



TIMES

The Islamic & Middle Eastern Studies
Post-Graduate Forum

WELCOME TO TIMES FORUM SYMPOSIUM 2017

Thank you for being part of the **TIMES** Forum Symposium at the University of Birmingham. We are delighted to be welcoming delegates for what promises to be a stimulating and enjoyable conference.

Photography :

We will be taking photographs, and possibly some videos, during the Symposium, which will mainly be used in **TIMES** promotional materials. If you do not wish to feature in any of the photographs, please make this known to the organisers.

WiFi :

You can access the University of Birmingham's WiFi network.

Network name: WiFi Guest

Password: uniofbham

Venue :

All the days activities will take place in **Muirhead Tower** (Red Zone, R21). Apart from the manuscript workshop at the end of the day, all the sessions will take place in the **G15 Lecture Theatre on the ground floor**. The manuscript workshop will take place in the seminar room of the **Cadbury Research Library** on the lower-ground floor

Prayer Room :

For your convenience, we have booked room 417 (4th floor) of Muirhead Tower for anyone who would like to make use of it for prayer. In addition, there is the main campus prayer room with wash room facilities located in the Guild of Students (Orange Zone O1).

Don't Forget to Tweet!

Feel free to share online about your attendance, experience and anything interesting you see, hear and learn throughout the day. You can follow us on Twitter [@TIMES_Forum](#).

We are also having a 'take-over' of UoB's Public Engagement Twitter feed [@uobengage](#) for the day. As well as tweeting on our usual account, the day's activities will appear on their feed too.

Please join in and extend the discussion by using the hashtag [#TIMESPG17](#)

We hope you enjoy the Symposium

Best wishes,

Amna Nazir, Hanan Fara, Neelam Hussain & Tasawar Bashir
([T10000](#) Forum Symposium Committee)

TJUE Forum Symposium 2017 Programme

18th May 2017, 09:00 – 18:00

Venue. G15 Lecture Theatre, Muirhead Tower, University of Birmingham

08.45–09.15 **Registration**

09.15–10.00 **Opening Remarks & Keynote speaker**

Prof. Jorgen Nielsen, Professor of Contemporary European Islam:

Contemporary Trends in European Islam

10.00–11.20 **Panel One. Representation in Arts and Literature (Chair: Dr Islam Issa)**

Juliet Gryspeerdt, University of Nottingham:

Portugal's Islamic Heritage. Late-modern Representations of Al-Andalus

Gabriel Polley, University of Exeter: *Writing Palestine 1840–1914. Travel Literature and the Balfour Declaration*

Dunya Ismael, University of Birmingham: *The Translation of Sectarianism in Post-2003 Iraq*

Alessandra Amin, University of California: *Judit in Arab Dress. Appropriation and Ambivalence as Political Engagement*

11.20–11.40 **Break**

11.40–12.40 **Panel Two. Islam in Britain**

(Chair: Dr Katherine Brown)

Sufyan Abid, University of Chester: *Purifying and Multiplying the Profits: Analysing Local and Global Dimensions of Muslim Charity Practices in Birmingham, UK*

Zainab Naqvi, University of Birmingham: *Women's Experiences and Views of Unregistered Muslim Polygamous and Monogamous Marriages in the UK*

Sophia Butt, University of Birmingham: *BRIT Questionnaire – A Socio-Cultural Analysis*

12.40–13.40 **Lunch**

13.40–14.40 **Panel Three. Debates on Religious Orthodoxy**
(Chair: Dr Chris Allen)

Usaama Al-Azami, Princeton University/Markfield Institute: *The Emergence of Takfīr Ideology and Mainstream Islamism's Theological Response*

Belal Alabbas, University of Oxford: *Ninth-century Islamic Orthodoxy. Jahm ibn Safwān as a Buddhist Muslim*

Al-Muatasim Al-Maawali, Sultan Qaboos University: *The Distinction between Ibādīs and Khārijītes: a comparative study*

14.45–15.25 **Panel Four: Sūfī Conceptions & Reformulations**
(Chair: Nubla Mohamad)

Fitzroy Morrissey, University of Oxford: *‘Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī’s Sufi Metaphysical Conception of Revelation and Prophecy*

