



Centre launches new project on Public Health, Science and Technology in Muslim Societies

The Centre is initiating an innovative project on Public Health, Science and Technology in Muslim societies. There remains an urgent need to study the relationship between science and society in Muslim countries and to facilitate a deeper understanding of their interdependence. Within the scope of this project the Centre is adopting a holistic approach and will bring together concepts from different academic disciplines, notably from the sciences and social sciences, in order to strengthen the scholarship around this topic.



Sir David Clary

The aim will be to analyse the contribution of Muslim countries to global scientific progress and to identify opportunities for new approaches and mechanisms, including of international cooperation, which might enhance that contribution. The Centre has appointed

two eminent scientists to key roles in the delivery of this project. Professor Sir David Clary, Former President of Magdalen College, Oxford, has been appointed the Senior Adviser for this project and King Salman Fellow at the Centre. Dr Shahid Jameel, Director of Trivedi School of Biosciences at Ashoka



Dr Shahid Jameel

University and leading virologist, has been appointed the project's Principal Investigator. Both have contributed generously to the initial scoping of the project and will be valuable additions to the Centre as it begins to investigate science and technology with reference to Muslim societies.

This multi-disciplinary project will strengthen the Centre's commitment to a collaborative approach to research, while developing its unique international connections.

Promoting international understanding and scholarship Celebrating 30 years of Visiting Fellowship Programme

To mark the 30-year anniversary of the Centre's Visiting Fellowship programme, a series of seminars was held to discuss the productive impact of international scholarship. The programme, with support from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), enables scholars to undertake a period of independent study and research in Oxford.

Alumni of the programme have attained exceptional success, and for this anniversary the Centre invited former Visiting Fellows to present their perspectives from different corners of the world: the USA, Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, Central Asia and the Caucasus, and South East Asia.

The speakers included, among others, the following alumni of the Programme: Professor Dale Eickelman (Dartmouth College) and Professor Bruce Lawrence (Duke University) from the USA; HE Mohammed

Benaïssa (Former Moroccan Minister of Foreign Affairs) from the Middle East and North Africa; Dr Bakhrom Abdukhalimov (Director, Abu al-Raihan al-Biruni Institute of Oriental Studies), Dr Naida Azizova (RT Producer-Correspondent) and Ms Diloram Ibrahimova (Editor, BBC World Service) from Central Asia and the Caucasus; Professor François Burgat (French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS)) and Professor Ulrike Freitag (Director, Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient) from Europe; Tan Sri Syed Hamid Albar (Former Malaysian Minister of Foreign Affairs), Mr Khairy Jamaluddin (Malaysian Minister of Science, Technology, and Innovation) and Mr Nazir Razaq (Former Chairman of CIMB Group, Malaysia) from South East Asia.

The seminars celebrated the achievements of Visiting Fellows thus far, and paved the way for the success of the Programme's participants in future.

Scholarships: Continued Support for Students at Oxford

The Centre's Scholarship Programme provides funding for students reading towards degrees at the University of Oxford and this year will provide fully-funded scholarships to nine new Scholars. Subject areas represented by the 2021-22 cohort include: Law, Business Administration, Economics, Public Policy, Management, Byzantine Studies, International Health & Tropical Medicine, Pharmacology and History. Four of these were made possible through our long-standing partnership with Yayasan Khazanah.

Visiting Fellowships 2020—21

The Centre hosted the following Visiting Fellows, Visiting Research Fellows and Scholars-in-Residence over the course of 2020-21:

Dr Zubair Abbasi,
Chevening Fellow;

Dr Maha Hanaan Balala,
Visiting Research Fellow;

Dr Diana Galeeva,
Scholar in Residence;

Professor Tarik
Ghodhani, Chevening
Fellow;

Dr Ahmad Fauzi Abdul
Hamid, Scholar in
Residence;

Dr Nilay Özlü, Abdullah
Gül Chevening Fellow;

Dr Nour-Eddine Qaouar,
Scholar in Residence;

Dr Haroun Rahimi,
Imam Bukhari Visiting
Research Fellow;

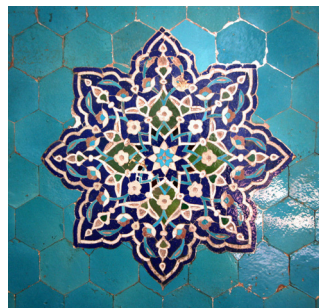
Mr Abdulkader Thomas,
SC-OCIS Visiting Fellow
in Islamic Finance;

Professor Muhammad
Mustaqim Mohd Zarif,
Chevening Fellow.

Centre seminars

Exploring Global Islamic Cultures

Study of Global History



Over the past two terms the Centre has hosted seminars on Islamic History.

