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ISIM Newsletter 3
for the study of islam
in the modern world

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The war in Kosovo and the accompanying ethnic cleansing has catapulted this region to the centre stage of Western attention after so many years of relative silence and indifference. Already in the 1980s, many analysts pointed out that tensions between Albanian and Serbian nationalism and divisions between the Christian Serbs and the (mainly) Muslim Albanians were growing, and were turning the province into a dangerous Balkan hotspot. Comparisons were drawn, especially by Serbian nationalists, with the famous Battle of Kosovo fought between the Ottoman Turks and Balkan Christian forces in 1389 – a 'clash of civilizations' between two deeply antagonistic and incompatible nations. In light of the recent developments, it is logical that the rift between Albanians and Serbs is now perceived as a hard and fast line of division. Yet Kosovo has had a history of coexistence, with considerable movement across this ethnic and religious frontier, through economic ties, cultural diffusion, religious exchange and conversion. Throughout history, the ethnic and religious barriers have been anything but watertight.

Circumambulatory procession at the monastery of Zočište

PHOTO: GER DUIJZINGS (1991)

KOSOVO

The End of a 'Mixed' Pilgrimage

GER DUIJZINGS

Since 1991, I have conducted research on ethnically and religiously 'mixed' pilgrimages (in such places as the Serbian Orthodox monasteries of Gračanica and the Roman Catholic shrine of Letnica), which offer clear examples of this contact across religious and ethnic boundaries. At present this seems unimaginable, but until very recently, Muslims and Christians of different ethnic backgrounds visited one another's sanctuaries, worshipped one another's saints and ignored the evident theological objections of religious orthodoxies. Particularly in the field of popular religion, which religious authorities traditionally control the least, boundaries were most often disregarded. There are numerous examples in Kosovo (and beyond) where Muslim and Christian forms of pilgrimage and saint veneration have amalgamated and formal religious divisions have become blurred. Most interestingly, in Kosovo, Serbian Orthodox shrines have often demonstrated a propensity to attract Muslim pilgrims of various ethnic backgrounds. The following account deals with one such Serbian shrine, Zočište, which I visited in 1991. Its recent fate somehow symbolizes the breakdown of a shared existence once enjoyed by Serbs and Albanians. It shows that religious *communitas* (Victor Turner), always a precarious matter, can turn into precisely the contrary under certain conditions.

In July 1991, I went to visit Zočište, a mixed Serb-Albanian village three miles from the town of Rahovec, in the southwest of the province. Just outside the village on a hilltop, there is an old medieval Serbian Orthodox monastery (dating from the 14th century or even earlier). Its shrine has a reputation for being particularly helpful in cases of diseases of the eyes and mental and psychosomatic disorders. The church is called Sveti Vrači (the Holy Medics) after the saints Kuzman and Damnjan, patron saints of the monastery. My reason for visiting this shrine was that, until the late 1980s, many Muslim Albanians from Zočište and nearby Rahovec would come to the monastery to join the festivities. The story holds that before the Albanian protests of 1989, which were violently suppressed in Rahovec (Orahovac in Serbian), Albanian pilgrims were even more numerous here than Serbs.

Yet in the last few years the growing distrust between Albanians and Serbs put an end to this 'mixed' pilgrimage: Albanians had begun to boycott. As I heard from a local Albanian taxi-driver, only a handful of old and very ill Albanians would still make the effort to go to Zočište, and perhaps some Muslim Gypsies, as well as Slav Muslims and Turks from Prizren. In the village itself, relations seemed to have deteriorated, also due to the fact that Albanians had begun to outnumber the Serbian inhabitants. Local Serbs said that they felt they were being pressured into leaving, especially by the strong Albanian clans of the village. The small town of Rahovec was now ethnically segregated, although relations between Serbs and Albanians had been quite harmonious or even symbiotic before, due to processes of mutual assimilation and absorption. One of the most interesting features of life in this small town was that old urban Albanian families were Slavophone, that is to say, they did not speak Albanian at home, but rather a Slavic dialect (*naš govor* – our tongue). During the 1921 census, the majority of urban Albanians in Rahovec had therefore been registered under the category 'Serbs or Croats'. During my own research, some asserted that their language was similar to Macedonian, apparently trying to dissociate from any connection with Serbian. Since most Albanians had been sacked from their jobs in 1990, there was now a great deal of 'bad blood' between local Serbs and Albanians.

During the pilgrimage, the entrance of the monastery is animated by booths, mainly manned by Gypsies selling snacks and various toys and trinkets; whereas within the confines of the monastery there is an outdoor café run by Serbian youth from the village. There are also other simple, improvised fairground attractions run by Gypsies. During my visit, a Serbian tradesman was selling posters and badges containing images of leading Serbian nationalists like Vuk Drašković, Slobodan Milošević, and Vojislav šešelj, as well as small Serbian flags and other Chetnik paraphernalia. From the café I could hear old Chetnik songs, and later in the afternoon, down in the village, I saw an Albanian café with Albanian music blaring from the speakers. This was just opposite a Serb marquee emitting even more deafening decibel levels of Serbian songs.

While in 1991 Albanians boycotted the pilgrimage, Gypsies were present in quite substantial numbers. These were mostly Orthodox or 'Serbian' Gypsies (*Srpski cigani*) from Suva Reka and Rahovec who seemed to be quite well assimilated into the Serbian community. During the holiday, Serbs and Gypsies closely intermingled, apparently knowing each other quite well. While I was present, there was also a smaller but quite conspicuous presence of Muslim Gypsy women, wearing the characteristic wide baggy trousers and speaking Albanian, who hardly joined in with Serbs and Orthodox Gypsies; obviously they were not part of the Orthodox *communitas* developing within the walls of the monastery.

Although this was meant to be a feast, the atmosphere was quite tense during my visit: the war had just started and (as a Dutchman) I sensed a great deal of suspicion (at a time when the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hans van den Broek, was heading the European Community efforts to stop the war in former Yugoslavia). At dawn shots were fired, probably by some drunken Serbs, and later that morning army jets flew over, as a reminder to everyone that the situation was far from normal. Suspicion was, however, not only directed against foreigners: I witnessed a Serb pilgrim from Prizren accusing a local peasant of being an Albanian 'spy', because of his local dialect, which sounded to him like an Albanian speaking Serbian. After the poor peasant showed his ID to his fellow Serb from Prizren he was told jokingly, but not without serious overtones, 'You had better change your language if you want us to become friends'. Deep distrust is characteristic of the Serb

Continued on page 20

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Coming issues
ISIM Newsletter 4
Deadline: 15 September 1999
Published: November 1999
ISIM Newsletter 5
Deadline: 15 January 2000
Published: March 2000

The ISIM solicits your response to the ISIM Newsletter. If you wish to contribute to the Newsletter, style sheets may be obtained upon request from the ISIM Secretariat or on the ISIM website. In order to offer update information on activities concerning the study of Islam and Muslim societies, along with news on vacancies, grants, and fellowships, the ISIM relies on its readers. The information will be made available on the ISIM Website.

Editorial

Europe has witnessed yet another round of religion-related violence; again a Muslim population has suffered dramatically from 'ethnic cleansing'. The violent replacement of ethnic groups in areas that once were part of the Ottoman polity has left few communities untouched, and the dismantling of mixed societies which date back to pre- and early modernity continues. Again, the rationale of nationalism exposes the dark side of the modern condition. In the broader context of Europe, the paradox is that, on the one hand, attempts are made to form a society based upon the ideal of a multicultural identity while, on the other hand, the coexistence of divergent identities is put to trial. Whereas the Muslim population in Europe in general has increased markedly due to recent migrations, Europe's indigenous Muslims suffer major setbacks. Perhaps we should not read too much religion or ideology into the tragic events, but in the case of the Serbian extremism directed against the Albanians of Kosovo it seems hard to locate possible material motivations. The horrors of Bosnia and now Kosovo cast deep shadows over the future of remaining minorities in the now-battered Serb Republic, in particular the Muslims of the Sancaq area. In this edition of the ISIM Newsletter, Ger Duizings (p.1) demonstrates that traditionally mixed religious practices in Kosovo had already come under severe pressure in the decade preceding the war. Michael Sells (p.31) describes how religious symbolism in the Balkans has been politicized by nationalists whose devotion to 'historic' land has produced a horrid caricature of the history of inter-communal relations in the Balkans.

Recent outbreaks of communal fighting in Indonesia and the renewed clashes in Kashmir have further brought to the fore the realities of political religion. In a recent meeting in Beirut, a Lebanese scholar critiqued a specific statement in the Research Approaches and Thematic Profile of ISIM (see Newsletter 1, p. 3) which seems to downplay the importance of political radicalism as a topic of scholarly concern; although they constitute a minority, radicals often provide leadership to those who would normally be considered to be moderates. Serb politics of the 1990s may be a case in point. Marc Gaborieau (p.21) while being careful not to speculate about the ultimate goals of the movement, questions the non-political nature of the Tablighi Jama'at – an icon of moderation – suggesting that teligious politics are not only a matter of purpose, but also of style.

Although the series of recent events forces us to reflect upon the political uses of religion, only few states and societies are actually ruled by distinctive religious ideologies. Much space in this issue is devoted to less direct ways of disseminating ideas and practicing ideals in Muslim societies, ranging from performance of song, to the exhibition of religious manuscripts, to the writing of women into national history. A series of articles deal with material culture, in particular architecture, and with the various uses of space in – mainly – urban contexts. Urban, sacred, and moral spaces constitute a field of research that seems to call for a clearer multidisciplinary approach than many other fields. Diverse diasporic experiences are covered in various contributions. Helene Basu (p.39) reports on her experiences in field research among the African diaspora in India, and Andrée Feillard (p.17) on the meetings she had with Indonesian ulema, indeed a category for which we invite more contributions. The same goes for critical essays on current trends in the study of the Muslim world. In a sweeping argument, Hammed Shahidian (p.5) opposes the centrality of religion in the understanding of these societies. He criticizes the emphatic treatment of trends that – in his eyes – may limit the freedom of groups and individuals. Institutes like ISIM, which concentrate on the study of Islam and societies of Muslims, have only to benefit from their critics. ◆

DICK DOUWES
editor

MISCELLANEOUS

Conference on the 'Transformation Processes and Islam in Africa'

Co-Sponsored by the ISIM

Islam has always been a vehicle of economic, political and ideological re-orientation in African societies. The explosive increase in communication has intensified these processes, transforming the face of both Islam and Africa, also in regions which, until well into the 20th century CE / 14th century AH, had remained virtually untouched by Islam. This conference aims to bring together Dutch researchers investigating transformation processes related to the presence of Islam in sub-Saharan Africa. The invited international scholars, Louis Brenner (SOAS, London UK) and Lamin Sanneh (Yale University, New Haven CT), will place this topic into a wider perspective. Louis Brenner will deliver a keynote address on 'Recent developments and challenges in the study of Islam in Africa: international perspectives'. The rest of the day's programme will be fixed on the basis of the abstracts submitted.

Organizers: Africa Studies Centre (ASC)
in co-operation with the International
Institute for the Study of Islam in the
Modern World (ISIM)
Convenors: Wim van Binsbergen,
Anneke Breedveld, José van Santen
Place of event: African Studies Centre,
room 1A27, Pieter de la Courtgebouw,
Wassenaarseweg 52, Leiden
Date of event: Friday, 15 October 1999
Contact person: Ms. Dr. Anneke
Breedveld, African Studies Centre;
P.O. Box 9555, 2300 RB Leiden,
The Netherlands,
E-mail: brdvld@rulcri.leidenuniv.nl
Tel: +31 (0)71-527 33 75

Attention!

We kindly asks that you consult the ISIM Website regularly for information and announcements concerning the upcoming ISIM PhD and post-doctoral fellowships. Information of the opening for the position of ISIM Chair in Amsterdam will be placed on the Website in the coming months. Electronic forms for all of these as well as for the ISIM Advanced Degree programme can be found on the site as well. ◆

Retraction

In the ISIM Newsletter 2, the following errors were made in our 'info pages':

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The e-mail address of the Islamic Area Studies Newsletter of the University of Tokyo, Japan, which was listed on page 46, had an incorrect e-mail address. The correct address is: i-office@l.u.tokyo.ac.jp

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On page 47 an academic meeting was listed under 'Beyond the Border: a New Framework for Understanding the Dynamism of Muslim Societies, to take place from 8-10-99 to 10-10-99, in Kyoto, Japan. The title for that meeting should read: '1999 International Symposium' and the correct fax is: +81 3 5684 3279.

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We have also been notified that in the meantime, the telephone and fax numbers for the Islamic Area Studies Project in Tokyo have been changed.

The new numbers are:
tel. +81 3 5841 2687, or 8952,
and the fax +81 3 5841 2686.

—

We sincerely apologize for the inconvenience. ◆

ISIM Advanced Degree Programme

Applications for 2000

The ISIM starts its Advanced Degree programme in November 1999 (deadline for applications is passed). For the year 2000, the Advanced Degree programme will begin in late September. ISIM invites applications for 2000. The closing date for applications is 1 January 2000.

The Advanced Degree programme prepares students (holders of a Master's degree or its equivalent) for PhD research. It is open to graduates in the humanities, social sciences, and religious studies. The applicants must specialize in a field specifically related to the study of modern Islam and Muslim society. The programme lasts for one academic year and includes, among others, training in social science and cultural-historical approaches and methods, and topic specialization through workshops and tutorials. The programme combines course work and individual supervision. Staff of the ISIM and the participating universities, as well as visiting fellows are engaged for the programme, which is offered in cooperation with several institutes abroad. The emphasis in the selection is clearly placed on proven outstanding academic capacity. Although the Advanced Degree training is a preparatory programme for PhD research, this does not guarantee entry into an ISIM PhD programme.

The tuition fee is 10,000 guilders (currently approximately 5,000 USD). However, (partial) waivers may be obtained in certain cases. For the academic year 2000-1 a limited number of grants will be offered. For information and application forms, please contact the ISIM secretariat or consult the ISIM Website. ◆

Institutional News

NATHAL M. DESSING

ISIM's New Academic Director
Muhammad Khalid Masud

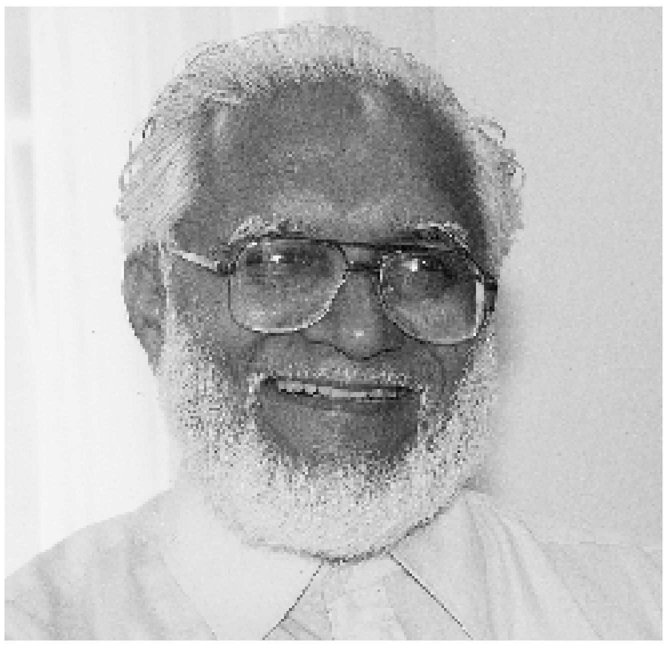
PHOTO: WIM VREEBURG

Professor Muhammad Khalid Masud has recently been named Academic Director of the ISIM for three years. He succeeds Professor Wim Stokhof who, as Director in Charge, laid the foundations of the Institute and led the search for an Academic Director. We will miss the distinctive presence of Wim Stokhof, but we are delighted with the arrival of Muhammad Masud at the ISIM. Masud joins the ISIM from the Islamic Research Institute (IRI), International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan, where he was professor and head of the Islamic Law and Jurisprudence Unit.

Muhammad Khalid Masud was born in 1939 in India. His family fled to Pakistan when the state was formed. After working as a teacher, he entered the Punjab University at Lahore and in 1962 obtained an MA in Islamic Studies with honours. From 1963 to 1999, he was associated with the IRI, where he held many positions, including editor of the journal *Islamic Studies* for two spells in the 1970s and 1980s.

Masud took several periods of leave from the IRI in order to study and conduct research abroad. From 1966 to 1973 he studied at McGill University in Canada, where he received an MA in 1969 and a PhD in Islamic Studies in 1973. His MA thesis on Deobandi *fatwas* dealing with legal problems for which there is no precedent, such as those arising from Western dress, banknotes, the gramophone, and the use of toothbrushes, established his enduring interest in methodology and the impact of social change on Islamic law. The questions posed by such novelties could not be solved within the framework of the widely accepted theory concerning the *'usûl al-fiqh*, developed by Al-Shâfiᶜî and further refined by subsequent Muslim scholars. According to them, there are four sources of evidence in Islamic law: the Koran, tradition literature (*hadîth*), consensus (*ijmâᶜ*), and reasoning by analogy (*qiyâs*). However, if no precedent exists, reasoning by analogy is not possible. Solving this category of legal problems requires alternative principles on the basis of which one is able to declare something lawful or unlawful. This methodological question led Masud to the Malikite Shâtibî (d. 1388), whose works (especially A*l-Muwâfaqât*, *Fatâwa*, and *Al-Iᶜtisâm*) are frequently cited by modern scholars and have contributed to the modernists' conception of Islamic law. Unlike his predecessors, Shâtibî adopted the concept of *maslaha* as an independent principle: a method of inductive reasoning that takes into consideration the entirety of Koranic verses and *hadîth*, rather than specific verses and *hadîth*. According to Shâtibî, something is lawful if it is supported by textual evidence and social practice. In this framework of thinking, change is allowed in *ᶜâda* but not in *ᶜibâdât*. Masud's doctoral dissertation on Shâtibî formed the basis of his book *Shatibi's Philosophy of Law*, published by the IRI in 1973 and in a revised and enlarged edition in 1995.

In 1977 Masud obtained a Fulbright postdoctoral award, which enabled him to visit libraries in Philadelphia and other cities in the United States for research that resulted in his book *Iqbal's Reconstruction of Ijtihad* (Lahore, 1995). His extensive international experience also includes a stay in Nigeria from 1980 to 1984, where he was senior lecturer at the Centre for Islamic Legal Studies at the Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria. There he taught Malikite law and had the opportunity to become acquainted with Malikite law in practice. He was a member of the Committee on the Comparative Study of Muslim Societies, Social Science Research Council, New York, from 1985 to 1990. This appointment gave him the opportunity to widen his international contacts and to further develop his interest in social sciences. In 1990, the Committee held a workshop in London on the Tablîghî Jamâ'at, a twentieth-century transnational movement for the renewal of Islamic faith. This meeting was organized within a wider project on Muslim transnationalism led by James Piscatori. Masud edited the proceedings of this workshop, entitled *Travellers in Faith* (forthcoming).

Masud has also conducted research on the position of Muslims in non-Muslim societies from the perspective of Islamic law. In 'Being Muslim in a Non-Muslim Polity', in *Journal of the Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* (1989), he distinguishes three approaches to the question of the permissibility for Muslims to live in non-Muslim countries. He argues that the approach that allows Muslims to live in non-Muslim countries provided they are allowed to fulfil their religious duties is the most constructive. Masud has surveyed this fundamental debate and elucidated many of its subtleties.

In his contribution to *Russia's Muslim Frontiers: New Directions in Cross-Cultural Analysis*, edited by Dale F. Eickelman (Indiana University Press, 1993), Masud explores the limitations of existing scholarly analysis of Muslim politics. Supporting James Piscatori, he suggests that many scholars resort to impressionistic and general statements, for example in assuming that the nation-state constitutes an appropriate unit of analysis in the Muslim world. He has also co-edited a volume entitled *Islamic Legal Interpretation: Muftis and Their Fatwas* (Harvard University Press, 1996). This is a collection of analytical studies of specific *fatwas* on various issues contributed by several scholars. His interest in Islamic law and social sciences also underlies his current research project on religion, law, and society in Islam.

As ISIM Academic Director, Masud will build on his broad international experience. As a Pakistani at the head of a Western academic institution, Masud will be able to assure that both Muslim and non-Muslim scholarly approaches to the Islamic world are represented and accepted at the ISIM, and that the appearance of double standards in dealing with Islam is avoided. His plans for the ISIM involve the development of a methodology based on three pillars: social sciences, religious studies, and history. Thus far, modern Islam has been approached mostly from the perspective of one of these disciplines, whereas Masud favours a multidisciplinary approach that builds on all three. Furthermore, to avoid stereotyping Islam, he emphasizes the importance of comparative studies of Islam and Muslim societies. In this way, Masud hopes to bring out the diversity of Muslim responses to contemporary problems, which is superimposed on the underlying unity of Islam. ◆

Nathal M. Dessing is a PhD researcher at Leiden University, specializing in life cycle rituals of Muslims in the Netherlands. E-mail: dessing@rullet.leidenuniv.nl

ISIM Beirut Meeting

One of the objectives of the ISIM is to build cooperation networks with academics and institutions in other countries in order to develop the field of the study of Islam in the modern world as a scientific discipline and to seek institutional collaboration in this respect. The first of such meetings was held in Beirut on 27 May 1999 with the German Orient Institute in Beirut as host. Scholars from academic institutions in Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan, and Syria attended the meeting.

In addition to the introduction of the ISIM, the agenda of the meeting aimed at, firstly, the development of the field of the study of Islam in the modern world and, secondly, the modalities of cooperation. Martin van Bruinessen presented the research approaches and a thematic profile of the ISIM. He stressed that the institute's approaches are interdisciplinary, grounded in the social and cultural sciences and building upon the insights of history and religious studies. He explained that the Institute will conduct its research on the developments associated with modernity, modernization and globalization. He identified four main areas of interest in this respect: intellectual debates, Islam and State, Muslims in diaspora, and transnationalism. The ensuing discussion recognized the need of closing the gap between Islamic studies and social sciences through comparative and multi-disciplinary approaches. Some commented that in the region, the gap may be too wide, given that Islamic studies are often understood as the reproduction of religious guidance and that it would be difficult to satisfy the entire field. Moreover, the practice of interdisciplinary approaches is rare. It was remarked that the production of a state-of-the-art in relevant fields and discourses in the different regions was vital in order to address the current fragmentation. So far overviews are lacking.

Commenting upon the ISIM Research Approaches and Thematic Profile (see ISIM Newsletter 1, p. 3) most participants expressed that the initiative is remarkably ambitious given its broad orientation and most welcome given the lack of comparable initiatives. Critical remarks on the ISIM profile were invited. Several participants observed that moderate Islam is the mainstream expression, but that the influence of more radical forms of Islam should not be downplayed because it provides leadership to communities. Moderates, it was said, sometimes lack the confidence needed for political action.

The concern was expressed that social science approaches de-emphasize the more traditional views and the purely religious aspects of Islamic revivalism. On the other hand Islamicists tend to attach too little importance to fieldwork and contextualized understandings of Islam. In particular in the field of gender, fieldwork is imperative because reliance on textual sources only obscures gendered differentiation. It was also stressed that the ISIM research agenda should not be restricted to the Western views and concerns; it must also reflect Muslim voices.

The discussion on possible ways of cooperation focused on the development of resources, in particular source materials, both digital and otherwise, and on the establishment of networks of cooperation. It was agreed that the meeting served as the starting point of building a network for the region. ◆

Participants

- Prof. Aşye Ayata
  (Middle East Technical University, Ankara)
- Prof. Mehmet Aydin
  (Dokyu Eylul University, Izmir)
- Prof. Sadiq Jalal al-Azm
  (University of Damascus)
- Prof. Ahmad Baydoun *(Lebanese University)*
- Dr Dalal el-Bizri
  (Lebanese University / Cairo University)
- Prof. Martin van Bruinessen
  (Utrecht University/ISIM)
- Dr Dick Douwes *(ISIM)*
- Dr Mona Fayad *(Lebanese University)*
- Dr Nizar Hamzeh
  (American University of Beirut)
- Dr Johannes den Heier
  (Netherlands-Flemish Institute, Cairo)
- Prof. Fehmy Jadaane
  (Jordan University, Amman)
- Dr Farid Khazin
  (American University of Beirut)
- Prof. Muhammad Khalid Masud *(ISIM)*
- Dr Annelies Moors
  (University of Amsterdam)
- Prof. Ahmad Moussalli
  (American University of Beirut)
- Dr Muhammad Sammak *(Ijtihad)*
- Prof. Ridwan al-Sayyid
  (LebaneseUniversity / Ijtihad)
- Dr Thomas Scheffler *(Orient Institute, Beirut)*
- Prof. Erik J. Zürcher *(Leiden University/ISIM).*

Africa

R.O. ROM KALILU

Islam and Artistic Response among the Yoruba of Nigeria

Until recently, the study of the influence and image of religion in the rich visual art of the Yoruba, the largest ethnic group of Nigeria, was limited to indigenous and Christian religious terrains. However, contacts with Islamic culture predated other non-local religions and are also manifest in the artistic panorama of this group, offering a paradoxical image of enrichment and iconoclasm. A Yoruba saying confirms the antiquated history of Islam in their culture:

Ifa is primordial
Islam is primeval
Christianity crept in in the noon of culture

Close-up view of a house post showing a bearded figure with turban and leather sandals, holding a spear.

