends the author on the excellent job he has done analysing Hanafi's life and works, but considers the most original, penetrating and impressive part of the book to be the section dealing with Madjid.

*Muslims and Non-Muslims in the Early Islamic Empire* by M. Levy-Rubin (Cambridge University Press) is an excellent contribution to the history of the political institutions in the early Islamic world. It builds on existing scholarship by taking seriously the long continuities in Middle Eastern political culture over three or four millennia. The reviewer says this is a well-structured book, expressed in lucid prose, elegantly produced and shows thorough awareness of existing scholarship on the topic.

*Patronage and Poetry in the Islamic World* by Jocelyn Sharlet (IB Tauris) is an excellent piece of scholarship that contributes broadly to the fields of Arabic and Persian literatures and cultures. The book shows that individual loyalties were far more important than institutional ones in social mobility and status in medieval Arab-Islamic culture, and that this mobility depended on refined rhetoric rather than political authority. One reviewer describes this book as innovative and that it will force scholars to rethink the composition and interpretation of 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> century literature in medieval Islamic culture.



## VISITING FELLOW AND SCHOLARS



## Biographies:

### VISITING FELLOWS AND SCHOLARS

#### *Visiting Fellow*



**Dr Shana Cohen** (1 July 2011 – 30 June 2013)

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 Abdelwahab El-Affendi** (1 October 2010 – 30 September 2012)

Reader in Politics

University of Westminster

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

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



**Dr Yousef Meri** (1 March 2011 – 29 February 2012)

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.

**Research at Cambridge:** a book project on memory among Muslims and Jews in the Islamic World.



**Dr Jeremy Henzell-Thomas** (1 October 2010 – 30 September 2012)

Writer and researcher

Founder and former 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 Ahmad Jamil Azem Hamad** (1 September 2011 – 30 August 2012)  
Researcher

**Research interests:** conflict management in the Middle East; the Arab Israeli conflict; social politics in the Middle East.

**Research at Cambridge:** conflict management in the Arab world.



**Mr Mohammed Abdul Aziz** (1 June 2011 – 31 May 2012)  
Director, FaithWise Ltd

**Research interests:** equality and human rights; race, religion and cohesion; developing narratives.

**Research at Cambridge:** a granulated understanding of British Muslim grass-roots communities and theologies

### *Visiting Scholars*



**Professor Helge Daniëls** (27 September 2011 – 14 February 2012)  
University of Leuven, Faculty of Arts

**Research interests:** Arabic linguistics; language ideology; language and identity.

**Research at Cambridge:** language ideological debates in the Middle East.



**Ms Leila Samadi Rendy** (16 July – 15 August 2012)  
PhD candidate  
Institute of Iranian Studies, University of Göttingen

**Research interests:** Diaspora studies; gender studies; post-colonial theories; space studies; autobiography; post-modern literature.

**Research at Cambridge:** transgression of Islamic values for Iranian women in Diaspora.



**Mr Malek Abou Hamdan** (15 September – 15 December 2011)  
Université Paris II Panthéon Assas

**Research interests:** Islamic economic and financial thought; Islamic studies; financial markets.

**Research at Cambridge:** risk and uncertainty in Islamic thought.



**Mr Mohammad Ayatollahi Tabaar** (20 February 2012 – 12 August 2012)  
PhD candidate  
Georgetown University

**Research interests:** Middle East politics; international relations.

**Research at Cambridge:** (de)secularising impact of politics on Iran's theocracy.



**Mr Yuval Evri** (1 September 2010 – 31 August 2012)  
PhD student  
Tel Aviv University

**Research interests:** national identity; language and territory;  
institutionalisation of Hebrew language in late 19 century Jerusalem;  
Arab-Jews in Palestine.

**Research at Cambridge:** sociolinguistic aspects in the  
institutionalisation process of Hebrew language in Jerusalem at the end  
of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



**Dr Jing Min** (1 December 2010 – 1 December 2011)  
Assistant Professor  
School of History and Culture, Lanzhou University

**Research interests:** history of Arabia and Turkey; Islamic civilization and  
its relationship with western history.

**Research at Cambridge:** Islamic civilization and its relationship with  
Western history

## **Final Reports**

### **Final Report by Visiting Fellow Dr Ahmad Jamil Azem Hamad**

As a mid-career researcher and editor based in United Arab Emirates and working on various aspects of Middle Eastern politics, I wanted to focus on research and writing on the topic of "Conflict Management in the Arab World". My research included surveying think-tanks, academic units, journals, and articles that analyse conflict management approaches within the region.

I needed to access literature published on conflict theories and conflict management, resolution, prevention, and transformation. It was important to connect with a vivid academic community where I could explain and discuss my ideas and receive feedback and comments from fellow researchers.

From October 2011 to June 2012, I was privileged to be part of the larger academic community of Cambridge University through my research at The Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Centre of Islamic Studies. I had access to the unmatched library and resources of the University, and I was able to participate in many programs and events taking place within the University. The Centre's lecture series "Beyond the Arab Spring" was timely and well-planned, fostering a broader understanding of the historical moment in the region.

The Centre's Research Day in November gave me an excellent opportunity to discuss my project in detail, hear about other fellow scholars and

researchers and their fields of study, and exchange views and experience.

