



4TH MUHAMMAD ALAGIL ARABIA ASIA CONFERENCE

# BEYOND BEDOUIN AND BANIA

ARABIA-SOUTH ASIA RELATIONS

7-8 DECEMBER 2017

CONVENED BY THE  
MUHAMMAD ALAGIL CHAIR IN ARABIA ASIA STUDIES,  
ASIA RESEARCH INSTITUTE,  
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE.  
WITH FUNDING SPONSORSHIP  
FROM MIDDLE EAST INSTITUTE,  
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE

Photo Credit: Engseng Ho

Arab dhows being handmade for Gulf clients in Beypore near historic Calicut frequented by Arab traders, in Kerala, India.

By dint of proximity and other reasons, Arabia and South Asia are neighbouring regions which have been involved in each other's affairs for centuries. While their relations are not always the most visible, peoples from the two regions enjoy a degree of familiarity and mutual knowledge that defies conventional notions of cultural and religious difference.

This conference will explore and map the range of relations between Arabia and South Asia in the present and the past in a number of arenas, as in the programme enclosed. In particular, the presentations will bring to light engagements away from the usual focus on states, empire and migrant labour, to plumb deeper cultural currents that have had a continuous and continuing effect on both regions together.

We showcase here work employing original sources that have not been mobilized in a transregional framework, to show the range and depth of Arabia-Asia relations that are open to further research and discovery.

## **CONFERENCE CONVENORS**

### **Dr Nisha Mathew**

Asia Research Institute, and Middle East Institute,  
National University of Singapore  
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### **Prof Engseng Ho**

Asia Research Institute, and Middle East Institute,  
National University of Singapore

## THURSDAY, 7 DECEMBER 2017

**10:00 – 10:15 REGISTRATION**

**10:15 – 10:45 CONFERENCE OPENING**

**MUHAMMAD ALAGIL**, Jarir Investment, Saudi Arabia

**ENGSENG HO**, National University of Singapore

**10:45 – 12:15 PANEL 1 | INDIA IN ARABIA**

CHAIRPERSON **SHUANG WEN**, National University of Singapore

10:45 [When Nationalism and Orientalism Coincide:  
Reading History and Culture in Emirati Schoolbooks](#)

**RANA ALMUTAWA**, University of Oxford, UK

11:05 [“My Mother was Born in India, in Karachi”:  
Migrations, GCC Family Memory via Colonial British India](#)

**DHOLEKA SARHADI RAJ**, Independent Scholar

11:25 [The Mobility Paradox:  
Hadrami Diaspora in the Neighborhoods of Barkas and King Kothi in Hyderabad](#)

**KHATIJA SANA KHADER**, Amnesty International India

11:45 Questions and Answers

**12:15 – 13:30 LUNCH**

**13:30 – 15:00 PANEL 2 | BALUCHI NETWORKS BETWEEN EMPIRES**

CHAIRPERSON **MUHAMMAD ARAFAT BIN MOHAMAD**, National University of Singapore

13:30 [Mir, Merchant, Mercenary:  
Imperial Connections between Oman and Baluchistan](#)

**SCOTT ERICH**, City University of New York Graduate Center, USA

13:50 [Why Does Bahrain Recruit Baloch Mercenaries?](#)

**AMEEM LUTFI**, Duke University, USA

14:10 [Treading Gulf Waters](#)

**AHMAD MAKIA**, Independent Writer

14:30 Questions and Answers

**15:00 – 15:30 AFTERNOON TEA**

**15:30 – 16:30 PANEL 3 | NETWORKS OF IMPERIAL INFRASTRUCTURE**

CHAIRPERSON **ANDREW PEACOCK**, University of St Andrews, UK

15:30 [“Distilling” Empire in the Gulf: The Indian Ocean Origins and Post-Imperial Legacies  
of Desalination in the Arabian Peninsula](#)

**MICHAEL CHRISTOPHER LOW**, Iowa State University, USA

15:50 [Posting the Empire:  
India’s Overland and Overseas Networks and the Middle East, C. 1850s-1920](#)

**DEVYANI GUPTA**, University of Leeds, UK

16:10 Questions and Answers

**16:30 – 16:45 BREAK**

**16:45 – 18:15 PANEL 4 | IMPERIAL ARTERIES, DIASPORIC CURRENTS**

CHAIRPERSON **SERKAN YOLOCAN**, National University of Singapore

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16:45 **Turkistanis across South Asia and Arabia, from Pilgrims to Refugees, to Trade Diaspora**

**RIAN THUM**, Loyola University New Orleans, USA, and National Humanities Center, USA

**HUDA 'ABDUL GHAFfour AMIN**, Independent Scholar

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17:05 **Voyage of the Moors: Arab Identity and Islamicate Modernity in Ceylon**

**ARUN RASIAH**, Holy Names University, USA

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17:25 **Rethinking Genealogies of Arab Nation States through the Indian Subcontinent:  
The Bombay Arab Mercantile Communities and *al-Manar's* Intellectual Milieu, 1898-1935**

**ROY BAR SADEH**, Columbia University in the City of New York, USA

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17:45 Questions and Answers

**18:15 END OF DAY 1**

## FRIDAY, 8 DECEMBER 2017

10:30 – 10:45 REGISTRATION

10:45 – 12:15 **PANEL 5 | CREOLE CLUES: CULTURAL SOURCES FOR NEW HISTORIES OF ARABIA-SOUTH ASIA RELATIONS**

CHAIRPERSON **NISHA MATHEW**, National University of Singapore

10:45 **Tarana to Tillana**

**SIRI RAMA**, Kanaka Sabha Performing Arts Centre, Singapore and Mumbai

11:05 **Islamic Syncretism in Religio-Cultural Heritage in Sri Lanka: An Insight to Kurunegala Vistaraya Palm Leaf Manuscripts**

**KANCHANA DEHIGAMA**, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

11:25 **The Cultural Roots of Arabic-Malayalam**

**ABOBACKER KAYA**, Independent Scholar

11:45 Questions and Answers

12:15 – 13:45 LUNCH

13:45 – 15:15 **PANEL 6 | INTELLECTUAL NETWORKS I: AN INTERCONNECTED ECUMENE**

CHAIRPERSON **RIAN THUM**, Loyola University New Orleans, USA, and National Humanities Center, USA

13:45 **Networks of Scholars as a Cosmopolitan Community in the Arabian-South Asian World**

*Video Presentation* **JOHN O. VOLL**, Georgetown University, USA

14:05 **Imperial Connections and Arab Indology**

**ESMAT ELHALABY**, Rice University, USA

14:25 **Hands below the Navel: Eighteenth Century Hanafism and Hadith Scholarship across Sindh and the Hijaz**

**SOHAIB BAIG**, University of California – Los Angeles, USA

14:45 **Teaching Arabs Islam:**

**Intellectual Networks of Malabari Teachers and Meccan Students**

**MAHMOOD KOORIA**, Leiden University, Netherlands

15:05 Questions and Answers

15:45 – 16:15 AFTERNOON TEA

16:15 – 17:45 **PANEL 7 | INTELLECTUAL NETWORKS II: MALABAR AND ARABIA**

CHAIRPERSON **ENGSENG HO**, National University of Singapore

16:15 **From Khulasat al-Madad al-Nabawi to Nū ral-Qulū b: The Revival of Hadrami Practices in Contemporary Kerala**

*via Skype*

**MUHAMMAD ASHRAF THACHARA PADIKKAL**, Hamad Bin Khalifa University, Qatar

16:35 **Re-connecting Territories: Texts and Contexts in the 'Alawī Sufi Cosmopolis**