PHOTO: R.O. ROM KALILU (1993)

To appreciate the dynamic interactions between Islam and the visual arts of the Yoruba requires a comprehension of their religious set-up. The indigenous religious outlook of the Yoruba is pluralistic. An individual may belong to one or more religions. This helps to explain the traditionally tolerant attitude towards non-local religions. The Yoruba believe in one God, the Creator and the Cherisher of the whole universe, to whom reference is made in the oral tradition, most especially in the divination corpus of Ifa. God has no shrine built for His worship; being omnipotent, he cannot be confined within space, but is rather called upon in prayer whenever the need arises. The Yoruba had also developed a pantheon of gods who are invariably anthropomorphic and are venerated and placated in various ways. In their liturgies, these deities are conceived as worshippers of God. They are considered as intermediaries between Him and the people. The tolerant reception of Islam is not unconnected with monotheistic teachings concerning God, to whom 'belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth…' (S 112: 1-3), to whom 'everything renders worship…' and to whom 'is due the primal origin of the heavens and the earth…' (S 2: 116-117).

Although the Islamic concept of the divine was not alien to the people, the Yoruba and Islamic traditions were contrasted by the cultures they radiate. The Yoruba had a non-literate religious culture and records of religions have been preserved to a large extent through oral tradition and visual art forms. This is also true of the situation today. The Yoruba have developed a non-literate way of appreciating religion and a very high sensitivity to image construction, whereas Islam discourages the use of icons and encourages writing. As a consequence, a paradoxical relation of love and hate between the Yoruba culture and Islamic teachings became extant; a relation to which people responded artistically.

Islam in the Yoruba Artistic Panorama

A remarkable example of the influence of Islam on Yoruba visual arts is to be found in the theme of a bearded figure with leather sandals. Varieties of this peculiar theme are carved on door panels and house posts. It is essentially composed, in addition to the beard and sandals, of a standing male figure, wearing a long narrow dress (*jalabiya*) with a pair of trousers. The figure also dons a turban. Carrying a big leather wallet with a long strap on his shoulder, he holds a rosary in one hand and a slate in the other hand. The figure is at times also depicted holding a spear. This representation of a male figure also reflects the fact that women did not participate, at least openly, in the teaching and spreading of Islam to Yorubaland.

Bearded figures reflect the early images of contacts with Muslims. The theme is supported by oral records. In Otura-meji, an Ifa verse, metaphorical allusions to the early Muslims in Yorubaland are made in conjunction with the imagery of the figure with sandals:

Ka taluku kai lai [1]
Aworokonjobi [2]
The egret is the Muslim priest to the birds
Whenever he wakes up he calls out ilaafi, ilaafi
He slides his sandals unto his feet
and treks away
It was divined for Amodu [3]
That goes to Arabia

Although the sculptures are not painted and are finished in the brown colour of the wood, the egret – with its immaculate white colour to which the Muslim is likened in the Ifa verse – suggests a sense of neatness and purity. The Yoruba regard the egret (*aworoko-n-jobi*) as the neatest of all birds. The *jalabiya* depicted on the figure is indeed in real life almost invariably white in colour. The depiction of the spear with the bearded figure portrays the more violent encounter with the Fulani Muslim warriors in the early 19th century. Significantly, the theme indicates that the early bearers of Islam to Yorubaland were associated with the slate: standing, perhaps walking postures and pair of slippers, most probably of leather – all of which suggest a social order, a conception of dedicated, disciplined and learned minds with some level of competence as scholars and teachers of their faith. Their association with the kola nut (*obi*) – which the bird, Aworokonjobi, is believed to be fond of eating – and long distance journey indicate that they were in some way connected with the Arabs and the Berbers, and particularly the Hausa, who traded kola nuts with the Yoruba states.

Paradoxical influences

The impact of Islam in the art is paradoxical. It has enriched the visual arts of the Yoruba but has also served as the basis for the destruction of some indigenous art objects. Islam has not had any stylistic impact on the Yoruba sculptural traditions. Themes associated with Islam are invariably rendered in Yoruba styles. Nonetheless, it has enriched their arts in terms of motif and form. For example, the typical flat Qur'anic school slate is used as a motif in Yoruba wooden sculpture. Also the Qur'an, represented as an open book, and the rosary are used as motifs in both wooden sculpture and gourd carving. Islamic names of God and short phrases in Arabic letters are also used as motifs on carved door panels. The inscriptions are also commonly written, engraved, or made in bas-relief on walls of mosques, houses and on motor vehicles, particularly the commuter vehicles belonging to Muslims. Stylistically, the Arabic inscriptions do not reflect the rich free-flowing rhythm and the elegance characteristic of Islamic calligraphy. This is partly due to the limitations of the medium, usually wood, on which they are made. It is also because the texts are written by artists, usually unlettered or not knowledgeable of Arabic, who merely copy whatever is written for them. Also till today, Islamic education in Yorubaland concentrates on Qur'anic studies; it has not taken any interest in calligraphy as an art. Gourd carving – the gourd being a medium that lends itself easily to such carving techniques – has only recently adopted Arabic texts as motifs (see photo).

Carved gourd decorated with arabic inscription.

PHOTO: R.O. ROM KALILU (1994)

A few geometric motifs found in Yoruba art appear to have been inspired by decorations on saddles and other horse riding equipment as well as ornamented swords, reflecting Sudanese and Bornu influences. Interlaced motifs are now commonly found in Yoruba leatherwork, gourd carving and woodcarving. Such motifs have a pre-Islamic origin but are associated with Islamic cultures in West Africa. Their southward spread to Yorubaland has been attributed to trade contacts through the Hausa. The same appears to be true of cloth embroidery, which in West Africa is associated with the dress of Muslim scholars and teachers.

Islam does not encourage direct representation of living forms, it therefore became associated with a certain level of iconoclasm in Yorubaland. The arts of the Yoruba were dominated by sculptures. And in spite of a growing Muslim population, people remained fond of ornamenting their doors and house posts with carvings. The Fulani jihad, however, was accompanied by destruction of art. Some Yoruba settlements were despoiled of their valuable artistic treasures. For example, between 1833-35, on more than one occasion the Fulani ruler of Ilorin sent warriors to ransack the town of Oyo-Ile to remove, amongst other things, numerous brass posts and all the masquerade costumes. These art objects were destroyed, the metal being melted to make cannon balls needed for warfare. It was not unusual, until the last decade of this century, to find Muslim preachers publicly destroying indigenous art objects belonging to new converts or their families. And for the same iconoclastic reasons, some artists in the indigenous arts such as the brass casters of Ilorin, who professed Islam, stopped the production of figurative forms.

Notwithstanding the iconoclastic incidences, few Yoruba Muslims have any serious iconoclastic tendency. Yoruba traditional thought still exerts some influence on them. Many continue to use sculptures for architectural and other decorative purposes. Such sculptures also identify them with Islam. Other Yoruba Muslims have integrated their cultural aesthetic sensitivity into their faith and are thus not averse to the display of pictures and figurative objects that have religious significance. Photographs, stickers and painted portraits of men of God, particularly those of Sheikh Ibrahim Niyas of Kaola (Senegal), the spiritual head and reformer of the Tijaniyya tariqa, as well as those of other sheikhs of local significance are displayed or painted on vehicles or on houses.

The Yoruba's use of visual art continues to be one of the ways in which their conception of Islam is recorded. At the same time, it is a means of identifying with Islam through a much-valued aspect of their culture – the visual arts. Its uses indicate that the Yoruba see their art not only as part of an ethnic identity, but also as a means of identification with foreign influences. ◆

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For more details and references, see the author's work on the 'Bearded Figure with Leather Sandals: Islam, Historical Cognition and the Visual Arts of the Yoruba'. Africa: Revista trimestrale di studi e documentazione dell' Istituto italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente, *1977.*

Notes

1. Cognomen of priest
2. Cognomen of the priest and name of a bird
3. Ahmad

Debate

HAMMED SHAHIDIAN

Islam's 'Others': Living (Out)side Islam

Until the 1970s, 'Islamic societies' were considered homogeneous, facsimiles of each other, founded on immutable religious precepts. This mystique simultaneously situated 'the Islamic world' in the realm of fancy and justified colonialist politics. Yet in recent decades, that approach has been disputed. New scholarship underlines that far from adhering to ordained laws, Muslims must meet earthly realities; far from replicating an ideal, societies with a predominant Muslim population comprise diversity and dissension.

Categorical identifications like 'Muslims' and 'Islamic countries' prevail in academic and non-academic parlance. When scholars dismiss misconceptions of a uniform 'Islamic land', emphasis falls strongly on the diversity of Islamic expressions. Overlooked are many of us who do not identify ourselves as Muslims – either we consider ourselves many things including Muslim, or harbour alternative religious convictions, or simply do not adhere to any creed. Casting our societies 'Islamic' automatically designates Islam as norm, all others as deviation. We are made strangers in our own home.

But not only in academic pages do we appear as the strangers. In *real life*, presumed Islamic ubiquity suffocates us. Our life has been a tireless effort to escape the shadow of Islam, to redefine social parameters, and hence to create a rightly deserved space: open societies wherein all are legitimized. From our standpoint as marginalized 'others', Islamic culture and politics appear dissimilar from both orientalist and diversity approaches.

Where monolithic walls of orientalism have been smashed, a wider net of multifarious Islams entraps us 'others'. Being some kind of Muslim becomes our quintessential determinant. We are presented as family – as if we welcomed this – as adherents of, not subjects to, Islam. Islam is thus judged *the* culture, Islamic politics *the* politics. In most contemporary scholarship, 'defending Islamic culture' is posed as the prime element of nationalist agendas. What of those who do not defend Islamic culture yet still take part in resurgence? Doubtless, strands of the nationalist movements prioritize defending Islam; yet one can hardly equate nationalism with Islamic zeal. Consider how the 1979 Iranian revolution is deemed an *Islamic revolution*, notwithstanding insurgents' staunch opposition to the Islamic Republic, and the brutal persecutions that have bloodied culture and politics under the IRI. Islam's 'others' are seen but ignored, heard but unacknowledged. Our omission results through formulating from the outset a paradigm obfuscating difference.

We could more easily accept omission were it limited to socio-historical descriptions. Yet our alleged piety comprises normative discourses and political imperatives: all we do *ought to* be in an Islamic context. We hear that 'any instance of diversity opens a broader range of avenues for the *Middle East in search of its cultural identity within Islam*'.[1] What does this statement mean? Is this a truism – viz. 'if we stay on the road of Islam, we'll end up in many Islamic places'? A political agenda – 'Muslim Middle East, search for diversity in Islam to maintain our Islamic cultural identity'? Or an inevitability – 'there is no alternative to Islam in the Middle East'? But, what happens to non-Muslims in a 'Middle East in search of its cultural identity within Islam'?

Old politics revisited

We enter the inescapable maze of 'many Islams'. Intellectual life in this labyrinth has been stifling as we must search for a(nother) new and improved Islam. At every turn, we confront one more prosaic assortment of 'regressive' and 'progressive', 'fake' and 'authentic' Islams. We invest valuable energy engaging with hackneyed claims that '*this* version differs fundamentally from others'; '*this* rendition works unprecedented wonders'. Consider enthusiasm over 'Islamic feminist' threadbare clichés. Triteness dressed barely less offensively than the original. We are encouraged to rest content because Qur'anic verses that 'suggest a *more egalitarian* treatment of women are highlighted' in the 'Islamic feminist' revision.[2] But what does it mean to treat women in a 'more egalitarian' manner? Why should women's rights be based on edicts granting but *some degree* of equality? On what is this august order based? Verses 'call[ing] for restrictions on women's actions are reinterpreted. Often a word has multiple meanings and a less restrictive synonym can be adopted'.[3]

Old politics revisited: impose a biased rendering of edicts, take a deep breath, and hope for the best.

I do not deny the possibility of change in Islam, nor that followers could revise Islam to accommodate the modern world. Yet I object to the rest of us – we 'others' –being roped within the 'new improved' paradigm as our only alternative. Assumed Muslims, we are compelled to seek alternatives only from this collection. We are urged to posit human rights and liberties – nowadays especially gender politics – in the particularistic fashion of cultural relativism. 'Westerners might object to our solutions, but these are compatible with our way of life'. Presumably part of a happy family, we are silenced lest we offend a relative. We are told that every (re)rendering, every apologia for Islamic dicta, signals intellectual virility – or, in fashionable postmodernese, posits 'choices before an active agency'. Yet genuine surges toward new intellectual life are considered suspect, susceptible to manipulation.

Propositions that, in a non-Islamic context, outrage audiences, are taken uncritically when authored by 'insiders'. The argument that *hijab* liberates by allocating women a safe zone might raise concerns which yet are rarely verbalized lest the inquirer be stamped 'Eurocentric'. No such reaction would be elicited were the statement transposed into a non-Islamic situation: 'Modest dress protects women against rape'. Our benevolent colleagues should recognize that Islam's 'others' have tried for a long time, notwithstanding difficulties, to rend the veils of roundabout apologies. We appreciate their regarding non-Westerners as civilized, capable of ameliorating their societal ills. But their silence deprives us 'others' from genuine concerns, sincere support, and thoughtful exchange. Worse yet, this silence betrays a(nother), albeit more sophisticated, form of racism by intimating that though they would not tolerate such an argument about themselves, it might explain our situation. We do not expect them to fight our battles (nor do we appreciate their deciding our battles), yet we welcome democratic dialogues. In the context of equal exchange, non-native critiques do not sound condescending. Indeed, many 'others' share more in common with our geographical strangers than with fellow denizens of our land.[4]

Twin clubs

Political and cultural hurdles are compounded when Islam is designated the official creed. State and religion become twin clubs, at each other's convenient disposal whenever either is challenged. This partnership claims its toll on our efforts. Frequently, some feel obliged to 'watch what we say' to avoid identification with 'deviant' foreign theories. Such self-censorship distorts ideas, overlooks dangers, and avoids pivotal though perilous challenges that some resistance might survive. The problem is obviously not association with non-native ideas; rather, that *anything* can easily be branded 'foreign'. Could one create a 'safe space' for defiance, without penalty of treason? I believe not. When competing voices *within* the Islamic discourse are easily condemned, what safety has a non-Islamic, let alone an anti-Islamic, voice? Were we to stand as far from 'foreigners' as might be imagined, safety would remain illusory. Accusation of treason is often wielded as a weapon against Islam's 'others'. With no sin to avoid, we may only dodge the attack. But when we express this inherent jeopardy, we are blamed for repeating orientalist propaganda, if not for colluding with the enemy.

When we refuse to think within Islam's limits, we are rebuffed: 'ours is an Islamic society within which we must seek cultural identity'. When critiquing Islam, we are answered that 'religion is not really "that important" in light of "other factors" – economic, historical, political, or cultural'. Postmodernists advise that we attend not to Islam, but to its interpretations. But do Islam *and* its construal belong to mutually exclusive planes? We thus run smack into a contradiction. Were Islam so strong as to define societies, it could not be haphazardly jettisoned due to interpretive diversity. Conversely, a fluid, shapeless Islam would serve a very limited analytical purpose.

We are reminded that some Muslims toil for reforms; that religion alone is not responsible for our social ills; that injustice is not exclusive to Islam. We object not to Islamic reforms, but to their inadequacies. Many of us have opposed all oppressions; not solely those rooted in Islam. Indeed, we were guilty of not according Islam – the infamous 'cultural factor' – its due strength. Islam has been a major contender in the process of social change. Where it has not directly opposed our efforts, it circumscribes the scope of our endeavour *to its own benefit*. This force must be combated to achieve justice, democracy, and freedom.

Towards the future

No moratorium on Islam need be called, no quarantining of Islamic ideologies need be legislated. Yet Islam must be construed – in real life, not just in apologies – as merely *one* factor to contend with. Democratic orders should accommodate believers, but prefixed by Islam, no democracy proves genuine. We must dispense with illusions of 'overall egalitarianism', 'greater liberality', and sanctions 'nonetheless feminist'. Islam is repeatedly presented as the inescapable solution to our problems. Various reformulations amount to little more than repackagings of old wine in new linguistic bottles. Little has been offered to even promise a democratic, free future. Accomplishing the goals of social justice, democracy, freedom, and gender equality requires that we transcend the boundaries of Islam, especially political Islam's borders. We must walk uncharted paths, rather than familiar alleys ensuring loss. ◆

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Notes

1. Charrad, M. M. (1998). Cultural Diversity within Islam: Veils and Laws in Tunisia. In H. L. B. a. N. Tohidi (eds.), *Women in Muslim Societies: Diversity within Unity*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, p. 77 (emphasis added).
2. Afary, Janet (1997). 'The War against Feminism in the Name of the Almighty: Making Sense of Gender and Muslim Fundamentalism'. *New Left Review* (224), p. 105 (emphasis added).
3. Afary, (1997), p. 105.
4. I discuss this issue in more detail in: Shahidian, Hammed (1999). 'Saving the Savior'. *Sociological Inquiry* 69(2), pp. 303-27.

Gender

NIKKI R. KEDDIE

Women and Religious Politics in the Contemporary World

The important role of women in the recent global rise of religious politics is evident. Some are baffled as to why women are attracted to movements that are often conservative and non-egalitarian in their gender attitudes. Scholars, however, often give only scant attention to the important role of women and of gender attitudes in religio-political movements – questions concerning veiling or abortion are discussed, but in analysing these movements, attention shifts from women to more male-related questions of political control, terrorism, and the like. The first 1999 issue of the *Journal of Women's History* is a special issue on women in religious politics worldwide. The articles analyse both comparative questions and culture-specific ones.[1]

In scholarship on women that has flourished in recent decades, comparisons have usually been either global (e.g. all women have shared in certain kinds of subordination) or within contiguous or culturally similar societies (e.g. women from all over Africa, Europe, or the Middle East). New insights may be gained by comparing women from different cultures. Religious politics is one of several modern global political trends in which women have come to the fore. Nationalism has had a particular resonance and colouring among women, and socialism is often seen as solving their problems, including inequality, through the radical reorganization of society. Fascism, Nazism, and other secular right-wing politics have had many active female devotees. And women's movements have become global in recent decades. The authors in the special issue deal with women in 20th-century religious politics in the Muslim world, from Bangladesh to the Arab world, and in the United States, Latin America, and South Asia.

Why women enter religious politics

The socio-economic conditions that created possibilities for women to enter politics are similar in many parts of the world. These include the rise of capitalism and industrialization, which first separated the domestic and work spheres, but also provided new opportunities for women to work outside the home. Trends affecting women in most societies included: the need for an educated work force, disciplined for regular tasks and hours, which helped create public education; urbanization, which spread new needs and social patterns; and the effect of war which brings women into the labour force. All of these affected women both positively and negatively. Although some women acted, mostly indirectly, in politics in the pre-capitalist past, women's organized political participation is overwhelmingly a phenomenon of modern capitalist societies.

Women's political views and participation have always been diverse, but women have often been associated with movements for reform and for the betterment of their position. In the US, women were involved in abolitionism, welfare programmes, temperance and women-centred causes like female suffrage. A similar pattern is found in the Global South, where women have been involved with welfare, women's education, and legal reforms to benefit their cause. The forces and ideas of modernization, while having important negatives for women, have been mostly favourable to efforts for greater equality and activity in the public sphere: capitalist societies promote the opening of labour and consumer markets to wider groups and to making fewer status differentiations than in the past. Everywhere, modern trends had to contend with centuries-old systems, based originally on the consequences of frequent childbearing, which placed men in superior positions and claimed women's mental capacity was inferior. Such gender inequality was reinforced by nearly all religions, which retained their appeal to many people even after many of the conditions that gave rise to their views on gender had passed. Recent trends, while giving more women a chance at education and work outside the home, have had more problematic consequences for many women, often encouraging divorce, migration patterns that separate men from women; sweated labour, prostitution, and other trends disrupting the previous functioning of the family, whose role is less central than it once was. The undermining of the older family (which is idealized by religious and conservative authors) had both positive and negative results for women, with some experiencing more negatives than positives.

Given these and other problems, it is not surprising that some men and women seek salvation in what are seen as traditional religious values. What is new is the degree to which religion is tied to strong political movements. Although religious nationalism (the identification of a nation with a religion, as found in South Asia and Israel) goes back at least a century, such religious nationalisms, including religious Zionism and Hindu nationalism, have become much stronger in the past two decades. Similarly, movements that are not nationalist but evince a reaction against one's own national government and culture – considering these as immoral and hostile to true religion – including most Islamist movements and the American Christian Right, have been formed or greatly strengthened since the 1970s.

The rise of religious politics in very different cultures has also been furthered by the perceived failures of secular nationalism, whether in the US since the 1970s, in South Asia, or in a variety of Muslim countries. Many have been disillusioned by varieties of secularism, including secular nationalism, and also varieties of socialism since the fall of the Soviet Union. Religious politics and the role of women in it existed before the 1970s, but it became strong worldwide more recently. Religious politics appeal to women for several reasons. In most countries there are more women than men among religious observants, and this 'religiosity' carries over into religious politics, even where activists are predominantly male. Women active in religious politics mainly come from religious backgrounds, and many are glad to use new partial freedoms to express themselves in ways that include elements incorporating their beliefs and which their families and peers find acceptable.

Also, many religio-political movements are seen as providing protection to women. In the Muslim world, some movements insist on women's inheriting and managing property, as Islamic law says they should, and allow for women's education and work. Although these forms of protection are fewer than those advocated by secular liberals, this may be seen as less significant than the factors that favour women's participation in these movements. Many women find such protection more important than subordination in the ideologies of their religio-political movements. Protestant movements in Latin America, the US, and elsewhere often ask that men be faithful to their wives and families. This, to many women, is more important than the abstract question of subordination or obedience, which can often be at least partially circumvented. In the Muslim world, 'Islamic dress' is found to protect women against unwanted male advances.

Religious politics also allow women to be activists in their milieu, and to meet and act together. Mutually supportive communities are often created, while more religious or 'traditional' women might not feel comfortable in secular or feminist groupings. Women participate in general social and ideological trends of their times and the current trend in many parts of the world includes a rise in religious politics.

Class is also expressed in religious politics, including the religious politics of women. In many societies the educated elite has been attracted to secular ideas, while various popular class and more traditionally educated or less educated groups have recently tended towards religious politics. On the other hand, in the Muslim world it has often been students of science and technology who have been most sympathetic to these movements – more broadly, however, it has been mainly students from less urban and more religious backgrounds who have been sympathetic. Women as well as men from these groups tend to favour traditional-seeming ideological solutions.

Much religious politics may be seen as backlash to other trends, and such cultural reaction is significant. Everywhere old moralities have been under assault, from films and media, from the increasing market for one gender in labour migration, for sexual services, and so forth. Invoking what are seen as traditional religious moralities and standards is not a surprising reaction to this disruption, nor is the participation of many women in fighting what are seen as trends undermining the family. While the traditional family has been over-idealized in most cultural and religious ideologies, it is also true that current trends have been felt as negative by many women. In many cultures, women have seen in religious values a way to improve male behaviour in the family; this may be seen especially in US and Latin American Protestant movements.

Special features of women in religious politics

Keddie's article in the above-mentioned JWH issue accounts for different approaches to women in two types of New Religious Politics: those trying to control governments, and those stressing nationalism and territory. The former, which include most Islamist and Christian Right movements, have conservative, scripture-oriented positions on women and the family. The latter, including South Asian movements and territorial Israeli groups like Gush Emunim, are not always conservative with regard to women, and insofar as their main enemies are Muslim, may even contrast their progressivism on women to Muslim views. The article also discusses differences between cultural relativists, who hesitate to criticize other cultures, and universalists, who defend women's rights as global.