In April 2012, I was especially fortunate to be included in the programme "Cambridge in Morocco". During our tour of the country, I gave talks about my research, specifically on conflict management within the Moroccan context. It was an excellent opportunity to present my ideas and findings to researchers and students in Morocco and to receive their feedback, while also benefiting from daily interaction and discussions with the distinguished researchers who formed the Cambridge delegation.

One of my papers has been already published in *al Majallah al-'Arabiyya li-l-'Ulum As-Siyasiyya* (The Arab Journal for Political Science), another paper is already accepted for publication in other journal, and I am optimistic that the significant progress I have made in my research will be realised in additional publications, especially in English, in the near future.

The team at the Centre deserves my very special thanks. I will always appreciate and admire Professor Yasir Suleiman, Founding Director of the Centre of Islamic Studies. I am so grateful for his hospitality, support and advice. Both Dr Paul Anderson and Dr Saeko Yazaki were very welcoming and generous in their support. I enjoyed our discussions, and the intellectually rich and friendly times we shared.

## Final Report by Vising Fellow Mr Mohammed Abdul Aziz

This was a wonderful year at Cambridge. My research focused on a granulated understanding of British Muslim communities and theologies. In particular, I was interested in the understandings of Hakimiyah, Shari'ah, Khilafah, Ummah and Jihad in Shia, Sufi, Barelvi, Salafi, Deobandi, Modernist and Revivalist Muslim communities in Britain. I have a considerable way to go in my work, but Cambridge provided me with an absolutely great start. During the course of this year, I also wrote two conference papers on multiculturalism. The first was presented at a conference at the Mevlana University in Konya, Turkey and published in *Debating Multiculturalism 1* (Eds. Max Farrar and Omer Sener), The Dialogue Society, London: 2012, and the second was prepared for a conference on Shared Futures, jointly organised by the Centre and the British Council, which has now been published in an e-book which is available on the CIS website.

During the course of the year, I also contributed to the enormously rich programme of activities at the Centre. I helped with developing and delivering its Contextualising Islam in Britain (CIB) II project; participated in all the two-day sessions of CIB II and commented in detail on various revisions of

the final CIB II report which is available on the CIS website. I also made a significant contribution to the design of an Intensive Orientation Course on Islam and Muslims for senior professionals being discussed at the Centre and was given the opportunity to do some teaching on the Centre's ground breaking Cambridge-Azhar Imam Training Project – leading three separate sessions on Multiculturalism, Human Rights and Equality.

In my time at the Centre, I benefitted enormously from the University's incredibly rich libraries and interaction with leading scholars and specialists at conferences and seminars organised by the Centre and the wider university (e.g. the Reforms in Islamic Education Conference). I found the Research Day events organised by the Centre, where colleagues present their research work, particularly stimulating and useful. But my time and wonderful experience at the Centre would not have been possible without the staff at the Centre. I wish to record my appreciation and thanks particularly to Professor Yasir Suleiman, Dr Paul Anderson, Dr Saeko Yazaki and the administration staff at the Centre for being such first class colleagues over the year.

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## Final Report by Visiting Scholar Mr Malek Abou Hamdan

As a young French-educated Ph.D. student, I was both happy and fortunate to be accepted as a Visiting Scholar at the Centre of Islamic Studies, Cambridge University, for almost three months (September to November 2011). My stay at the Centre has been enriching and productive at all levels.

At the research level, I have been able to develop and/or complete important aspects of my Ph.D. project, which I started in 2010/2011. My research deals with the issue of the modern interpretation of the Islamic Fiqhi rule of "Bay' al-Gharar" and its possible practical implications in terms of "risk management", "risk transfer" and "insurance"

techniques. Generally speaking, as a visiting scholar of the Centre at Cambridge University, I have been able to access a rich variety of resources that were otherwise unavailable to me. However, my advancements went beyond this bibliographical dimension. First, I have been able to make a significant progress in my survey, analysis and screening of the instruments currently used by Islamic financial institutions as "alternatives" to "financial derivatives". Second, I have been able to mature my epistemological and theoretical thoughts on the question of the modern interpretation of "Bay' al-Gharar", benefiting – among others – from Cambridge's outstanding resources on

Financial Theory as well as on the Sociology of Religions. Finally, I have been able to progress on writing some key chapters in my thesis especially on the "Gharar" question.

However, my experience went beyond this strictly professional dimension. I was fortunate to attend different lectures, talks and conferences organised by the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Centre of Islamic Studies, the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, as well as the other faculties and colleges in Cambridge. I have also been able to meet people interested in my field of research or familiar with the approaches I use in my work. In addition, I have presented my research project during the Centre's "Research Day" on November 18th, and discussed the first results with other fellows and visiting scholars, who were supportive to me at all levels.

As a French-educated student, I was particularly enthusiastic and interested in attending the different cultural and scientific events and, in particular, those who were part of "The Cambridge's Festival of Ideas". I was also extremely interested in all the events related to the "Arab Spring".

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude and profound appreciation to Professor Yasir Suleiman for hosting me at the Centre. I would also like to thank Dr. Saeko Yazaki, Dr. Paul Anderson, Miss Clare Bannister and Dr. Jennie Doolan for being extremely supportive and welcoming. At the end, I wish to express my gratitude to Dr. Gérard Bekerman, my University: Paris II Panthéon Assas and the Fondation Nationale pour l'Enseignement de la Gestion des Entreprises (FNEGE), who made this visit possible for me.