**ABDUL JALEEL PKM**, Muhammad Alagil Arabia Asia Chair at ARI

16:55 **هجرة علمية روحانية من ملبار 'كيرلا' الهند إلى البلاد العربية**  
*in Arabic* **Intellectual and Spiritual Journeys from Malabar to Arabia**

**ABOBACKER SIDHEEQUE VP**, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India

17:15 Questions and Answers

**17:45 – 18:30 CONCLUDING DISCUSSION**

**ENGSENG HO**, National University of Singapore

**NISHA MATHEW**, National University of Singapore

**18:30 END OF CONFERENCE**

## When Nationalism and Orientalism Coincide: Reading History and Culture in Emirati Schoolbooks

**Rana AlMutawa**

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University of Oxford, UK

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My Emirati relatives still refer to the Emirati dirham as a “rupee;” my friends still do a henna night whenever one of them gets married, and we still cook biryani at home, using spices that were introduced from India. Although our lives are intertwined, connections to the Indian Ocean world are often downplayed (Onley 2007, 2004; Patrick 2012). The Arab Gulf associates itself with the Arab world, not with South Asia, which it often views as inferior. By neglecting the stories, histories and cultures from the Indian Ocean, the Arab Gulf depicts itself as purely Arab and Bedouin — contrary to its reality (Onley 2007, AlMutawa 2016). This article argues that abandoning the reality of the Indian Ocean influence on the United Arab Emirates (UAE) creates local representations of Emirati culture that are monolithic and ahistorical — similar to Western Orientalist depictions of Emirati society. Through a critical discourse analysis (van Dijk 2003) of high school national education textbooks in the UAE, I will show how the UAE aims to create an imagined community with one shared history and culture. Through standardizing local culture and avoiding the non-Arab influences in it, social reproductions begin to portray Emirati history and culture similarly to the way Western Orientalists do — purely Arab and Bedouin, monolithic and ahistorical.

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**Rana AlMutawa** is a PhD Candidate at the University of Oxford, St. Antony's College. Her PhD dissertation is focused on exploring intra-Orientalism in the Arab world and the marginalization and Arabizing of local cultures in the Arab Gulf. Rana has published several articles on nationalism and the invention of traditions, such as an article titled “National Dress in the UAE: Constructions of Authenticity” by BRISMES' *New Middle Eastern Studies Journal*. She has presented in various conferences, such as the Gulf Research Meeting in Cambridge, and will present in an upcoming workshop about gender in the UAE at NYUAD. Prior to joining Oxford, Rana worked as an instructor and researcher at Zayed University in Dubai. She holds a master's degree in International Affairs and a master's degree in Public Policy from Columbia University and the University of Tokyo, respectively.



## “My Mother was Born in India, in Karachi”: Migrations, GCC Family Memory via Colonial British India

**Dhooleka Sarhadi Raj**

Independent Scholar

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This project explores migration as part of the Capitalocene (Moore 2015) — the age of capital using a case study of Arab migrants based in British India during the early 20th century. The essay from which this presentation is drawn advances two interconnected arguments. First, that the Arab social and cultural links with South Asia that occurred during British colonial rule — began by family trade or religious reasons — had a reverberation of cultural exchange that passed through generation(s). Second, that this lesser known migration is informed by and forms part of both colonial history alongside the histories of nascent nation-state post-colonial formations. Their family histories are complicated and intertwined by the histories of empire, and pre-dates the independent nation states of both the Gulf region and the Indian subcontinent. Much work exploring mobilities between these regions focuses on two important moments: current Indian labour or voluntary migrations to the region, or, historical maritime trade. Based on family narratives, this project seeks to reveal the memories of Arab informal connections with India. Families scattered throughout the region have one parent, a grandparent or indeed themselves born in British India. This paper shares preliminary stories of their families’ mobilities (oral histories of who was in India, how they ended up there, and if they have any current ties to India). In this, the wider project from which this paper is drawn is meant to capture a history of those less well-known and understudied mobilities (or, so called South-South migrations set in the backdrop of indenture). The project also examines the ways that their family notions of ties to India continue in current practices through socio-cultural links (language, food/cooking, films, social events). The research will draw from families based in Kuwait and the UAE. My aim is to uncover the social and cultural connections that link the Gulf with the Subcontinent, a story that begins during the British Raj, when the Gulf was administered as part of the British East India Company.

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**Dhooleka Sarhadi Raj**, PhD (Cantab.) is a Global Research Scholar deeply committed to expand the engagement and interactions with the increasing economic and political importance of India and its Diaspora. Her work addresses mobilities, global citizenship, tolerance and emigrants’ infrastructure with a focus on South Asia. Current Project examines the historical links between India, UAE and GCC through family oral narratives. Dr Raj is author of *Where Are You From? Middle Class Migrants in the Modern World* (University of California Press, 2003) which explores complexities of Indian migration, cultural change and nation-state policies on tolerance and social cohesion. *Overseas Citizen of India and Emigrant Infrastructure* (article, Geoforum, 2015) which proposes a new conceptual frame to understand mobilities interweaving Foreign Policy, Diaspora Strategies and State Sovereignty. Her articles have been published in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *Social Analysis*. She has been invited by Nobel Foundation, UNESCO, Government of Canada, Government of India, BBC, NPR, International Metropolis Project, and India International Center and University lectures at Amsterdam, Singapore, Cambridge, Yale. Dr Raj holds a doctorate in anthropology from the University of Cambridge. She was previously the Associate Chair of South Asian Studies at Yale University. With the American Anthropological Association, Dr Raj served on both The Committee of Ethics and The Ethics Task Force. She has held Fellowships at The Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University and The University of Cambridge. Previously, she worked at Battelle as Principal Research Scientist with CDC, NIH, HRSA on bioterrorism, health policy implementation, government interagency coordination, cancer control and violence.

## The Mobility Paradox: Hadrami Diaspora in the Neighborhoods of Barkas and King Kothi in Hyderabad

**Khatija Sana Khader**

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This research posits that mobility should be understood as immanent to the processes of identity construction. In the Princely State of Hyderabad Hadrami Arabs were closely linked to the ruling elites of the Asaf Jahi dynasty (1724-1948). This paper will draw on fieldwork conducted in the neighbourhoods of Barkas (a colloquial spin on the word Barracks) and King Kothi (named after the palace of the last Asaf Jahi Nizam where *Khanazad* Hadramis meaning “sons of the house” live) in Hyderabad between 2014-2016. Marriages, home layouts, food practices, local markets with frankincense, clothes and wares imported from Dubai and male sartorial practices — *Sarungs* produced in Indonesia and Sandals produced in Bangkok and distributed whole-sale from Saudi Arabia and Dubai – allows one to locate the Hadramis in the larger matrix of global capitalist production and supply chains. This is understood as mobility paradox because moving out of the Old City area (abetted by the marginalisation they face as Muslims) does not capture this diaspora’s imagination, the way migrating across the Indian Ocean does. Therefore, given the high demand for labour in the Gulf markets and their established translocal networks, Hyderabad Hadrami prefer to transcend the disadvantages at ‘home’ by migrating. Further, most Hadrami women — young and old — who rarely venture to their local markets know street and mall names in Dubai and Jeddah. This paper also argues that the concept of foreigner within the Hadrami diasporic population is realised fluidly. Hyderabad Hadramis self-ascribe themselves as *Chaush* (guard in Turkish) and as Syed/Mashiekh/Qabail. *Chaush* are both *wilayati* (foreigner) as well as *muwalladin* (foreign born or of mixed parentage). The diasporic population see themselves as *Muwalladin*. However, those Hadramis who migrate from the homeland or *watan*, Hadramawth, are inscribed as *wilayati*. The *muwalladin* (foreign-born native) and the *wilayati* (native foreigner) never belong.