Atta Muhammad, University of Leeds *The Conception of the ‘Public Good’ in Medieval Muslim Societies*

15.25–15.45 **Break**

15.45–16.45 **Panel Five. Reexamining Histories**
(Chair: Hanan Fara)

Öznur Özdemir, University of Exeter: *Banū Qurayza, Banū Qaynuqa and Banū Nādir: The Jews in Yathrib in the First Islamic State*

Gemma Masson, University of Birmingham: *Writing Eighteenth Century Ottoman History*

Mustafa Coban, University of Birmingham: *Reexamining Turkey’s Place on a Revisionist – Status Quo Dichotomy in the Immediate pre-WWII Period*

16.45–17.45 **Interactive Workshops.** (Choice from two parallel workshops)

– Neelam Hussain, Special Collections, University of Birmingham: *Arabic and Persian Manuscripts in the*

Mingana Collection

- Tasawar Bashir, Tsun Winston Yeung, Scott Wilson
and Afia Masood; University of Birmingham.

*The Experience of Qawwali: Findings from the Qawwali
Shrine*

17.45-18.00 **Concluding remarks**

TJUE Forum Symposium 2017
Speaker Profiles

Professor Jorgen Nielsen, Professor of Contemporary European Islam, Dept. of
Theology & Religion, University of Birmingham.

Contemporary Trends in European Islam

Jorgen Nielsen is Professor of Contemporary European Islam at the University of Birmingham. With degrees from SOAS and the American University of Beirut, he has researched and published extensively on Islam in Europe since the late 1970s when he moved to Birmingham. In 2005, he became Director of the Danish Institute in Damascus and then in 2007 was appointed Professor of Islam in Europe at the University of Copenhagen until he returned to Birmingham in 2013.

Juliet Gryspeerdt, Dept. of Spanish, Portuguese & Latin American Studies,
University of Nottingham.

Portugal's Islamic Heritage: Late-modern Representations of Al-Andalus

Abstract. In the medieval period, there was an Islamic presence (and rule) in the region known as al-Andalus, which encompassed large parts of both Spain and Portugal. The borders of this region shifted considerably over the years, with the Islamic presence in Portugal lasting from 711 to 1249 AD. The history of remembering al-Andalus is one marked by long periods of erasure by the Spanish and Portuguese elite, with those centuries of Muslim presence becoming a contested heritage in the process of modern nation-building and construction of national identities. All the while Portugal's historical Muslim presence lived on vividly in the collective memory and in popular imagination (Patricia Hertel, 2015). In terms of the foreign gaze, Romantic writers' fascination with al-Andalus is well known with regards to Spain, but representations of Portuguese al-Andalus remain marginal or overshadowed by Spain in the international consciousness.

In this paper, I will introduce the topic of Portuguese Islamic heritage, providing a historical overview of the Muslim presence in Portugal and discuss pertinent examples how al-Andalus has been represented in nineteenth and twentieth-century Portuguese literature. This is in the context of my PhD research which examines travel writing about southern Portugal and historical fiction.

Research Profile. *Juliet Gryspeerdt is a second-year PhD student in Spanish and Portuguese studies at the University of Nottingham, and is funded by the AHRC (Midlands3Cities DTP). Her research examines representations of Al-Andalus and Arab-Moorish-Islamic heritage in travel writing and historical fiction concerning southern Spain and Portugal.*

Gabriel Polley, European Centre for Palestine Studies, Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter:

Writing Palestine 1840–1914: Travel Literature and the Balfour Declaration

Abstract. This paper marks the centenary year of the Balfour Declaration by questioning the connection between the phenomenon of British, travel to Palestine in the twilight of Ottoman rule, and the colonial activities of the imperial powers. This will be done by drawing attention to the role played by travel literature on Palestine, and the influence of the vision of Palestine created in this literature upon the colonial machinations of the British elite, finishing with the writing of the Balfour Declaration in 1917.

Throughout the nineteenth century, thousands of British tourists, archaeologists, missionaries and others travelled to the ‘Holy Land’ in what has been called ‘a peaceful crusade’. This was an era of decline in the Ottoman Empire, and in Britain, the belief in the Biblical end of days and Jewish restoration – and the necessity of securing Palestine as the route to the Empire in India. The outcome of many British visits to Palestine was a huge volume of travel books, which presented Palestine through an orientalist discourse, as a backward, deserted land ready for colonization and absorption into the British Empire. This paper investigates the legacy of these texts, in paving the way for British support for Zionism in Palestine.