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### Final Report by Visiting Scholar Ms Leila Samedi Rendy

Before and after the Islamic revolution of 1979 due to some social and political problems many intellectuals left Iran for other western countries and continued their work in exile. As narrated in literary productions of Iranians in diaspora a change in the living space of the characters affects their idea of moral and religious values. This plays a more significant role in the works of female writers, because they, and consequently the female characters in their works, are more engaged with religion as the transmitters and protectors of the value system of a nation. However, no matter how hard the female characters in the works try to preserve a particular selfhood and value system, hybrid religious values and identities are inevitable as the main consequences of diaspora.

During my time as Visiting Scholar at the Centre of Islamic studies at the University of Cambridge, I carried out research clarifying the relationship between religious identity and western urban life, nationality and globalization in light of postcolonial and postmodern theories of space, nation, globalization, gender, and religion. This concentrated on the poetry and literary fiction published in the anthology *Let Me Tell You Where I've Been: New Writing by Women of the Iranian Diaspora* (edited by Persis M. Karim) and the full text of four autobiographies, the extracts of which are included in that work. The results have formed an essay entitled "Space and Transgression of Islamic Values in Literature of Iranian Women in Diaspora" which was presented in the 19th DAVO Congress, 4–6 September, Erlangen, Germany.

## Final Report by Visiting Scholar Dr Jing Min

It is a great pleasure to report on my study and research as a Visiting Scholar from 14 December 2010 to 12 December 2011 at the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Centre of Islamic Studies, University of Cambridge.

First and foremost, I have attended many conferences and seminars at Cambridge and other British universities, including a very successful conference at the University of Sarajevo, Bosnia in May 2011. I was pleasantly surprised to find that the Centre is not only famous in the Islamic and Middle Eastern field of research but very active in organising a variety of academic events as well. Each of the events held by the Centre was so rich in its achievements that I have learned much from them.

Secondly, through the help of the Centre I have met many scholars in the fields of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies. Some of the scholars are from West Asia and North Africa while others are from British universities and Islamic organisations. I am fortunate to find that with the advice and information provided by these friends I have a better understanding of British Muslims and Islam and my view in this field broadened. As a result I corrected some of the arguments in my article 'The Basic Crux of the So Called British Muslim Problem', and this article will be published in a collection about

Christian-Islam relation by a Hong Kong publishing house in 2012.

Thirdly, during my stay I collected extensive research materials from many libraries in the United Kingdom. These are critically important and helpful for my future studies in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies when I return to my home university.

Finally and most importantly, I finished a research project on the *Origins and Development of the Kurdish Problem* and wrote a report about it. In addition I also finished a book entitled *Turkish Politics and Islam* which I plan to publish with the support of Lanzhou University in 2012.

I must admit that without the support of the Centre of Islamic Studies I would not have been able to accomplish so much in a very short period of time. I owe great thanks to Professor Yasir Suleiman, as he gave me the chance to study in University of Cambridge and encouraged and invited me to take part in some conferences and seminars. I would also like to extend my thanks to Dr Paul Anderson, Dr Saeko Yazaki and to Clare Bannister for their help and warm welcome. As members of the Centre they are very friendly, passionate and helpful to visiting scholars. I hope one day in the future I will have another chance to visit this Centre.

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## First Year Reports

### First Year Report by Visiting Fellow Dr Yousef Meri

It has been a great pleasure for me to be affiliated with the Centre of Islamic Studies (CIS) as a Visiting Fellow. As a Cambridge-based scholar I have benefited tremendously from the close relationship of the Centre of Islamic Studies with the Centre for the Study of Muslim-Jewish Relations, Woolf Institute of which I am academic director. The CMJR has a history of unique collaborations with the CIS, including a symposium on life and death in Judaism and Islam. More recently, I collaborated with CIS and Dr Saeko Yazaki in organising a successful

conference on Muslim-Jewish Relations during September 2011. This symposium would not have been possible without Yasir Suleiman's vision and insight and Saeko Yazaki's boundless enthusiasm and energy.

I also made brief presentations at CIS and the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies. I have also given a talk on the Prophet Ezekiel/Dhu'l-Kifl at the FAMES Research Day held in March 2011.

In addition to editing and publishing the Intertwined Worlds symposium proceedings with my colleague Dr Camilla Adang, my current research focuses on the theme of history and memory among Muslims, Jews and Christians in the Middle East. I am also working on an introductory study on Pilgrimage and Pilgrims in Islam which is under commission from Edinburgh University Press. I would like to thank our CIS colleagues for their support

and collegiality, in particular Yasir Suleiman as well as Paul Anderson, Saeko Yazaki and Clare Bannister. I greatly look forward to further opportunities for collaboration over the next year.

