



TIMES

The Islamic & Middle Eastern
Studies Post-graduate Forum

WELCOME TO TIMES FORUM SYMPOSIUM 2019

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.



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

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 day's activities will take place in **Muirhead Tower** (Red Zone, R21) in the **G15 Lecture Theatre on the ground floor**.

Prayer Room:

For your convenience, we have booked room 118 (1st 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](#).

Please join in and extend the discussion by using the hashtag [#TIMESPG2019](#)

We hope you enjoy the Symposium.

Best wishes,

TIMES Forum Symposium Committee:

Amna Nazir

Hanan Fara

Nahid Khan

Neelam Hussain

Shahnaz Akhtar

Talha Bhamji

Programme for TIMES Forum Symposium 2019

12th June 2019. 09.00-17.15

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

- 09:00 - 09:30 **Registration**
- 09:30 - 09:45 **Opening Remarks**
- 09:45 - 10:45 **Keynote Address:** Professor Charles Burnett,
Warburg Institute University of London
Form and Style in the Transmission of Arabic
Philosophical and Scientific Texts to the West
- 10:45 - 11:30 **Panel One: Women's Voices**

Muhammed Tajri, The Al-Mahdi Institute:
**Shī'a Female University Experiences: Shaping
Religious Authority Conceptions**

Mahmoud Ali Afifi, University of Lancaster:
**Bint al-Shāṭī: A Tradition-Based Voice for
Women's Emancipation**
- 11:30 - 12:00 **Break**
- 12:00 - 12:45 **Panel Two: Muslims in Britain**

Shahnaz Akhter, University of Warwick:
The Art of Securitization

Nahid Khan, University of Birmingham:
**Children's Adoption and Biological Identity in
Shari'ah Fiqh with a Civil Law Perspective**

12:45 - 13:45

Lunch

13:45 - 14:45

Interactive workshop

Hurst Publishers, London: Publishing within and outside academia

14:45 - 15:45

Panel Three: Studies of Hadith

Shazad Khan, University of Birmingham:

Ibn Salah's Seven-Fold Division of Sahih Hadiths

Omama Hamasha, University of Jordan:

Prophet's Marriage to Umm Ḥabībah: Methods of Critiquing Historical Events

Mostafa Movahedifar, University of Birmingham:

Isnād as a crucial tool for dating Islamic traditions: the example of Shaykh al-Ṣadūq's Man la Yahḍuruḥu al-Faqīh

15:45 - 16:15

Break

16:15 - 17:00

Panel Four: Literary Representations

Amina Zarzi, University of Birmingham:

Identity Expressions through the Prism of the Sahara Desert

Adel Musaylih Almuthaybiri, University of Birmingham:

Literary Representation of Women in Saudi society

17:00 - 17:15

Concluding remarks and presentation of Best Paper Award

TIMES Forum Symposium 2019
Speaker Profiles

Prof. Charles Burnett, Professor of the History of Islamic Influences in Europe, Warburg Institute University of London:
Form and Style in the Transmission of Arabic Philosophical and Scientific Texts to the West

Bio:

Charles Burnett studied for the BA in Classical in Cambridge University (May 1972) and achieved a PhD in Modern and Medieval Languages in the same university in June 1976. Having been a Junior Research Fellow at St John's College, Cambridge, 1976-9, and a Senior Research Fellow, Warburg Institute, 1979-82, he was Leverhulme Research Fellow in the Department of History, at the University of Sheffield (1982-4 and 1985), interrupted by a year as Member of the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton (1984-5). He was appointed Lecturer in the History of Islamic Influences in Europe at the Warburg Institute, University of London, in April 1985, and promoted to Professor in 1999.

Research:

The transmission of texts, techniques and artefacts from the Arab world to the West, especially in the Middle Ages:

The research on the transmission of texts, techniques and artefacts from the Arab world has led Charles to study Arabic and Latin manuscripts of texts on philosophy, arithmetic, geometry, astrology, astronomy, medicine and magic (e.g. divination by the shoulder blades of sheep). He has documented the lives of the Latin translators, their motives, their relationships with Arabic/Islamic culture, and with scholarly communities in the West. He has studied the language of the translations, the role of glosses and commentaries, and the contributions of the translations to European learning, especially in the universities.