Research Profile. *Gabriel Polley is a first-year PhD candidate at the European Centre for Palestine Studies at the University of Exeter. His supervisor is Professor Ilan Pappé. Before embarking on the PhD, Gabriel was a teacher at the American School of Palestine in Ramallah. His interests are the history of Palestine in the nineteenth century and the impact of colonialism on the region, from British colonialism to settler colonialism today.*

The Translation of Sectarianism in Post-2003 Iraq

Abstract. Sunni-Shia sectarianism has been one of the major dilemmas faced by Iraq after the American invasion in 2003. New sectarian identities appeared and led to violence. This paper deals with the topic from the viewpoint of translation, namely English-Arabic translations of books about post-2003 Iraq. It argues that the translators follow strategies to affect the positive or negative evaluation about sectarian symbols, such as clerics. Such strategies are based on the veneration of the symbols. The veneration is related to parameters such as the translator's distance from the sectarian cultural focus and the translator's appropriation of the culture in question.

The issue of appropriation surfaces because the translation studied is an inversed one, i.e., the texts are anthropological writings about the target culture. In other words, the translators are conveying the texts back to their 'native' culture. This creates a disturbance to the dominance equilibrium. Source texts, English, and invaders are usually held to be more dominant than target texts, Arabic and the occupied. The empowerment of the translators as cultural appropriators and/or the influence of socio-cultural factors of sectarianism neutralizes such a dominance.

Research Profile. *Dunya Ismael has a BA and MA in translation. Her research interests are the translation of culture and the sociology of translation. Her PhD research project is about the socio-cultural factors in the translation of non-fictional books from English into Arabic, with a special focus on the books about post-2003 Iraq. The research questions whether such an accumulation is neutralised in the translation of the books under study due to a peculiarity in their translation. The peculiarity is that the translation is reversed into to the culture from which the settings demonstrated in the texts originate.*

Alessandra Amin, Dept. of Art History, University of California.

Judit in Arab Dress. Appropriation and Ambivalence as Political Engagement

Abstract. Palestinian artist ‘Abd ‘Abdi came of age in a maelstrom of contradictory sociohistorical circumstances. Born in Haifa in 1942 and exiled as a young child during the *Nakba*, he returned to the place of his birth as a teenager and became active in communist politics there. Through the Party, which at the time comprised both Arabs and Jews, he earned the opportunity to study abroad in the German Democratic Republic during the 1960s and early 1970s — a particularly tense moment in East German cultural history, characterized by widespread censorship and strict state mandates circumscribing the arts. ‘Abdi maintained close contact with Palestinian intellectual circles during this time, and watched from afar as the Six Day War changed his country’s physical and political landscape forever.

This paper considers the woodblock prints he made as a young student in the GDR, focusing on a 1970 portrait of his lover “in Arab dress.” Far from a straightforward representation or a work of pure symbolism, ‘Abdi’s print bridges the fraught social contexts of East Germany and Palestine through a subtle and intricate visual dialogue between Byzantine icons, biblical narratives, modernist art history, and international mass media. In doing so, it actively and self-consciously contests the contemporary dogma of legibility that dominated socialist visual culture, subtly broadening the representational field of socially engaged art.

Research Profile. *Alessandra Amin is a Ph.D. student in the department of art history at the University of California, Los Angeles. Her major field is modern Arab art, with a focus on Palestine and Palestinians living in exile, and her minor field is the history of Western photography. Particular areas of interest include gender and sexuality, social history, and alternative modernisms.*

Sufyan Abid, Dept of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Chester:

*Purifying and Multiplying the Profits: Analysing Local and Global Dimensions
of Muslim Charity Practices in Birmingham, UK*

Abstract. This paper explores why Muslims in Birmingham do charity and what relationship does it have with their everyday life social, religious, economic and political practices. This paper problematises the meanings and complex nature of doing charity among Birmingham Muslims by locating and examining it with the theoretical debates around Mauss's idea of gift in Anthropology. Charity among Birmingham Muslims, apparently a religiously motivated phenomenon, has its impact on the local socio-political dynamics and has a vital role in reorientations of their relationship with imagined global community of Muslims.