Besides common features, the role of women in contemporary religious politics has many special culture-specific aspects that are discussed in the special issue. The authors agree that gender relations are never fixed and can be renegotiated in the context of women's participation and activism, including activism in 'fundamentalist' movements. Women can renegotiate the traditional patriarchal bargain to their advantage and seek empowerment and expanded opportunities within the more socially accepted sphere of religious activism that affirms their domestic roles. While historical and contemporary religio-political movements can offer women avenues of independence and initiative and in some cases help bring about progressive social reform (as with 'Islamic feminists' in Iran), they usually involve major concessions and accommodations to a larger male-dominant, patriarchal order. Re-imagining other alternatives for women's agency and activism in society, and more particularly in politics, is perhaps the next step. ◆

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For further details, see the introduction to the issue, 'Women and Twentieth Century Religious Politics', The Journal of Women's History, *10 (Winter, 1999), ed. Nikki R. Keddie and Jasamin Rostam-Kolayi.*

Notes

1. The word 'fundamentalism' is rarely used – mainly because it is now considered pejorative and is often misleading.

Economics

ABDULLAH SAEED

Islamic Banking
Moving Towards a Pragmatic Approach?

Islamic banking has developed from its early experiments of the 1960s into a major force in the Islamic world, with assets of more than 100 billion dollars, and is still growing rapidly. Today it is not difficult to find an Islamic bank or an Islamic branch of a conventional bank in many Islamic countries. Responding to the needs of their Muslim clientele, some major Western international banks have set up their own Islamic branches as well. Even in Australia, the relatively small Muslim community has managed to set up its own financial institution. This is equally true for a number of other Western countries such as the USA.

The role of Islamic banks in the life of Muslim communities is increasingly active as more and more institutions are being established – from village banks to major international development banks. All this in competition with conventional banks but with significant cooperation with them as well. Such growth and development has not, however, had a smooth ride; the catchphrase has been 'proceed with caution'. Nevertheless, Islamic banking has moved on from its rather naïve, simplistic and moralistic models of the 1950s and 1960s, models which were solely based on Profit and Loss Sharing under the extremely risky contracts of *musharaka* (partnership) and *mudaraba* (commenda).

Approaches to Islamic banking

Three approaches to Islamic banking may be identified and placed on a continuum: idealist, pragmatic and *maslaha*[1] oriented. The idealist approach seeks to retain the 'purity' of Islamic banking by restricting it to contracts allowed under Islamic law. This was the 1950s and 1960s model. At the opposite end of the continuum are the Muslim scholars who argue that interest is not inherently evil and that the term *riba* does not include modern bank interest. This approach is the most 'liberal'; indeed, it even makes a case for there being no need for separate Islamic banks at all. Provided they adopt ethical principles, conventional banks, in their view, can provide financial services. Between these two extremes lies the pragmatic approach, which is realistic enough to see that the idealist model of Islamic banking has significant problems in terms of feasibility and practicality but, at the same time, does maintain the interpretation of *riba* as interest. The majority of Islamic bankers are pragmatists, who are prepared to balance practicalities with traditional Islamic principles.

Pragmatic adjustments

The result has been that these bankers and their *shari^{c}ah* advisers have opted for a less risky form of Profit and Loss Sharing by modifying traditional contracts, such as *mudaraba* and *musharaka*, to suit the banking needs of the late 20th century. More importantly, for the bulk of their financing and investing operations, they have opted for safer and less risky contracts such as *murabaha*, which is very similar in some respects to lending on a basis of pre-determined return. So successful has this been, that *murabaha*-type contracts now make up at least 75% of such investment operations of most Islamic banks, despite the concerns of some idealists that *murabaha* could be used as a back door to dealing on an interest basis. This is a pragmatic triumph indeed. Simultaneously, the use of the less secure contracts such as *mudaraba* and *musharaka* has been dramatically curtailed, retaining only a small share of assets on the investment side.

The pragmatists have also adjusted the concept of money, which, in the *shari^{c}ah*, is equivalent to 'coin' and a mere medium of exchange. In the *shari^{c}ah*, money cannot be sold for money, that is more for less, and it should not have a 'price'. This definition of money, espoused by the idealists, has been modified in the interests of practicality. This adjusted concept of money exists quite comfortably with notions of the value of money in relation to time, of present value being higher than future value, and of it being possible to charge a sum against time in certain types of debt.

A third pragmatic adjustment is the interpretation of *riba*. Without question the theoretical position of Islamic banking is that *riba* is equivalent to interest in all its forms: nominal or real, fixed or variable, simple or compound. Nonetheless, in Islamic banking practice, *riba* has come to be considered a 'legal' concept rather than an economic one; that is, it is seen as a contractual obligation on a borrower to pay an increase in a loan – money for money. Under this legal definition, certain contracts that allow for fixed interest are now feasible. A case in point is the *murahaba* contract. Prominent theorists of Islamic banking argue that there is no substantial difference between fixed interest and mark-up in a *murabaha* contract. The latter is considered acceptable in Islamic law, as it does not involve exchange of money for money. In strictly economic terms, however, the mark-up (profit) in *murabaha* would be equivalent to fixed interest. Similarly, the legal maxim has been relaxed, according to which 'every loan that begets an advantage is *riba*'. This is seen, for instance, in the case of inter-bank operations in which reciprocal placement of funds on an interest-free basis is made. Money is advanced by one Islamic bank for a certain period of time, on an interest-free basis, on the understanding that the other bank reciprocates at a later date, either with the same amount of funds, or with less over a shorter time.

As part of this more pragmatic orientation, the concept of paying a 'fine' is now widely accepted in Islamic banking. This occurs where a debtor defaults on a loan despite being able to repay. A fine, which can be equivalent to the normal rate of return, can be imposed on the debtor by the bank. The *shari^{c}ah* boards generally approve of this fine as compensation for the loss suffered by the lender. Similarly, variable commissions or fees are charged on certain transactions, such as purchase of traveller's cheques, and this has also become generally acceptable in the practice of Islamic banks. Another interesting development is the offering of 'prizes' to savings or current account holders in order to encourage depositors to keep their deposits with the bank.

Examples of these pragmatic adjustments are also available in the case of profit and risk. In the former, Islamic bankers do take into consideration market interest rates in calculating their profits when making financing or investment decisions. A further change is that it is now accepted in practice that time can enter into the calculation of profit, although in the literature many early jurists object to the idea of varying the amount of profit according to the time involved. As to risk, there has been somewhat of dilution of the idea that money must first be risked in order to earn a return. In Islamic banking today, there are many examples of risk-minimization: *murabaha* profit, short-term commercial *musharaka* and *mudaraba* profit, and rent-sharing arrangements.

The pragmatic approach has been successful in a number of other interesting developments in Islamic banking. Some Islamic banks have begun to use what may be termed 'cleansing' of profits earned from investing in companies which deal on a basis of interest. According to a complex formula, the *haram* share of the profit related to these companies and in which the Islamic bank has invested, is taken out before profit from a particular portfolio is finalized. Similarly, a number of Islamic banks are experimenting with the idea of 'securitization of debt' and trading in such debt, again another innovative idea. A further issue under debate is whether profit can be predetermined. If ultimately accepted, this practice will change Islamic banking dramatically, bringing a large number of contacts, which are not yet acceptable to Islamic banking, into the fold of acceptable products.

In all of this, Islamic bankers have thus been highly creative in their approach to the development of their institutions' operations. Although Islamic banking has its roots in the idealist literature, it has undergone a process of redefining the acceptable, made possible by the flexibility available in interpreting *shari^{c}ah* texts, as well as by the need to keep pace with the present global environment. What we are seeing is that the pragmatic approach has facilitated the development of a viable Islamic banking sector. However unacceptable these adjustments may be to the idealists, they have nevertheless provided Islamic banking practitioners with much needed flexibility in designing appropriate *halal* investment products for their Muslim clientele, and this is likely to continue in a more radical fashion into the future. ◆

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Notes

[1] *Maslaha* is the underlying reason or the objective of a given ruling in Islamic law; public interest.

Religious Structures

HASAN-UDDIN KHAN

Identity, Authenticity and Power: the Mosque of Hassan II

Cultural identity can be expressed in many ways; perhaps most apparent is its manifestation in architecture. The contemporary mosque as a building type not only expresses collective identity but also symbolizes piety and is emblematic of how communities present themselves to the outside world. In general, contemporary mosques from the 1950s to the 1970s revealed a concern for projecting the 'modern Muslim'. However, since the 1980s, mosques commissioned by national governments and institutions seem to be more architecturally conservative and tradition-bound, and refer to past models that are seen as manifestations of political and religious authority. A case in point is the Mosque of Hassan II in Casablanca, Morocco, completed in 1993.

King Hassan II, who ascended the throne in 1961, continuing in the line of the Alawid dynasty established in 1666, commissioned the grand complex. The King, often referred to in Morocco as *Amir Al-Moumine, le Réunificateur, le Saveur et le Réassembleur* (in the senses of 'Leader of the Faithful, the Unifier, the Saviour and the Builder'), is an active patron of the arts and seems to have been conscious of the power of buildings and places to impart a sense of stability and legitimacy. In 1968, the King announced his decision to build a grand mosque in Casablanca, the economic centre of the country, which lacked a focal monument.

It has been said that the siting of the mosque was inspired by the Quranic verse describing the Creation of the World: '-and His throne was over the waters' (Sura XI:7). Casablanca, on the sea, was also seen as having a natural advantage from which to signal the presence of Islam. This intention is clearly manifested in the form of the massive 200 metre-tall minaret, a landmark with a laser light-beam shining towards Mecca for a distance of 30 kilometres. The building itself is the largest mosque built in the modern world.[1] The issue of scale, of representation of the importance of the Kingdom and its ruler, was resolved in an equation of 'greatness equals size'.

The architectural language draws permanency and legitimacy from the great historical Moroccan mosques of the 12th century, such as the Kutubiyya in Marrakech. For the King, who is both the secular and religious head of the country, these considerations became important amidst the uncertainty of modern political circumstances.

Given this formidable assignment, the French architect Michel Pinseau had limited scope for interpretation and innovation. The complex is comprised of five main elements. The Mosque itself consists of a prayer hall which can accommodate 25,000 worshippers, areas for ablutions, thermal baths, meeting and VIP rooms, press facilities and other ancillary spaces, and the tall minaret. Next, the *madrasa* is a semicircular protrusion containing a Quranic school, a library specializing in Islamic sciences, and other conference and audio-visual spaces. A third element is the Public Library and Museum, composed of two symmetrically arranged separate buildings along the main access plaza. The esplanade itself, a huge open space covering some 30,000 square metres and surrounded by columns, is an area that can be used as an extension of the prayer hall to accommodate over 80,000 people. The fifth element is that of transport facilities, with an underground road and parking spaces for 1,100 vehicles and 40 large coaches.

Hassan II Mosque by the sea. The plaza with the museum and library are in the foreground with the mosque and madrasa complex in the background.

PHOTO: HASAN-UDDIN KHAN AND THE AGA KHAN AWARD FOR ARCHITECTURE

The building, following the styling of the historical Moroccan mosques, is far larger in scale and even richer in the use of materials and detailing. In plan, the complex is reminiscent of a basilica in that the narrow end of the rectangular prayer hall (200 x 100m.) is adjacent to the *qibla* wall, instead of the customary wider side allowing for the maximum number of worshippers to be aligned together facing Mecca. A huge retractable roof covers the centre of the prayer hall to form an internal 'courtyard' when it is opened. The hall itself rises from a height of 27 metres to 65 metres above the floor. Women's galleries occupy mezzanine floors along each side of the main hall with direct access from the ablution facilities. The ablution chambers below the prayer hall present a forest of columns and fountains, the most elaborate facilities of their kind anywhere in the world. In addition, there are *hammams* and a heated pool that may well conjure up images in the Orientalist paintings of Ingrès or Gérôme. The sumptuousness of the interiors takes traditional Moroccan craftsmanship and ornamentation to new heights and the beige marble, green tile work, copper and brass doors, and traditional green roofs of the exterior help unify the grand complex.

The project was financed mainly through the subscriptions of about 13 million people contributing approximately US 400 million. Taxes and contributions from individuals (almost mandatory for government employees), corporations and the royal treasury made up the rest of the funds. Official figures published at the time of the opening put the cost at US 700 million, but it appears that the real cost may have been about US1 billion. In 1995, another appeal through the media was made, this time for funds to maintain and operate the complex.

After seven years in construction, the building was finally inaugurated in August 1993, on the eleventh day of the month of Rabiᶜ al-Awwal (the eve of the anniversary of the Prophet Mohammed's birth) in the year 1414 AH. This was exactly four hundred years after al-Mansur inaugurated his Baadi Palace in Marrakech. The anthropologist Elaine Combs-Schilling pointed out the similarity in the way these ceremonies were conducted. She notes: 'The significance of such a gesture is not accidental. The ceremony itself, almost identical in content and form to the one centuries earlier, reaffirms nationhood and the King's secular and religious roles. The prayer hall is full to capacity; the King and his cortege enter watched by his subjects, presidents and diplomats from around the world, and some one thousand media people. The candle-lit procession, the prayers led by the King, and the incantation of paeans of praise to the Prophet by the three winners of a poetry competition culminate in a new symbolic event. The King asks the female winner of the fourth award to read her poem – probably unprecedented in a mosque – and the ceremony closes with this reading.'[2]

The values that the monarch stands for, both as Guardian of the Faith and father of his people, are reaffirmed by these symbolic acts and by the architecture of the building. It is the same idea that was manifested in the Shahanshah Aryamehr's (Shah Reza Pahlavi's) celebration of the 2,500th anniversary of the founding of the Persian Empire, held in historic Persepolis in October 1971, televised to an audience of millions in Iran and throughout the world. In the 20th century, such acts of national reaffirmation are extended into the international arena, aided by mass communication technologies and the media.

The use of architecture to represent power within one's own state has a long history. However, it should be noted that, in Islam, the building of a mosque is an act of piety. Even when an individual builds a mosque it does not belong to that person but to everyone – in reality often to the State or to a *waqf* (endowment or trust). The action of King Hassan blurs the line between individual and state patronage, but the operation of the mosque speaks somewhat more strongly of state influence. The status of this building brings it close to being a national mosque. Because of its importance, it has not one but two imams. Nominations to these positions are confirmed by the King. This has become customary in Morocco, as well as in some other countries, and can be viewed as a form of political control. It should be noted that in some places the mosque has been used by opposition groups as a 'refuge, lair and a springboard' (to use one of Mohammad Arkoun's phrases)[3] for political activities, something which may well have been observed by the astute monarch in Morocco. The evidence of state control of the mosque is not to belittle the genuineness of the motivation to build the mosque, but it does illustrate the issue of the use of architecture to represent 'authenticity' of culture, and to express the authority and legitimacy of the State. ◆

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Notes

1. For a more detailed description of the Hassan II Mosque, see Renata Holod and Hasan-Uddin Khan's *The Mosque and the Modern World* (London: 1997), pp. 56-61.
2. I am indebted to Elaine Combs-Schilling for her interpretation of the opening ceremony of the mosque. See her book, *Sacred Performances: Islam, Sexuality, and Sacrifice* (pp. 157-174) and 'Casablanca 1993: Negotiating Gender and Nation in Performative Space' in *Journal of Ritual Studies* 10 (Summer 1996), pp. 3-35.
3. Mohammad Arkoun, 'The Metamorphosis of the Sacred', in Martin Frishman and Hasan-Uddin Khan (eds.), *The Mosque* (London: 1995), pp. 268-272.

Religious Structures

SHARIFAH ZALEHA

Surau and Mosques in Malaysia

One major issue in the current programme of Islamization in Malaysia is the construction of Islamic institutional infrastructures in new growth centres. In Bandar Baru Bangi, a new town close to Kuala Lumpur, both the State and its Muslim residents address the issue by building mosques and *surau* (communal prayer places). Outstanding as an Islamic symbol and sanctuary in the town is not a mosque, but rather a *surau* that is endowed with vast human and financial resources mobilized through grassroots operations, upon which it continues to function. The growth of mosques and *surau*, and differences in their identities in Bandar Baru Bangi, may not represent typical trends in Malaysia, but they do reveal the on-going competition between State and society to promote the Islamization cause.

Urbanization that took place in Malaysia soon after the country achieved independence in 1957 was associated with the development of new growth centres where industrial villages, administrative centres and housing units were to be built. Bandar Baru Bangi is one of these centres. It is located in the district of Hulu Langat in the state of Selangor and is about 25 kilometres from Kuala Lumpur. Bandar Baru Bangi was developed in stages starting in 1977. The land on which it grew was originally covered with secondary jungle and oil palm plantations. These were gradually cleared to make way for houses, shops, factories, a shopping complex, offices and a golf course. The population of the town now stands at approximately 40,000. Malays make up 85 percent of the total population and belong to the professional, managerial, administrative, technical and sales categories of occupation.

When Bandar Baru Bangi was being developed, Islamic fundamentalism (or *dakwah*) was on the rise in Malaysia. Close to the town was Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), one of the hotbeds of *dakwah* movements. There student associations were influenced by the reform ideas of the Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia (led then by Anwar Ibrahim), the Islamic Representative Group, and the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party (PAS). The associations regularly organized socio-religious activities to increase awareness amongst students of the central role of Islam in society. Likewise, lecturers arranged for seminars calling for the Islamization of knowledge. UKM thus served as the fount of Islamic dynamism from which the first group of Bandar Baru Bangi residents, who moved into the town in 1978, drew ideas and guidelines to help them organize their religious life in the evolving new community.

Leading them in the process were several lecturers and administrative officials of UKM, who were deeply committed to actualizing the fundamentalists' call for Muslims to reach back to Islamic history and teachings for alternative ideology and practical solutions to help counter the secularizing influences of the West. They accomplished this by mobilizing economic resources from within and outside Bandar Baru Bangi to construct *surau* in the few neighbourhoods that had developed in Section 1 of the town.

Organization and identities

A *surau* is actually a place for prayer. Irrespective of its size, state authorization is required for its establishment. The first of these, Surau Al-Umm, was created in 1979. It was originally a room in a semi-detached house that belonged to the state agency that developed the town. A few years later, the residents collectively purchased the house and turned it into a *surau*. Later, Surau An-Nur was built in another neighbourhood in the same section, followed soon after by Surau Damai in Section 2. As Bandar Baru Bangi grew in size and population, more *surau* were built. This was generally done upon the initiative of the members of a particular neighbourhood. To date the town has 12 *surau*, six of which are found in Section 1 and all of which are administered by a community-elected committee of volunteers.

Bandar Baru Bangi is also served by two mosques: the UKM Mosque and the Masjid Jamek Bandar Baru Bangi. Both owe their existence to the State. The UKM mosque was built in 1982 and functions as an ancillary of the university. Mosques constructed in the university actually represent a modern phenomenon very much in line with the State's Islamization policy. Being part of UKM, the management of the mosque is entrusted to a special unit in the office of the chancellery. This unit is manned by a few officials who work at UKM and is therefore identified with the university bureaucracy. For religious matters, the unit relies on lecturers of the Faculty of Islamic Studies.

The state mosque is headed by a professional *imam*, who is assisted by the *nazir* (supervisor), *bilal* and *siak* (caretaker). All four mosque officials are appointed by the Selangor Department of Religious Affairs (Jabatan Agama Islam Selangor, JAIS) and receive pay from the government. Helping to link the mosque and the community is the mosque committee, comprised of ten people. In theory, members of the mosque committee are elected by the community. However, in practice, JAIS 'appoints' them based on the recommendations of the *imam*. Thus the administrators of the state mosque are identified with the state religious bureaucracy where all details concerning sermons, types of mission work and categories of preachers are handled by administrators and clerks responsible to the government.

Surau An-Nur

A *surau* or a mosque is generally thought of as a place for obligatory prayer and other religious assemblies. However, in the context of current Islamization in Malaysia, both institutions have the additional responsibility of doing mission work (*dakwah*) in view of heightening the people's consciousness of the relevance of Islam in modern times. Thus the ability of a *surau* or a mosque to organize a range of socio-religious activities for this purpose greatly affects its identity, character and status as an Islamic sanctuary. In this regard, the earlier mentioned Surau An-Nur stands out. Regarded as the most active religious institution in Bandar Baru Bangi, this *surau* regularly runs Quran and *tafsir* classes for men and women, conducts *tahlil* sessions and systematically schedules religious talks on a range of topics that deal with spiritual matters and current social problems. These talks are delivered by preachers with outstanding Islamic credentials, some of whom make allusions to issues of social justice and truths, sometimes with stark candidness. The *surau* too is able to garner large amounts of donations sufficient for setting up its own foundation to provide financial assistance to needy students and the poor. Because of its increasing popularity, Surau An-Nur has been recently enlarged to accommodate the hundreds arriving from within and outside Bandar Baru Bangi to perform the Friday noon prayer and participate in its activities.

UKM Mosque ▶

PHOTO: SHARIFA ZALEHA

Surau An-Nur's prominence may be attributed to three factors. First is its location in the elite section of Bandar Baru Bangi whose residents are generally economically well endowed and who donate generously to the *surau*. Second is the leadership and patronage of Ustaz Harun Din, a highly esteemed *ulamak* in Malaysia, that the *surau* enjoys until today. A former professor at the Faculty of Islamic Studies, UKM, Ustaz Harun Din played a crucial role, especially in the early years of the *surau*, in helping members of the neighbourhood to run the *surau* and by networking with other *ulamak* and Islamic organizations. Thirdly, there is a high level of religious sentiment sustained by the people living in that neighbourhood. Most of these belong to the generation of Malays who were exposed to the Islamic fundamentalist currents of the 1970s and early 1980s. Imbued with a high level of religious commitment, they dedicate themselves to making Surau An-Nur the focal point of their own religious life. Furthermore, many of them work at UKM and can therefore easily cooperate on religious matters.

The other eleven *surau* are pale by comparison to Surau An-Nur. Many do not organize religious talks on a regular basis and a few function as arenas for individuals to compete for status. As such, they do not attract many people and only come to life during Islamic festivities.

Both UKM and the state mosques have the resources to conduct Quran classes and arrange for preachers to provide religious talks. Between the two, the latter attract less attention. In the popular view, the state mosque exists for the use of state agents to elaborate Islamic orthodox teachings and legitimize government acts and policies. Being a state agent, the *imam* imparts comments on controversial religious or political issues, such as the Anwar Ibrahim case, through indirect references. Furthermore, he plays up the social distance between himself and members of the congregation. In contrast, the UKM mosque is not viewed as a mouthpiece of the State. Mission work through sermons and religious talks attract large audiences, but these activities do not provide sufficient opportunity for groups to consolidate and help generate a vibrant religious situation in and around the mosque.

In conclusion, suffice it is to say that mosques and *surau* are the legitimate institutions of religious expression in the urban setting in present-day Malaysia. *Surau* construction undoubtedly represents grassroots operations to either support or compete with state structures, i.e. the mosques. However, what makes one *surau* more prominent than another depends to a great extent on its resources, both human and financial. The success of Surau An-Nur in becoming the religious hub of the town, is facilitated by some peculiarities of the neighbourhood within which it is located, in particular the charisma of Ustaz Harun Din and the sustained high level of religious sentiment among the residents.

The Bandar Baru Bangi experience also shows that the autonomy and scope of locally initiated religious institutions do not shrink in the face of an expanding state apparatus. Although a *surau* cannot exist without authorization from the Department of Religious Affairs, it does not have to depend on the latter to operate. Thus a *surau* such as that of An-Nur, when sufficiently developed in terms of size, popularity, funding, goals and contacts, has the potential to eclipse a mosque. ◆

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Material Culture

ROGIER BEDAUX

Protecting Mali's Cultural Heritage

Mali is a country of rich history and diverse culture. Its cultural heritage is, however, threatened by both pillage and illicit trade. Looting has dramatically increased in recent years, especially in the Inner Delta of the Niger and the Dogon country, and has obliged the Malian authorities to take measures to counteract this negative development.