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**Khatija Sana Khader** recently completed her PhD titled “Interrogating Identity: A study of Siddi and Hadrami Diaspora in Hyderabad City, India” at the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi. Her PhD and publications explore the histories of migration in the Western India Ocean and locate concepts like diaspora, race and homeland/s in a non-western location. She is currently working as the Human Rights Education Campaigner for Amnesty International India and intends to continue engaging with her PhD research.

## Mir, Merchant, Mercenary: Imperial Connections between Oman and Baluchistan

### **Scott Erich**

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After a power struggle in the late eighteenth century, an ousted member of the Al Busaidi dynasty of Muscat took exile in the Balochi port of Gwadar, which became a part of the Omani sultanate and remained so until 1958, when it was “sold” to Pakistan. For centuries, royals, merchants, and mercenaries have traveled networks between Balochistan and Oman, and continue to play important roles in political life, commerce, and the military on either side of the Gulf of Oman. This gulf, a body of water which marks the shortest distance between South Asia and the Arabian peninsula, is made shorter and blurred by a long history of interaction, trade, conflict, and (until relatively recently), flexible citizenship laws between Balochistan and Oman.

Building on previous scholarship, primary source documents, field research conducted in 2015-2016, and an analysis of social and news media, this paper seeks to explore this “distance,” and the people that straddle it. I aim specifically to trace the long current of Baloch loyalty to Al Busaidi sultans, from the earliest use of Baloch as mercenaries, through their role in the suppression of Oman’s two revolutions, to their attainment of high-level positions in the current Omani government. In addition, this paper attempts to show that a desire for Baloch independence and sovereignty exists alongside allegiance to the Omani sultans; Baloch independence literature is sold in Omani bookstores today, and a Baloch separatist group recently wrote an appeal to the current Omani sultan to “reclaim” Gwadar. The durable, complex, and power-laden bond between Balochistan and Oman begs to be studied further, and this paper is a preliminary historical and anthropological exploration of this relationship.

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**Scott Erich** is a PhD Student in Anthropology at the City University of New York Graduate Center who researches mobility, diaspora, and politics in the western Indian Ocean. Previously, Scott was a Fellow at the Institute of Current World Affairs based in Muscat, Oman, and Program Officer at the Sultan Qaboos Cultural Center in Washington, D.C. He teaches in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Baruch College in New York City.

## Why Does Bahrain Recruit Baloch Mercenaries?

### Ameem Lutfi

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The political stable Persian Gulf city-states have long served as the American empire's unofficial regional base from which its military, oil-brokers, diplomats and corporate employees safely monitor and shape political turbulences and social upheavals in the Middle East and South Asia. For example, Bahrain has since its independence served as a secure docking shore for America's largest naval asset in the Indian Ocean, the Fifth Fleet. Importantly, the Persian Gulf states are not considered colonies despite continued imperial presence, because states like Bahrain voluntarily accommodate American interests. Thus in a way, Persian Gulf states allow an 'invisible' America empire by providing a stable society in which there is no need for directly imperial control and suppression of local population.

A growing corpus of literature has explored regime stability in the Persian Gulf through the states' rentier mechanism, dynastic structures, and repressive mechanisms. This paper, however, understands the willing accommodation of big American Guns in the region through the smaller guns of Baloch mercenaries recruited via informal diaspora networks from across the Indian Ocean. I argue, informally Baloch networks constituting the single largest ethnic group in most militaries in the Gulf, quietly create the conditions for the American empire to establish itself as an unobtrusive state guest only interested in monitoring affairs elsewhere in the Indian Ocean.

In particular, the paper explores how the diverse geographical base of the Baloch diaspora has provided Bahrain with many avenues of recruitment of soldiers, in order to satisfy and suppress reforms demands. Almost each decade since the inception of the modern bureaucratic state, Bahrain has encountered popular movements for reform. Each time, I argue, the movements ended with Bahrain reforming its policing structure by bulking an existing military force, or building a new one. The efficacy of these military reforms were contingent on availability of soldiers from outside the discontent Bahraini citizenry. By exploring the diverse logics and repertoire mobilized by the Baloch to recruit from within this diaspora, I highlight, how Bahrain has had ready access to soldiers without the need for America backed formal agreements for seconded soldiers from foreign states. I thus showcase how historically accumulated practices of a little known informal diaspora network structures the prolonged presence of an 'invisible empire'.

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**Ameem Lutfi** is a Graduate Student in Cultural Anthropology at Duke University. His PhD thesis entitled "Conquest without Rule: Baloch Portfolio Mercenaries in the Indian Ocean" explores the military history of the Indian Ocean through the circulation of the Baloch diaspora. More broadly, his work brings archival and oral history together with multi-sited ethnography in order to consider how the historically informed logics and imaginations of a transregional network shape the internal structures of security and violence within modern states.

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## Treading Gulf Waters

**Ahmad Makia**

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In contemporary Oman, xanith — Arabic term for males with effeminate characteristics — exists in the informal state, wherein they are acknowledged by formal society but not celebrated as part of them. Xaniths exist in other Gulf regions, such as Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Kuwait, as well as east African port-cities such as Zanzibar and Mombasa. Their trans-oceanic footprint grew out of the commercial exchanges, slavery mainly, that occurred in the Indian Ocean between the 17th and 19th centuries. Xaniths, historically, migratory homosexual sex-workers, are a rare mention of the Omani fleet transporting admirals and merchants between Zanzibar, Muscat and Gwadar. The few records of xanith's migrational history can be found in British colonial records and reports on the Omani controlled Swahili coast. These documents offer descriptions of the 'perverse' sexual cultures introduced into east Africa, such as pederasty and sodomy, by way of the ruling Omani Empire. This led to the conception that contemporary local forms of homosexuality and transvestism in East Africa is inherited from Arab-Swahili slave culture and Khaleeji colonial settlement. This essay problematizes this conception by reinterpreting the forms of belonging xanith communities create, and have created, with the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean.

Most scholarly material published in English regarding xanith is reviewed in this essay. This includes: the Western Academy's ethnography of xanith, made prominent by the fieldwork of Norwegian anthropologist Unni Wikan in 1977; colonial British imaginaries of the intimate encounters of Arab rulers in the Swahili coast; the social history of overseas Omani territories; and postcolonial perspectives on race, gender, and sex in the colonized Swahili coast. These materials are supported by critical readings of literature on the erotic customs of exploratory ships and maritime conceptions of space. Also, commentary on Indian Ocean trade relations, Khaleeji urban settlement, and contemporary forms of governance and identification in the GCC. These studies are brought together to provide profound acknowledgment of xanith communities in the Gulf and similarly situated local groups. The essay aspires to uncover the political and personal conditions shaping xanith's political affinity to Oman, the Gulf, the Arabian Peninsula, and the Indian Ocean.

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**Ahmad Makia** is a Human Geographer from Dubai. He writes about wet matters, Gulf landscapes, and sex. He is the managing editor of Publications at Sharjah Art Foundation, and is co-founder of THE STATE, an editorial platform based out of Dubai, that focuses on south-south orientations, cultural criticism, Gulf lived experiences, and digital humanities.