**Dr Yousef Meri**

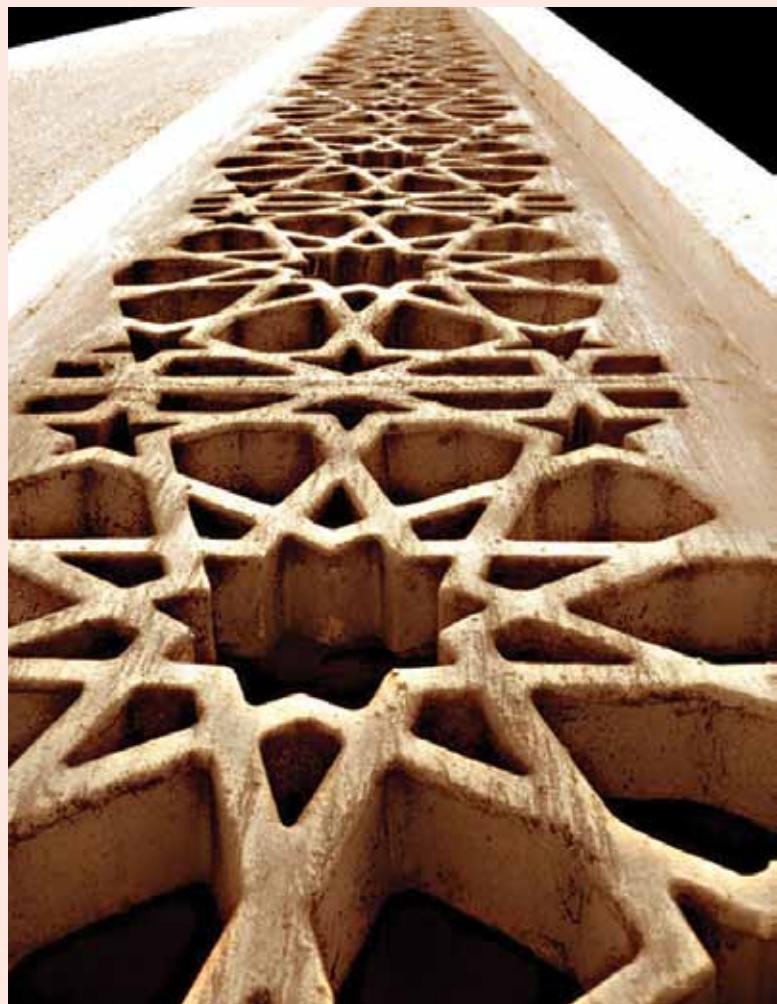
Affiliated Researcher, Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies  
Academic Director, Centre for the Study of Muslim-Jewish Relations, Woolf Institute



Andrew



## REPORTS



fady habib

## Contextualising Islam in Britain II

Project Leader: Professor Yasir Suleiman

The second report of a project of the Centre of Islamic Studies, Cambridge in association with the Universities of Exeter and Westminster and supported by the Department of Communities and Local Government.

### **Description:**

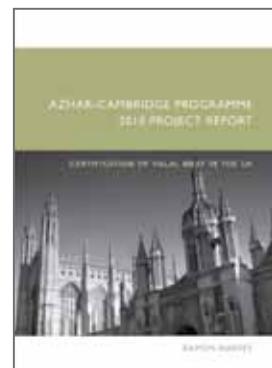
This report represents the collective thinking of a group of British Muslims in the second phase of 'Contextualising Islam in Britain': a project that began in 2008. The first phase culminated in the report Contextualising Islam in Britain: Exploratory Perspectives, published in October 2009. In this previous report the project participants set out to answer a central question: what does it mean to live faithfully as a Muslim in Britain today? The second report sets out to answer this question more fully, building on the findings of its predecessor. It does so by engaging with a new set of issues that impact on the following areas of Muslim belief and practice: (1) the individual and the community; (2) gender: equality, identity and sexuality; (3) education; and (4) wider society and the common good.

This initiative brought together leading Muslim scholars, activists, and faith and community leaders from a wide range of geographical, theological and ethnic backgrounds in the UK in a series of symposia during 2010 to debate these issues. It created an

independent and open space for discussion and the report's findings represent a significant development of the 'Contextualising Islam in Britain' project and of the fuller and more active examination of Islam within modern Britain as a whole.

