

## THE ATLAS PROJECT:

### THE SOCIAL AND INTELLECTUAL HISTORY OF MUSLIMS IN SOUTH ASIA

The Atlas documents and offers a visual representation of the spread of social and intellectual movements across the Muslim world. It highlights connections, continuities and discontinuities across regions and time periods, and explains how individuals and ideas moved between Muslim societies, and the scholarly and religious movements they inspired. This information is presented using maps, charts and tables, accompanied by textual commentary. Maps illustrate the geographical and spatial diffusion of intellectual networks, revealing their expansion or contraction across regions; charts and tables trace these patterns over time and across generations; while the accompanying text highlights key themes and explains the main findings revealed through these visual representations.

The Project intends to examine the Muslim world in five volumes, with each volume focused on a different region. These include: i) The Arabian Peninsula, Southwest Asia, the Nile Valley and the Red Sea; ii) West-Central Asia, Inner Eurasia, Western China; iii) North Africa, the Western Mediterranean, Saharan and West Africa; iv) South Asia; and v) Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean. The Atlas project is under the direction of Dr Farhan Nizami.

The volume on South Asia, which is nearing completion, has been supported by the Leverhulme Trust (UK), the Faisal Islamic Bank, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Carnegie Corporation of New York, and the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS). It sets the template for other volumes and defines the method, procedures, and analyses that can be applied to the historical geography of Islam in other major regions.

The *South Asia* volume describes the region's first contacts with Islam through trade and military incursions. It maps out the settlement patterns, overlapping pilgrimage and trade routes, and the eventual establishment and growth of Muslim polities such as the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire. Against this political and economic backdrop, it charts the spread of Sufi and scholarly networks, emergence of teaching centres, development of curricula, migration patterns, and the different means for the transmission of learning. The volume comprises 23 chapters consisting of 162 maps, 142 charts, and 109 tables, for which data has been drawn from a variety of historical sources (such as local histories, biographical dictionaries, chronicles, and other materials) that have been verified, collated, and interpreted. The accompanying text of about 180,000 words aims to tie the themes together and explain the key findings.

The *South Asia* volume is currently being supported by a grant from KFAS, which has enabled the Centre to build a dedicated research team, with the primary focus on the completion of the written text.