## “Distilling” Empire in the Gulf: The Indian Ocean Origins and Post-Imperial Legacies of Desalination in the Arabian Peninsula

**Michael Christopher Low**

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The region that we now know as the Middle East, partially owes its “middle-ness” to the carbon storage networks designed to fuel the age of steam. In the late nineteenth century, British India and its Arabian appendages depended on the even spacing of coaling stations spread across the Red Sea and Persian Gulf to service the increasing flows of steamship and military traffic flowing between India, Egypt, and Europe. While coal is the obvious centerpiece of this transportation story, water, on the other hand, has remained a neglected part of this history.

From as early as the 1850s, the British Empire began to experiment with coal-fired condenser units to convert saltwater into freshwater in Eastern Mediterranean and Red Sea ports like Malta, Suez, and Aden, where local water supplies were unable to keep up with the new demands of industrial steamship traffic. By World War I, these British condensers formed a desalinated archipelago supplying freshwater to troops and ships from Suez, Port Sudan, Suakin, and Aden to Muscat, Bahrain, and Kuwait in the Persian Gulf.

In 1909 and 1911, two desalination plants were commissioned on opposite ends of the Arabian Peninsula. One was a British-manufactured unit, installed by Ottoman officials struggling against a deadly mix of drought and raging cholera overwhelming the port of Jeddah. The other was installed by the Anglo-Persian Oil Company at the behest of Kuwait’s Amir Mubarak al-Sabah. As these two examples suggest, desalination technology spread alongside the interests of British India’s Persian Gulf empire. And like the modern Peninsula itself, desalination was originally a child of imperial coal and steam, but matured into a global force in the age of oil. Today, desalination technologies represent the infrastructural heart of the modern Arabian Peninsula. Saudi Arabia and the rest of the Gulf produce roughly 70 percent of the world’s desalinated water.

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**Michael Christopher Low** is Assistant Professor of History at Iowa State University. His areas of specialization include the late Ottoman Empire, the Arabian Peninsula, and the Islamic Indian Ocean. Professor Low received his PhD from Columbia University in 2015 and is currently working on a book manuscript, *The Mechanics of Mecca: The Ottoman Hijaz and the Indian Ocean Hajj*. He has published numerous articles and book chapters on Indian Ocean history, Saudi Arabia, the Hijaz, Mecca, and the hajj. His work has appeared in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*; *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*; the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*; *Jadaliyya*; and the *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association*. In collaboration with Lale Can (The City College of New York), he is also co-editing *The Subjects of Ottoman International Law*, forthcoming from Indiana University Press. Low also presented his work at the Social Science Research Council’s 2016 “Inter-Asia” Mecca workshop, convened by Engseong Ho and Cemil Aydın, in Seoul, Korea.

## Posting the Empire: India's Overland and Overseas Networks and the Middle East, C. 1850s–1920

**Devyani Gupta**

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An instrument of colonial control and imperial expansion, the hitherto unexplored history of Post Office of India highlights processes of imperial standardisation in the nineteenth century, which would help prop up the edifice of the British Empire not just within the subcontinent, but also abroad. This marks the cataclysmic juncture of linkage between networks of communication of British India, and colonial ambitions in Arabia and the Gulf.

It was through the imperial postal service — with its ever expanding networks of overland and maritime transport — that India came to be linked ever more tightly to the wider political and information networks of the British Empire. The development of communication networks went hand in hand with Britain's consolidation of its military, political and commercial domination in far off places like Burma, Singapore, Hong Kong and Shanghai in the east, and Aden, Baghdad, Bushire and Zanzibar in the west. The subsequent assertion of Indian agency within the global colonial order of the British Empire necessitated new techniques of political control, which came to be shaped through postal networks radiating out of India.

This novel story of the spread of India's postal network from Bombay to the colonial outposts of Arabia, the Persian Gulf and East Africa, chosen because of their importance as colonial stations within the larger global linkages of British imperialism spanning South Asia, the Persian Gulf and the Middle East, East Africa, Turkish Arabia and even the Ottoman Empire, throws light on the development of related networks of knowledge transmission and exchange, emerging from various points such as Baghdad, Aden, Mocha, Damascus, Alexandria and so on. Drawing from the spread of these networks, this paper will attempt to reconstruct the larger global story of connected histories in the region and in the greater British Empire, while remaining rooted in the Indian context.

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**Devyani Gupta** completed her PhD in History from the University of Cambridge in 2016 and the topic of her research was 'The Postal System of British India, c. 1830-1920'. Her BA and MA degrees were from the University of Delhi, India. She has also taught an undergraduate course on the Cultural History of Modern India at the University of Delhi from 2008-09. Devyani has joined the University of Leeds, UK, from October 2017, as the Leverhulme Early Career Fellow and she will be researching on 'The Global and Domestic History of British Indian Opium, c. 1830-1930'. She is also part of the editorial team of *The Journal of Transport History* (SAGE).

## Turkistanis across South Asia and Arabia, from Pilgrims to Refugees, to Trade Diaspora

### Rian Thum

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### Huda Abdul Ghaffour Amin

Independent Scholar

This paper traces the establishment of a network of Turkistanis linking South Asia and Arabia over the course of the twentieth century. By the third generation of Mughal rule, the arrival of Central Asian Turks in South Asia was again a relatively rare occurrence. Nonetheless, historical sources frequently document the passage of Central Asian Turks across South Asia on their way to Mecca. For the first three hundred years of this flow, South Asia mainly played the role of middle ground. However, the upheavals of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and especially the communist colonial projects in Central Asia, unexpectedly transformed South Asia into the main eastern node of a “Turkistani” diasporic network, with immediate westward links to Saudi Arabia.

The paper draws on letters to a Turkistani refugee-turned-merchant family in Saudi Arabia, contextualized through interviews conducted in Jeddah and Ta’if, contracts from Chinese Turkistan, and South Asian historical sources from the Mughal period onward. In the early and mid-twentieth century, Central Asian Turks who fled communist rule had no choice but to move south, following longstanding trade routes and hajj infrastructure. For many of them, the South Asian regions that had previously served only as intermediary territory – lands to be crossed on the way to Mecca – now became home. Others made the full journey to the holy cities of the Hejaz. All of them remained connected, eventually using their shared language and expanded geography to create a network linking South Asia and Arabia.

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**Rian Thum** is Associate Professor of History at Loyola University of New Orleans, and a Fellow at the National Humanities Center, concurrently holding an American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) fellowship. His book, *The Sacred Routes of Uyghur History* (Harvard University Press, 2014), won the American Historical Association’s Fairbank Prize and the Hsu Prize for East Asian Anthropology. His current work focuses on the history of Chinese Muslims, particularly as they have been shaped by connections to South Asia, and on the Turkistani community in Saudi Arabia.

**Huda ‘Abdul Ghaffour Amin** acquired her Doctorate Degree from al-Azhar University in Cairo in 2009, with a concentration on Islamic economic history and Islamic civilization. She worked as an Assistant Professor at King Abdulaziz University and Dar al-Hekma University in Jeddah in 2013. At present, she researches Central Asia and its relations with the Arabian Peninsula as an affiliated Researcher at the National University of Singapore. She is conducting joint research with Dr Rian Thum at Loyola University, United States, the author of award-winning book *The Sacred Routes of Uyghur History* (Harvard University Press, 2014), on the histories of Turkistani communities in the Hijaz. They have presented some of their findings at the international conference on Asia-Arabia relations, held in National University of Singapore. Her Arabic publications include *Hisbah in Islam and its Role in Environmental Protection* and *Economic Conditions of Jeddah from the sixth to tenth centuries (hijri)*.