The fight against the loss of cultural heritage in Mali has been reinforced by the enhancement of legislation aimed at regulating archaeological excavations and prohibiting unauthorized excavations. It also forbids the illicit export of cultural heritage. But a further step at the grassroots level has also been taken by creating awareness of the importance of protecting Malian cultural heritage in the local population. This is done through radio and television broadcasts, exhibitions, and articles in magazines and newspapers. The establishment of 'Cultural Missions' in the cities of Djenné, Tombouctou and Bandiagara, which figure on UNESCO's List of World Heritage Monuments, formally reinforced this. However, regional and international cooperation, which is currently being sought, is still somewhat wanting. A joint-programme between Mali and the Netherlands has given rise to several projects for conserving and protecting Malian cultural heritage, one of which concerns one of the major old centres of West-African Islam.

Architectural heritage management

The city of Djenné is one of the oldest known cities in West Africa. Archaeological traces of early settlement, dating from the 3rd century BC, have been found in the city. Urbanization was well developed by the 10th century and the region must have been densely inhabited. Some 79 sites within a radius of 4 km around Djenné appear to have been inhabited during this period. Evidence for extensive settlement is indicated by one of the largest mounds in the region, the site of Djenné-Djeno, measuring more than 33 hectares. Due to the advantage of its location in the fertile Inner-Niger Delta, which ensured rich pastures, fertile soils, and fish and game in abundance, Djenné developed into a flourishing commercial centre, initially mostly interregional, later also becoming a post on the long-distance trade routes across the Sahara.

The Inner Niger Delta played a major role in the history of West Africa and was closely related to the development of such medieval empires as Ghana/Wagadu, Mali, and Songay. Many people were attracted to this fertile region bordering on the Sahara, the Marka/Songay (urban merchants), Bozo (fishermen and masons), Fulani (herdsmen) and Bamanan (agriculturists) forming the majority. Their descendants can still be seen in Djenné and together with the merchants from the North and the South determined its real cosmopolitan character. To date, the town has a population of some 12,000 inhabitants.

Nowadays, only the monumental mud architecture reminds us of Djenné's former grandeur. The famous mud-brick architecture, which made the reputation of Djenné, is threatened however, not by the fragile nature of the material, but by the economic recession preventing the inhabitants to maintain their houses and by social transformations endangering the traditional house structure. This also incited UNESCO in 1988 to accept both the city itself and the archaeological sites around it as a World Monument.

The architecture of the monumental two-storied mud buildings with their decorated façades is world famous. The mosque, for example, measuring 75 square metres, is the world's largest mud construction. It dates from 1906-1907 and was built on the ruins of the first mosque, according to oral tradition built in the 13th century. The ruins of this first mosque can still be seen in photographs from 1893. Archaeological excavations yielded evidence of the use of mud bricks as early as the 8th to 9th centuries, and of rectangular house plans dating back to the 11th and 12th centuries. However, the exact age of the existing houses is difficult to ascertain. All we know for sure is that some of them figure in photographs from as early as 1893 onwards. Since these houses then already show signs of a certain age, it may be estimated that they could at least be some 200 years old.

Ever since the 1970s, the wide possibilities of research in Djenné attracted many researchers. An exhibition on Djenné, based on this multidisciplinary research and complemented with a catalogue, first opened in Leiden (the Netherlands) in 1994 and was later also shown at Bamako and Djenné itself. Presenting a vivid image of this multi-ethnic city, a wide audience became aware of the disastrous situation of its architecture. Consequently, in 1995, the Dutch Embassy at Bamako took the initiative and asked the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde (Leiden) to draw up a plan for the restoration of the city. A joint Malian-Dutch mission went to Djenné to make an assessment of the actual situation. It then appeared that more than 30% of the monumental buildings that had been visited by Dutch researchers in 1984 had disappeared and those houses still extant were in a dramatically poor state of conservation.

A plan for the restoration of the city, submitted to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, met with the favourable decision to subsidize the project (for the period of 1996 to 2003), which concentrates on the restoration of some 168 monumental buildings in the city of Djenné (out of a total of some 1,850). It also focuses on setting up an organization to assure safe management of the cultural heritage. The project is currently being executed by the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde, in close cooperation with the Musée National du Mali in Bamako, and the Mission Culturelle de Djenné.

Local masons in Djenné – often of Bozo ethnic origin – carry out the restoration work, along with blacksmiths, carpenters (for making doors and windows) and potters (for the earthenware windows and drainpipes). Local masonry techniques and available materials are used. The quality of the mud-brick architecture in Djenné is directly linked to the craftsmanship of the masons, who are formally organized in a kind of guild structure, the *barey-ton*, which is unique in Africa and has its origins probably in the 15th century. It is through this organization that the craftsmanship, which guarantees the high quality masonry of the houses in Djenné, has been passed on from generation to generation. The internal organization of the *barey ton* is strictly hierarchical, involving apprentices, young masons and master masons. The latter are expert craftsmen and possess the necessary magical knowledge. Each family has a long-established relationship with a specific mason's family, in which magic also plays an important role. In the project, naturally, this connection between houses and specific masons is duly respected.

Restoration ethics

Because Djenné has been registered as a World Monument, the project has adopted certain principles of restoration, based on the International Venice Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites. These principles have been adapted conform to local circumstances. Even for World Monuments, there are no absolute and universally accepted restoration principles. The project tries to retain the atmosphere of the city based on its location, with its typical structure of narrow streets and small squares and, especially, the monumental mud-brick houses with decorated façades plastered by hand. This ensemble must survive. For this reason a number of 168 mostly monumental houses were selected for restoration, sometimes bordering a street or square, sometimes standing by themselves, spread all over the city and in various states of deterioration. This selection is primarily based on architectural criteria. In the project now being carried out, the architecture and the city's atmosphere of around the turn of the century are taken as an arbitrary model for the restoration. It is from this period, the beginning of French colonization, that the oldest written records and illustrations survive.

Before any intervention, careful recording and research is necessary. The documentation consists of: the already existing plans and photographs; drawings and photographs of the actual condition; plans for the restoration with a detailed description of the work to be carried out, a calculation of the quantity and quality of the required materials, and a tender. The restoration plans are made by a Malian architect and submitted to an international committee. The principle to retain as much of the original parts of any monument as possible is of paramount importance in making of decisions. The elaborate documentation ensures that all restoration work is more or less reversible. It will also permit a reasonable control, which was formerly virtually impossible.

We hope that this project will give rise to a larger interest in the city of Djenné and will contribute to the conservation of one of the most beautiful cities of Mali. This project is further expected to reaffirm the still often overlooked fact that Africa has indeed, a rich history and that its traces must be respected. ◆

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Rain damages the vulnerable mud architecture

PHOTO: MARTIN STOOP

Religious Structures

NELIDA FUCCARO

Islam and Urban Space: **Ma'tams in Bahrain** before Oil

For centuries Islam has provided a set of cultural norms, principles of social organization, legal prescriptions and often instruments of political mobilization for many urban communities. It has therefore contributed substantially to the articulation of urban environments. However, Islam has not shaped clearly identifiable urban systems, at least in the sense suggested by the notion of the 'Islamic' city which has fuelled much academic debate in the past decades.[1] As this notion is representative of an ideal type, it clearly implies the existence of a somewhat 'monolithic' Islam. In reality Islam has been extremely diverse both in time and space. Furthermore, it is essential to recognize that there is a striking variety of political, social and cultural systems within which its different manifestations have operated as forces of urban development.

In pre-oil Bahrain, the articulation of urban space was primarily the result of the close interaction between tribal solidarities, mercantile values and a tradition of cosmopolitanism which throughout history shaped a multi-cultural social fabric. Tribal solidarities were undoubtedly major forces in defining the political dynamics of the Gulf region. From the late 18th century, the political ascendancy of tribal groups belonging to the *ᶜUtub* confederation in the coastal areas of the Gulf led to the imposition of tribal rule over Bahrain. The new tribal elites, and in particular the al-Khalifa family, were able to maintain their political legitimacy by exerting effective control over a mercantile economy which was based in urban areas. In the 19th and early 20th centuries much of the urban expansion that occurred in Bahrain resulted from the economic forces unleashed by the pearl boom. In the city of Manama particularly, a mercantile settlement whose population by 1905 was approximately 60% Shi'i, the economic and political developments of the period actively encouraged urban growth. In the course of the 19th century, Manama became the most important market centre of the island and the focus of British imperial interests in the Gulf region.

The role played by Islam in the expansion of Manama can only be understood in the context of the meaning assumed by sectarian identities within the specific framework of the Bahraini polity. The authority of the new tribal rulers was identified with Sunni Islam which, in the eyes of large sections of the local Shi'i population, became the religion of oppression and of 'unjust' tribal rule. Accordingly, Shi'ism became an instrument of resistance to the political hegemony of the tribal elites, although especially urban communities displayed a remarkable degree of adaptation to new political and economic realities. From the late 19th century, the articulation of Shi'i networks which centred upon *ma'tams* (funeral houses) played a central role in the expansion of a number of Manama's residential areas. The history of *ma'tams* highlights the ways in which religious solidarities, as they structured an urban institution, were major determinants in the shaping of urban space. It also shows the extent to which these solidarities were closely connected to the definition of social relations and power structures in the specific urban milieu of Manama.

Manama's funeral houses

In contemporary Bahrain the word *ma'tam* can refer to a specialized building and to a congregation of people. In both capacities, funeral houses have been central to the definition of Shi'i identity and still represent the privileged relationship which links the local Shi'i community to Imam Husayn. *Ma'tams* are multi-functional organizations which, similar to the Iranian *hoseyniyyes*, are the venues for the celebration of Ashura, a series of ritual performances which commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Husayn and for the dissemination of Shi'i teachings and traditions. *Ma'tams* are also informal places of leisure and socialization where non-Shi'i are usually welcome. Until the end of the 19th century, *ma'tams* were spontaneous gatherings which met regularly in private houses, both in rural and urban areas. After the 1890s the sudden proliferation of specialized *ma'tam* buildings in many residential areas of Manama allowed many Shi'i communities to acquire new social and political visibility. Since then *ma'tam* buildings have become strongly identified with the urban landscape as it seems that no 'official' *ma'tams* were established outside Manama until the 1950s. The establishment of 'official' funeral houses coincided with the beginning of the public celebration of Ashura, especially with the performance of open air processions which in the following decades became an important outlet for the political grievances of Shi'i urban groups.

Further, and more importantly for the transformations which affected Manama's urban space in this period, *ma'tams* became the architectural sign of the Shi'is' 'love for Husayn'. As such, they were particularly instrumental in the consolidation of immigrant groups within expanding Shi'i neighbourhoods. For instance, the *ma'tam al-ᶜAjam al-Kabir*, established in 1892, functioned as the focal point for the Persian community of Manama, many of whose members had arrived in the city from southern Iran after the 1850s. This funeral house, which was located at the edge of the urban settlement in a sparsely populated area known as Mushbir, functioned as the core for the expansion of what in later years became one of the Persian quarters of Manama. Similarly, the emergence of the *ma'tam al-Ahsa' iyyin* in 1895 in the Mukharaqa district defined a new urban identity for many Shi'i immigrants from al-Hasa, a coastal region located in the eastern province of Saudi Arabia.[2] In this period many *ma'tam* congregations were made 'official' by the replacement of mud and reed huts, where believers occasionally met, with masonry buildings. In 19th century Bahrain, this use of urban space indicates a transformation of the built environment that increasingly differentiated rural areas from expanding urban settlements. The establishment of permanent masonry buildings for *ma'tam* purposes, and indeed their maintenance, required substantial capital. Thus the *ma'tam* boom of the 1890s has to be considered in the light of the emergence of a powerful Shi'i mercantile elite which benefited from the pearl boom of the late 19th century and from increasing British protection. Their direct association with the 'official' *ma'tams* was an indication of religious piety but it increasingly became a sign of wealth and social prestige.

Urban forms and Sunni authority

The spatial distribution of *ma'tam* buildings in Manama would indicate that Shi'i places of worship remained confined to the residential areas of the city. The suq, which was the political and economic centre of Manama, and the largest area of public utility, was in fact a Sunni-controlled space, as indicated by the fact that the majority of warehouses and commercial premises were either owned by tribal Sunnis or more often endowed as Sunni *waqfs*. Although many Shi'i entrepreneurs who supported *ma'tams* in the residential areas of the city operated from the suq, they were generally unable to acquire property there. Their wealth was usually invested in urban neighbourhoods where houses and shops in particular were often registered as Shi'i *waqfs* for the benefit of specific funeral houses. A useful comparison can be made with many Iranian cities where *hoseyniyyes*, the local counterparts of the Bahraini *ma'tams*, were integrated in large commercial and religious complexes and directly supported by shops located in central bazaars.[3] In Manama, the tribal government's concern with the control of revenue from trade clearly affected the development of the suq and determined the peripheral location of Shi'i places of worship in relation to the political and economic cores of the city. Although the rulers made extensive use of the only Sunni religious court of Bahrain, which was strategically located in Manama, they were generally reluctant to enforce an official Sunni tradition. Rather, they extensively relied on tribal custom. In the first decades of the 20th century, the only large Sunni mosque that was visible in the urban texture of Manama was located in a residential area called Jamiᶜ. The fact that the quarter was named after the mosque is a clear indication of the extent to which the presence of large places of worship in the city was unusual.

Islam was undoubtedly a very important dimension in the urban development of Manama, a city which was controlled by Sunni rulers but whose socio-religious structure was predominantly Shi'i. However, as the case of the *ma'tams* shows, sectarian identities alone cannot explain the development of specific urban forms unless these are contextualized in the wider political and socio-economic setting. ◆

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Notes

1. As seminal contributions see: Abu-Lughod, Janet (1987), 'The Islamic City – Historic Myth, Islamic Essence, and Contemporary Relevance', *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, pp.155-176; Eickelman, Dale (1976), 'Is there an Islamic City? The Making of a Quarter in a Moroccan Town', *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, pp. 274-294.
2. Sayf, ᶜAbdallah (1995), *al-Ma'tam fil Bahrayn*. Manama.
3. As an example see: Bonine, Michael (1987), 'Islam and Commerce: Waqf and the Bazaar of Yazd, Iran', *Erdkunde*, pp.182-196.

Urban Transformation

JEAN-PAUL LOUBES

Transformation of the **Hui district in Xi'an**

Located in a metropolitan area of Xi'an, ancient capital of several majors dynasties in China, is the famous Great Mosque. This edifice, in the heart of the Hui district, provides one of the more important tourist sites of Xi'an. The resulting wealth of the district, also adding to the economic vitality generated through commerce, lies at the origin of a remarkable architectural transformation. This study focuses on the Hui people, whose centuries-old Muslim identity has recently come to express itself through contemporary vernacular architecture.

The great economic power of the Hui Muslims, when considered in conjunction with the fact that there is a total lack of building regulations (uniquely within the Hui district), is conducive to the development of an uncontrolled transformation of the 'urban form'. Observing this local 'outlaw' situation offers an excellent context in which to analyse what is called 'contemporary vernacular architecture'. This term consists in two parts: Vernacular architecture refers to architectural work by the local people, without any institutional or professional help. The process is based on the cultural background of the residents, as well as their technical and economic resources. 'Contemporary' refers to the architecture of today, made of modern material and techniques such as reinforced concrete, glazed tiles, modern metal windows, and includes the invention of new solutions for plan and design, in other words, new types of houses.

▶ **Transformation of urban form. The beginning of the transformation on the narrow parcel network. Some 'Chinese' houses still remain between the new houses.**

PHOTO: JEAN-PAUL LOUBES

The beginning of transformation

From the eighties, a great change occurred in the 'urban form' of the famous Drum Tower (emblematic monument of the Hui district) area. This change was relatively progressive at the outset (1985-90), achieving greater momentum with the strong economic development in China from 1990 onwards. It is in this last decade that one can speak of a 'new urban form'. This form is mainly characterized by three, four or five-storey houses and flat roofs with accessible terraces. The district now has many common traits with medinas – in the habitual typology of urban form.

The transformation can be observed at two levels: urban structure and public space; and architectural form (the emergence of a new architectural type and new terminology). The new type of architecture is based on the inhabitants' large capacity to invest, which has lead to the transformation of the ancient traditional Chinese town. This latter term signifies the regular city inherited from the ancient urban network of structures consisting in low courtyard houses (one or two floors), with tiled Chinese roofs. These Hui houses, which once composed the urban fabric of the district, were identical to the Chinese houses (often cited in literature as 'traditional house' from the North of China). That is to say, they expressed the Chinese ethnic identity rather than the Muslim religious identity of the Hui.

The ancient urban network maintained a plot of greenery in the empty spaces, such as in the main courtyards, back yards with gardens, and public spaces with trees lined along the streets. The present rebuilding process in this area has saturated these former empty spaces by, for example, filling up the courtyard with additional constructions. Complete saturation of the urban network was attained at the end of the seventies, the first observable consequence of the lack of space. Of course this did not concern only the Muslim district, but rather all the Xi'an districts inside the perimeters of the city wall and all Chinese cities during this period. The great economic vitality of the Hui, however, made the transformation more rapid and precipitated the move to yet another phase: substitution of the ancient courtyard house by an altogether new type of dwelling. The narrow parcel of land of the former is taken up and used to build the latter. From a professional point of view (of an architect or an urban planner), this narrow patch is generally thought too narrow to be used. If the new rebuilt district needs three, four or five-storey houses in order to accommodate increased density, an architect would usually suggest grouping several parcels together, allowing for more efficient use of the land and a more rational plan of housing. With the urgency of housing problems and, as mentioned before, the fact that there is no housing regulation, the inhabitants simply cannot wait for a solution. They thus take matters into their own hands.

The narrowness of the parcel necessitates new organization of space, new geometry for the rooms with new proportions which professionals such as architects could never normally accept. The constraints of shared property and local agreements amongst neighbours are at the origin of what we call 'invention', which in this case can be considered a successful process of densification. With three, four or five-storey houses, accommodation of a higher population density is obtainable. But the challenge for the authorities in charge of rehabilitation or rebuilding programmes is to make it sustainable.

Accessible terraced roofs characterize the new architecture, with annexes like storage space, cellars, and shelters for animals. Certain prior uses of the courtyards are now found on the terraces. The new multi-storeyed house is organized around a patio, smaller than the ancient courtyard and used mainly to provide light and to distribute the various flats. The level of sanitation equipment has increased considerably. Sanitary installations and toilets appear on the first floor with a water point at each level.

The turning point

By 1997, 60 to 70% of the district area was estimated to have been transformed according to new vernacular architectural design. Though not respecting the habitual architectural figures, the new architectural type offers solutions where the authorities in charge of urban issues fail to do so. But this is not all.

Until recently, the Hui people were wary of expressing their Muslim identity by way of architecture. One could not observe differences between Han houses and Hui houses. The revival of pilgrimages to Mecca, authorized since the eighties, and the increased contacts of the Hui with other Muslims in the world, has opened them up to new architectural references. The Hui have now experienced the Arabo-Islamic architecture found in many countries of the East. They take these references and imitate the figures. After centuries of simply producing typically Chinese architecture, the Hui architecture now emphasizes differentiation. In this way, the Hui affirm their identity and reinforce their distinct characteristics.

The current period represents a fundamental turning point in the history of Hui architecture, and is not limited to housing. In several mosques, domes and cupolas are erected instead of the tiled roofs of ancient Hui mosques. A progressive transformation of these mosques has occurred. In the past, they were organized according to norms of the Chinese temple. There is a new urban scenery: arches incorporated in the design of windows and doors, vaults, and cupolas. These signs clearly manifest that one is in an Islamic space.

It seems paradoxical that inside of this Muslim district of Xi'an, all Chinese authority in the field of urban regulation and control is disappearing. Perhaps the delicate situation between Hui and Chinese municipal authorities explains the fact that regulation stops at the limits of the district. Building licences do not exist in this zone and there is no control over, or even knowledge of, how many square metres are built each year. Such a phenomena merits further research by anthropologists and architects in terms of the anthropology of space as there are many more general questions remaining to be answered. What type of space do people create when there is no control? What patterns or foundational structures do people choose under these conditions? What is the place of architecture in (in this case Muslim) group identity? Vernacular modern architecture offers a most fertile terrain for further research into these questions, in this case concerning identity and the expression thereof through the re-forming of urban space by a Muslim minority group. ✦

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Urban Transformation

BRIAN LARKIN

Cinema Theatres and Moral Space in Northern Nigeria

The Plaza cinema squats on the edge of the Old City of Kano, Nigeria. Outside women sell bean cakes, men hawk cassettes, cigarettes, and oranges. Buses stop and taxis unload, disgorging passengers who hurry on to catch other buses, different taxis. 'Drop me at the Plaza.' 'Meet me at the El Dorado.' These quotidian directions are uttered by urbanites who have little interest in going to the cinema but who have internalized the fact that cinema theatres, along with mosques, the post office, banks, and other institutions of the post-colony, architecturally punctuate the city. Their built forms create an abstract skeletal structure around which the city's nervous system circulates.

Cinema is one of the quintessential technologies of modernity. In the case of Kano, it is a colonial modernity, often perceived as an un-Islamic (*kafirai*) threat to local constructions of ethnicity and religion. Kano is the largest city in northern Nigeria and while its inhabitants are mainly Hausa Muslims, it contains considerable ethnic and religious diversity. To go to the cinema in Kano is to step outside of Africa, to move beyond the moral relations of an Islamic society and into the Indian, American, and Chinese realities projected on the screen. Cinema is seen as distinctively modern because of this ability to destabilize and make people, ideas and commodities mobile. Yet at the same time cinema theatres are parochial, an intimate part of urban topography that draw around them congeries of social practices that make cinema-going an event.

In 1937, the Rex opened in Kano. Before that, films had been screened in dance halls but had no purpose-built space of their own. This opening could be seen as unremarkable, the coming to prominence of an entertainment form well established elsewhere in the world. But this ignores how moments like these were foundational in the incremental enveloping of Hausa social space by a transformative colonial one. Cinema theatres were introduced to Kano as part of a much wider transformation of the colonial public sphere. Like the beer parlours, theatres, public gardens, libraries and commercial streets that proceeded them, cinema theatres created new modes of public association that challenged existing relations of space, gender and social hierarchy. The cinema theatre thus created new modes of sociability that had to be regulated – officially by the colonial administration and unofficially within local Hausa norms. [1]

The Hausa distrust of cinema was cemented when the construction of cinema-halls was mapped on to the moral geography of Kano City. After the arrival of the British in 1903, the mud-walled city of Muslim Kano was segregated from the European township and Sabon Gari, the area where the young male migrants from the Christian south were arriving in numbers. Sabon Gari was and is an area of ill repute in Hausa eyes and stands as the moral antithesis to the *birni*, the Old City, where female seclusion is maintained, prostitution and the sale of alcohol are forbidden and the values of conservative Islam upheld. The first cinema shows took place in the Sabon Gari in dance halls where men went to meet women and alcohol was sold. This is where the Rex was built and its original application included a request for an open-air bar that would promote social recreation beyond the cinematic event. Cinema in Kano quickly established a reputation as an illicit, immoral arena which respectable people should avoid. Cinema-going was regarded as *iskanci* (dissoluteness) and was (and is) associated by many Hausa with the immoral cultural complex known as *bariki*: which includes beer parlours, dance halls, certain hotels, and male and female prostitution. The mixed-sex nature of cinema theatres meant that they were also socially unacceptable for most Hausa women. Those who did attend were seen as *karuwai* (prostitutes), and their presence meant that pleasure and desire were to be found both on and off the screen, the erotic pleasures of one context feeding off the other.

Despite its popularity with certain sections of Hausa society then, the space of cinema was quickly saturated with an un-Islamic moral aura. There were questions about whether the apparatus itself contravened the Islamic prohibition on the creation of images. The early Hausa names for cinema, *majigi* (from magic) and *dodon bango* (evil spirits on the wall) carried the traces of this initial religious distrust, just as the official royal names of the theatres – Rex, Palace, and later Queens – indexed the conflation of technology with empire.

Cinema theatres took hold in the Hausa imagination as a social space and practice that enacted the moral qualities of the areas in which they were located. They mimicked, in profane form, symbolic and material qualities traditionally associated with mosques and markets. Just as the mosque traditionally marked out the physical boundaries of moral society and the creation of a public arena for ritual and economic activity, the cinema theatre came to take on this role in inverted fashion. Like the mosque, it created an arena for public association, for ritualistic attendance; it drew around it satellite enterprises selling food or books and magazines; and it constituted a landmark of the urban topography.