This paper is based on one year ethnographic fieldwork in predominantly Muslim neighbourhoods in Birmingham. The paper suggests that reformist Muslim groups reinterpret and reorient the culture of giving among Birmingham Muslims. Reformist Muslim groups and their fundraisers evoke the modern discourses surrounding the idea of being a good Muslim, offer them new definitions and open up horizons for charitable acts. Birmingham Muslims' charity practices are shaped by many factors including the pressures to prosper and the fears that their financial assets might be taken away from them, in case, they don't do charity.

Research Profile. *Sufyan Abid completed his PhD in Anthropology with specialisation on Islam in Britain with a focus on Islamic reform, piety and charity among Birmingham Muslims. He recently completed a two-year post-doctoral research project on 'Karbala in London: Transnational Religious and Political Networks of Shia Muslim between Britain and Middle East' at the University of Chester, UK. Currently he is based in Birmingham and working on publication of his research.*

Zainab Naqvi, Birmingham School of Law, University of Birmingham:

Women's Experiences and Views of Unregistered Muslim Polygamous and Monogamous Marriages in the UK

Abstract. This paper explains the findings from a qualitative study with women regarding their experiences of marriage. I share participants' stories to highlight the legal and social interplay between religious and civil marriages to challenge current legal regulation in the UK. I argue that the lack of legal recognition for Islamic marriages impacts upon women in two main ways. First, in denying these women legal recognition, they are more vulnerable because the civil ceremony requirement is being abused by their husbands. Second, these women are treated as inferior because of their religious marriage. This subordinates them and also impacts upon how they define and view themselves. However, conceptions of recognition are also problematic and as such, legal recognition needs to be pursued in a way which does not orientalise women and their marriages. It is important to note the opposing perspective in this area, in which individuals exercise their choice to avoid state marriage regulation. Based on my findings, I argue that the recognition of Islamic marriages is worth pursuing, but in a way which is sensitive to the needs and identity of women in these marriages.

Research Profile. *Zainab completed her LLB in Law and French at Coventry University, her LLM (General) at the University of Birmingham Law School in 2013 and remained at Birmingham as an ESRC DTC Doctoral Research Student. During her undergraduate studies, she was the recipient of the Coventry Law School Prize for three consecutive years as well as the Oxford University Press Prize. Her research interests are in family law and socio-legal theory with a particular focus on legal responses towards relationships and marriages in the UK.*

Sophia Butt, Dept. of English Language & Applied Linguistics, University of Birmingham. *BRIT Questionnaire – A Socio-Cultural Analysis*

Paper abstract. May 2015 saw the launch of BRIT (Building Resilience through Integration & Trust), the UK government’s ‘radicalisation-seeking’ questionnaire for primary schoolchildren. Introduced under Prevent (one of the four strands of *CONTEST* – the UK counter-terrorism strategy), it is based on a 2010 study by two psychologists with links to the national security industry. Their so-called pre-crime intervention model named “Extremism Risk Guidance 22+” (ERG22+) was used to assess the propensity of prison inmates to be radicalised towards violent extremism: it was ERG22+ that informed the design of the BRIT questionnaire which allegedly helps elicit responses from pre-pubescent children who could be displaying signs of susceptibility to radical ideology.

Critics of this highly controversial questionnaire have expressed concerns about it at multiple levels, including its design validity; the decision to administer it in schools with a large proportion of Muslim pupils; and, the lack of transparency surrounding its implementation – often without parental consent. There were more than 4,000 referrals to Channel (the multi-agency programme in *Prevent* designed to provide support plans for de-radicalisation) in 2015 alone. This presentation proposes to analyse the BRIT questionnaire from a sociocultural perspective in order to determine the extent to which it is likely to be meeting its alleged objectives.