## Voyage of the Moors: Arab Identity and Islamicate Modernity in Ceylon

### **Arun Rasiah**

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Holy Names University, USA

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This paper considers the connected histories of the Middle East and South Asia from the vantage point of Muslim activists in colonial Ceylon, 1883-1906. In the crucible of British colonialism, local elites forged an Islamic identity that was at once provincial and cosmopolitan. The endeavor to consolidate a modern “racial” identity involved positing a self-styled genealogy reaching back to Arab sailors of the eighth century. This identity found expression in the emblematic figure of the “Moor” and was formed through new religious institutions and print. Muslim notables articulated a discourse of reform (*islah*) to “modernize” the island’s insular community through the voice of numerous English and Tamil periodicals, reflecting an international orientation. In 1883 the arrival in Colombo of exiles from Egypt led by revolutionary Ahmad ‘Urabi Pasha decisively influenced the contours of this project of renewal (*tajdid*). The Egyptian-Ceylonese encounter facilitated a reconstitution of longstanding Shafi’i tradition, coalescing in the desire for English medium Muslim education. Consequently, the flagship Madrasa al-Zahira was fashioned in 1892 after Cairo’s al-Azhar, where ‘Urabi Pasha had once studied. The Egyptian presence reinforced the global design of Moorish identity between Arab Islamic heritage and anticolonial agitation in the British empire as reflected in writings of the period around Muslims as racialized subjects, including the “fez incident” of 1905-6. Moreover, the transoceanic geography of a Moorish imaginary allowed local Muslims to reposition themselves alongside Tamils and Sinhalese as neighbors in a multiethnic, rather than binary, society. Ceylon’s first anti-minority conflagration targeted Muslims in the riots of 1915, foreshadowing the politics of the nation-state’s postcolonial racial order. In this reinterpretation of a chapter of Muslim intellectual history at the turn of the century, the formation of Moorish discourse represented a quest for cultural sovereignty that merged enlightenment modernity with Islamicate universalism.

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## Rethinking Genealogies of Arab Nation States through the Indian Subcontinent: The Bombay Arab Mercantile Communities and *al-Manar*'s Intellectual Milieu, 1898-1935

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As various studies have demonstrated, 19th-20th centuries' British "imperial cosmopolitanism" had contradictory effects. While the British Empire's political and technological connectivity brought together geographically distanced communities, such "cosmopolitanism" also produced new segregated politics that stressed ethnic and linguistic differences between co-religionists. By focusing on the interactions between the India-based milieu of the Islamic modernist journal of *al-Manar* ("the lighthouse"; 1898-1935) and Bombay's Arab mercantile communities (mostly the Arabian Peninsula) from late nineteenth century to the 1930s, this paper examines how these connections produced imaginaries of Arab-Muslim identity that reshaped the pedagogical position of Arabic as a transnational-Muslim language. Founded in Cairo by the Syrian-Born Muhammad Rashid Rida (1898-1935), *al-Manar* was one of the most important outlets of Islamic modernism, reaching to various Muslim communities around the world. Notwithstanding the diversity of topics covered by *al-Manar*, its call for Islamic unity overshadowed all others. Within this unifying call, however, the role of the Arabs in the history of Islam was elevated above that of other ethnicities, conditioning Islamic unity on the utilization of the Arabic language, in addition to internalization of the journal's Islamic modernist discourse. *Al-Manar*'s milieu sought to make British India, the home to the world's largest Muslim communities until its 1947 partition, into one of the journal's major target audiences. As this paper will show, due to the interwar's rise of national imaginations in South Asia, especially Urdu's primacy as an Indian Muslim *lingua franca* and its preference over Arabic, *al-Manar*'s message was mostly espoused by Bombay's Arab mercantile families who searched for a sense of belonging in the crystalized environment produced by British colonialism. Overlooked by scholars of both South Asia and the Middle East, the encounter between *al-Manar*'s milieu and Bombay's Arab mercantile families tells an untold story on the formation of Arab scholarly networks across South and West Asia.

**Roy Bar Sadeh** is a third year PhD Student in the International and Global History track and the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society (ICLS). His research focuses on the emergence and development of Islamic modernism in Eurasia, particularly the the connected space of the Indian subcontinent, the Arab East and Tsarist/Soviet Russia, from the Indian rebellion of 1857 to the 1955 Bandung Conference. Combining in his research both primary and secondary sources in various languages, including Arabic, Urdu, Hindi, Russian, Persian, Hebrew, English and French, Roy's research interests include Islamic thought and law, relations between Islamic reform and daily practices in the Mashriq, Indian subcontinent, Russian Empire/Soviet union, comparative nationalisms and Empires, as well as developing inter-disciplinary approaches and methodologies to intellectual history.

## Tarana to Tillana

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Tarana is a musical composition which was introduced to North Indian Classical music system by a legendary Indian musician called Amir Khusro around the thirteenth century. Influenced by Sufi traditions and Arabic language this musical composition gained popularity in the music and dance, and continues to evolve in performance spaces today. Tarana which later came to be called Tillana in the southern musical traditions, reflects the morphing of words and ideas belonging to one religion or religious path from Arabic and Persian traditions into something which reflects an entirely different ethos and religious thought in the South Asian tradition. Different characteristics which define this musical composition in music and dance, will be seen through the eyes of performing artistes and research material available in both audio- visual and literary sources. The journey of this musical mode also in many ways indicates the difficulty in tracing one source or path for performing art traditions in South Asia.

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**Siri Rama** is a Bharata Natyam and Kuchipudi research scholar, dancer, teacher and choreographer. She is the founder-director of the thirty-five-year-old dance institution in Mumbai, the Kanaka Sabha Performing Arts Centre. She holds a PhD in the Fine Arts from the University of Hong Kong. Siri has performed to critical acclaim and received awards, presented group performances, and lectured, in many different cities of India and the USA, Germany, the Middle East, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore and Thailand. She served as Adjunct Faculty at Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA) and currently serves as an Adjunct Faculty at Singapore Management University (SMU). Siri has also trained a large number of young dancers in Mumbai, Hong Kong and Singapore. Siri is the founder-editor of [www.kanakasabha.com](http://www.kanakasabha.com), a worldwide website devoted to the appreciation of the Indian classical dance forms. She has also serving her third term as the President of the global organization World Dance Alliance (Singapore). She has received lifetime achievement awards from Kannada Sangha (Singapore) and at the Cuttack International Dance Festival.

## Islamic Syncretism in Religio-Cultural Heritage in Sri Lanka: An Insight to Kurunegala Vistaraya Palm Leaf Manuscripts

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Muslim of Sri Lanka constitute an integral part of Sri Lankan society. Association with Tamils and Sinhala communities over a thousand years has resulted co-existence. Assimilation of Sri Lankan culture in Islamic tradition is portrayed in their customs festival as well as practices. Muslims have adopted Tamil as their mother-tongue which ensued an Arabic-Tamil language which is of Arabic script. Their marriage ceremonies are colored from the elements that are adopted from both Tamil and Sinhala customs. In addition to the medical practices and food habits influenced by both communities, several multi religio-cultural interchanges are also evident. Worship of Gale Bandara deity is one of the examples. Gale Bandara is a regional deity believed to be a reincarnation of a prince called Vathimi Bandara whose origin is from a Muslim mother and a Sinhala father. Hence, Gale Bandara cult is followed by both Muslim and Buddhist devotees. While Gale Bandara legend is documented in palm leaf manuscripts in Sri Lanka none of the significant historical document records about it. In the meantime, probe into literature tell that only a very few studies are available on Muslim-Sinhala religio-cultural relations. Hence, this study has focused primarily to study the historical background of the Gale Bandara cult that has resulted religio-cultural syncretism between Sri Lankan Muslim and Sinhala communities. Kurunegala Vistaraya Palm Leaf Manuscript, which is of several slightly different versions available in the University of Peradeniya Library, Sri Lanka will be focused in the research. The study will further examine the characteristics of cultural heritage and cultural expressions of Gale Bandara cult followed by both communities.