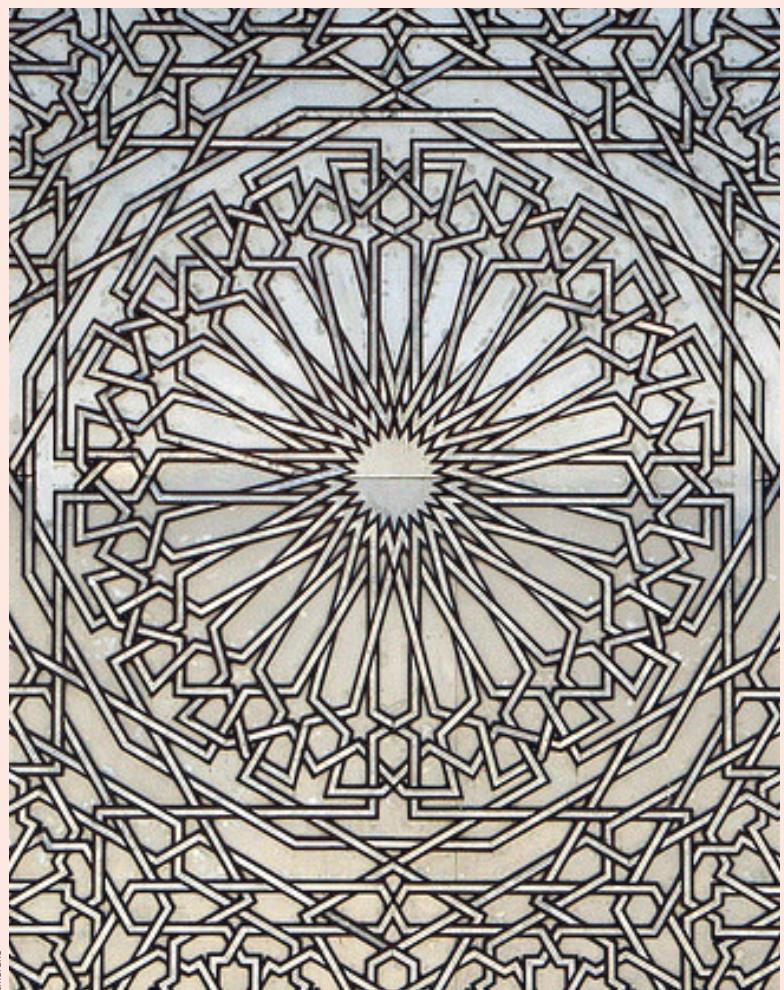
### **Past reports**

CIS past reports include **Reforms in Islamic Education** and **Certification of Halal Meat in the UK**



All Centre reports are freely available to download at [www.cis.cam.ac.uk](http://www.cis.cam.ac.uk).

## PARTNERS



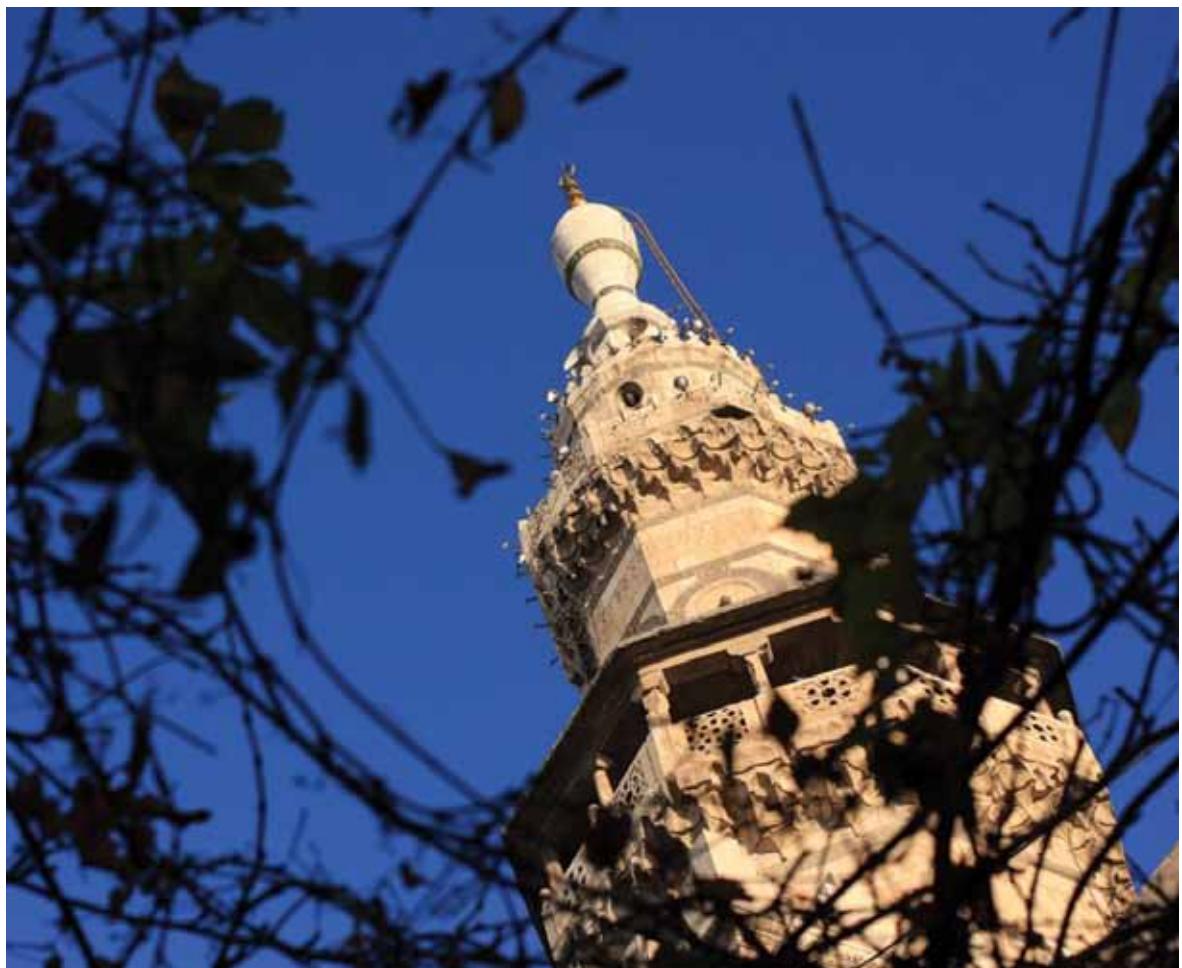
## Gulf Research Centre-Cambridge (GRC-C)

The Gulf Research Centre – Cambridge (GRC-C) is the Cambridge office of the Gulf Research Centre (GRC). GRC-C is a registered UK Charity, cooperating closely with the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Centre of Islamic Studies at the University of Cambridge. The prime directive of GRC Cambridge 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.