Research Profile. *Sophia Butt’s doctoral research employs interdisciplinary research methods to examine the marketing of national policies and how these scaffold the engineering of public opinion and the manufacturing of consent in support of domestic politics. Specifically, it focuses on counter-radicalisation discourse in the UK education sector. The principle aim of the research is to determine the effects policies are having on key stakeholders in the UK education system amidst growing fears of extremism and radicalisation.*

Usaama Al-Azami, Dept. of Near Eastern Studies, Princeton University/
Markfield Institute. *The Emergence of Takfirī Ideology and Mainstream
Islamism's Theological Response*

Paper abstract. The roots of *takfirī* ideology take us back to the earliest days of Islam when the *Khawarij* (Seceders) first appeared. This faction was condemned by the proto-Sunni theologians for their *takfir* (excommunication) of other Muslims, which such groups used to justify killing them with impunity. However, 20th century post-coloniality created the conditions in the Middle East for a resurgent *takfirī* ideology among ideological offshoots from mainstream Islamist organisations. Among these, the “Group of Excommunication and Emigration” (*jama‘at al-takfir wa-l-hijra*) forms one of the earliest such factions. Their ideas have been the subject of serious study by Western scholars.

My paper considers the 1978 response of a mainstream Islamist scholar, then a member of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers, who penned a 96-page rebuttal of their theology of *takfir* based on Sunni orthodoxy. Yusuf al-Qaradawi’s *Zahirat al-ghuluww fi al-takfir* articulates a brisk, yet reasonably systematic treatment of the question of *takfir*, and the gravity of unguarded excommunication. In my paper, I assess his articulation of Sunni orthodoxy vis-à-vis *takfir*, as well as his appeal to the thought of the controversial Hanbali theologian, Ibn Taymiyya. I conclude with some reflections on the booklets relevance to groups like ISIS.

Research Profile. *Usaama al-Azami is a Lecturer in Islamic studies at the Markfield Institute of Higher Education, and PhD candidate in Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University. His dissertation critically examines Islamic legal and religious reform in the modern period by looking at the writings of moderate Islamist scholars. He completed his BA in Arabic and Islamic Studies at Oxford University, and his MA in Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University. He has also studied with Muslim jurists and theologians in seminarial contexts in the Middle East and Europe.*

Ninth-century Islamic Orthodoxy, Jahm ibn Safwān as a Buddhist Muslim

Paper abstract. Jahm ibn Safwān was a controversial figure, a protagonist for the revolt of al-Ḥārith ibn Surayj, who was executed with him by the Umayyad administration in 128/746. Although little of his life is known, Jahm is only remembered in Muslim sources as a source of theological deviation and ignorance. Most of the teachings attributed to him are doubtfully his, but if such claims are to be taken seriously, there seems to be an intriguing part of his life that later made him an enemy of almost all ninth-century Muslim sects. Jahm debated the existence of God with Buddhist monks, leading him to adopt some Buddhist teachings and deny that God exists separately from his creation. He insisted that God has no attributes (*ṣifāt*), and thus, the Qur'an cannot be the word of God but a creation of his. Such teachings were at the core of the famous ninth-century Inquisition (*mihna*), mostly devised and supported by proponents of Jahm, some of whom were Ḥanafī jurists.

In this paper, I reconstruct some of Jahm's thought based on ninth-century material and explore the relationship between followers of Jahm and Ḥanafīs in the worldview of Traditionalists such as Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870).

Research Profile. *Belal Alabbas is a historian of Islamic intellectual history. His research addresses themes such as orthodoxy, religious authority and the theory and practice of Islamic law. His current research project is writing an intellectual biography of Muhammad ibn Isma'īl al-Bukhari (d. 870).*

The Distinction between Ibādīs and Khārijītes, a comparative study

Abstract. At the time of war and ongoing conflict, this academic paper tries to shed some light on a unique experience of coexistence and tolerance of one of the most Islāmically diverse societies. This is the Omani Ibādī experience, a 13-century-old experience which is marked by the fact that Oman is the only Muslim country ruled by an Ibādī government, despite the other fact that Muslims of all major denominations, namely Ibādīs, Sunnis and Shī‘as, live together in peace under its umbrella.

The issue of Khārijī thought was brought back to discussion with the recent emergence of ISIS and there has been a lot of confusion between the two different sects (Ibādīs and Khārijītes) in both academic and public circles. This paper focuses on the political and theological differences between Ibādīs and Khārijītes.