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**Kanchana Dehigama** is a Branch Librarian, Faculty of Allied Health Science, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka. She graduated in Archeology from University of Peradeniya and currently a PhD Scholar in Library and Information Science. She started her professional involvement in Archaeology as a Research officer in the UNESCO Sri Lanka Central Cultural Fund. Thereafter, while serving as an Editor of *ABIA Art and Archaeology Index*; which is an online annotated bibliography, Kanchana completed her Postgraduate Diploma in Archaeology with a Merit Pass during the same time period. Afterwards, she completed her MSSC degree in Library and Information Science in University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka and AIS programme in NISCAIR, Delhi, India in 2004. In 2002, she joined the library system of University of Peradeniya, as an Assistant Librarian. In addition to her current position as Senior Assistant Librarian, In charge of the Faculty of Allied Health Science Library, she currently an responsible for managing heritage collections at the University of Peradeniya Library Network of which the total collection exceeds 800,000. As a part of her responsibilities, she is working on the palm leaf collection of the library, which considered as the second largest collection of Sri Lanka. Kanchana has extensively published on both the Archaeology and Library and Information Science. Her continuous interest is on linking two disciplines through her research.

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## The Cultural Roots of Arabic-Malayalam

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Arabi-malayalam is a hybrid language prevalent among the Mappila community of Kerala, a south Indian state. According to generally accepted and oft-repeated theories this hybrid language came into being as a result of linguistic contact between Arabs and Keralites. Arab settlements in Kerala date back to the early years of Islam. However, the oldest available work in Arabi-malayalam is “Muhyidheen Mala” written by qazi Muhammed in 1607. This gap in time between early settlements of Arabs and the first cultural production in Arabi-malayalam in documented history has been attributed to the colonial government’s policy of censorship of literary works in this creole script. I contend that such an argument cannot explain this temporal gap satisfactorily. Another question that ought to be raised is why scholars have neglected the presence of Persian and Tamil as partner languages of Arabi-malayalam. The only answer offered so far is that the writers accepted words from any language for the sake of rhyme scheme.

This paper is an attempt to find out satisfactory answers to these questions. Historical and literary analysis of Arabi-malayalam works provide clear insights into some of these questions. Arabic script might have been used to write Malayalam in Kerala from the beginning of Arab settlements in the region. However, its evolution to the status of a literary language necessarily required a stronger cultural movement as Sufism. In Malabar, the influence of Sufi movements can be traced only after the 12th century CE. Arabi-malayalam might have matured as a vehicle to produce literary works in 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> centuries CE. It was the mission of Sufis to uphold the language of the downtrodden communities. That version of Malayalam is the partner language of Arabi-malayalam. These Sufi movements brought with them the Persian language and literature into Malabar. Arabi-malayalam came into being among coastal peoples who were highly influenced by Sufism during a period in which Malayalam and Tamil languages were not clearly separated. This study shall help us to understand Arabi-malayalam against the some of such historical developments in medieval South Asia.

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**Aboobacker Kaya** teaches Malayalam in a Higher Secondary School in Kerala, South India. He has been doing research in the area of hybrid languages and creole scripts of Malabar in general and Arabi-Malayalam in particular. He has collected, transliterated and annotated all Arabi-Malayalam works of Moinkutty Vaidyar into Malayalam, along with KK Muhammed Abdul Kareem. His collection of studies of eminent writers on Arabi-Malayalam is another major work. Currently he works as a co-ordinator on a publication project on the history of Arabi-Malayalam Literature.

## Networks of Scholars as a Cosmopolitan Community in the Arabian-South Asian World

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Societies in Arabia and South Asia have interacted since ancient times. Initially these relationships involved two regions dealing with one another at substantial distances. However, networks of socio-cultural relations developed and geographically defined zones of interaction “gradually converted into cultural domains” (in the words of Janet Abu-Lughod). The western Indian Ocean/ Arabian Sea developed as a networked religio-cultural domain. The nature of this domain is difficult to understand if one utilizes the “conventional notions of cultural and religious difference,” viewing Arabia and South Asia as separate regions which “interact” rather than recognizing that important aspects of this domain are trans-regional, multi-dimensional syntheses. One approach to understanding this difference is to utilize analytical concepts that do not define phenomena in exclusive either/or terms. For example, in analyzing religious practice, analyses often distinguish between local-populist modes and cosmopolitan modes, rather than seeing a synthesis that involves a cosmopolitanism with particular roots, creating what Kwame Appiah identifies as “rooted cosmopolitanism.”

This paper will discuss the historical developments involved in the rooted cosmopolitanism of the Indian Ocean/Arabian Sea domain, and will utilize a case study of scholarly networks in the 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> centuries AH to show the nature of this religio-cultural domain. Specifically, the study will examine those scholars in the Arab world who are identified as “al-Hindi” or “al-Sindi” in biographical dictionaries and chronicles. It will also examine Arab diaspora scholars active in South Asia, with special attention given to major South Arabian families like the Aydarus. The conclusion of this analysis is that the scholars in the networks within this domain represent a rooted cosmopolitanism that reflects a synthesis of ecumenical Islam (using the terminology of Engseng Ho) and distinct cultural identities. In this framework, Arabia and South Asia are not two separate regions interacting; they are component elements in a trans-regional cultural domain.

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## Imperial Connections and Arab Indology

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By the nineteenth century, the terms which governed the long history of translation, trade, and exegesis across the Indian Ocean had been changed by colonialism. The rise of European power created new conditions of intellectual production and cultural commerce. As Ashin Das Gupta put it in his essay "India and the Indian Ocean in the Eighteenth Century," "the fellowship upon the ocean had been broken." In his book *Imperial Connections*, Thomas Metcalf registered this shift by tracing how colonial administrators (and their attendant ideas of colonial administration) traveled between the colonies of the British Empire. He also followed Indian and other colonial laborers — "coolies" and soldiers — as they moved between those same spaces. But what about non-European ideas that traveled between the colonies? No longer was this intellectual space occupied simply by religious scholars traveling between the Hijaz and the Indian Ocean's centers of Muslim learning. New kinds of people and texts were being written, read, and translated. In the shadow of Curzon and Cromer, Arab and Indian intellectuals connected across a new world of empire. My paper follows the work of one of these writers, the poet, lawyer and translator Wadi al-Bustani (1886-1954), as he moved from Beirut to Yemen, Cairo, Bombay, Transvaal, and finally Haifa. Along with essays on Indian culture and translations of Rabindranath Tagore's poetry and plays, Bustani spent decades translating and annotating Arabic renditions of the Mahabharata, the Ramayana, the Gita, and Kalidasa's *Shakuntala*. His translations of and commentaries on these Indic texts and the global philological project he saw himself a part of, speak to the new forms of knowledge that circulated in this period. By tracing the life and reading the work of Bustani, I aim to highlight Bustani's place in a global intellectual history that, in the words of Sanjay Subrahmanyam, goes beyond Hegel and Marx.