In Kano, mosques, cinema theatres and markets were (and are) threshold spaces that mediated the boundaries between northern Nigeria and the wider world. Through ritual practice, film and commodities, these institutions connected participants to spiritual and material realities across national boundaries. Yet while transnationally oriented, they were at the same time local. Kano cinema theatres were situated next to major markets, and these institutions shared the task of marking out the spatial borders between the different ethnicities, religions and races that were brought together (and then kept separate) in the segregated colonial city. The Rex for instance, was located on the border between the European township, Muslim Fagge and Christian Sabon Gari. Later, the Plaza was constructed just outside the mud walls of the Old City, separating Hausa from their non-Hausa fellow Muslims in Fagge; the El Duniya marked off Fagge from the European township; Queens separated Sabon Gari from Bompai, a commercial area, and so on.

The carefully fashioned balance between space and religion in Kano was threatened in 1953 when the construction of the Palace cinema next to Kurmi market in the Old City disrupted the boundaries on which the moral division of Hausa urban space was built. Before the Palace, there had never been any controversy over the siting of cinema houses. The Rex and the El Duniya were both located in non-Hausa areas and hundreds of Hausa youth left the Old City nightly to attend performances at these cinemas. In the Old City, the news that a cinema was to be opened there sparked outrage and a massive effort to prevent its construction. A fatwa was issued forbidding the showing of films because of the religious injunction on the creation of images, but was overruled when it came before the Emirate Council. Petitions were signed to entreat and pressure the Emir into halting construction. The opening of the Palace was marked by violence and the Emir had to call in the police to arrest the ringleaders. Months after the opening, the police were still arresting youths who were stoning patrons of the open-air cinema.

In 1951, while the controversy over the Palace was raging, matters worsened when the El Duniya burned down, killing 331 people out of an audience of 600. The tragedy was popularly seen as divine punishment for participation in this immoral arena and the rumour quickly spread that the film being screened contained the image of the Prophet Mohammed. The tragedy spawned many other rumours which grew so strong that the colonial Government was forced to take official notice and counter them over the radio. Twice daily for two days in four different languages, the Radio Diffusion Service announced there was no truth to stories that the people handling the bodies of El Duniya victims died, or that Native Authority warders who helped in the tragedy had all gone mad, or that prisoners from Kano prison (who helped in handling the corpses) could not eat for days afterwards.

Cinema theatres seem to have an ontological security based on the solidity of an auditorium which places audiences in familiar rows underneath the spectacle of light and dark unfolding on the screen. But in reality physical spaces have to enter and take hold in the imagination before they take on social significance. They must be made to have meaning. The conflict over the siting of the Palace cinema reveals the ways in which the public sphere of colonial modernity was contested and how control of the moral dimension of urban space was often embedded in the surface of institutions of everyday mass culture. The construction of cinemas, where they were located, the stories about cinema, the act of naming them, all contain residues of the history of colonialism and the urban experience. The physical coherence of the cinema theatre, its seeming reproducibility cross culturally, masks the dynamic process whereby this global edifice becomes localized, its bricks and mortar invested with social meaning as it is carefully placed and integrated into the colonial and postcolonial urban topography. ◆

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Notes

1. Elizabeth Thompson (*Colonial Citizens; Republican Rights; Paternal Privilege and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon*. New York: Columbia University Press. Forthcoming) and Stephen Hughes ('Policing Silent Cinema in Colonial South India.' In, *Making Meaning in Indian Cinema*. Ravi Vasudevan ed. 1999, Oxford University Press) provide illuminating accounts of the spatial and social significance of cinema theatres in French mandate Syria and colonial India respectively.

MISCELLANEOUS

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Religious Structures

RONALD A. LUKENS-BULL

The Sacred Geography of an Indonesian Islamic Modernity

In the centre of Tebu Ireng, Indonesia's most famous Islamic boarding school, is a mosque-graveyard complex which includes the grave of Hashim Ashari, the founder of Tebu Ireng who is remembered and revered as both a Sufi master and an Indonesian national hero. Around this physical and spiritual centre, a number of new spaces (schools, a telecommunications office, computer labs, and banks) have emerged. It is argued here that the very landscape of Tebu Ireng spatializes the kinds of relationships that the school's leaders argue that Muslims should have with the State, secular science, and the global market place.

In East Java, the sacred geography of a *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) serves as a model for how faith and modernity should be ordered in the lives of Indonesian Muslims. Pesantren Tebu Ireng has been for many Indonesian traditionalist Muslims a model for how to engage modernization through education. In addition to being a popular boarding school for students from throughout Indonesia, it is also a popular pilgrimage destination (over 2000 pilgrims each month). As an institution that has undergone a transformation from being a traditional centre of Islamic learning, famous for training *ulama,* to a religious boarding school primarily for junior high and high school students, Tebu Ireng's landscape reflects a tension between maintaining tradition and modernizing.

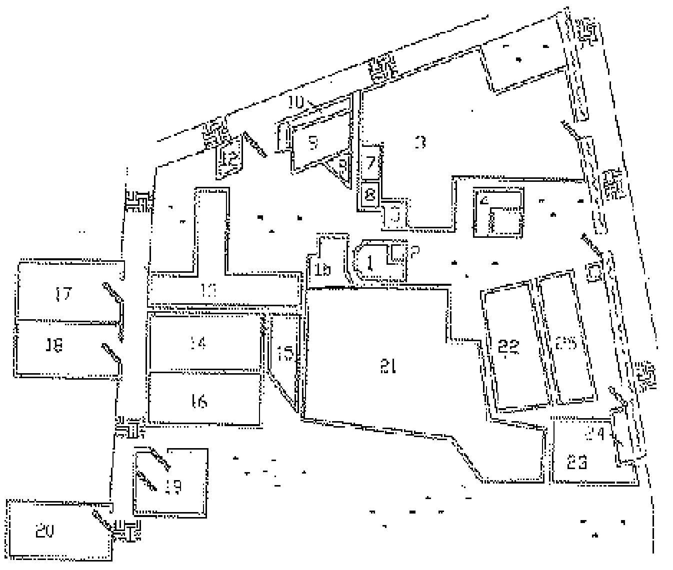
A balanced centre

The mosque and the *mahkam* (graveyard) at the centre of Tebu Ireng form the most sacred space. The landscape proudly proclaims that both normative piety (as exemplified by the mosque) and mysticism (as exemplified by the graveyard and the activities which take place there) must be part of modern life and Indonesian statehood, and it demands that they be placed firmly at the centre.

The Tebu Ireng mosque is of the distinctive Javanese three-tiered pagoda roof style. The three tiers are said to symbolize *Sharia, Tariqah*, and *Hakikat* (Law, Mysticism, and Truth). At the entrance to this mosque stands a large drum (*beduq*) used to call the faithful to prayer. Local lore holds that when Hashim Ashari built this mosque he said that, as long as it stood, students (*santri*) would find knowledge and *baraka* (blessing/power) at Tebu Ireng. Because of the special nature of the mosque, some people have been antagonistic towards the building of additional mosques for the *pesantren*'s use.

In addition to communal worship, the mosque is used for the teaching of classical Islamic texts (*ngaji*) including those of al-Ghazali. Besides regular lessons on these texts, some of the leaders hold special sessions during school breaks and the Ramadan. These special sessions are open to pilgrims and regular students alike and start after *salat Isyak*, the last prayers of the day, and continue for several hours, sometimes until midnight.

To the west of the mosque is the graveyard of Hashim Ashari and his family members. Sacred geography places this graveyard between the believers and Mecca when they pray. Because the dead are buried facing toward Mecca, the placement of the graveyard suggests that the great *kyai* (*ulama*) buried there are still leading the community in prayer. In Java, this pattern is rare for most *pesantren* leaders, but is common for great saints including the Walisonggo (the legendary nine saints who brought Islam to Java). The graveyard is an important source of *baraka* as it can linger in the body and is transmitted to the area around the tomb. Pilgrims will take a copy of the Qur'an that has been at the graves, absorbing *baraka*, and leave a replacement copy.



Grounds of Tebu Ireng

1. Mosque
1b. Graveyard
2. Student Affairs Office
3. The *kyai*'s house
4. Small store and Bank Rakyat Indonesia
5. Overnight guest room
6. Security office
7. Staff dining room
8. Stage (with TV)
9. MAK dormitory
10. General bathing room
11. The former house of Kyai Wahid
12. Skills centre
13. Tsanawiyah building
14. Cafeteria
15. Courtyard
16. Girls' *pondok*
17. Junior high school
18. Senior high school
19. Aliyah building
20. IKAHA
21. Dormitory
22. Volleyball court
23. Classrooms
24. NU-SUMMA bank
25. *Pesantren* office and library

The mosque-graveyard complex forms the physical and symbolic centre of the *pesantren*. This complex is, then, representative of traditional Javanese Islamic piety. It reflects three dimensions of piety: *Shariah*, scholarship, and mysticism. It clearly demonstrates that these three dimensions must be balanced; that one cannot exist without the other. The leaders of Tebu Ireng reject the idea that that it is possible to transcend *Shariah* by mystical practice and therefore no longer be required to uphold it. They also reject the claim that Sufism must be abandoned in order for Muslims to modernize. Finally, classical scholarship must continue to be an integral part of Muslim intellectual life.

Secular, modern space

All of Tebu Ireng proper is *wakaf* (land dedicated to religious purposes). By incorporating profane spaces within the sacred complex, the landscape of Tebu Ireng is declaring what the relationship should be between Islam and modernity. With Islam as central, Muslims may engage in all aspects of modernity including education, medicine, banking, and marketing. At Tebu Ireng, these activities are located in spaces within the orbit of the *pesantren*, depicting that such secular activities are acceptable when kept within the range of balanced Islamic practice. Surrounding the mosque-graveyard complex on three sides are student dormitories where students sleep, study for school, receive some *ngaji* lessons, and study for *ngaji*. Southeast of the mosque are the library and the fully computerized *pesantren* office. The library at Tebu Ireng subscribes to a wide range of magazines and newspapers, which the students are encouraged to read in order to develop a broad worldview. This is in sharp contrast to traditional *pesantren,* which forbid any outside reading material. The library is well used and includes an historical archive that holds the *kitab* and journals of Hashim Ashari (in Arabic) as well as copies of every research project conducted on Tebu Ireng. Another reflection of this greater openness to outside material is a television in an open-air courtyard which students are allowed to watch on Thursday nights after *tahlilan* (prayers for the dead) at the graves. Just inside the gate are interest-charging banks. These banks serve a number of functions including wire transfers and savings and loans for students, faculty, and neighbours. The presence of interest-charging banks inside a *pesantren* is a controversial move toward what some consider the dangerous side of modernity.

To the west of the main complex are the compounds for the 'secular' junior high and high schools called Sekolah Mengenah Pertama (SMP; First Middle School) and Sekolah Mengenah Atas (SMA; Upper Middle School), respectively. Outside the high school, a large sign proudly boasts that the school has biology, mathematics, and computer laboratories. Further west is the Madrasah Aliyah compound and the campus of Institut KeAgaman Hashim Ashari (IKAHA), which was originally established as Universitas Hashim Ashari (UNHASY) in the 1970s.

Tebu Ireng's involvement in state projects is partially demonstrated by its educational evolution. Next to the schools is a helicopter landing area, said to be used for visiting government dignitaries. The presence of such a facility, whether regularly used or not, makes a statement about the relationship between the *ummat* (Islamic community) and the government, as does its placement at the edge of the complex. Good relations with the government are critical but not central.

Between the schools and the mosque-graveyard complex is the general kitchen. By May 1995, all students ate here, a change that reflects aspects of modernity. In traditional *pesantren,* students cooked for themselves, or in cooperative groups; this was seen as part of the training in *kemandirian* (self-sufficiency). However, since students are no longer cooking for themselves, this part of the traditional training in *kemandirian* has been lost. Moreover, since general education has reduced the amount of time for religious education, Tebu Ireng and many other *pesantren* have sought to regain this time by preparing food for the students.

Across the road from the north gate is a new *losmen* (small simple inn). Although the building and the land are owned by Yusuf Hashim's daughter, the establishment is staffed by Tebu Ireng *santri*. This five-room inn is designed for those visitors to the *pondok* who want a more quiet and comfortable environment than the crowded free guestrooms in the *pesantren*. The inn reflects a change in *pesantren* clientele. Many who stay there are fairly wealthy parents from Jakarta, Surabaya, and other urban centres. It also reflects a trend in which the family of *kyai* run businesses that cater to the needs of *santri* and their parents. However, detractors argue that any such support services should be run by the *pesantren*'s neighbours, thus contributing to the economic development of the village.

This brief treatment of the sacred geography of Tebu Ireng, a *pesantren* in East Java, has shown how a summary of the landscape provides a model for reality. The pilgrim enters the *pesantren*, all of which is *wakaf*, and immediately sees a bank, a telecommunications office, and a library. He proceeds past student housing to the mosque-graveyard complex and performs a number of rituals there. As he leaves, he passes through the back gate and encounters government curricula schools and a helicopter-landing pad for government visitors. As he moves through this landscape, he sees a model for how a Muslim should live in the modern world. This model requires traditional piety and mysticism, as an important part of Islamic practice that includes both religious and non-religious scholarship, and good relationships with the existing government, even if it is non-Muslim. ◆

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Urban Transformation

DARWIS KHUDORI

Islamization and Secularization through Architecture: **the Case of Ismailia**

Muslim societies are confronted with the problem of conciliation between 'permanence' as taught by religious tradition and 'changes' as imposed by modernization. One facet of modernization of the Muslim world is habitat. This term encompasses all human creations and starts from the fundamental need to inhabit. This latter is manifest at various levels, ranging from house to city.

The city of Ismailia, founded in 1862 and managed by the Suez Canal Company until it was nationalized in 1956, was appropriated and managed afterwards by the Egyptian Government up to the present day. The following will look at how the Egyptians (understood as: Orientals, Arabs, Muslims, Traditionals) appropriate and develop a habitat conceived and formed by the French (understood as: Occidentals, Europeans, Christians, Moderns).

The problematic of modernization

The modernization of the Muslim world is problematic, because it is provoked, at least it was at the beginning, by an external force: modernity of the West. In the Arab World, the signs of this issue seem to be more obvious when compared to the non-Arab Muslim world. This may be explained by the former having made its civilization sacred during many centuries to such extent that all the elements of this civilization (systems of politics, economy, society, space) seem to be derived from a sacred law, namely 'Islamic'. At least in theory, all the elements of civilization coming from outside which might enter into the sacred space of Islamic civilization (*dar al-islam*) have first to be examined. If found to be suitable, they become Islamized, or at least subordinate to the sacred law of Islam; otherwise the penetration of the foreign elements would be considered as a violation/profanation/secularization of the sacred space of Islam. The problem is that the rigour of examination is not always homogenous in time and space (it depends on the existing political regime, the role of *ulema*, Islamic thought, etc.) and the elements to be examined are not always simple (political models, technical projects, economic enterprises, etc.). Moreover, there are elements which enter by force (e.g. Bonaparte's expedition in Egypt and the French occupation of Algeria) or by charm (e.g. that of Ferdinand de Lesseps and the attractive image of a civilized Europe). In this way, the guardians of the sacred space (such as the Vice-Roy Mohammed Said and the Khedive Ismail in the case of Egypt) have proven unable to resist.

The case of Ismailia can be seen in light of the choices made in response to modernization. The city of Ismailia is a 'modern' work, designed by the engineers of l'Ecole Polytechnique or l'Ecole des Ponts et Chaussées educated in the rising spirit of rationalism, positivism and functionalism at the beginning of 19th century. There is no mythical, symbolic or religious reference in its design. The city was considered as an object of design whose form was shaped according to geometric rules. The habitat was conceived according to scientific and hygienic considerations – although certain aspects of design escape the conceptual reasoning of the designers, such as the choice of the geometrical form of layout and the architectural language of buildings. Moreover, behind that spatial concept, there were utopian ideas of Modern Man and Society (inspired by the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, Saint-Simonism, and 19th century Utopians), for example: *égalité* in the spatial layout of the different quarters and the rights to different cultural expression; *liberté* in religion; and *fraternité* in such domains as those related to social work, including schools, hospitals, and religious buildings. The reaction of the Arab society of Ismailia to that modernity is particularly noteworthy.


PHOTO: DARWIS KHUDORI

1. Pre-WWII traditional house

Islamization

Modernization, as carried out by the importation of elements of foreign civilization, was felt as a threat, or at least a disturbance, to the Islamic unity of community (*umma*) and territory (*dar al-islam*). Although this was tempered for a long time by Western presence, it was expressed for the first time (in the case of Ismailia) in the epoch of Nasserism. It is under Nasser that the Egyptian Government constructed the first state mosque of Ismailia (called Al-Isma^{c}ily) in the northern part of the city. But it was under Sadat, and subsequently Mubarak, that the signs of Islamization became more obvious. The number of mosques increased rapidly and continuously, the most outstanding of which is the newest state mosque, under construction since the end of the 1980s. It stands exactly in the middle of the old city centre, which was previously dominated by a Catholic church founded by the Suez Canal Company. The size, position and name of this mosque merit attention. It is gigantic, with twin towers whose height surpasses that of the church. It is located beside Midan Jumhuriyya (previously Place Champollion), the previous living centre of Europeans. It carries the name Abu Bakr As-Siddiq (the first caliph successor of the Prophet Mohammed).

These points show the distinctive spirit of the epoch of Sadat-Mubarak, as compared to its preceding epoch. While the epoch of Nasserism is characterized by 'Arabism' (the name of the mosque refers to the ancestor of the Arabs) and 'secularity' (by maintaining the European character of urban centre), the epoch of Sadat-Mubarak is characterized by 'fundamentalism' (the name of the mosque refers to the fundamental epoch of Islamic history) and 'Islamity' (by Islamizing the European character of the urban centre).

Secularization

Modernization provokes, however, not only 'Islamization', but also at the same time, 'secularization'. Until 1930, for example, the construction of Arab houses in Ismailia still expressed more or less the traditional way of life of Arab society in accordance with religious tradition. The spatial organization shows a clear separation between the family space and that of visitors (exactly the same case as in *salamlik* and *haramlik* in traditional 'Cairene' houses influenced by the Ottoman tradition). There are always two doors: one leads to the *salon* (borrowed French term used in Arabic, referring to a normal living room) for visitors, the other leads to the *sala* or *fasaha* (a kind of central hall) which distributes the flow into the corridor and rooms belonging to family members. The *salon* is completely separated from the rest of the house; visitors have no view into the house. An interesting phenomenon in terms of formal language is at hand. The rich Arabs of Ismailia constructed houses in the same style as certain Europeans (Greeks, Italians, and French). This is mostly evident in their façades, characterized by a wooden balcony, supported by columns standing on the sidewalk, and protected by an inclined roof covered with ceramic tiles. But there is a clear difference. While the balcony of European houses is open, that of the Arabs is covered with *musharabiyya*, the famous dense wooden grill enabling inhabitants to see outside without being seen (see photo 1). Today, and mainly since the epoch of Nasserism, all those traditional rules are broken. There is no longer any clear separation between the space for visitors and the space for family. The *salon* no longer forms an autonomous space. Rather it is integrated into the house, enabling visitors to communicate, or to see, at least, the other parts of the house. The house has only one door, through which both visitors and family members enter. In terms of formal language, the balcony is still there, but is not covered: the *musharabiyya* has disappeared. From the balcony, one can interact with a passer-by on the street (see photo 2). In other words, in constructing houses, people do not refer anymore, or perhaps never have, to the orthodox teachings of Islam. They separate housing culture from religious tradition. This implies secularization, at least in the field of habitat. ◆

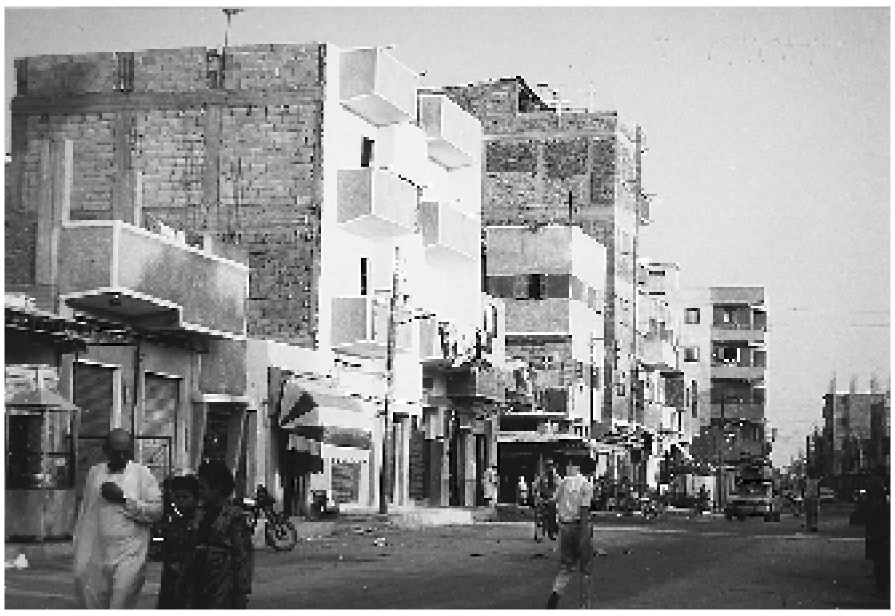
PHOTO: DARWIS KHUDORI

2. Popular developing house, post-1967 war

This article is based on the author's doctoral study on Ismailia: From French Creation to Egyptian Development, Architectural and Social Transformations in a City of the Muslim World: The Case of Ismailia, Egypt (1862-1993).

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Southeast Asia

JOSEPH ERRINGTON

Language, Religion, and Identity in Indonesia

Social, political, and economic turmoil now make it easy to forget that just two years ago Indonesia stood out amongst ethno-linguistically plural nations for its successful nationalist and developmentalist dynamic. And as recently as the mid-1990s, Indonesian modernization seemed to be unimpeded by religious tension.

President Suharto and his New Order government received international praise for economic progress among a diverse, peacefully coexisting citizenry of Muslims, Buddhists, Protestants, Catholics, and Hindus. But over the last two years bloody civil unrest, mostly along ethno-religious lines, has arisen out of conditions of economic recession and political uncertainty. Some see parallels between this unravelling of Indonesia's social fabric, and the strife in the Balkans following the end of the Cold War. With the demise of Suharto's authoritarian state, by this line of reasoning, 'age-old', 'primordial' ethno-religious hatreds have been allowed to emerge. But current events can also be plausibly read as effects and even continuations of the less praiseworthy aspects of New Order rule.

Fear and violence which now feed each other in many parts of Indonesia have clear antecedents in the massacres of hundreds of thousands which occurred in the dark days of 1965, and which underwrote the legitimacy and style of New Order rule. Some of the most vicious clashes are now occurring in areas where state transmigration and development programmes have created communal conflict across lines of ethno-religious difference; some ethnic resentments which have fuelled riot, murder, and rape, date from the colonial era, and were in turn exploited rather than effaced under New Order rule.

Text book on Hindu religion, Project for Improvement of the Level of Religious Education in Hinduism and Buddhism, Department of Religion, Republic of Indonesia

If there is more than one diagnosis of the current trouble, there is likewise more than one way to think about possible Indonesian futures. Here I consider the future of ethno-religious pluralism in Indonesia with an eye to the unobvious but constitutive role of languages in the Indonesian national project. This may seem a distanced way of addressing the kinds of atrocities which continue to be committed with impunity. Nonetheless, language is integral to the nexus of religious and national identity, which will continue to be crucial for any brighter, less bloody Indonesian future. Relying heavily but not exclusively on my own experiences in Central Java, I sketch the linguistic grounds of ethnicity, nationalism and religion in Indonesia with special attention to the ambiguities of identity which linguistic pluralism has allowed.

From its inception in 1965, the New Order government operated and legitimized itself through a far-reaching, top-down programme of national development (in Indonesian, *pembangunan nasional*). Crucial here are just two dimensions of this vast enterprise: the establishment of Indonesian (*bahasaIndonesia*) as the national language, and of monotheism as the common attribute of state-sanctioned religious identities.

Indonesian language in the Indonesian nation-state

Before independence, the language now called Indonesian counted as an artificial language for administration in the Dutch East Indies, a non-native variety of Malay which was spoken natively in several other dialects by a few million subjects in the colonies. But since 1965, knowledge and use of Indonesian across Indonesian territory has exploded. At a 1990 conference, the Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture asserted, not implausibly, that 83 percent of citizens over the age of five knew Indonesian, and that by 2010, all Indonesians would speak the national language. So Indonesian is a national language spoken natively by relatively few Indonesians. Most know it as a second language lacking primordial links to a distinct group of native speakers. This paucity of native speakers makes Indonesian less a non-native language – that is, a language native to some 'other' group in the country – than an unnative language, that is, devoid of ante-historical roots in some ethnic, religious, or territorial identity.