GRC Cambridge organizes 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, the GRCC 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 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

The Islamic Manuscript Association 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.

The Islamic Manuscript Association is an affiliated project of the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Centre of Islamic Studies at the University of Cambridge.

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## Cambridge Arab Media Project (CAMP)

The Cambridge Arab Media Project encourages research into the Arab media and provides media

professionals and academics with an open and neutral platform for debate.

## **Woolf Institute for Abrahamic Research**

The purpose of the Woolf Institute is to serve the public good. The Institute studies how relations between Jews, Christians, and Muslims can enhance our understanding of key concepts of public life: community and identity, personal responsibility and social solidarity. Combining theology with the social sciences and the humanities, the Woolf Institute seeks to strengthen the ethical framework that is needed for our political, economic and social life.

The Woolf Institute's teaching and research examines common purpose and points of difference between Jews, Christians and Muslims from a multidisciplinary perspective with focus particularly on Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. In addition to the pursuit of knowledge, the Woolf

Institute designs public education programmes aimed at improving public and voluntary sector services and linking difference with the broader sustainability of communities.

As an independent institute working closely with the University of Cambridge, the Institute has the expertise and flexibility necessary to combine theory, research and practice while offering world-class scholarship in a rich learning environment.

The Institute is named in honour of Lord Harry Woolf, former Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales and was founded by Dr Edward Kessler MBE, described by the Times Higher Education Supplement as 'probably the most prolific figure in interfaith academia'.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I:

News Story: Narratives of Conversion: Female Perspectives

### APPENDIX II:

News Story: Cambridge in Morocco: Perspectives on Islamic and North African Studies, 16–20 April 2012

### APPENDIX III:

News Story: Cambridge in Beijing: Peking University and University of Cambridge Arabic Studies Joint Conference, 9–14 May 2012



## APPENDIX I

### News story

#### Narratives of Conversion: Female Perspectives

**Story from 'Research News', University of Cambridge,  
27 January 2012**

*Narratives of Conversion*



A project concluding this weekend examines why women choose to convert to Islam – and what the experience is like.

A landmark project which seeks to map out the different routes through which women convert to Islam, and describe their experiences on entering the faith, reaches its conclusion this weekend.

"Narratives of Conversion to Islam in Britain", which is being run at the Centre of Islamic Studies at the University of Cambridge in association with the New Muslims Project in Leicester, is collating the views and stories of female converts in an effort to provide an insider's view of what the experience is really like. A report, detailing the results of three meetings exploring why they chose Islam, their feelings about doing so, and the responses of family, friends and other Muslims, will be published in the spring.

Those involved in the project will remain anonymous until the final report is released, as a condition of their participation. They include women from a range of age groups, variously of white, African, and Caribbean descent. Among them are former Christians, Jews, Hindus, Sikhs and atheists.

Organisers say that one of the main reasons for the project is "a general sense of frustration" with one-dimensional portrayals of female conversion in the media. Often these focus on women who marry into the faith, and suggest that they do so at the expense of their independence and liberty.

The reality, academics say, is far more varied and complex. "Judging by what the media tends to write about Islam, you would expect liberal-minded, intellectually-engaged women from non-Muslim backgrounds to give it a wide berth," Professor Yasir Suleiman, who is chairing the meetings and the project's leader, said.

"It seems to be a religion that clashes with our ideas about modernity. Yet the paradox is that there is a noticeable number of well-educated, intellectually-engaged women with high-flying careers who are choosing to become Muslims. So the question is, how do we explain this?"

Although there are no firm statistics about women converting to Islam in Britain, it is possible that as many as three-quarters of British converts – an estimated 100,000 between 2000 and 2010, were female. To investigate why women convert to Islam, three symposia organised by the Centre of Islamic Studies were developed based on an initial discussion in May last year. The subsequent gatherings touched on questions such as family, dress, lifestyle, relationships within the Muslim community, marriage, the media, sexuality, political identity and the tenets of the faith itself.

Despite the myriad reasons for women converting to Islam – which, contrary to popular belief, often do not involve marriage – the project team say that a consistent, emerging theme is that many stressed a strong sense of continuity with the past. Although outsiders view conversion as a break with a previous life, and in extreme cases apparently "racialise" white converts as if they have somehow become non-white by joining the faith, the women who make the change retain many of their fundamental beliefs and relationships.

Why they convert is a highly complex question, however. In some cases, women simply came into contact with the Qur'an and found that it struck a spiritual chord – sometimes one that, given their background, they initially found it hard to accept. Other cases recorded in the discussions included those of journalists who, dispatched by their editors to write a piece about the restricted lives of female converts, were in practice won over to the merits of Islam itself.