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**Esmat Elhalaby** is PhD Candidate in the History Department at Rice University and am currently a visiting scholar in the Middle East/South Asia program at the University of California, Davis. He studies the intellectual history of modern West and South Asia. In 2016 Esmat co-organized a conference at Columbia University, "South-South: Intellectual History across Middle East and South Asia, 1857- 1948."

## Hands below the Navel: Eighteenth Century Hanafism and Hadith Scholarship across Sindh and the Hijaz

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The transregional intellectual history of early modern Sindh remains understudied by contemporary scholarship, despite its close connections with Hijazi networks of scholarship. This paper focuses on the circulation of manuscripts and scholars across Sindh and the Hijaz in the first half of the eighteenth century to interrogate how Sindhi scholars mediated multiple traditions of knowledge through their writings and travels. Based on Sindhi, Hijazi, and Syrian biographical dictionaries, *ijzas* of hadith transmission, and legal treatises, it traces the intellectual genealogies of two contemporaneous Sindhi shaykhs who traversed these regions: Makhdum Hashim Thattwi (d.1761), based in Thatta, and Muhammad Hayat al-Sindi (d.1750), in Medina. In particular, it analyzes a series of debates between them on the question of the proper placement of the hands in prayer, which revolved around deeper questions of the legal import of hadith in the Hanafi school of thought, the very nature of *taqlid*, and the methods of determining the reliability of hadith manuscripts. Considering Hashim Thattwi's staunch defense of Hanafi positions and principles, these debates complicate the prevailing understanding of 18th century hadith-based reformism as being largely skeptical of the idea of the *madhhab* and the general applicability of *taqlid*. Ultimately, this paper argues that the intellectual history of Sindh and the Hijaz in the eighteenth century must take seriously the extent to which they constituted connected intellectual zones.

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**Sohaib Baig** is a PhD Candidate in the Department of History at the University of California, Los Angeles, and from August 2017, a Visiting Fellow at the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies in Riyadh. His dissertation explores intellectual exchange across the Hijaz and South Asia from the eighteenth century to the early twentieth century, with particular focus on the 'ulama of Sindh and Delhi.



## Teaching Arabs Islam: Intellectual Networks of Malabari Teachers and Meccan Students

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The existing intellectual historiography of Islamic world on the nineteenth and twentieth century focuses almost exclusively on the so-called “modernist”, “reformist” and “anti-colonial” projects, and ignores the concerns and contributions of the majority of Muslim scholars who sought ways to assert their religiosity and intellect over the new tides of “false innovations”. For example, the scholars in Mecca tried their best to continue the legal, theological and mystical *longue-durée* of Islam by presenting its knowledge system according to the new logics and demands. In this paper, I explore such “archetypal scholarly” dimensions by examining the interconnections between the Middle East and South Asia through a micro-community: the Malabari scholars who hailed from the south-western coast of the Indian subcontinent and followed the Shāfiʿīte school of Islamic law and the Qādirī Sufi order. Interestingly, they asserted their religious legitimacy over Arabs by putting forward a strong claim that the Arabs have lost interest in pursuing pure Islamic knowledge and thus they are the true custodians of Islam. If not ironically, they utilized the network of the law and mysticism associating themselves with such predominant Shāfiʿī scholars in Mecca as Aḥmad Zaynī Daḥlān (d. 1886) and ‘Abd al-Hamid al-Sharwānī (d. 1876) to propel their claims and legitimize their positions. This is a rather interesting story of a “marginal community” who argued for their centrality in the Islamic intellectual world, often conflicting with a large chunk of Ḥanafī scholars from South Asia or the Ottoman Empire. I focus on the lives and contributions of three such Malabari scholars: Sayyid Faḍl bin ‘Alawī (d. 1900), Shaykh Aḥmad Kuṭṭī Musliyār Kōṭāncēri (d. 1907) and Muḥammad ‘Alī Musliyār Nellikkuttu (d. 1921). All the three had a completely different intellectual and political trajectory (one of them was an exile from the British Empire who went on to become the religious advisor to the Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamid II, while the other was killed by the British upon his return to Malabar), yet they all came together in their assertion of Shāfiʿī Islamic legalism and their positionality in transmitting the Islamic knowledge. Through their decades-long careers in Mecca, they built up a strong network of Arab, African and Indian scholars who eventually wrote some remarkable works asserting the views of Islamic “archetypal scholarship” and countering the views of new radical ideologies and “modernist” thoughts. Their works help us understand how a “peripheral” community asserted its place in the heartlands of Islam through constant intellectual engagements thanks to the new political, economic and technological networks and developments of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. To elaborate on those aspects, I utilize many primary and secondary sources in Arabic, Dutch, English, Malayalam and Urdu written by or on these scholars.

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**Mahmood Kooria** is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Dutch Institute in Morocco and Leiden University, the Netherlands. Earlier he was a joint Research Fellow at the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) and African Studies Centre (ASC), Leiden. He did his PhD at the Leiden University Institute for History on the circulation of Islamic legal ideas and texts across the Indian Ocean and Eastern Mediterranean worlds. Prior to this, he pursued his undergraduate and post-graduate studies at Darul Huda Islamic University, University of Calicut, Jawaharlal Nehru University. He has edited a volume with Michael Pearson entitled *Malabar in the Indian Ocean World: Cosmopolitanism in a Maritime Historical Region* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2017).

## From *Khulasat al-Madad al-Nabawi* to *Nūr al-Qulūb*: The Revival of Hadrami Practices in Contemporary Kerala

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Hadrami culture has been a central feature of the Muslim life in Kerala since the arrival of Hadrami *sāda* in the eighteenth century (Dale 1997, Anne K. Bang 2013, Lakshmi 1995). The *Ratib al-Haddād* (belonging to ‘Abdullah b. ‘Alawi al-Haddād (d. 1719)) brought by the ‘*Alawi sāda*’ became a key element of Muslim everyday life in the Malabar. The Islamization project that the Hadramis began in Malabar could be attestable by the currently existing parallels such as the visitation to the Sufi-shrines. It is evident that there is a non-political Islamization project taking place in the contemporary Kerala which was manifested in the compilation and the wide distribution of *Nūr al-Qulūb* as a select version of the rituals in *Khulasat al-Madad al-Nabawi* (*The Quintessence of (Spiritual) Help from the Prophet*) that is the handbook of everyday-rituals of students in *Dar al-Muṣṭafa*, Hadramawt and in several other initiatives including the International *Da‘wa* conferences held in Calicut inspired by the one taking place yearly in Tarīm, Yemen. The *Khulasat* is originally a collection of liturgical prose and poetry, mainly written by some great Hadrami saints, which was compiled by al-Habib ‘Umar b. Hafiz of Yemen, whose saintly reputation in Kerala is even very high. Drawing upon my yearlong fieldwork and interviews with the returned students of *Dar al-Muṣṭafa* in Kerala who themselves played very crucial role, I argue that the Hadrami culture in contemporary Malabar is now in the phase of a resurgence as a revivalism of ‘missionary pietism’ in an attempt to bring back Sufism as a viable mode of religious practice in the region. The paper also examines the background, key contributors and apolitical imagination of the main actors involved in the resurgence.