Research Profile. *Al-Mu‘taṣiim Sa‘īd al-Ma‘waḥī is a religious supervisor working for Omani Studies Centre at Sultan Qaboos University. He holds an MA degree in Islamic Studies from the University of Birmingham and a member of the TIMES Forum since its inception. al-Mu‘taṣiim authored a five-volume series in Islamic Jurisprudence called al-Mu‘tamad and recently published (February 2017) his translation of the first volume from Arabic into English. He also published articles on Ibādī Studies in 2016.*

Fitzroy Morrissey, Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Oxford.

*‘Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī’s Sufi Metaphysical Conception of Revelation and
Prophecy*

Paper abstract. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī’s (d. 868/1422/3) *al-Insān al-kāmil* (*The Perfect Human*) was one of the most influential works of theoretical Sufism in the pre-modern Islamic world. A systematic exposition of the Sufi metaphysics of the Ibn ‘Arabian tradition, it gives us an important insight into the development of Ibn ‘Arabī’s thought by his later followers and the theoretical underpinnings of Sufism in late medieval and early modern times. This paper introduces al-Jīlī’s Sufi metaphysical theory, and presents as a case study of that theory an analysis of chapters 33–38 of *al-Insān al-kāmil*, which are devoted to the various forms of revelation named in the Qur’an: the Mother of the Book, Qur’an/Furqan, Torah, Psalter, and Gospel. It shows how al-Jīlī’s treatment of those revelations, and the prophets and doctrines associated with them, is conditioned by his Sufi metaphysics, particularly his key theories of universal theophany and the perfect human. It suggests that while this does not lead al-Jīlī to contradict the normative Islamic conception of sacred history, nevertheless it allows him to develop a number of original insights into the revelations and prophets named in the Qur’an, which might serve as the intellectual basis for an alternative Islamic conception of other religions.

Research Profile. *Fitzroy Morrissey is a DPhil (PhD) student, Arabic instructor, and tutor in Islamic Studies at the Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Oxford. He is interested in the history of ideas in the Islamic world (medieval and modern), Sufism, and relations between Muslims and non-Muslims. He is writing his PhD on the Sufi thinker ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī’s (d. 868/1422/3) treatment of the scriptures in his al-Insān al-kāmil.*

Atta Muhammad, Dept. of Arabic, Islamic & Middle Eastern Studies,
University of Leeds.

The Conception of the 'Public Good' in Medieval Muslim Societies

Paper abstract. Seen through the particular prism of Shari‘a (revealed law), the concept of public interest was given key importance in pre-modern Islamic discourse, and was defined variously according to different contexts. In the history of Middle Eastern societies, there were many individuals and schools of thought involved in the discourse on public good, directly or indirectly.¹

This paper focuses on Sufi articulations of the idea of public good during the later Abbasid caliphate, as manifested in Sufi literature. On the basis of their extreme piety and self-disinterestedness, Sufis were often hyper-aware of right and wrong, as compared to the commonality of people who pursued mainly personal interests. The approach of Sufis indirectly impacted jurists in defining *maslaha* (common good) towards the middle point between the two extremes of self-denying hardship and heedlessness. While relying on esoteric knowledge of the religion and its underlying objectives, Sufis seemed to favour the use of the principle of *maslaha*, in order to facilitate a range of benefits for the community at large.

¹ The present study locates the conception of the public good as discussed and defined by many jurists, philosophers, and rulers in later Abbasid period in general and Sufis, in particular.

Research Profile. *Atta Muhammad's research interest is Islamic History and Sufism. He is doing his PhD at the University of Leeds UK under the supervision of Dr. Fozia Bora.*

Öznur Özdemir, School of Languages, Cultures & Societies, University of Exeter: *Banū Qurayza, Banū Qaynuqa and Banū Nādir: The Jews in Yathrib in the First Islamic State*

Abstract. Before the immigration (*Hijra*) of Prophet Muhammad to the Yathrib (*Madina*) in 622 A.D., three Jewish tribes (Banu Qurayza, Banu Qaynuqa and Banu Nadir) and two Arab tribes (Aws and Khazraj) were sharing the city both physically and politically. However, after the *Hijra*, Prophet Muhammad founded the first Islamic state and established a new rule in Yathrib. Although it ended up undesirably, the social life in the city was based on an alliance, which guarantees the rights of both sides; the Arabs and the Jews. A mutual relationship was brought about as well as the freedom of religion, life and property of the Jews were secured. According to this alliance, Muslims and Jews had to help each other against their enemies out of the city. However, the alliance was broken within only a few years and severe penalties were imposed on the Jews. This paper aims to discuss firstly, the situation of the Jews, in the first Muslim community, secondly, the reasons behind the infringement of the contract between the Muslims and Jews, and finally, the whys and wherefores of the exile, slavery and death punishments which were given to the Jews by Prophet Muhammad.