The New Order also zealously promoted Indonesian-ness through the five principles (the Panca Sila) which count together as a summary ideology of official Indonesian nationalism. Most relevant here is the first principle, which establishes monotheism as both a condition of citizenship and a parameter for religious tolerance. In effect, it reconciles national unity with religious pluralism through an obligation that citizens acknowledge one of five authorized, (putatively) monotheistic religions: Islam, Protestant and Catholic Christianity, Hinduism(!), and Buddhism. In fact, the vast majority of Indonesians – 90 percent of the population, or more than 180 million – count as Muslims at least for official statistical purposes. Current ethno-religious strife is throwing into relief the longstanding discrepancy between Muslims' demographic dominance in the populace on one hand, and Islam's official coequality with four religions of far fewer adherents on the other. As a result, there have been ambiguous, sometimes conflicted understandings of the rights and obligations of Indonesians as members of an Islamic community (*umat*) and citizens of a secular nation-state (*negara*). Here I am concerned with the instrumental and symbolic roles which languages have played in these vexed political and cultural arenas. Indonesian, I suggest, has helped foster official religious tolerance by assimilating religious doxa and practice, via religious language, to the institutions of the State. This is a double development that I sketch here with an eye to Islam, but also to the peculiarly Indonesian version of Hinduism which has highly Sanskritized Old Javanese as its vehicle.

Language and religious community

In his influential account of the rise of nationalism, *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson suggests that secular/national languages (like Indonesian) contrast in important ways with sacred/esoteric languages of religious discourse (like Classical Arabic or Old Javanese). He links the rise of nationalism to the spread of secular literacy in national languages. These differ crucially from what he calls 'Truth languages', which are vehicles of sacred texts and discourse, imbued with religious truth, and transmitted through restricted literacy. The ascendance of standard national languages, Anderson argues, makes all languages comparable and intertranslatable, including those which are privileged as vehicles of sacred discourse and transcendent truths. Indonesian, as one such national language, can be considered in this regard with an eye to Islamic reform movements, which have become increasingly salient in current Indonesian politics. Under the New Order, groups like Muhammadiyah were restricted in their activism to efforts to purify Islam of local syncretisms and heterodoxies, and did so through educational systems which provide direct, knowledgeable access to the Koran. This scripturalist movement has made Islam's Truth language focal, but taught it in a modern educational framework through Indonesian. The national language, as the medium of instruction, thus takes on a simultaneously privileged and symbiotic role in relation to Arabic and the Islamic project. If Indonesian's un-native, non-ethnic origins enhances its status over and against a multiplicity of local, ethnic languages, it also gains value as a 'neutral' linguistic mediator of religiously based knowledge.

A similar but more striking instance of this complementarity between national and religious identities involves marginal highland Javanese communities, where peasants responded to government requirements that they acknowledge an authorized religion by collectively espousing Hinduism. Though associated primarily with Bali, Hinduism on that island is universally recognized to have its antecedents in pre-colonial Java. The State actively supported these rural Hindu communities by making Hindu texts and doxa required subjects of study in local schools. Because they are taught in Indonesian, the national language becomes the means of access to standardized, public versions of formerly esoteric, sacred Old Javanese texts. The paradoxical result is that the national language mediates between these villagers and the ancestors they imagine to have been the original practitioners of Hinduism in Java, and original users of the sacred Old Javanese Truth language. Their assertion of a distinctly local religious identity is thus bracketed or muted by the intervention of an un-native, national medium of religious instruction. The broad point, then, is that the Indonesian language helped to mute political and cultural tensions under the New Order that arose from the condition of religious pluralism and requirements of national unity. When Indonesian's role as mediator between religious affiliation and national identity is foregrounded, it becomes easier to gauge that language's enduring salience for the national project. Indonesian survives as an infrastructural means to reduce or elide felt differences between religious and nationalist modes of community.

Speculation on multiple political and cultural saliences of language might lack clear relevance to ongoing, deadly conflict; but it might help to envision a polity in which a national language facilitates not just religious diversity but a civil society, and the sort of public sphere which the New Order systematically suppressed. As other New Order successes come to seem hollow and illusory, Indonesian's enduring viability may obtrude if it subserves an Indonesian version of public citizenship, and a public discourse in which the demands of faith and country are neither completely divorced, nor entirely congruent. Perhaps Indonesian will be among the New Order's best and most lasting legacies: a medium for public discourse within and across lines of political and religious difference, a national mode of discourse never supported by an authoritarian state which successfully fostered a vehicle for it. ◆

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Southeast Asia

ANDRÉE FEILLARD

Pre-election Visit to **East Java's Ulama**

Andrée Feillard toured Java last March to give lectures in four cities for the launching of her book on the Nahdlatul Ulama, Indonesia's largest traditionalist Muslim organization. She also visited several *ulama*, politicians, and student groups in East Java. She gives here a short account of her journey in the troubled province where 254 people were mysteriously murdered from September to November 1998. At the time of her trip, interreligious and interethnic violence was high in Ambon.

Wednesday, 3 March 1999

My first visit outside Surabaya is to see Kiai Hasyim Muzadi in Malang, a likely successor to Abdurrahman Wahid, alias Gus Dur, the Nahdlatul Ulama chief, to be replaced at the next NU congress in November. In the hall of the brand new, sparkling white *pesantren*, I wait for the recitation of the soft Sufi *wirid* to be finished. Sitting on a bright green carpet, surrounded by a dozen teachers and *santris*, the 56-year old Kiai Hasyim holds a *tasbih* in his right hand, ready for the toughest questions. He is a popular, humorous local MP (1972-1983; 1986-1987) and now also a respected *kiai* with an innovative touch (he opened a *pesantren* for the students of general universities in 1991). Kiai Hasyim is a no-nonsense man: 'Formalist Islam', he tells me, 'has proven its incapacity to rule the country.' This rather direct judgement of Habibie's ten-month old regime goes hand in hand with his concern about a possible disintegration of Indonesia. But I find his assessment of the violence in the Moluccas reflects a rare equanimity: 'According to our NU office in Ambon, there is a Christian fear of Islamization. There is also the economic factor and the political factor. The Jakarta elite is playing around, people think there is a scenario'. The Banyuwangi assassination campaign, which he compares to Bosnia's, was in his opinion a political campaign in favour of the status quo, but which produced the reverse effect: NU's political party, the Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB), which was at first terrorized, afterwards gained more popularity. His confidence is shattered more by money politics (in favour of the PPP) than by NU's small splinter parties. Finally, he concludes, the 38 military seats in the MPR will be the determining factor. But, whatever happens, Kiai Hasyim seems convinced that 'formalist Islam' is bound to be a big failure, a disintegrating factor for the archipelagic nation. Like everyone else I meet during this trip, he reacts most coolly to the possibility of an alliance with Amien Rais, a pluralist 'for just two days', he notes ironically.

Gus Dur told me later in Jakarta that Hasyim is indeed, so far, a favourite candidate to succeed him. Hasyim Muzadi may be more of an organizer, and Gus Dur more of an intellectual, but Hasyim seems to approve of Gus Dur's choice of 'substance' and ethics rather than 'formalism', and he smiles, visibly amused, pointing out that Gus Dur is now being dubbed a 'krislam' (an acronym for Christian and Islam).

Thursday morning

Prof. Tolhah Hassan, the rector of NU's university (UNISMA) receives me warmly. I find him most concerned about the situation in Ambon, which he feels is less a religious than an ethnic problem. During a trip in East Nusatenggara (NTT), east of Bali, he saw huge discrepancies between the living standards of 'settlers' and the 'original population'. There the shops were owned by Buginese or Javanese, and locals had less access to universities. Eight years ago, he started a grant programme for students to come and study in Malang (there are now about 20 students in town). Such sensibility about ethnic problems linked to the transmigration programme is new to me in Java.

Downstairs, a number of students wait for me. They speak of a regular weekly meeting of political parties aimed at preventing animosity from degenerating into violence, a bid to prove to the armed forces that 'we are ready for democracy'. On the way to the Malang PMII (NU's student organization) headquarters, one student tells me of the increased popularity of Shiism among some students, synonymous with 'free-thinking' and the power to change things. At the headquarters, many of the 40 or so PMII students question the wisdom of creating the PKB, which they fear will bring the NU back to the ugly politicking of the 1970s. All but two of them will vote PKB. They are mostly proud of NU's 'progressive' and no longer want the NU to be called 'traditionalist', which they deem unfair. 'Progressive traditionalists'? They loudly agree, optimistic that *they* are the future of Indonesia, while the 'others' are the *partai setan* (satanic parties) 'using Islamic symbols for political gains'.

Friday morning

Back in Surabaya, the PKB chief for East Java, Choirul Anam, is busy and as placid as I have always known him to be. His soft tone hardly reveals his solid optimism about PKB's prospects: 'We will score higher than you would expect', he tells me in confidence of the PKB and the PDI, always linking the two. But he too points to the crucial role of the armed forces seats. On the Banyuwangi massacres, Choirul comments: 'One objective was to create disorder, so that the army would step in to restore order, but it failed. And now, it is Ambon's turn.'

Friday evening

Some 30 km to the east of Surabaya, I spend the night at Kiai Choiron's *pesantren* in Bangil. Besides the many NU *pesantren*, there is a rare 'reformist' *pesantren* of the Persis (Persatuan Islam) and a *pesantren* of Shiite reputation, the Yayasan Pesantren Islam (YAPI). PAN's Amien Rais recently visited the district, but his convoy was stopped by protesting Muslim youths. It was Kiai Choiron who opened the doors of his *pesantren* for Amien, despite threats that his school would be set on fire. 'The majority here votes for PKB', explains Kiai Choiron, 'whereas PAN will find voters in the Persis and Shiite *pesantren*.' Sitting on a wooden bench in the yard of the newly extended *pesantren*, Kiai Choiron says there is practically no PKB cooperation with PAN. I remember that during my research in 1991, differences between NU and Muhammadiyah were minimized. This time, it is the reverse.

Saturday morning

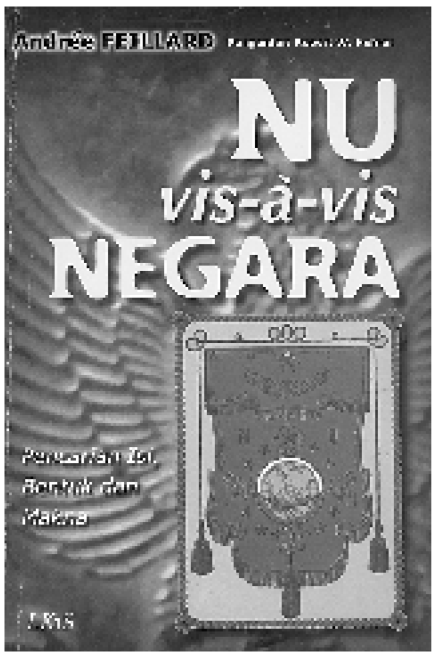
Kiai Choiron kindly lends me his car to drive to Jember, some 200 km to the east in Banyuwangi's direction, where Kiai Muchith Muzadi, the right hand of NU's former *rois aam*, Kiai Achmad Siddiq, is waiting. I had first visited Jember in 1988. All along the road, red PDI flags alternate with PKB or PPP green flags, while the yellow Golkar flag appears only once in a while. The thin 74-year old *kiai* who studied in the famous Kiai Hasyim Asy'ari's *pesantren* from 1937 to 1942 is an 'intellectual' *kiai* whose unassertive ways hide a solid influence on the NU. Kiai Muchith recalls the high points of 1998, Gus Dur's political choices, and the usual role of the supernatural in NU's decisions. He calls Gus Dur a *kiai moral*, as compared to 'normative' *kiais*. He adds: 'PAN is in the process of adapting from the modernist *pola* (way of thinking) to a *pola* like NU's', he comments, 'but Muhammadiyah still has difficulties in rejecting sectarianism, and actually NU also has [such difficulties], but because of Gus Dur's charisma, there is a breakthrough in this direction.' For four hours, in his small noisy sitting room, Kiai Muchith speaks in confidence. He has been asked by local Protestant priests to distribute *sembako* (basic food items) in their place, as some Muslim radicals see it as a material incentive for conversions. But the elderly yet dynamic *kiai* preferred to have the students' organizations, including NU's PMII, do it: 'I have to be careful', he explains. A constant advocate of tolerance, he rebuffs the widespread fear of Java's *kristianisasi*.

Sunday morning

Back in Bangil, I have a long conversation on the phone with Ustad Zahir, the rising teacher in the Shiite YAPI *pesantren*, an articulate young man, a passionate admirer of Khomeini's achievements. Like some other Nahdlatul Ulama *kiai* I have met, Kiai Choiron is increasingly tolerant of Shiism. Walking through the large yard to the road, Kiai Choiron mumbles that he does not regret that the NU finally set up its own political party: 'With Golkar and PPP, we were always the losers.'

My trip in East Java comes to an end. I meet Choirul Anam again in Surabaya. He tells me of his efforts to convince the small Islamist party, Partai Keadilan, the party of justice, to accept NU's pluralist line. PK recruits mostly among general university students, and has Internet connections to the Refah and Hamas. 'I say to them that God decided men should have different religions, so it is not for us to try and change this, our duty on earth is to apply religious values and ethics.' 'Do they accept your argument?' I ask. In a tired voice, Choirul answers: 'It is difficult for them, the indoctrination is too strong over there.'

In just over five days, ten months after the fall of Suharto, I have discovered an Islamic community increasingly divided by politics, but at the same time hopeful that change is at the doorstep after 32 years of manoeuvring to protect the *kiais* and the *pesantren*. I have also seen the seeds of pluralism, planted by Gus Dur a long, long time ago, now burgeoning in the midst of inter-religious strife while one essential question looms among *ulamas* and activists: Has God decided whether Indonesia should remain one single country? ✦



NU vis-à-vis Negara, Pencarian Bentuk, Makna, dan Isi was published by the LKiS, in Yogyakarta, and is an updated translation of Andrée Feillard's book *Islam et Armée dans l'Indonésie Contemporaine* (L'Harmattan, Paris, 1995).

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Southeast Asia

MICHAEL LAFFAN

A Visit to Jakarta's Bayt al-Qur'an

Nearly one hundred years ago the Dutch scholar C. Snouck Hurgronje, writing in the Netherlands Indies, published his article 'Islam and phonography' in which he described a contemporary interest in recordings of suras of the Qur'an made available for the phonograph.[1] At the time, this innovation caused both interest and debate among Muslim scholars as to whether the use of this medium was Islamic, although it soon became accepted. The phonograph was later succeeded by the audiocassette. Now there are many interactive products available for the computer-literate Muslim – from various indexed and hyper-linked Qur'ans accessible through the internet, to CD-ROM packages designed for users who wish to learn to recite the Qur'an at home. Perhaps the most astounding aspect of the CD-ROM is its capacity to join the visual and aural experiences of the Qur'an. Yet, like its bakelite predecessor, the CD-ROM has evoked a modern debate over the application of such technology and the Islamic qualifications of its creators.[2]

In Jakarta today, one is made aware of modern technologies (i.e. aural and visual). In terms of access to them, however, there exists a dividing line between the wealthy and the poor – in much the same way as the elevated toll roads of Jakarta divide the elite suburbs with their satellite dishes, from the crowded slums and their minarets. In the streets one often hears, as in most other Muslim countries, recordings of the Qur'an made by famous readers in one of the approved recitations. Bookshops popular with the middle classes – like the 'Gramedia' and 'Gunung Agung' chains – regale their customers with the latest in interactive software replete with translations into Indonesian, hyper-linked suras and floating graphics. Not all of these programmes are assembled officially by the *ulama*, but are rather the creations of software designers and engineering students, some of whom are attached to particular ideological schools. In many ways these designers are repeating the process of interpretation and presentation performed by individual calligraphers, publishers and printers. Some are perhaps unconsciously applying their own regional or supra-regional Islamic imagery to the margins of any given medium; for it is in the margins of the Qur'an that a freedom to decorate is granted, whilst the text itself remains eternal and immutable. This is also relevant for the internet where presentation is often equated with accessibility. A well-designed interactive product complete with evocative images will always generate more visual interest than a bare text.

Museum and presentation

It is this marginal experimentation that I observed most recently whilst being shown through another relatively recent aspect of modernity in Indonesia: the Islamic museum, or more particularly the Bayt al-Qur'an of Jakarta's Taman Mini.[3] Here one walks, as it were, from the margin of the Qur'an into the margins of the Islamic world and on to what some Muslims would find marginally Islamic. I say this not to be glib, but rather to raise some old questions. Can a cultural bias be applied to the presentation of Islam and in what sense is something Islamic? The Bayt al-Qur'an raises both questions.

The visitor to the Bayt al-Qur'an is at first struck by the new and spacious building at the outskirts of Taman Mini. After passing copies of the Qur'an displayed glass cases and paying a modest fee, one enters the first hall of the main exhibition. Here one encounters various framed pages of the *mushaf* (the text itself), each decorated in its margins in a style intended to represent the particular provincial culture of the artist. Were all these pages to be compiled – and if indeed there were enough – then perhaps we would be confronted by a peculiarly Indonesian Qur'an whose assembly mirrored the national motto – 'Unity in diversity' (Bhineka tunggal ika). Yet this national unity is, or perhaps was, underwritten by a political ideology and not the majority faith of its inhabitants. Until recently in Indonesia, the various cultures were only allowed to express their differences in the supposedly harmless margins of national culture: in art and music. The political text of Pancasila[4] remained immutable and untranslatable and permeated every aspect of New Order Indonesia.

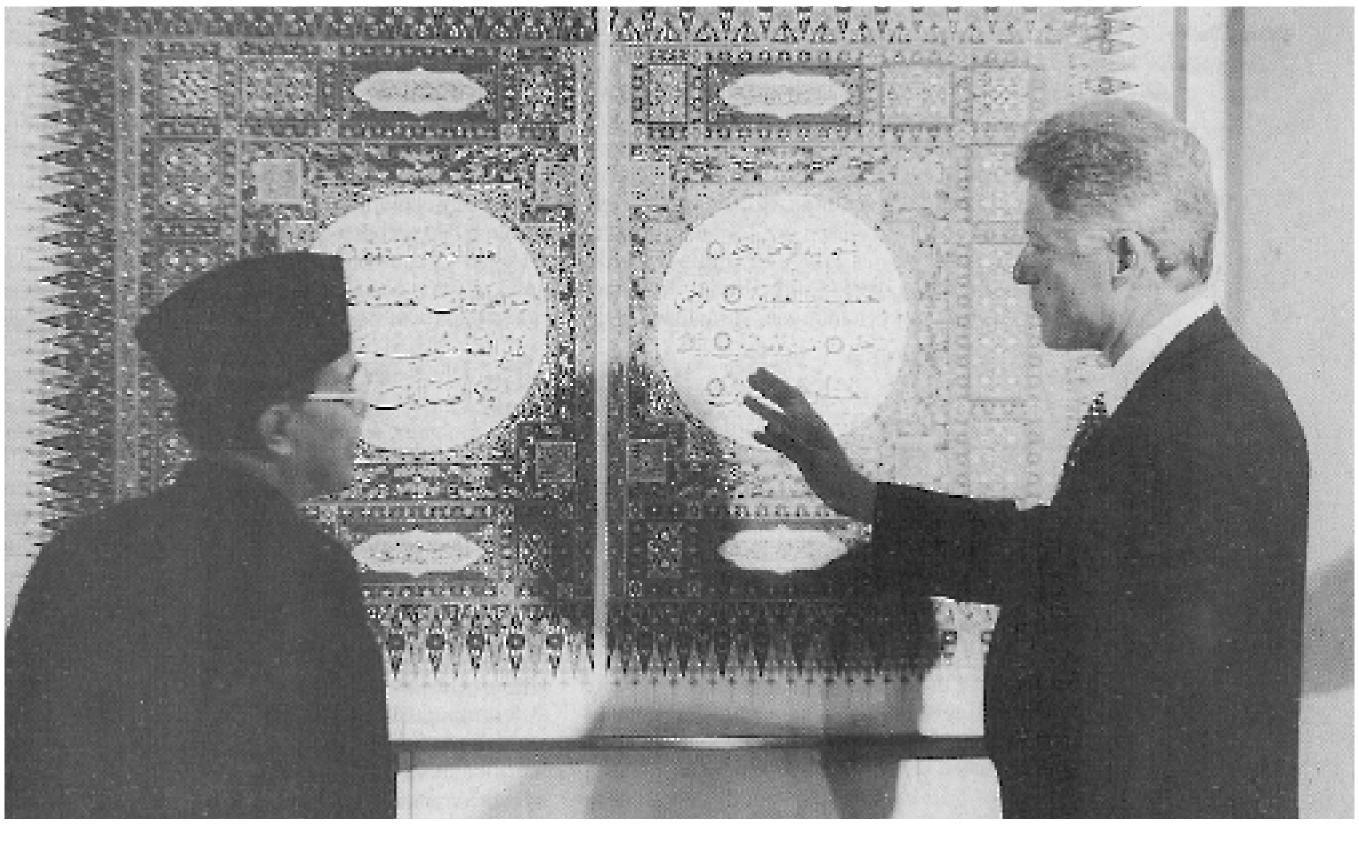
The second hall of the Bayt al-Qur'an also contains many images representative of a pride in the historical Islamization of the archipelago. If the first hall was concerned with rendering the universal Indonesian, then the second is about proving the historical credentials of that claim. There are thus images and models of the court mosques of Demak, Banten, Yogyakarta, and Solo, as well as smaller *suraus* (village mosques) from the eastern archipelago. Clearly this is not just a museum of texts as its name would indicate. These are images of mosques whose function is incontrovertibly a part of Islamic practice and whose form need not follow the established patterns of the Islamic 'centre'. Rather, the images freely recall the ancient architectural styles of the archipelago.

The third hall was for me the key to the entire exhibit, displaying a collection of Qur'ans and some of the core texts of the Islamic sciences used throughout the Muslim world – from exegeses to grammatical treatises. Some are lithographed, others copied by hand on European paper or locally-manufactured bark paper. Few are dated. Here the irrefutable beauty of the Arabic script is on display and the undeniable calligraphic unity of the *umma* is reinforced. In the background, yet another CD-ROM emits a recitation that would incite a remarkably similar reaction in Muslims throughout the world. In this sense the third hall is not the preserve of any one culture but displays the universality of Islam as defined by its revealed book and the sciences it has created.

What is Islamic here?

It is thus in the subsequent displays that the coherence of the exhibition seems to break down. Here are fabrics (batik and ikat) and cultural artefacts – from ceremonial daggers and Acehnese headstones to objects of everyday life. 'What is particularly Islamic here?' the viewer might ask. Many of the items on display could well have been made or used by non-Muslims; but then again so are many of the artefacts displayed in Cairo's museum of Islamic arts. What perhaps matters here is that these objects represent for their users a totality of Islamic experience where daily life cannot be extracted from faith. These objects are perhaps for some Indonesian Muslims seen as a part of their Islamic heritage, an impression that would not be shared by, for instance, a Moroccan or an Uzbek.

But perhaps the strangest items on display in the fourth hall are two clay models of the *kalamakara*, a pre-Islamic hybrid creature which combines the attributes of a horse, the *garuda*,[5] and an elephant. In one version, its prehensile trunk even grips a Sivaite trident. This image also features in the prelude to the display. In some respects the foreign viewer is reminded of Buraq – the magical beast said to have carried Muhammad on his night journey: our guide did indeed remark that this was the case. However, she added that some visitors had complained about the inclusion of such figures and also stated that there was no mention of this journey in the Qur'an. Why should such objects be displayed in the home of the Qur'an? In their wisdom, the curators have placed their Buraqs – even if they were not intended to represent Buraq – among the texts and images marshalled to represent their imagined *umma*. ◆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President Bill Clinton and former Minister of Religious Affairs Tarmizi Taher observing at the Mushaf Al Quran.