**Muhammad Ashraf Thachara Padikkal** is presently pursuing the (Research) Masters of Islamic Studies in Civilization and Societies at the Qatar Faculty of Islamic Studies, Hamad Bin Khalifa University, Doha, Qatar. He is interested in the areas of Sufism, Pluralism, Diaspora, Malabar and everyday Muslim life. His current research project is about the Sufism in the religious culture of Qatar with regard to its relationship with the immigrant communities from South Asia. He has previously worked as a writing-intern at the Centre for Islamic Pluralism, Washington DC. He has also regularly contributed to several online platforms including The Huffington Post. He has presented a number of papers in national and international conferences held in India, Turkey and USA. He has translated some of the works of the late Syrian scholar Ramaḍān al-Būti to Malayalam.

## Re-connecting Territories: Texts and Contexts in the 'Alawī Sufi Cosmopolis

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This paper examines the textual *longue duree* of the Alawi Sufi writings and the interactions and negotiations it made at certain local contexts while traversing geographies from Tarim to Mecca, Malabar, Ma'bar and onwards to Ceylon. These texts of different genres written mainly in eighteenth and nineteenth centuries not only summated new persons and localities in its textual expansion but also addressed issues of local contexts engaging or contending other orders, ritual practices, puritan critiques, reform attempts and theological issues. At the same time, these writings attempted to retain its Sufi, diasporic, theological, liturgical and cosmogonical contents, connecting the texts back to early Hadrami genealogical and Sufi skeleton. Approaching these textual interactions as part of the Alawi Sufi *longue duree* will help not only to think of a Sufi cosmopolis in the Indian Ocean but also in some extent to redirect the studies of Islam in modern period from its undue emphasis on reformist/puritan/modernist discourses to dynamic experiences of Sufi Islam.

For this, I use the writings by Muhammad bin Abī Bakr al-Shillī (d. 1682) in Mecca and Tarim, Shaykh al-Jufri (d. 1808) in eighteenth century Malabar, Sayyid Fadl Mawlā al-Dawīla (d. 1900) in Mecca and Istanbul, 'Abd al-Rahmān bin Mīrān Labba Marakkār of Ma'bar and 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Jufri of Ceylon, who hold significant nodes in these inter-textual Hadrami reproductions of South Asia. The texts like *al-Mashra'* by al-Shillī provide a reference for many of the writings in distant peripheries of the Indian Ocean, as explicit in al-Jufri's Sufi writings in the non-Muslim context of Malabar. While Faḍl followed al-Jufri and other predecessors during his successful scholarly and political career in and outside Arabia, the two later South Asian scholars introduced the Alawi genealogical and Sufi claims in vernacular Arwi in Ma'bar and Ceylon. I will first provide a brief historical sketch of the trans-regional interconnections maintained by these Hadrami scholars. Along tracing the local context for such writings in distant peripheries, I will analyze some of the significant Hadrami texts like *Natīja Ashkāl*, *al-Ṭarīqa al-Hanīfiyya*, and *al-Dalā'il al-Qawī*. These texts written in various temporal and spatial contexts explain how they responded to local issues while retaining many universal contents that emphasize the Alawi Sufi Islam. Through these texts mainly in Arabic, Arabic Malayalam and Arabic Tamil, I will trace how this inter-textuality of writings in Arabia and South Asia reasserted the Hadrami Sufi expressions and ritual practices of Islam in these regions.

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## العربية البلاد إلي الهند' كيرلا' ملبار من روحانية علمية هجرة

## Intellectual and Spiritual Journeys from Malabar to Arabia

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هذه محاولة تبحث فيها عن الهجرة العلمية من سكان ولاية كيرلا -الهند-(ولو كان قليلا في العدد أثرها في الولاية كبير ) إلي الحجاز - مكة المباركة- ليروي عطشهم الدينية. ولو كان هناك دراسات وبحوث عن مساهماتهم ما وجدت بحثا مهما يسلط الضوء إلي دور الحجاز في تشكيلهم بثقافة دينية واستعدادهم لخدمة دين الله جل وعلا. .

تاريخ الهجرة العلمية من الولاية يبدأ من القرن السادس عشر الميلادي (كما نصّ في كتب التواريخ المشهورة) ويستمر مع زيادة عدد المهاجرين حتي في الأوضاع الراهنة.

يعتبر زين الدين المخدوم الأول (هناك "زين الدين مخدوم الثاني " حفيد الأول ' وهو أيضا ذهب إلي مكة وتابع في مجال الدعوة جده) أول من ذهب إلي الحجاز للتعلم. وهو إمام كبير ولد في جنوب الهند وتعلم من الحجاز -مكة- وذاع صيته في أجواء الأرض. وقد ترك لنا عددا من آثاره الرائعة في المجالات العلمية والثقافية والسياسية والإجتماعية. وخدماته قد رفعته إلي مكانة عالية في قلوب المليباريين -بل في قلوب العالميين حتي اشتهر عالما راسخا القدم في علوم الفقه والتصوف والتاريخ وسياسيا حكيما ضد ظلمة المستعمرين البرتغاليين واجتماعيا مؤثرا في حياة المليباريين. ويرجع هذا الشرف والعظمة إلي عدة أمور وفي مقدمه تعلمه من علماء مكة وحياته في الحجاز .

وفي هذه الورقة أرتكز على نقاط مهمة مثل تاريخ الهجرة ودوافعها وكيفية نظام التعليم الدينية العجمية في ولاية كيرلا ونظام التعليم في الحجاز العربية ونتيجة تعلمهم لدي علماء مكة وأثرهم في الولاية دينيا واجتماعيا ودور "فتح المعين" في تحقيق أحكام الشرعية لسكان الولاية و 'أذكاء' في تصفيفهم علي السلسلة الصوفية و 'تحفة المجاهدين ' في تحريضهم علي قواة المستعمرين وغيرها.

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## ABOUT THE CHAIRPERSONS AND ORGANISERS

**Andrew Peacock** is Professor of Middle Eastern and Islamic History at the University of St Andrews, UK. His research interests include political and religious connections across the Indian Ocean and he is coeditor of *From Anatolia to Aceh: Ottomans, Turks and Southeast Asia* (OUP, 2015). His research focuses on sources in Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Malay.

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**Muhammad Alagil** serves as the CEO of Jarir Investment and Chairman of Jarir Group, which comprises of Jarir Bookstore, Jarir Marketing, Jarir Furniture, Jarir Real Estate, Kite Arabia Ltd., Kids Kingdom and various other associate companies. Mr Alagil conceptualized and co-started Jarir Marketing and Jarir Bookstore chains, developing them into leading wholesalers and retailers in Saudi Arabia for stationery, school supplies, office machines, computer supplies, books, arts and engineering items. Since 1990 Mr Alagil has been focusing, through Jarir Investment which is a family office, on private investing both as a direct principal and with various known institutional partnerships. Jarir Investment have been investing worldwide in Hedge Funds, Private Equity, Real Estate and also guiding families second generation through family constitution, career planning and legal structuring.

**Muhammad Arafat Bin Mohamad** is a Social Anthropologist who became interested the study of social life through his involvement in community work in southern Thailand while studying for an undergraduate degree in Southeast Asian Studies at the National University of Singapore. With the encouragement of some inspirational professors, he began a long-term commitment to study various social issues pertaining to Southern Thailand, including development, social memory, the politics of ethnicity, and migration. Since 2007, he has expanded the geographical range of his research to include Mecca, which has been a migration destination for Patanians for several centuries. He is currently preparing a book manuscript about the social situation of the Patanian diaspora in Mecca.

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