Research Profile. *Öznur Özdemir is currently a PhD research student at University of Leeds, school of Languages Cultures & Societies (UK). She graduated from Bogazici University History department in 2009. She completed her MA in Islamic History, Marmara University. Öznur has been a research assistant and a PhD candidate in Islamic History Department at Sakarya University (Turkey) since 2013. Her research area is "The Abbasid Revolution in Modern English Literature". Her research interests are Dhimmi Law in Islam, Taxation in Islam and The period of Mehmed II in Ottoman History.*

Gemma Masson, Dept. of Byzantine, Ottoman & Modern Greek Studies,
University of Birmingham.

Writing Eighteenth Century Ottoman History

Abstract. The Eighteenth Century is a period which has been extremely understudied in the field of Ottoman History until quite recently. The current resurgence of interest in the century has led to several issues arising in terms of how it should be studied and approached.

This paper shall analyse the issues facing historians of the Ottoman Eighteenth Century covering periodisation, the types of studies undertaken and key themes that arise around the period in addition to offering an overview of some methodological literature relevant to Ottoman studies. Additionally, there will be discussion of some of the key terminology used in the writing of Ottoman history and how these terms relate to and define the concepts they discuss. The main aim here is to lay out these issues in a clear format and offer some ideas as to how they may be approached by scholars as well as opening a dialogue with other related fields of study regarding the way the Eighteenth Century is approached, defined and studies by those scholars.

Research Profile. *Gemma Masson is a PhD Candidate in the Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies. Her thesis aims to create a prosopography of the urban janissary in Eighteenth Century Istanbul. Her research interests include Ottoman History circa. 1453-1826, Eighteenth Century History, Imperial and Global History, History in Popular Culture, Dracula History, Historical Linguistics.*

Mustafa Coban, Dept. of Byzantine, Ottoman & Modern Greek Studies,
University of Birmingham.

*Reexamining Turkey's Place on a Revisionist – Status Quo Dichotomy in the
Immediate pre-WWII Period*

Paper abstract.

Turkish foreign policy in the 1930s has commonly been examined in dichotomous terms. This characterization attempts to place Turkey either in the status quo camp with Britain and France on one hand or with Germany and Italy in the revisionist camp on the other. First, the common demarcations of the revisionist-status quo divide are outlined. Then, the prevailing historiography is presented to outline the basic contentions of historians with regards to Turkish foreign policy history. This is followed by an examination of three Turkish foreign policy cases; The Montreux Straits Convention 1936, The Saadabad Pact 1937 and the Alexandretta Dispute 1937-39.

The discussion supports the view that neither a status quo nor a revisionist grouping is appropriate for Turkey in the 1930s, and that a null-hypothesis on Turkey's place in a dichotomy is more appropriate since it a) does not fit into the boundaries of the dichotomy b) did not participate in WWII and c) the eventual belligerents were broadly divided along a status quo - revisionist polarity. One implication of writing Turkish interwar history this way may be to retrospectively legitimize or delegitimize Turkey's place in the 'Western' alliance during the Cold War.

Research Profile. *Mustafa Coban is a PhD Candidate in History. His research attempts to analyse Turkish domestic policy as it relates to foreign policy in the 1930s. It includes a qualitative comparison of the Balkan and Saadabad treaties and how domestic as well as external factors contributed to them.*

Neelam Hussain, Special Collections; Dept. of English Literature / Dept. of
Theology & Religion, University of Birmingham.

Arabic and Persian Manuscripts in the Mingana Collection

Abstract. The Mingana Collection of Middle Eastern manuscripts is made up of over 3000 manuscripts in over 20 languages. There are over 2000 Arabic Islamic manuscripts with the earliest manuscripts dating from the 7th century. In 2015, a Qur'anic manuscript in the collection was identified as one of the oldest to have survived, having been written between 568 and 645. There is also a small but significant collection of Persian manuscripts, often lavishly illustrated, several of which are Indian in origin with stamps from the Mughal library of Emperors Akbar, Jahanghir and Arungzaib. This workshop introduces the Arabic and Persian manuscripts in the Mingana Collection and showcases some of its treasures.