Charles has written about astrolabes and directed a project on Jewish astrolabes.

Jesuits in Japan:

He has studied a contrasting cultural transmission: that of the Jesuits in bringing European culture to Japan in the so-called 'Christian Century' (mid-16th to mid-17th century).

Palaeography:

In palaeography he studied the way that numerals (especially Hindu-Arabic numerals) were written, and also looked at the palaeography of magic texts.

History of Numerals and Arithmetic:

Charles is interested in showing how Hindu-Arabic numerals entailed a completely new way of making calculations and rivalled the use of the abacus.

Muhammed R. Tajri, The Al-Mahdi Institute:
**Shī'a Female University Experiences Shaping Religious Authority
Conceptions**

Abstract: Analysis of women's experiences, in religious spaces, is a growing facet of ethnographic research; it seems a consequence of greater appreciation of the gender-specific dynamics that exist within any social space. This paper brings to light some of the findings from an ongoing research, which explores Shī'a Muslim university student organisations in the UK, the AhlulBayt Societies (ABSocs). Some of the experiences of female ABSoc affiliates on campus, are specific to them and identifiable as such; largely not felt by the male research participants, or perhaps not realised in the same way. Whilst the challenges they face involve cross-gender contact, they are not limited to this dilemma.

The wider research explores the concept of religious authority in Twelver Shi'ism, and the performances thereof, among this very distinct segment of UK Muslims. As such, this paper discusses how, because of their gender-specific experiences, some female participants, in practice, adopt their own religious/jurisprudential agency independently of authorities recognised within Shī'ī orthodoxy; and how their gender-related contexts may have impacted upon shaping their perception of the said established authorities.

Research Profile: Muhammed is a senior lecturer, in Arabic and Islamic studies, at the Al-Mahdi Institute. He is also a PhD candidate at Lancaster University's Department of Politics, Philosophy and Religion. Having initially studied Computer Science at City University, London, he went on to complete a BA in Islamic Studies at Middlesex University (2007) whilst simultaneously studying the traditional Islamic Sciences at the Shi'a Islamic Seminary. He graduated from the advanced levels of Arabic Language, Grammar and Poetry at the University of Damascus in 2007, before studying at the Imam Khomeini Shi'a Islamic Seminary, Damascus, Syria (2007-2008). He completed an MA in Islamic studies at Middlesex University (2010) and a second MA at Cardiff University (2013) in "Islam in Contemporary Britain".

Bint al-Shāṭī: A Tradition-Based Voice for Women's Emancipation

Abstract: 'Aishah Abdurrahman is an Egyptian female Muslim intellectual known by her pseudonym Bint al-Shāṭī'. She is a distinguished hermeneutics theorist and mufasir in 20th century Egypt. She gained renown for her literary approach to tafsir. Her work belongs to the modern Islamic thought of 20th century Egypt, which witnessed a surge in writing works on quranic hermeneutics. Therefore, her work projects the impact that the encounter with modernity had on Islamic modern scholarship at that time. Bint al-Shāṭī's work on the Quran, however, stands distinctive from its other contemporaneous works for its systematic and methodological structure. Her systematic method is conspicuously cushioned in the thematic interpretive genre, which treats the quranic text holistically and not as piecemeal units. This paper investigates Bint al-Shāṭī's literary method in connection with the broader context of tafsir development in 20th century Egypt.

The paper draws on Bint al-Shāṭī's feminist ideas to demonstrate the extent to which the literary-thematic approach enabled her to better articulate a forward-looking authoritative position on the status of women in Islam, as she embraced a middle ground between the conservativeness of classical interpretation and the modern trends of western hermeneutics.

Research Profile: Mahmoud Afifi is currently studying my PhD in Religious Studies at Lancaster University and his research deals with the feminist interpretation of the Quran. He received his undergraduate education at Al-Azhar University in Cairo in Islamic studies and English translation. He completed his MA in Islamic Studies from Claremont Graduate University in California, USA 2012 on the topic of gender violence from a socio-Islamic perspective. Mahmoud has presented papers on the issues of wife beating, hijāb, and wife abuse in the Muslim communities across the UK.