Professor
Richard M.

Eaton, University of Arizona, discussed “India in the Persianate Age, 1000-1765” and explored the complex relations between the Persianate and Sanskritic worlds, proposing that the study of South Asian history should focus on the wide range of cultures shaped by Sanskrit as a transregional language.

Dr Michael Christopher Low, NYU Abu Dhabi, spoke on the topic of “Pandemic and the Pilgrimage: Ottoman Arabia in the Shadow of British India’s Ecological Fallout”. Dr Low discussed travel restrictions to Mecca during the COVID-19 pandemic, suggesting that a comparison with the 1831-1914 cholera pandemic could inform mass mobility management in future.

Dr Alexander Morrison, New College, Oxford, spoke on the topic of “The Russian Conquest of Ferghana, 1875-76” and explored Khoqand’s eventual destruction and commemoration in a rich historiography.

Lastly, Centre Fellows Professor Adeel Malik and Dr Moin Nizami led a discussion on “Sufi State and Society”, exploring how Sufism is applied in communities.

Philosophy

Dr Rashmee Lall, Visiting Fellow at the University of East Anglia, presented her paper on “The Platonic Influence on Al Farabi”, exploring the impact of Plato’s epistemological theories on the Islamic philosopher. Al Farabi was heavily influenced by the philosophical tradition of Classical Alexandria, and wrote about the ideas of Plato and Aristotle in his own texts.

Islamic Law

The following members of the Centre led seminars on the topic of Islamic Law. Dr Salman Younas spoke on “A Conservative Jurist’s Approach to Legal Change: Ashraf Ali al-Thawani on Women’s Political Rule”. Professor Zubair Abbasi gave two seminars on Sharia, entitled “Constitutionalising Sharia: The Incorporation of Islam into the Legal System of Pakistan”, and “Humanising Sharia and Harnessing the State: Islamization of Laws in Pakistan”. Dr Tarik Ghodhani spoke on “Water Governance in the Sahara; Religious Rules, Identity and Administrative Policy: Legal Pluralism and Problematic of Interaction”, and in a consequent seminar spoke on the topic of “State Policy, Religious Rules and Inherited Social Traditions”, using an Algerian Sahara case study. Lastly, Dr Hanaan Balala explored “The Role of the Rule of Law in the Socio-Economic Development of Muslim Societies”.

Art and Architecture

Professor Scott Redford, SOAS, spoke on “Writing as Talisman in Medieval Islamic Art”, discussing the changes observed in Islamic scripts around the year 1000 with particular reference to architectural facades. Professor Doris Behrens-Abouseif, SOAS, spoke on “Poets and Artisans in the Mamluk Sultanate - Literary and Artistic Interactions”, and examined mutual artistic exchanges in the medieval realm. Chevening Fellow Dr Nilay Ozlu spoke on “Treasures at the Topkapi Palace: Imperial and Sacred Collections Revisited”, discussing the museum’s archives in Turkey, and in a second seminar discussed the “Architectural Representations of Justice” which can be found in many Ottoman Imperial palaces of note.



Exploring manuscripts

Qur'anic Illuminations and Beyond

In 2021 the Centre has hosted many discussions about Islamic manuscripts and their interpretation.

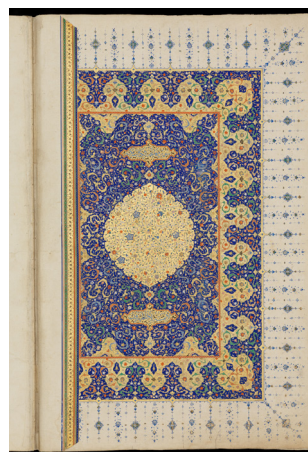
A seminar series was held on Qur'anic manuscripts, for which four speakers were invited. Dr Umberto Bongianino, University of Oxford, discussed "Untold stories of Maghribi Qur'ans", and explored the implicit values of the people connected with these manuscripts. Second, Dr Zulfikar Hirji, York University, Toronto, spoke about 18th-19th century illuminated Qur'an manuscripts from Pate Island in Kenya and our understanding of the manuscripts' creators.

Next, in her paper, "The Sulawesi diaspora floral style of Qur'an illumination", Dr Annabel Teh Gallop, British Library, explored regional artistic schools. Finally, Dr Sana Mirza, National Museum of Asian Art in Washington, D.C, spoke on "The Qur'ans of Harar: An Ethiopian manuscript

tradition", investigating what these manuscripts reveal about the Muslim communities which once inhabited the region.

A further talk was given by Professor Anna

Contadini, SOAS, in collaboration with the Oxford Bibliographical Society, entitled, "Book culture in the Arab world: an illustrated herbal of the 13th century". The Syrian herbal she discussed sheds light on artistic collaboration and scholarly engagement with a major classical text in the medieval Arabic world.