The final report will, organisers say, attempt to portray the experience of conversion in full by expressing the participants' feelings and stories whether positive or negative. Women who are attracted to Islam because it seems versatile and inclusive, for example, sometimes find themselves struggling with the more conservative views of Imams. Others have encountered a sense of triumphalism from some "heritage Muslims", who are keen to show off white converts to the wider world because of their social origins, rather than because of their beliefs. "The report will attempt to describe and explain the journeys converts take in full," Professor Suleiman added. "The stories are very different, but the women who tell them have consistently stressed that they don't see conversion to Islam as a break from the past, but part of one greater, continuing journey as a whole."

The final report from the project, Narratives of Conversion to Islam in Britain will be published online by the Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Centre of Islamic Studies, University of Cambridge, in April or May 2012

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## APPENDIX II

### News story

#### Cambridge in Morocco: Perspectives on Islamic and North African Studies, 16–20 April 2012

**Story from 'Research News', University of Cambridge, 16 April 2012**  
*Cambridge in Morocco*



In the midst of the historic changes that are affecting much of the Arab world, a team of Cambridge researchers are visiting Morocco to explore new perspectives in the study of the Middle East and North Africa.

The delegation, organised by the University's Centre of Islamic Studies and the British Council, will meet some of Morocco's most prominent academics and discuss the latest research on the region

But the real value may be in what they learn. There will be reciprocal presentations by Moroccan academics working on similar issues.

Dr Paul Anderson, Assistant Director of the Centre, said: "Middle East scholars at Cambridge and in Morocco work within different academic cultures and different languages. But we are all fascinated by the same questions. For example, what drives social and political change? Often we lose out because we do not hear each other's voices. This is an opportunity to start a conversation, which we hope will keep our own analysis informed and sensitive."

"Cambridge in Morocco" is part of a series of international events organised by the University's Centre of Islamic Studies. Entitled "Cambridge In..." this project aims to initiate reciprocal intellectual conversations across traditional boundaries. The series began last year with a joint symposium at the University of Sarajevo. Since then a number of Bosnian scholars (in Islamic studies and Middle East studies) have visited Cambridge to participate in the Centre of Islamic Studies' research activities and conferences.

The work to build more intellectual communities continues next month with "Cambridge in Beijing". For more information on the Centre of Islamic Studies' work, visit [www.cis.cam.ac.uk](http://www.cis.cam.ac.uk).

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## APPENDIX III

### **News story**

**Cambridge in Beijing: Peking University and University of Cambridge Arabic Studies Joint Conference, 9–14 May 2012**

**Story from 'Research News', University of Cambridge, 10 May 2012**  
*Islamic Scholars head to Beijing for 'Cambridge in China' conference*

**Islamic scholars head to Beijing for "Cambridge in China" conference**



**A conference exploring Chinese perspectives of the Middle East and the Islamic world, at a time when China's interest in the region is growing, will take place in Beijing later this week.**

Researchers from Cambridge's Centre of Islamic Studies will meet with some of their Chinese counterparts from Peking University for the third in an ongoing series of "Cambridge In..." events, which aims to bring together the views of scholars specialising in Islam around the world.

"Cambridge in China" takes place against a diplomatic backdrop in which that country's interest and involvement in the Middle East is growing. With China becoming a major player on the world stage, some Middle Eastern and Islamic countries are beginning to see its leadership on issues such as trade, energy and international security as a viable alternative to that of the United States.

In addition, it gives researchers an opportunity to find out more about the study of Islamic society and culture in a country that has long-standing, but often overlooked, links with the Islamic world, as well as a large and established Muslim population.

Professor Yasir Suleiman, Director of the Prince Alwaleed Centre of Islamic Studies at the University of Cambridge, said: "Like our own Centre, many of the Chinese researchers we will be meeting are interested in Islam less from a theological point of view than from a cultural, or socially scientific perspective."

"At the same time, their view of the Middle East or the Islamic world is very different because of their different vantage point. Really, what we are trying to find out is whether point of view creates the object. In other words, how are these regions conceived differently in China – and why?" Some of the papers that will be presented at the conference allude to the diplomatic resonance of understanding China's perspective of the Islamic world. They include studies of China and the Gulf, and its impact on oil security and commerce in general. Further research will touch on the potential global reach of the Arab Spring, and the notions of trust that appear to underpin trade relationships between China and the Middle East.

The overall aim of the conference is, however, simply to build a closer relationship with researchers studying Islam, in the spirit of the Islamic saying, or "hadith", which urges Muslims to: "Seek knowledge, even if you have to go as far as China." Peking University itself was one of the first Chinese universities to dedicate a department to the study of Arabic and Islamic culture.

As a result, there will also be detailed studies of the language and cultural output of different parts of the Islamic world, such as Palestine and Iraq. The reception and perception of this material in China is of considerable significance. The country has had a Muslim population since the 7<sup>th</sup> century, and even conservative estimates place its current Muslim population at upward of 20 million – a figure which dwarves that of the United Kingdom and is the 18<sup>th</sup> largest in the world.

# CENTRE STAFF 2011–12



## 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. He serves as Trustee on the Boards of the following organisations: Arab-British Chamber Charitable Foundation, International Prize for Arab Fiction (in association with the Man- Booker Prize), 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 Advisory Board of the Centre for the Advanced Study of the Arab World 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.