Research Profile. *Neelam Hussain is the co-ordinator of the TIMES Forum and is writing her PhD thesis on a popular medieval text, the pseudo-Aristotelian Kitāb Sirr al-Asrār, and its transmission to medieval Europe as the Secretum Secretorum. Her research is funded by the AHRC-Midlands3Cities DTP, and investigates the appeal of this treatise in the Islamic and European traditions. Neelam's research interests include book history, material culture, the transmission of Islamic philosophical, political and scientific thought to medieval Europe, and the Graeco-Arabic and Arabic-Latin translation movements.*

Neelam works with the Islamic manuscripts in the Mingana Collection at Cadbury Research Library, University of Birmingham. She is currently working on a project cataloguing manuscripts on the Fihrist - an online union catalogue of Islamic manuscripts in the UK. Neelam runs workshops on working with manuscripts and has worked on exhibitions of 'Mingana, Islamic Arabic, 1572a,' one of the oldest fragments of the Qur'an in the world.

Tasawar Bashir, Tsun Winston Yeung, Scott Wilson and Afia Masood;
University of Birmingham.

The Experience of Qawwali. Findings from the Qawwali Shrine

The pioneering Qawwali Shrine project has been mapping physiological, psychological and emotional responses to Qawwali music and exploring whether states of enlightenment and feelings such as Rasa, Fana or spiritual bliss can be experienced, measured and artistically represented through new technology.

Research Profiles.

Tasawar Bashir is an artist who explores aspects of Sufi identity and spirituality. His commercial work includes sound and visual production for AR Rahman while notable art exhibitions include; the Architectural Association (London & Dubai, 2007), Media Lab Prado (Madrid, 2010), Asia Triennial Manchester (2012), the New Art Exchange (2012) and the Venice Architecture Biennale (2013) and Art Colombo in Sri Lanka (2016). Tasawar is also PhD student, funded by the AHRC-Midlands3Cities DTP, researching the cultural history of modern qawwali.

Scott Wilson is a composer and sound artist whose work spans a variety of genres, including instruments, electronic sound, installations and improvisation. Recent projects include works for the Fidelio Trio, BCMG (with Lucy Schauer), and the Dark Matter project in collaboration with Art@CMS at CERN. He is Reader in Electronic Music at the University of Birmingham, and the director of BEAST (Birmingham Electro-Acoustic Sound Theatre).

Tsun Winston Yeung is a composer of electronic music and laptop improviser. Originally from Hong Kong, he is currently pursuing a PhD in musical composition at the University of Birmingham where under the supervision of Scott Wilson. His main research interests include stochastic music, live coding, improvisation, and data sonification. As part of the Laptop Ensemble BEER (Birmingham Ensemble for

Electroacoustic Research), he has performed around the UK, Canada, as well as Greece.

Afia Masood joined the SCHI 'sky' Lab Team Sussex University in 2016 to explore the electrophysiology of awe-filled experiences with relevance to the field of Human Computer Interaction. Prior to joining Sussex, she designed and developed an online Peer Assisted Learning programme (University of Leicester), worked on several research projects in the areas of neuroscience and neuropsychology (University of Birmingham) whilst also mentoring students with Mental Health & Learning Disabilities in Higher education. Afia has a M.Res in Cognitive Neuropsychology & Rehabilitation (2010). Her primary interest is in sensory motor neuroscience and rehabilitation of movement disorders using interactive technology.

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The Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies (TIMES) Post-Graduate Forum was formed to facilitate discussion amongst PGT and PGR students interested in any of the fields related to TIMES including; theology; philosophy; history; law; politics; social policy; and the arts, literature, language, and culture of the Islamic world. We have members from a range of disciplines and colleges.

We are based at the University of Birmingham, where we hold our monthly meetings, but we have members from academic institutions across the Midlands and beyond. We encourage anyone who shares our interests to join us by emailing ‘subscribe’ to join the mailing list, keeping up with the posts on our website, or by following us on Twitter.

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