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Notes

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2. Peter Mandaville (1999), 'Digital Islam: Changing the Boundaries of Religious Knowledge?' *ISIM Newsletter*, 2, pp. 1, 23.
3. Taman Mini is Indonesia's most famous assembly of musealized culture set around a decorative lake containing a scale model of the archipelago. Itwas established largely upon the initiative of Ibu Tien Suharto.
4. The five principles of the Indonesian state as propagated by Sukarno: Belief in one God, National Unity, Social Justice, Popular Sovereignty through Consensus, and Just and Civilized Humanitarianism.
5. The traditional mount of Visnu (and currently the national emblem of Indonesia) upon whose chest the Pancasila is displayed.

Southeast Asia

IMTIYAZ YUSUF

Aspects of Islam in **Thailand Today**

Thai Muslims and their co-religionists in Sri Lanka and Burma provide three examples of Muslim minority communities living in Theravada Buddhist majority countries. Two main groups comprise the Thai Muslim community: the 'native Muslims', or the Malays residing in the southern provinces, and the 'settled/naturalized' Muslims of different ethnic backgrounds residing across the country – hence the ethnic, linguistic, cultural and political variation within the Thai Muslim community. The southern Muslims make up the majority (approximately 700,000, or 80%) of the total current Thai Muslim population (approximately 5-7 million).

Islam is the second main religion in Thailand, with Muslims constituting the largest religious minority. Thailand's history of Islam dates back to the Ayutthaya Dynasty (1350-1767), when the country was still known as Siam. The independent Malay kingdoms to the south had not yet been incorporated. They were not to become part of Thailand until 1902. Islam arrived from various directions: the Malay-Indonesian archipelago, Yemen (Hadhramawt), Persia, India, Burma, China and Cambodia.

The establishment of Islam in Malacca, during the reign of Sultan Iskandar, led to the spread of the early syncretic Islam in the Southeast Asian archipelago, reaching Pattani by 1387. The upper southern Thai province of Songkhla marks the language border between Malay and Thai-speaking Muslims. There was minimal spreading of Malay Islamic religiosity beyond Songkhla. This was partly due to consolidation of the 'orthodoxy of Singhalese (Theravada) Buddhism, which had been introduced into the Indo-chinese Peninsula by the Mons of Burma and was disseminated further by the Thai'[1] already a century prior, following the decline of Hindu-Sanskrit culture and Mahayana Buddhism in the Menam and Mekong basins. One may remark that the encounter between Malay Islam and Thai Buddhism was one of two religious 'native type' orthodoxies founded on ethno-linguistic distinctions.

The other arrivals of Islam into Thailand were from various directions of the country, made up mostly of immigrant Muslims of different sectarian and ethnic backgrounds. The central plains of the country comprise Thai Muslims of Persian, Pakistani, Indonesian and Cham extraction. While those residing in the northern provinces of Lampang, Chiangmai and Chiang Rai are of Bengali, Burmese and Yunnanese (Chinese) origin, having migrated to Thailand for economic and political reasons (they were fleeing from religious persecution at the hands of the communists in China and the nationalists in Burma.).[2] There are also converts to Islam either through marriage or religious conversion. Most Thai Muslims are Sunnis, yet there is also a small Shia community belonging to both the Imami and Bohras/Mustali Ismailis sub-groups.

Apart from ethnic differences, there is also linguistic diversity within the Thai Muslim community. The majority of Muslims in the south speak Malay, while those residing in other parts of Thailand converse in Thai, both at home and in public. They are no longer familiar with the languages of their ancestors.

Islamic identity in Thailand

In Southeast Asia, religious identity is often linked to ethnicity: Malays are Muslim; Thais are Buddhist; and Chinese are either Christian or syncretic Taoist/Buddhist. Although ethno-religious constructs shape identities, it can be said that in Thailand, Muslims and Buddhists share nearly identical social manners, perspectives, formalities and practices. They share the Southeast Asian social demeanour and conventions of moderation, compromise and mutual consultation. Thai Muslims maintain, express and symbolize their identity through religious institutions such as the mosque, *pondok* or Madrasah and the office of the Chularatchamontri/*Shaikh al-Islam*,[3] as well as through Islamic festivals celebrated at the national level, including *Maulid al-Nabi*.

Islamic education in Thailand

Historically, the famous *pondok* system of Islamic education was instituted in Pattani and is noted for its celebrated scholars such as Ahmad bin Muhammad Zain al-Fatani and Daud al-Fatani, who played a pivotal role in the spread and development of Islamic education in Southeast Asia. Their intellectual influence has a left a lasting mark on the development of Islamic scholarship. Initially, the Thai state considered the educational programmes implemented by the *pondok* to be out-dated. Not recognizing their moral-cultural relevance, the idea was to streamline them along modern-secular educational lines.[4] Finally, upon Muslim protest, the religio-moral aspects of this demand for an integrated form of education as a means of maintaining Muslim identity and preparing the youth morally for modern professional life were recognized. This led to the setting up of Islamic Private Schools.

Contemporary Islamic education in Thailand is cultivated through both the *pondok*, which offers solely religious education, and the combined educational programmes disseminated by the Islamic Private Schools. These latter are under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. Both types of institutions are manned by graduates of religious seminaries and universities from Malay-Indonesian Archipelago, al-Azhar in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, India, Pakistan and Turkey.

Thai Muslims on the political stage

The Thai Muslim minority participated in the national political process during both its democratic and non-democratic eras. This engagement has earned Thai Muslims recognition within the political system. Thai Muslim politicians have represented different political parties in the various parliamentary elections that have taken place in the country since its emergence as a constitutional monarchy in 1932. This era also witnessed the southern Muslim struggle against the policy of 'Thai-ization'.

Thai Muslim politicians representing Muslim majority constituencies have long been concerned about developmental problems facing Muslims such as: educational amelioration, economic progress, cultural-religious freedom, and political recognition.

The political engagement of Thai Muslims has also undergone transformation since the recent rekindling of the democratic process. Until 1988, Thai Muslim politicians represented various constituencies on a personal basis. But this is now changing. The Democrat Party of Thailand, representing the middle class, has been the most popular political party in southern Thailand and has long been the main political voice of Thai Muslims. However, several long-time Thai Muslim politicians aligned with the Democrat party have withdrawn, complaining of the inadequate attention given by the party to specific Muslim matters and of the breaking of electoral promises. These disappointments caused them to form in 1988 a Thai Muslim political faction called the Wahdah (Unity), whose priority is to address developmental problems facing the Thai Muslim community. It has been described as an ethnic movement seeking to achieve the interests of the Thai Muslims from within the political system.[5]

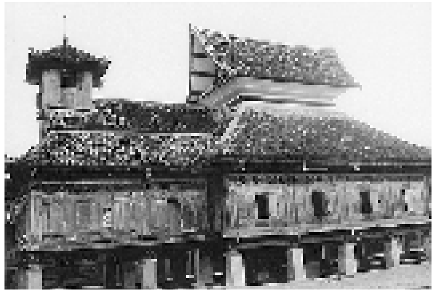
The Wahdah sees itself as an independent political group ready to support any political party that promises to pay special attention to developmental issues and problems facing Thai Muslims. Since its inception, it has aligned itself with the New Aspiration Party (NAP) or Kuam Wang Mai (Thai) also known as Harappan Baru (Malay) established in 1990. The Muslim members of the parliament from the Wahdah have obtained cabinet posts for the first time in the three recently democratically elected coalition governments since 1992. However, the political alignment of the Wahdah could change in view of the implications that the current economic crisis may have for the next parliamentary election.

Despite differing approaches according to political party, the Thai Muslim members of the Parliament and the Senate agree upon the urgent need to address specific developmental matters such as the improvement of the infra-structure and economic development of the Muslim majority provinces within the IMT-GT (Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand-Growth Triangle) programme. Other important matters include facilitating travel arrangements for Thai pilgrims to the Hajj, obtaining legal permission for Thai Muslim females to wear the *hijab* in public places (which has been granted) and the establishment of an Islamic bank as an alternative financial institution.

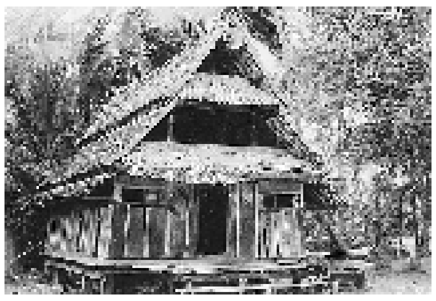
In the current Thai government led by the Democrats, the Foreign Minister is Dr Surin Pitsuwan, a prominent Thai Muslim member of the Democrat Party. Mr Wan Muhammad Nor Matta, member of the Wahdah and deputy leader of the NAP currently in opposition, is serving as elected speaker of the Thai parliament and is president of the National Assembly. Muslim support for the Wahdah faction is increasing in the south and is gaining popularity among Thai Muslims residing in other parts of the country. The next elections will be a test of the political popularity of the Democrat Party, the NAP and other parties among the Thai Muslims.

Over the decades, the Thai Muslims and Buddhists have come to understand and recognize their ethnic and religio-cultural identities. The enlightened of both communities have realized the need to move away from rigidity and exclusivity. Yet there remain several development issues, in the areas of education and economy of the Muslim sector, to be addressed – both publicly and privately.

The inter-religious dynamic in Thailand reflects the need for dialogue and negotiation. But most importantly, it reflects the ability on the part of the political authorities to recognize the ethno-religious variety. ◆



The 300 years old Masjid Talok Manok in Bacho district, Narathiwat, Thailand



A Surau (Musalla / Prayer house) at Natanjong, Yaring, Pattani district, Thailand

An old Muslim house in Thailand

Masjid Saiburi, Pattani district, Thailand

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Asia

LINDA WALDBRIDGE

Inter-communal Violence in Pakistan and Indonesia

Pakistan and Indonesia in terms of religious leadership represent – in some respects – opposite situations. In both societies we find a significant 'legalistic' vs. 'Sufi' divide, but the two forms of Islam are expressed and played out in different ways. Most importantly, they have different relationships with their governments that have produced drastically different results.

In January 1998, I attended a gathering of Fulbrighters in Lahore – both Pakistani and American. Just having returned from Indonesia, where I had been teaching at a government-run Islamic institute, I told the others that I had been struck by how much the government of Indonesia controlled religious matters. It set the curriculum for the institutes, appointed faculty, and hired the graduates to work in the bureaucracy as experts on Islamic matters. These graduates, of course, would be expected to be members of the ruling Golkar party. The government did not permit people who had gone through the centuries-old *pesantren* educational system to enter the government institutes unless they had gone to a government school as well. The traditional *pesantren* (a religious boarding school), which is a cross between a dervish conventicle and an Indian ashram – is a completely independent facility. It is run by a *kiyai*, a Sufi-like figure who holds his position through heredity as well as through the recognition he receives in society. These *kiyai*s were being heavily pressured to conform to government policies and to be part of the Golkar party.

When I finished my presentation, a Pakistani man in the room said that he wished that the Pakistanis had someone trying to control their religious leaders. He, with others chiming in, said that Pakistan had just the opposite problem: that the government had no control over the *maulavis* and that they were making a mess of the country. They wished that the government could rein them in, as they seem to have done in Indonesia.

Not long after that meeting, violence erupted in Indonesia. In Pakistan, inter-communal violence continued to escalate. The press regularly reported attacks by Sunnis and Shi'a on one another's mosques in the Punjab. Indeed, I visited some of the mosques that had been attacked. In the office of one, the filing cabinet was stocked with guns and rifles, which were brought out to protect the congregates gathered for prayers. The Christian community of Pakistan also feels besieged as a result of death sentences imposed on Christians accused of blasphemy. While tensions between Muslims and Christians have existed for decades, these accusations and the violence associated with them are a phenomenon of the late 1980s and 1990s.

Why the violence?

While religious tensions are hardly the only factor influencing riots and fighting in Indonesia, religion certainly is of importance when assessing violence on the islands of Java, Ambon, and Sumatra. In Java and Ambon, clashes between Muslims and Christians have taken many lives.

In Sumatra, the weakening of the regime has unleashed decades-old resentments over the issue of who defines and controls Islam.

In Karachi a Roman Catholic priest of Goan descent told me, '[The province of] Sindh is saturated with the culture of Sufism. Go beyond Karachi and you will find a lot of *pirs*. Sufis and *pirs* have the highest regard for the human being. They do not speak of the supremacy of any religion, but they speak of the unity of mankind.' In his eyes and in the eyes of so many other Pakistanis, including the people listening to my presentation on Indonesia in Lahore, it is not the *pirs* or the traditional religious leaders that are the problem in society. Rather, it is the *maulavis* who are causing the dissension, the clerics who deliver Friday sermons and speak for the narrowest of interpretations of Islam. Essentially, the *maulavis* are fighting a proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran – a war that the Pakistani government does not discourage.

The situation in Pakistan

At an *imambarghah* in Lahore – a place devoted to the remembrance of the Imam Hussein – a man who had apprenticed himself to a dervish as a young boy, sat in the midst of some of his devotees. Others among his followers took me aside and told me how the recently rebuilt *imambarghah* had been destroyed by Sunnis a few years ago. 'It is the *maulavis*,' they said. They explained that they were not singling out only Sunni *maulavis*. They did not like any religious leaders who divided people and instigated hatred.

In the city of Gujrat, the leader of the Shi'a is not a man who studied at a *madrasa*. Rather, his father had been the Shi'ite headman of the area, and now the mantle of leadership had fallen on his shoulders. He too had little taste for *maulavis* and prided himself on the peaceful relations that he had helped to promote between Sunnis and Shi'as of this town – though the two communities lived in separate quarters.

In Pakistan, religious leaders of all varieties function independently of the government, though certainly the government is very keen on having the support of Islamic groups. Zia al-Haq, the military leader who took over Pakistan in a coup in the 1980s, tried to placate and thus control the leading Islamic groups (principally the Jamaat-i Islami) by inaugurating laws that could be portrayed as being in keeping with the Shariah; the *hudood* (criminal) laws and the blasphemy laws being the most controversial. But neither Zia nor the succeeding governments have been successful in completely winning over the Islamic groups. While Nawaz Sharif has made many overtures, the Jamaat regularly protest his policies. Obviously, the government does not have a great deal of say in the activities of the Islamist groups, yet it will step on the rights of minorities in order to try to placate even the most radical organizations.

The situation in Indonesia

Indonesia presents a very different picture. I visited some of the *pesantrens*, as I was interested in observing the lives of the students in these boarding schools. There was enormous variety among the *pesantrens*. Some did follow a government curriculum with a full spectrum of courses, while others maintained their traditional role – a place where one memorizes the Koran and the hadith and lives a life of prayer. These are the places where the Indonesian Sufi tradition is preserved. The independence of some of these boarding schools from government control became most obvious to me when I was visiting the northern part of the island of Madura off the coast of Java. On the birthday of the Prophet, thousands of people – men in their traditional sarongs and *pecces* (the so-called 'Sukarno hat') and women covered in their *jilbabs* – were making their way to the beach where a huge sound system had been assembled for speeches. In the villages nearby were *pesantrens* where serious young men wandered about clutching hand-written texts to their breasts. It was in places such as these that resistance to Dutch colonial rule had been organized and where further resistance to tyranny could also be fostered. Certainly I saw the potential for anti-government activity much like that found in the *madrasas* in Qom a generation ago. Of course, the *pesantrens* can also be leaders in sectarian violence as their resentment towards the government can be aimed at anyone who seems favourable to it. Since it is part of government policy to recognize and protect the rights of five religious communities, the minorities tended to be subdued in their criticism of the government.

On the other hand, those who were considered 'the *ulama*' of Indonesia, the ones who had completed their studies in religious law, etc., have posed no threat to the government. In fact, in the face of the most obvious corruption, these men have tended to remain silent rather than be a voice of protest. I spoke to a member of the Council of Ulama, which is essentially a committee that issues fatwas. It was the council's job, he said, to convey to the people the wishes of the government rather than to advise the government about the Islamic position on an issue. One example is that of population control. After initial resistance, the ulama came around to the government's thinking and actively promoted birth control as a sound Islamic idea. At this time of crisis, most of these men may lack the prestige necessary for constructive leadership. While they might have received points for being somewhat open-minded and tolerant of peoples of other religions – at least those that are legally recognized – they also have not spoken out against the abuses of the Suharto regime.

The two extremes

When the governments of Pakistan and Indonesia have actively intervened in religious matters, they helped (whether inadvertently or not) to produce radicalism in different sectors of their religious communities. While the Sufis of Pakistan continue to have a more or less stabilizing effect on society, the situation for their Indonesian counterparts is more volatile. In both countries attempts have been made to co-opt Islam for political purposes. While the Indonesian government has successfully controlled religious leadership, the government of Pakistan, in failing to do so, has encouraged sectarianism. ◆

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Continued from front page: Kosovo / *by Ger Duijzings*

community in Kosovo. After many years of political unrest and ethnic tension, Serbs have developed a strong sense of suspicion – or even outright paranoia – of anyone who appears not to be 'one of them'.

The highpoint of the religious gathering in Zočište was a circumambulatory procession three times around the church on the morning of July 14, headed by priests and flag-bearers carrying Serbian flags and a banner with an image of the two patron saints. During my visit, most Gypsies remained to the side, clearly showing that the whole event, in this particular place and time, was to be primarily interpreted as a demonstration of Serb presence in Kosovo – amidst a 'sea' of Muslim Albanians. It was part of a much wider 'offensive' by the Serbian Orthodox Church to strengthen its presence in Kosovo. It is not surprising that during the war, which commenced in spring 1998, the monastery of Zoči te became one of its local arenas: on 21 July 1998, it was taken by the Kosovo Liberation Army, the first Albanian attack on a Serbian Orthodox monastery. According to Serbian sources, the Albanians claimed the monastery as belonging originally to the Albanian Orthodox Church. Seven monks and a nun, as well as a few dozen Serb citizens who had taken shelter in the monastery, were taken hostage. Although they were later released, the monastery remained under Albanian control for several weeks, until it was taken back by Serbian forces. ◆

This text has been drawn and adapted from Ger Duijzings's PhD thesis, Religion and the Politics of Identity in Kosovo, *University of Amsterdam, May 1999; forthcoming, London: Hurst, 1999.*

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South Asia

MARC GABORIEAU

Transnational Islamic Movements: **Tablighi Jama'at in Politics?**

There has been much speculation on the significance of the Tablighi Jama'at, the workings of which remain secretive. The main controversy relates to its stance on political matters. Since its foundation, it has claimed to be completely aloof from politics. However, doubts have been sporadically raised as to the reality of this apolitical position, particularly in Pakistan where some well-known members of the movement were recently involved in the Afghan problem and in internal politics.

PHOTO: MARIE-FRANCE MOURRÉGOT

Tablighi preachers from Mauritius at the airport of Saint-Denis, Reunion Island

Tablighi Jama'at, a transnational Muslim proselytizing movement founded in India in 1927, has its headquarters in Nizamuddin, a suburb of Delhi. From there it expanded quietly all over the world from 1948 onward, finally becoming conspicuous and influential by the end of the 1970s. It was founded on six basic principles: the invitation (*da'wa*, or *tabligh*) to Islam is not the affair of religious specialists, but the responsibility of all Muslims who must devote their time and money to it; one should not wait for people to come to hear the preaching, but rather preachers should travel to reach the people; preaching is done by self-financing itinerant groups; the mingling of all social classes is obligatory within these groups; the primary objective is to deepen the faith of those who are already Muslims, proselytism toward non-Muslims being marginal; and the promotion of the unity of Muslims being a primary objective, theological as well as political controversies are prohibited inside the movement.

The secretive nature of the movement makes it impossible to find direct evidence of political strategies. There is nonetheless an indirect means of doing so: reconsidering its history, instead of focusing, as is usually done, on self-statements and on doctrinal literature, and trying to see if one can read in this history indications of political involvement.[1] The historical literature concerning Tablighi Jama'at is of two kinds, internal and external. From the founding of the movement until 1965 – a time when the movement was inconspicuous – the sources are exclusively internal and consist in biographical (or rather hagiographical) literature in Urdu, mostly produced by an institution closely linked to the Tablighi Jama'at, the Nadwatul-'ulama. The literature is comprised of biographies of the founder, Muhammad Ilyas Kandhalawi (1885-1944), of his son and successor, Muhammad Yusuf (1917-1965), and of their close associates, particularly Muhammad Zakariyya (1898-1982), who produced the edifying books used in the movement under the collective name *The Teachings of Islam.*[2] For the period after 1965, biographies are not available for In'amul-Hasan, who ruled the movement from 1965 to 1995. In'amul-Hasan died recently and his biography has not yet come out. However, the movement having become by that time conspicuous, there are external testimonies (unfortunately disparate and not continuous) about its spreading and workings.

Origins and expansion

The first striking point of this history is that the very foundation of the movement is firmly rooted in politics. It emerged in the decade of 1920-1930, which is crucial in Indian history: it witnessed a growing political divergence of the Hindu and Muslim communities, which ultimately led to the partition of the subcontinent between India and Pakistan in 1947. This hostility was accompanied by fierce competition in proselytizing: Hindu revivalists of the Arya Samaj tried to bring back Muslim descendants of converts to their fold; and Muslims, in order to win their backing and comfort the other Muslims, created organizations for 'preaching', a word which was rendered by the Arabic term *tabligh.* All of these organizations proved ephemeral, except the most recently created Tablighi Jama'at. One would be tempted to say that it survived because it was, unlike the others, apolitical. Upon closer examination, however, politics always remained in the background. It is not coincidental that the only pamphlet that Muhammad Ilyas ever wrote was addressed to the politicians on the eve of partition. It would therefore be more precise to say that – contrary to other Tabligh organizations – he had a long-term political strategy which eschewed short-term political involvement, and which ensured the durability of his movement.

The world-wide expansion of the Tablighi Jama'at was the main task of Muhammad Ilyas' son and successor, Muhammad Yusuf. After the disturbances which followed the Partition in 1947, he first consolidated the movement all over the subcontinent. The newly drawn border between India and Pakistan was ignored: as a transnational movement, Tablighi Jama'at does not consider borders to be significant. With this base firmly established, Yusuf began to systematically extend his organization worldwide. He established bridgeheads in the two areas which he considered crucial for the world-wide expansion of his movement (Arab countries, from 1948 and Western countries from 1950 onwards). Starting from 1956, he established branches in the Afro-Asian countries. Lately the movement has also been active in China and Central Asia. In the hagiography, this expansion is openly presented as a planned conquest of the world in a wording and spirit reminiscent of the medieval holy war or *jihad*: Tablighi Jama'at is presented as a militant movement which organizes people quasi militarily. It is able to mobilize millions of people over the five continents, as one can observe in the annual meetings called *ijtima'* or on special occasions such as the funeral of In'amul Hasan in Delhi in 1995. It evidently aims to build on Muslim solidarity across borders, ignoring the nation-states.

Tight organization

Tablighi Jama'at has a considerable hold on those who enter its fold. It has remained from the beginning very centralized: the leadership has been jealously kept by the lineage of the founder, with a Centre *(markaz)* at Nizamuddin, from which authority is delegated to chiefs (*amir*) in the countries, provinces, districts and towns. Local leaders from all over the world come regularly to the Centre for training. Members who want to remain or even rise in the movement must prove their commitment, showing that they are not reluctant to spend their own time and money for it. They have to demonstrate the capacity to lead an austere life according the model of the Prophet and his Companions as described in the edifying literature, which is circulated and indefinitely commented upon at the meetings. This hold on its members is so complete that sociologist Felice Dasetto described the movement as a 'total institution', and compared it to the 'sects' which have multiplied in the contemporary world.

But to what end is this power? This is difficult to answer since the inner core of the Tablighi Jama'at is not open to outsiders; nor is it open to ordinary members who have not risen in the hierarchy and pledged their commitment. None of those having reached this inner core have ever spoken. Given its planned strategy of the conquest of the world, which has been consistently maintained, and the tight organization remaining in the hands of one lineage, it is difficult to believe that spiritual development is the only aim. It would not be necessary to keep such a tight grip on members if this were the case. Given its secrecy, however, its ultimate aim is difficult to discern. Nonetheless, there are several indications, especially in Pakistan and Bangladesh, that Tablighi Jama'at is far from being indifferent to politics. Prominent members have been closely associated with the army and the intelligence service active in Afghanistan. The president of Pakistan, Mohammad Rafiq Tarar, is a Tablighi; he is believed to be the main promoter of the new bill for the enforcement of the *shari'a*. More generally, in its origins and in its leadership, Tablighi Jama'at is closely linked with the Deobandi school, which has always been highly politicized and which currently backs the Taliban movement in Afghanistan.