Shahnaz Akhter, University of Warwick:
The Art of Securitization

Abstract: Since the onset of the war on terror, art has been used as part of the securitization process to other the Muslim community within the UK. This presentation will focus on the way has been used to both securitize the Muslim community and to create a new ontological security within the British Muslim community in relation to this post the July 7 London Bombings. I will firstly focus on the way government has contributed to the insecuritization of Muslims by using art to build a good Muslim /bad Muslim dichotomy and creating a radical jihadi other.

This paper will firstly look at the way in which RICU; the Research Intelligence Communication Unit, the home office strategic communications unit, which has used art as part of its campaigns and will further analyse the way in which these messages have been reinforced via the wider media. It will secondly look at the ways in which the British Muslim community have responded to this securitization by focusing on the way Muslim artists in the UK have attempted to create a new ontological security by focusing on the work of Riz Mc in Englstan, Mahtab Hussain's 'You Get Me' exhibition and the Brown Hijabi.

Research Profile:

Shahnaz has recently completed her PhD 'The Other Within: Securitizing Muslim Group Identity in Britain'. In addition to his she is the widening participation officer for the Politics and International Studies Department at Warwick University and runs the Colonial Hangover Project.

Nahid Khan, University of Birmingham:
**Children's Adoption and Biological Identity in Shari'ah Fiqh with a
Civil Law Perspective**

Abstract: In 2016, 70,440 children were in local authority's care in the UK from all backgrounds and at any one time, there are nearly 4000 children in these care homes awaiting to find a new home. A significant number of these children are from a Muslim background and there is a serious shortage of Muslim Adopters. This led to various campaigns to recruit carers to cater for these children. Many Muslim people believe adoption is prohibited in Islam, hence depriving this group of children from their basic rights: a right to a family home; meeting their cultural, ethnic, religious and linguist needs/rights; saving the cost for local authorities for meeting these needs.

This paper focuses on adoption law in Shari'ah Fiqh and its compatibility with UK civil law on adoption. It offers a rebuttal to the controversies raised by scholars on identity, prohibited degree of marriage, modesty, illegitimacy, contact and inheritance, in the light of civil law. This fills a gap in academic knowledge as research to date focuses on motivation for adoption, historical understandings, and doesn't take into account contemporary jurisprudential developments regarding the rights of the child. Further, this paper recommends an alternative framework for adoption, as guided by Qur'an and Hadith for the care of vulnerable children.

Research Profile: Nahid Khan is currently researching children's adoption in Shari'ah fiqh and their rights in religious and civil law context. She has been working with the child protection agencies for a number of years. Her thesis is analysing the Qur'an and Ahadith to find a modern understanding of adoption in civil law, which builds a child's identity and not falsifies it. Although this project started with Muslim children in the UK, the findings have significance for Muslim children around the world.

Interactive Workshop: Hurst Publishers, London Submitting Book Proposals to Publishers

About:

“Hurst is an independently owned and run non-fiction publisher, based in central London but publishing globally. We have a track record of nearly fifty years of distinguished scholarly publishing for a general readership. Today, we produce around 90 new books a year, building on our strengths in African Studies, Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies, South Asian Studies and War and International Relations.

Among our more celebrated authors are Africanists Gérard Prunier, Stephen Ellis and Susan Williams; renowned scholars of South Asia Christophe Jaffrelot and Faisal Devji; strategists and security experts David Kilcullen and Sir David Omand; and experts on Islam and the Muslim world Madawi Al-Rasheed, Ziauddin Sardar and Jean-Pierre Filiu. We have also published several books on behalf of MSF in London and Paris.” (Michael Dwyer, Publisher)

For more information see <https://www.hurstpublishers.com/about/>

Shazad Khan, University of Birmingham:
Ibn Salah's Seven-Fold Division of Sahih Hadiths

Abstract: Ibn Salah Shahrzuri's monumental contribution to the field of hadith studies left an indelible mark on subsequent generations. His 'Muqaddimah', or 'Prolegomena', marked the standardisation of hadith nomenclature and hadith studies in general. Subsequent epistles, textbooks and marginalia all show a stagnation in this field, by regurgitating Ibn Salah's viewpoints as the official standards and definitions by producing the same material in verse, commentaries and compendiums. Two problems arise because of this: on the one hand his definitions are projected onto material written prior to Ibn Salah when there was no such standardisation and hence the problem arises of reading each author on different terms; the other is that his viewpoints have largely gone unchallenged.