The Ruzbihan Qur'an

Russia and the Muslim world: Through the Lens of Shared Islamic Identities

The Centre was able to support one of the Scholars-in-Residence, Dr Diana Galeeva, by hosting an international online conference at the Centre convened by her on the topic, "Russia and the Muslim world: Through the Lens of Shared Islamic Identities", which was held in Hilary Term. Contributors included the following: Professor Roy Allison (Oxford), Professor Vitaly Naumkin (Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences), Dr Alexander Shumilin (Institute of Europe of the Russian Academy of Sciences), Professor Mark Katz (George Mason University), Dr Alexander Morrison (Oxford), Dr Galina Yemelianova (SOAS, University of London), Professor Edmund Herzig (Oxford), Professor Michael Kemper (Amsterdam), Dr Ilsur Salikov (Kazan Federal University), Dr Akhmet A. Yarlykapov (Institute for International Studies at Moscow State Institute of International Relations) and Professor Linar Latypov (Kazan Federal University).

Participatory Finance

One of the Centre's Scholars-in-Residence Dr Nour-Eddine Qaouar is preparing for the release of his publication, *Le Conseil Supérieur des Oulemas et la fonction de confirmer leurs avis en finance participative*, which features a preface by our current SC-OCIS Visiting Fellow in Islamic Finance, Mr Abdulkader Thomas, reflecting the great benefits of scholarly interaction that we are able to offer at the Centre.

Islamic Economy and Ethical Finance

Talks on Islamic finance have continued virtually, which has encouraged greater attendance by participants in the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

Dr Tarik Akin, Division Director in the Finance Office of the Presidency of Turkey, presented on small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) access to finance, and in another presentation outlined the Turkish government's strategy for 'participation finance'. Dr Attiya Ahmad, George Washington University, presented on the 'Halal Tourism' industry, taking an anthropological perspective on this fast-growing market which constitutes a large share of GDP for many countries. In a related presentation, Dr Lena Rethel, University of Warwick, spoke about global governance of Islamic finance and halal food, outlining the increasingly transnational character of the Islamic economy. Dr Salman Syed, Islamic Development Bank, presented work on religiosity and multi-dimensional

poverty, as well as research on the potential for financial inclusion created by artificial intelligence developments.

Discussions were also led by current Visiting Fellows of the Centre. Dr Hanaan Balala presented on the challenges to Shariah governance of Islamic finance in Kenya, and Dr Haroun Rahimi spoke about Islamic finance in Afghanistan, discussing issues of legal indeterminacy, problems of access to credit, and a general lack of focus on SMEs. Also providing a unique country perspective was Dr Nour-Eddine Qaouar, who spoke about Shariah governance within Moroccan Participatory Banks. Lastly, Mr Abdulkader Thomas presented on Maqasid Al Shariah and its applications to Islamic finance, with a specific focus on applications to bankruptcy law.

Looking forward, plans are in place to restart fieldwork in Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan, including new work on asset-based microfinance for women in Pakistan.

The latest issue of the *Journal of Islamic Studies* contains articles by Nicholas Boylston on “Islam from the inside out: ‘Ayn al-Qudāt Hamadānī’s reconception of Islam as vector”, Youcef L. Soufi on “From conquest to co-existence: Burhān al-Dīn al-Marghīnānī’s (d. 593/1197) re-interpretation of jihād doctrine”, and Itzhak Weismann and Rokaya Adawi on “Muhammad Bahjat al-Bitār and the decline of modernist Salafism in twentieth-century Syria”. The issue also contains 16 reviews of recent publications about Islam and the Muslim world.

Centre Library

Special Collections and Expanding Catalogue

The Centre’s Library has recently acquired the special collections of the late Syrian scholar, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Fattah Abu Ghuddah, the late historian, Professor K. A. Nizami and the late historian Professor Clifford Edmund Bosworth.

The first stage of archiving the Nizami private papers has now been completed by the Fellow Archivist and it is intended that over the coming year the Library will achieve a similar level of archiving for the Bosworth and Abu Ghuddah private papers. Conservation of the manuscripts has also started under the auspices of the Oxford Conservation Consortium to ensure their longevity.

The Library’s collection now stands at 32,802 volumes altogether which are searchable on the online catalogue for the University of Oxford’s resources. This includes monographs and journals in English, Arabic and Urdu, and 17,000



The Centre’s Library

catalogued items unique to the Centre’s Library.

Further to this, there are approximately 20,000 books in Arabic, Persian and Urdu remaining to be catalogued, which will enrich the Centre’s collection further.

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