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, Self and Identity: A Study in Conflict and Displacement, 2011
- Living Islamic History: Studies in Honour of Professor Carole Hillenbrand (ed.), 2010
- Literature and Nation in the Middle East (ed.), 2006
- A War of Words: Language and Conflict in the Middle East, 2004
- The Arabic Language and National Identity: A Study in Ideology, 2003
- The Arabic Grammatical Tradition: A Study in Tal'lil, 1999
- Language and Society in the Middle East and North Africa (ed.), 1999
- Arabic Grammar and Linguistics (ed.), 1998
- Language and Identity in the Middle East and North Africa (ed.), 1996
- Arabic Sociolinguistics: Issues and Perspectives (ed.), 1994

#### **Reports:**

- Contextualising Islam in Britain II (with J. Henzell-Thomas), 2012
- 'Reforms in Islamic Education' (with P. Anderson and C. Tan), 2011
- 'Language, Conflict and Security' (with Y. Mendel), 2010

- 'Contextualising Islam in Britain: Exploratory Perspectives'  
 (with P. Anderson), 2009  
 'Arabic on Campus and beyond' (with P. Anderson), 2008  
 'Conducting Fieldwork in the Middle East' (with P. Anderson), 2007  
 'Islam on Campus: Teaching Islamic Studies at Higher Education Institutions in the UK' (with A. Shihadeh), 2007



### **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 'The Politics of Scorn in Syria and the Agency of Narrated Involvement', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*. (forthcoming).
- 2012 'Aleppo's Yarn Market: Trust and Speculation in a Time of Economic Transformation', in Barout, Boissière & David (eds.), *Alep et ses territoires*. Beyrouth: Presses de l'Iffpo.
- 2011 'The Piety of the Gift': Selfhood and Sociality in the Egyptian Mosque Movement', *Anthropological Theory* 11(1):1–19.
- 2008 'Is Altruism Possible?' Royal Anthropological Institute Hocart Prize Essay. Available at: [http://www.san.ed.ac.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/15269/080519-altruism\\_article.pdf](http://www.san.ed.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/15269/080519-altruism_article.pdf)

### **Conference and Seminar Papers:**

- 2012 'Economies of Desire: Justifying and Deriding State Intervention in Syria', Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, November.
- 2012 'Reflecting Objects and Reflexive Subjects: Financial Collapse and Self-Reproach in Syria', Senior Seminar, Department of Social Anthropology, University of Edinburgh, January.
- 2012 'Laughter and Reflexivity: Avoiding Cynicism in Syria', Senior Seminar, Department of Social Anthropology, University of Cambridge, January.
- 2012 'Leaving Room for Failure: Optimism in the Thought of Mohamed Talbi', Universities of Casablanca, Fes and Rabat, April.
- 2011 'Between Civility and Legality: Why did Syrian Popular Investment Schemes Collapse in the 1990s?', Middle East Studies Association, Washington DC, December.
- 2011 'Trust in a 'Transitioning' Economy: Aleppo's 'Money Collectors'', British Society of Middle East Studies Annual Meeting, University of Exeter, June.
- 2011 'Explaining Extraordinary Events in Syria: The Rise and Fall of Aleppo's Financial Entrepreneurs', University of Sarajevo, May.
- 2010 'Invisible Yarn: An Ethnography of Aleppo's 'Stock Market'', London School of Economics, South West Asia and North Africa Seminar Series, June.

### **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 Manager**



**Dr Saeko Yazaki**

Dr Saeko Yazaki is Outreach and Project Manager of the Centre. Her research interests include mystical movements, comparison between monotheistic and non-monotheistic faiths, and religion in general. She is currently working on a monograph, *Islamic Mysticism and Abu Talib al-Makki: The Role of the Heart*. The book examines al-Makki's *Qut al-qulub* and his influence on later Sufis, Hanbali scholars and the Jewish judge Ibn Baquda in Islamic Spain.

## **Administrator**



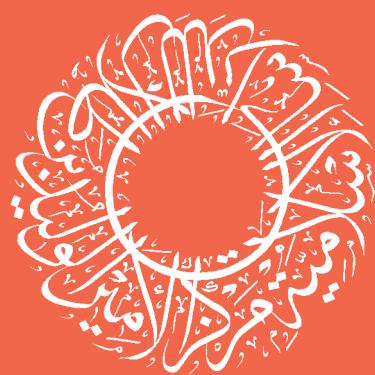
### **Dr Jennie Doolan**

Dr Jennie Doolan has recently joined the Centre of Islamic Studies as Administrator, having worked previously in research support and administration for both academic and commercial organisations. Jennie has a PhD from the University of Cambridge on pre-Christian motifs in the post-conversion manuscripts of medieval Iceland and Scandinavia.

## **Committee of Management**

Professor Simon Franklin (Chair)  
Professor Yasir Suleiman  
Professor Christopher Hill  
Professor Geoffrey Khan  
Professor Robert Gordon  
Dr Anas al-Shaykh Ali  
Mr Omer Totonji  
Ms Noor Al-Dabbagh





PRINCE ALWALEED BIN TALAL CENTRE OF ISLAMIC STUDIES

University of Cambridge / Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies / Sidgwick Avenue / Cambridge, CB3 9DA

Web: [www.cis.cam.ac.uk](http://www.cis.cam.ac.uk) Tel: +44(0)1223 335103 Fax: +44(0)1223 335110 Email: [cis@cis.cam.ac.uk](mailto:cis@cis.cam.ac.uk)