This proposal proposes to take up this latter point by highlighting several issues that show that his seven-fold categorisation of sahih hadiths have not been critically analysed. It proposes specifically to show the epistemological shortcomings of such an approach and what affect this has had on subsequent scholarship in the Islamic world. Whilst much of the literature tends to focus on the spurious nature of hadith, very little has been written from an insider's perspective and proposes to shed new light on how the spurious nature of hadiths was regarded by the traditionists themselves.

Research Profile: Shazad Khan has worked at Birmingham City University, Coventry University and is presently at the University of Birmingham. Primarily he is an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) Lecturer, and in his spare time he teaches Arabic and Islamic Studies. His research interests include: hadith studies, philosophy of religion and ethics and sociology of religion.

Omama Hamasha, University of Jordan:
**Prophet's Marriage to Umm Ḥabībah': Methods of Critiquing
Historical Events**

Abstract: The issue of reconstructing the past, in particular the biography of the Prophet (sīrah), has been a controversial and much-disputed subject between Western and Muslim scholars. While the former scholarship believes, from an historical perspective, that the biographical sources serve ideas based on historians' thought on the past, not the facts. This includes the historiography of the Prophet's life. The latter scholarship asserts that by using the devices and methods, related to both the isnād (chain of transmission) and the matn (contents) of the narratives, that were developed by Muslim scholars since the first/eighth century, one could provide a genuine account of the Prophet's biography. Ignaz Goldziher questions the usefulness of the isnād as a tool for sifting out spurious accounts and criticises Muslim traditionists for depending merely upon it and neglecting the contents, when critiquing the reports.

This paper argues that Muslim scholars did not neglect the contents by, first: providing a historical background on matn criticism from the Prophet's time until the modern age; second: revealing the main methods of matn criticism employed by renowned Muslim scholars, such as Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (d. 751/1350); when critiquing the contents of the historical narratives. Analysis of historical reports on several biographical works, identifies seven primary methodologies for contents critique; among these, is: comparing the contents with the prevailing customs at the time of the event; comparing the contents with the rational proof; and comparing the contents with established information and historical facts, which has been employed to critique the narratives that talk about the Prophet's marriage with Umm Ḥabībah.

Research Profile: Dr Omama Hamasha is currently an Assistant Professor at the School of Shari'ah, University of Jordan. She teaches the following modules: Hadith studies, Islamic culture and thought, sīrah, Islamic History and orientalism. Her research interests lie primarily in the area of Hadith criticism. She is also interested in the field of Islamic history, especially the Mamluk era, sīrah and contemporary orientalism.

Isnād as a crucial tool for dating Islamic traditions: the example of Shaykh al-Ṣadūq's Man la Yahḍuruhu al-Faqīh

Paper abstract: Islamic Traditions (aḥādīth), as well as the Qur'an, form the two crucial sources of Islamic doctrines, ritual practices, and historical events, in both Sunnī and Shī'ī Islam. In order to examine the authenticity of these traditions, determining the date of these traditions is a vital and first step in the study of not only the history of early Islam but also Islamic law. The examination of matn (text) and isnād (chain of transmitters) are two important ways in this field of Islamic studies. One of the controversial aspects of Islamic traditions in dating them is their isnāds. Scholars such as Joseph Schacht, G.H.A. Juynboll, and Harald Motzki have been interested in studying how, and to what extent isnād criticism can be useful in dating a particular ḥadīth. In this regard, all of them agree on the usefulness of the isnād in this field. However, the most important matter of dispute between them is the main role of "common link", the first transmitter distributing a particular ḥadīth to many strands. Whether this common link is the forger or merely the (first) collector of ḥadīth is the main issue of contention among them.

Without considering early Shī'ī works, these scholars have sought to deal with isnād criticism to date Islamic traditions. Investigating to the nature of isnād in early Shī'ī works such as Man la yahḍuruhu al-Faqīh by Shaykh al-Ṣadūq (d. 381/991), as well as the compiler-specific method of collecting ḥadīth from earlier sources, will add an important new perspective to this important question. Indeed, I intend to demonstrate that Shaykh al-Ṣadūq himself presented the common link in his book and introduce what the "common link" is. As a result, this presentation, with the help of al-Ṣadūq's work, seeks to illustrate firstly what the exact role of the common link is, and more importantly, how it can be helpful in dating aḥādīth.

Research Profile: Mostafa Movahedifar is working on Islamic traditions (aḥādīth), Shī'ī aḥādīth in particular. He is examining the methods of studying the authenticity of these aḥādīth (ḥadīth criticism), and also dating them. Specifically, he is working on one of the most important

parts of aḥādīth, i.e. the isnād (chain of transmitters). Mostafa is also interested in all sciences relating to Islamic traditions, and more importantly, their authenticity such as biographical and bibliographical study of ḥadīth transmitters.

Amina Zarzi, University of Birmingham:
Identity Expressions through the Prism of the Sahara Desert

Paper abstract: Whilst the Sahara Desert has fed the imaginary of Muslim nomads for centuries, it came to fascinate French colonial settlers and travellers. It therefore represents a prism towards the exploration of epiphany. One of the most striking elements in the literary narration of the Sahara is the scrutiny of the dichotomies between western civilization and nomad civilization; whilst the former represents a backdrop of material possessions, the latter embodies void, paving the path for an exploration of the philosophy behind the realm of emptiness.

Hereafter, this paper would like to engage with the dichotomies of the west and the Sahara Desert, fueling reflections on two different civilizations: sedentary and Bedouin civilization. To illustrate, I will discuss pertinent quotations from the novel of the French author Saint Exupery *Terre des Hommes* (1939) and also the Algerian author Farida Sellal *Nomade* (2017). Though the novels are written in two different centuries, their reflections on the two spaces and civilizations resonate. The discussion will be theoretically guided by the Muslim scholar Ibn Khaldun. His exploration of the difference between Bedouin and sedentary civilization and also the concept of 'Assabiya' will serve to illustrate and shed light on the examples discussed from the novels.

Research Profile: Amina Zarzi is a PhD candidate in the Department of Modern Languages at the University of Birmingham. She is researching identity expressions through the prism of the Sahara Desert and the dogmas behind the representation of the latter. Her research hopes to uncover more about the colonial investment and the postcolonial reinvestment of the scrutiny of barren spaces, that has been curiously neglected within existing scholarship. Amina's research interests include: postcolonial theories; geocriticism and the intersection between space and identity; theories of space; the philosophy behind Bedouin and sedentary civilization, with particular attention to the Muslim Medieval scholar, Ibn Khaldun.

Adel Musaylih Almuthaybiri, University of Birmingham:
Literary Representation of Women in Saudi society

Paper abstract: This study will identify the sociocultural, historical, religious, political and economic factors that have contributed to transforming women's roles and status in Saudi society, changes which have accelerated in Saudi Arabia since 2000. Providing these insights into both secular and religiously conservative attitudes towards women's rights and gender relations in Saudi society will help to establish how this context impacts on the representation of women and gender-related themes in contemporary novels written by male and female Saudi authors.

Since it is not possible to cover all the factors, attitudes and discourses affecting women's issues in Saudi Arabia, this thesis focuses on those that are of direct relevance to the themes to be explored elsewhere in this thesis including women's roles and position in both the private and public sphere.

This study provided an overview of the status and role of Saudi women in society including a brief overview of the challenges they have faced, and the achievements they have made focusing in particular on female education, employment and mobility in Saudi Arabia. The sociocultural, religious, economic, political and literary transformations that have taken place in KSA in the post-2000 period and their effects on an ultra-conservative society in relationship to women's rights and gender issues have been discussed. In addition, this research highlighted the social, religious, political, and economic barriers that restricted women's participation in the private and public sphere.

Research Profile: Adel M Al-Muthaybiri was born in Al-Marmuthah, Saudi Arabia, in 1986. After gaining a BA in Arabic language from the University of Qassim in Saudi Arabia, he completed an MA in the Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at the University of Leeds. He is currently engaged in doctoral research at the University of Birmingham in the field of feminism and gender in the contemporary Arab novel.

Join Our Activities

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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