Although the final interpretation of the significance of Tablighi Jama'at is not yet at hand, scholars should not be too irenical and manichaean, putting on one side purely spiritual, peaceful and apolitical movements (among which Tablighi Jama'at would be the best example); and on the other side the politically committed and often violent Islamists which are represented, for example, in South Asia by the Jama'at-I Islami founded by Maududi (1903-1979).

To my mind the dividing line is not between apolitical and political movements; it is between two ways of conceiving politics. On the one hand, with the Islamists, we have a short-sighted conception of politics in the framework of the nation-states, which aims at conquering power by the shortest route. On the other hand, with other schools like the Tablighis and the Deobandis, there is a far-sighted conception of politics. Going beyond the narrow borders of nation-states, they have not set fixed short-term ends. Putting politics most often in parentheses, they first build individuals and institutions, which over time may exert a more lasting political influence. ◆

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Notes

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South Asia

ABDUL KARIM KHAN

The Servants of God in the North-West Frontier Province of British India

In the current deafening criticism of Jewish, Christian, Hindu or Islamic fundamentalism and zealotry, it is hard to believe that Islam can inspire its adherents to social peace, democratic politics, economic justice, spiritual and secular education, protection against domestic and communal violence, and a broader humanitarian volunteerism. These were, however, some of the cherished ideals by which the Khudai Khidmatgars (Servants of God) lived.

The Khudai Khidmatgars were a Populist Party of deeply religious Muslims among the Pukhtuns (Pathans) in the North-West Frontier Province of British India (now in Pakistan). The movement was founded in 1930 by Abdul Ghaffar Khan (1889-1986), known among his people as the 'pride of the Afghans', and as the 'Frontier Gandhi' in India. They had sworn to rid themselves of social ills and to serve humanity, irrespective of caste or creed at the local and national levels. Hence their name, 'servants of God.' While the British colonial authorities decried Abdul Ghaffar Khan as another trouble-making Indian nationalist dreaming of freedom, Mahatma Gandhi found in him a paragon of non-violence and one who drew his *ahimsa* (non-violence) from the Holy Quran.[1]

Abdul Ghaffar Khan, a local khan, and his close friends of different economic backgrounds devoted their lives to the teaching of Islamic social morality, Pukhtun national unity, and humanitarian volunteerism. What made the Khudai Khidmatgars unique among the various Muslim movements in the wider region were their chief hallmarks: individual voluntary self-reformation; a lifelong commitment to serving humanity; rejection of violence, discrimination, sectarianism or polemical factionalism; protection of non-Muslim minority rights; non-communalism and egalitarian political philosophy; and the championing of women's and children's rights. Detractors of the Khudai Khidmatgars accused them of 'un-Afghan' behaviour, i.e. letting their women go outside and take part in political activities.[2]

Jihad, for an individual member of the movement, was waged against oneself; one would thus strive to serve one's parents, spouse, children, relatives and neighbours. New members were required to swear on the Quran not to lie, gamble, beat their wives or children, use drugs, quarrel with neighbours, or carry guns. These simple objectives were the most difficult to achieve in the Pukhtun culture, one of the most violent in the region. What made people join the movement so enthusiastically was the good moral example set by the leaders, who united people through the practice of Islamic morality and turned them into 'homo khidmatiqus' who would serve their fellow humans without seeking reward, and sacrifice themselves for their comfort and safety. Their motto was that the service of humanity was the best worship of God. They succeeded in creating at the local level a culture of *khidmat-o-qurbani* (service and sacrifice) through two Quranic means: *sabr-o-salath* (patience and prayers). The Khudai Khidmatgars summarized their mission in the Quranic injunction of stopping evil and spreading virtue.[3]

Non-violence

Abdul Ghaffar Khan launched the Khudai Khidmatgar movement primarily to unify the Pukhtuns, whose Afghan tribalism had maintained not only division but also great tension. To him, their mutual violence was their worst enemy – since more Pukhtuns were killed by their own kinsmen than by *kafirs* (infidels, British). A 'non-violent Pukhtun' was simply an oxymoron. But the Khudai Khidmatgars brought about a major change when thousands of them swore not to touch or carry any weapons of violence, setting an example of what some critics called extreme non-violence. In doing so, some became open and easy targets for their enemies and were murdered on account of previous unsettled scores. Their seeking for and granting of forgiveness for past feuds reflected their belief in God's love and His preference for forgiveness over retribution as stated in the Quran. Abdul Ghaffar Khan stressed the need of ending violence at home, in the family, and amongst kinsmen and neighbours. According to Mahatma Gandhi, non-violence with Abdul Ghaffar Khan was not a policy but an article of faith. 'The more I see him the more I love him', wrote Gandhi to India's viceroy Lord Willingdon. 'I know of the greatness of Abdul Ghaffar Khan. He is a brave Pathan, […a] sincere and honest man and he walks in the fear of God.'

Women's rights

The Khudai Khidmatgars were Pukhtuns, the major Afghan ethnic group living on both sides of the Duran Line between Afghanistan and present-day Pakistan. Women's rights were unheard of among the Pukhtuns. But the Khudai Khidmatgars placed women's rights at the focal point of their movement, which attracted female writers and activists. They attempted to raise awareness of the inferior status of women in rural and tribal areas, where they were sold into marriage, and deprived of property and educational rights as imbedded in Islamic law. The Khidmatgars began by honouring women's rights to education and property at the level of domicile. Their women's rights agenda landed them in opposition to the mullahs. The khans also opposed the Khudai Khidmatgars because the latter championed peasants' social and economic rights as well. The hardest blow came from the colonial authorities that saw the movement as a threat to the British Empire in this strategically important Frontier Province – hence it was to be nipped in the bud. Ultimately, however, their worst enemies were the Pukhtuns' own mass illiteracy and ignorance that maintained their enslavement to social ills, such as generation-long blood feuds and suppression of women's rights.[4]

Social reform

The Khudai Khidmatgars' struggle for social reform, economic justice, communal peace and brotherhood, and freedom from colonialism, turned them into a national salvation movement. Their steadfast and non-violent braving of the worse kind of opposition of feudal lords, Muslim clergymen, and British colonial authorities, further endeared them to the masses who voted them twice into government. As the movement turned massive in the early 1930s, the provincial government started suppressing the Khudai Khidmatgars, killing in the period of April-June 1930 approximately 100 and arresting more than one thousand people in the settled districts. Tribal agencies were bombed for the first time due to the spreading of the movement into Afghanistan where it could become a problem for the pro-British government of Nadir Shah. Repression further popularized the Khudai Khidmatgars, who now demanded more political reforms and liberating measures.[5]

In pursuit of their populist and non-communalist agenda, the Khudai Khidmatgars' provincial cabinets passed legislation that abolished feudal privileges that the khans, under the British patronage, had been enjoying at the expense of the general populace. The legislation also relieved the social and economic liabilities of peasants and small landowners that had been suffering under Muslim feudal lords and Hindu usurers. Furthermore, it made office holders accountable to the electorates and it decommunalized such bodies through joint electorates to promote mutual trust between Hindus and Muslims. The Khudai Khidmatgars also opened up governmental positions based on merit and competition. This was done through a public service commission, a practice that broke feudal monopoly over official bureaucracy.[6] Their overall anti-feudalist agenda, combined with their insistence on equality and dignity for both Muslims and non-Muslims, placed them in opposition to the Frontier Muslim League.

Partition

The Khudai Khidmatgars' social programme was halted by the worst Hindu-Muslim communal massacres in mid-1947 that eventually led to the partition of India on 14-15 August 1947. In that fateful summer of 1947, as retaliation against the Hindu massacre of Muslims in India, Muslim gangs attacked Hindus in the Frontier Province. When the communal fighting intensified, due to the British colonial authorities' failure to provide adequate safety, the Khidmatgars, with great risks to their own lives, protected thousands of Hindus in their villages. Their dictum was that every majority must protect its minorities. At the time of the partition, the Khudai Khidmatgars, who held the majority in the legislative body of the Frontier Province, called for a separate state, Pukhtunistan, in a province independent of both India and Pakistan. They did not wish to join either of the newly established states. But the British imposed a referendum upon them to join either India or Pakistan. They rejected what they called an illogical and unwanted offer, and boycotted the referendum, which eventually worked in favour of Pakistan.[7] On trumped-up charges of anti-state activities, the Muslim League rulers jailed many followers, often without trial. The persecution forced Abdul Ghaffar and other leaders underground or into exile. Their struggle was then carried on by several political splinter parties in the Frontier Province. Faced with martial law, this post-partition generation did not flinch from retaliating in kind. Although the elderly Khudai Khidmatgars condemned this, they simply could not control it. ✦

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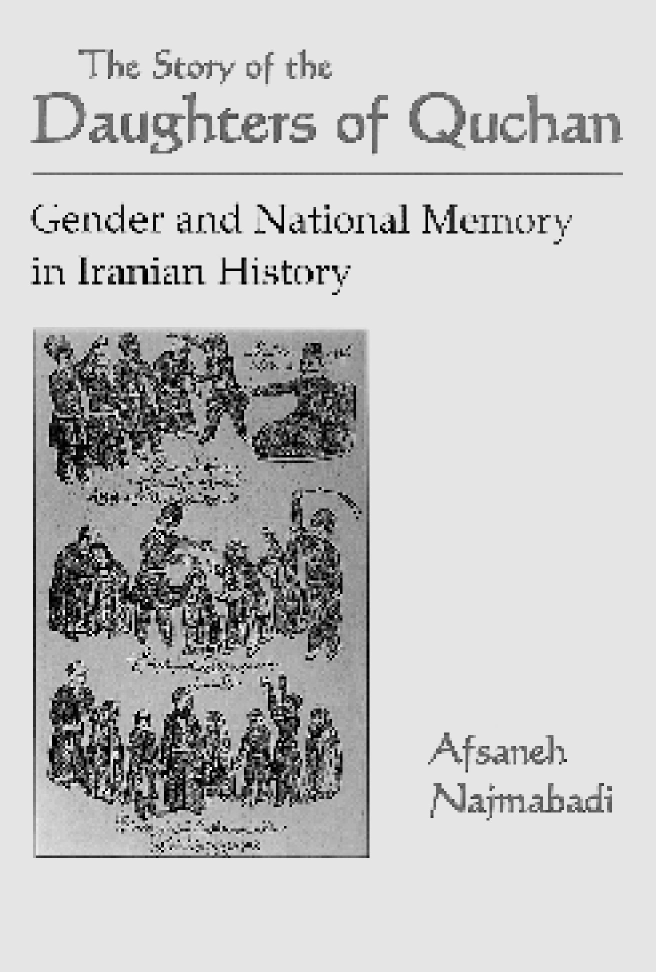
Middle East

AFSANEH NAJMABADI

Writing History as if **Women and Gender Mattered**

Current histories of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution (1905–1909) frequently begin with the bastinado of three Tehrani merchants, on 11 December 1905, upon the orders of Tehran's governor. This incident, we are told, led the two leading Tehran clerics to stage a sit-in protest, demanding dismissal of the governor and the premier, as well as calling for the institution of a House of Justice. Some months later, two men of religion were killed when government soldiers attempted to break up a protesting crowd in Tehran's Friday Mosque. This set off a chain of events that culminated in the issuance of the Constitutional decree by Muzaffar al-Din Shah on 5 August 1906. By telling a different story of these same revolutionary years, I question how these particular events have come to form Iranian collective memory of that revolution, while others have been merely forgotten.



The Story of the
Daughters of Quchan

Gender and National Memory
in Iranian History

Afsaneh
Najmabadi

The story concerns young girls and women who, in 1905, had been sold by needy peasants to pay taxes in a bad harvest year. Others had been taken as booty in a raid of a village settlement by Turkoman tribes. Neither of these events was extraordinary for its time and place. Yet, happening as they did within the political context of increasing agitation against the central government, they became woven into a much-narrated tale of outrage and grievance. They became a 'story', the Story of the Daughters of Quchan. From their pulpits, Muslim preachers lamented the fate of the girls. Social Democratic militants used the story as a tale of injustice of the rich and the tyranny of rulers.

The many retellings of this story within the literature of grievances against the old regime contributed to popular mobilization against autocracy and in favour of a constitutional regime. These recitations also provided much opportunity for the construction of a sense of 'nation-ness', of 'Iranian-ness', through a shared sense of grief that the teller and the audience, the writer and the reader, would experience in the events' repeated public remembrances. In these performances, both the themes of the story and its modes of performance were drawn from the familiar Karbala' narrative. While the recitations, remembrances, and collective weeping over the tragic fate of Husayn and his companions worked (and continues to work) to produce a sense of shared religious tragedy that crafted a sense of a Shi'ite community, recitations of the Story of the Daughters of Quchan provided a text for 'national narration', producing a sense of belonging to a national Iranian community.

Not only in public display of grief over common loss, but through the production of a sense of national solidarity and power, the story was effective in creating a sense of national togetherness. As the Daughters of Quchan became the daughters of the nation, our daughters, daughters of Iran, 'we, Iranians' became more meaningful.

The dissemination of this tale acted as such a powerful focus of national imagination that shortly after the opening of the new parliament in the fall of 1906, relatives of some of the captive women demanded that the parliament hear their grievances and act to punish those responsible for the crime. Upon the initiative of the Majlis (the Iranian Parliament), the newly re-constituted Ministry of Justice formed a commission of investigation and put a number of people of high station on trial for their responsibility in what had become a truly national affair. The investigations and the trial were the first under the new regime. They thus became constitutive of many of the new judicial institutions. The verdict issued by the Minister of Justice was brought back to the Majlis, setting off a new round of parliamentary debates and power struggles. The investigations, the trial, and their subsequent political repercussions provided the contesting terrain upon which some of the central institutions and political concepts of the constitutional regime took shape.

How did a familiar tale of rural destitution and the story of yet another Turkoman raid become a uniquely outrageous story, travelling not only the length and breadth of the country at a crucial historical moment, but also in between the many genres of revolutionary literature? And how, through these travels, did it contribute to the crafting of a sense of 'nation-ness' among Iranians? How did the fate of ordinary peasant girls and women provide the scenario for contestation over the most critical political themes of the revolution and the shaping of the new constitutional order? I argue that in the Constitutionalist discourse, acts of oppression or cruelty against women and children were recited to produce condemnation of autocratic rule. A power that oppressed the most helpless and weak was immoral and intolerable. It deserved to be overthrown. Both in the narratives of grievances against the autocracy, and in the rhetoric of mobilization for a constitution, women were cited as oppressed and dishonoured by the vices of autocratic government. Men were called upon to act against these vices, to rise up against autocracy and form a constitutional government, to establish the will of the nation and to re-establish moral order. In most such narratives, oppression and cruelty were linked with transgressions against women's sexual integrity (defined as men's honour). This linkage produced a multiple sign that political, moral and social oppression had gone beyond the limits of tolerance and it was time for 'great change'.

The Story of the Daughters of Quchan was by far the most frequently cited narrative of its kind. In this one tale, transgressions across many politically explosive boundaries were transcribed into a remarkable story, which included the class tension between peasants and aristocrats, the ethnic, sociological, and sectarian boundaries between Turkish Sunni raiding tribes and Persian Shi'i settled peasants. It also dealt with the selling of young virgin girls (the sexual honour of the family) to outsiders who were said to have taken them across the Russian-Iranian border (thus betraying national honour) and sold them to Armenians of Ashkhabad (thereby transgressing religious honour). Through its narration in a variety of genres of revolutionary literature, this single act was transcribed as signifying a multiplicity of national, moral, and religious loss. Yet, in the later historiographies of the Constitutional Revolution we are hard put to find a trace of the Daughters of Quchan. Instead, the two other episodes mentioned earlier are invariably cited as the events that sparked the revolutionary upheavals. When I first came across the story in primary sources of the Constitutional period some ten years ago, I was deeply puzzled by my own unfamiliarity with it. I had only the faintest recollection of having briefly encountered the story many years earlier in my first reading of the history of that revolution by Ahmad Kasravi. Nor had I come across the story in the more analytical political histories written by such major historians as Firaydun Adamiyat. The other events, however, were in every single history of Iranian Constitutionalism. Like many Iranians, I had come to remember them as the originating events of the Constitutional Revolution. A story that had magically moved and captured me in 1989 was simply not part of my cultural memory of that Revolution. How was this to be understood? Why were the Daughters of Quchan forgotten? What does this massive erasure of their story from Iranian national history tell us about the political culture of modern Iran, the constitution of the national memory, and modernist historiography?

Some events become subjects of history because of how they constitute an important part of national memory. Unlike such events, the Story of the Daughters of Quchan is marked as a 'scene of forgetfulness', a site of national amnesia. But this amnesia could not have resulted from a lack of the story's political and cultural significance for its contemporaries. Rather, it is the larger plot of later histories that has marked it as too insignificant to be included. Particular events acquire significance through their consequent effects and subsequent narration by historians. In other words, it is the consequent developments and the subsequent historiography that deem certain events important, others trivial. The broad outline of the narrative of the Constitutional Revolution has become fixed as a revolution made possible by the alliance of progressive clergy and bazaar merchants, united by their common opposition to foreign cultural and economic intrusions, and led by enlightened intellectuals. Once this outline became accepted as the frame story of Constitutionalist historiography, those events that could be memorialized as the symbolic representations of that outline found an eternal place in subsequent historiography. Remembering the punishment of merchants and murder of men of religion as the events that sparked off the Constitutional Revolution became the memorialization of the critical alliance of the clergy and bazaar merchants. Without any place accorded to either women or peasants in such a plot, however, there was hardly any reason for the Daughters of Quchan to be remembered. In other words, the urban-centredness and male-centredness of the plot of this subsequent historiography, as well as the central place allocated in it to the alliance of the clergy and the bazaar, have crafted the particular opening of the narrative.

The act of remembering the Story of the Daughters of Quchan then is a recuperative effort: recuperation of women into the national narrative and of gender into historiography. It is a proposition for writing a different kind of history of modern Iran that is interested in many issues thus far considered unimportant, mundane and quotidian, which are more often than not gendered through and through. And their very gendered-ness tells us a great deal about the political culture of society. This is not simply a desire for a more accurate history of the Constitutional Revolution. More importantly, it is an attempt at reconfiguration of national memory, at producing a counter-memory, counter to a cultural setting hostile to a central presence of women in its important cultural texts and in its political memory. ◆

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Middle East

HALA FATTAH

Culture and Identity in the Work of **an Historian of Ottoman Basra**

In comparison to other Ottoman Arab provinces, little has been written on Ottoman Iraq, and still less on Basra, historically Iraq's main outlet to the sea. To the vast majority of Arab historians, Basra only retains its importance because of its dominant contribution to the intellectual and religious debates of early Islam. Its later development as a key trading port for the Ottoman Empire is largely glossed over by those scholars still riveted by the 'golden age' of Islamic thought. And yet, Basra's social, demographic and intellectual evolution in the 18th and 19th centuries largely set the pattern for the province's interaction with Istanbul and the larger region throughout the rest of the Ottoman period.

The socio-economic and cultural changes that the province of Basra underwent in the latter part of the Ottoman era were of such enduring importance that they are now seen as influencing the governing paradigm used to explain the formation of present-day Iraq. The transformed socio-political cast of the population, the revival of sectarian movements over a decade and a half, the politicization of frontiers and the diminution of regional affiliation are all elements that figure in the historical development of Iraq as a modern nation-state. And these features were all central to the growth of Basra's societal make-up at the turn of the 20th century.

In the last quarter of the 18th century, Basra was in sorry shape. Plagues, financial mismanagement, reverses in trade and Persian invasions had cut into its once thriving economy and disrupted its role as a port of transit between central Iraq, Iran, Syria, the Gulf and India. However, even though the export trade suffered, Basrawi merchants retained a firm grip on the inland trade amongst the Arabian Peninsula, the Gulf coast and the Indian subcontinent. Horses, dates, grain, textiles and other finished goods were circulated and bought and sold throughout the region. As a result of this networking, a number of influential merchant families from Basra itself, as well as from Najd (northern Arabia), al-Hasa (eastern Arabia), Kuwait and Muhammara (south-west Iran) managed to hold on to their strong links with Bombay, despite increased British commercial competition. This was to come to an end in the 1860s, when the opening of the Suez Canal gave a boost to exports from Iraq, Arabia and the Gulf, and British shippers captured the vast volume of regional trade. Both developments seriously affected the regional merchant class and shook its foundations.

The fall – and partial recovery – of the regional economy (through the revitalized land trade) mirrored the vast social and intellectual changes occurring in Basra from the latter part of the 18th century. Two important developments were to have an enduring influence on Basrawi society. One was the increasing conversion of southern tribesmen from Sunni to Shi'i tenets, largely instigated by activist scholar-preachers from Najaf and Karbala interested both in defending the shrine cities from Wahhabi fundamentalism and spreading the teachings of the 'righteous' faith. The second was the attempted revitalization of Sunni schools and Sunni education under Sultanic aegis, as Abdul-Hamid II gradually came round to the view that the wayward province of Iraq had to be reformed by means of the more systematic inculcation of Sunni precepts. To understand the implications of this evolution, it is important to realize that Basra was composed of two worlds: Basra the port, a bustling arena where the inhabitants of the rural districts mixed and conducted business with merchants from all of the towns in the region; and Basra the periphery, where the tribes held sway and frequently came under the influence of the two Shi'i shrine cities, Najaf and Karbala. A growing scholarly literature, both in Arabic and English, has detailed these two intertwined developments (the most important being the works of Abdullah Nafisi, Yitzhak Nakash and Selim Deringil).

Cultural movements and sectarian developments

The most interesting aspect of the conversion movement and the challenges that it posed to the Ottoman authorities both in Basra and in Istanbul is the way it was interpreted in the local histories of the period. By far the most engaging version is that of Shaykh Ibrahim al-Haydari, a contemporary of the movement who wrote his history in the latter part of the 19th century. An 'orthodox' Sunni scholar whose family had deep roots in both the Hanafi and Shafi'i legal traditions, al-Haydari wrote a local history that gave free rein to his Baghdadi-bred cynicism, especially with regard to the movement of conversion from Sunni to Shi'i principles among the tribes of southern Iraq. Al-Haydari's chronicle is one of the most detailed sources for this development; and even while he uses disparaging terms to describe these mass conversions, he nonetheless records the names of tribes, the dates of their religious-ideological shift and the ramifications these changes had on the province of Basra.

Among the most important reactions that this movement caused was the at times energetic, though somewhat uneven campaign launched by Sultan Abdul-Hamid II to build new schools, educate more Sunni scholar-preachers and re-establish firmer ties with Sunni notables in Basra province. Al-Haydari's book dovetails neatly with this exercise. Throughout his history, he details the decline of Basra's glory and the growing ignorance of its population due to the lack of schools and, more importantly, the failure of the Ottoman leadership to remedy the situation. And he notes that the original Basrawis were Sunnis but had lapsed into Shi'ism because of the lack of official guidance and concern.

Part of al-Haydari's problem must have stemmed from the diminution of the position of the intellectual class in Iraq as a whole. The mid to latter part of the 19th century is known to have been a period of indignity for many scholarly families of Ottoman Iraq; their livelihoods came in for renewed inspection by the centralizing governors of Baghdad and Basra. Even al-Haydari's family itself was stripped of certain hereditary posts in the *ulema* hierarchy. It may be therefore be surmised that al-Haydari's book was also written as a barely disguised appeal to the Ottoman Sultan to revoke decades of neglect of the Baghdadi intellectual class, and to restore the Sunni religious aristocracy to favour once more.

Ideology and Identity

Yet another anxiety in al-Haydari's book, and one intimately linked to the Shi'i problem, was the increased weakness of the Ottoman Empire in the face of its regional and international foes. A staunch Ottomanist, al-Haydari viewed with dismay the many European attempts throughout the 19th century to carve up the empire. He was especially indignant with regard to creeping British annexation in Bahrain and Yemen. This led him to reassert a sometimes fictive Ottoman sovereignty on districts that had been at best a no-man's land, such as Muhammara (now south-west Iran) and its adjoining villages. In so doing, he traced the beginnings of an idealized Iraqi identity, couching it in an Ottoman context and lacing it with strong Sunni overtones. Thus, at times he completely disregarded the sovereignty of districts that adjoined Basra, preferring to regard them collectively as Ottoman territory, even though these same districts had come under different jurisdiction. At the same time, he used the term 'al-Iraq' on several occasions to include these same areas, awarded to Iran by international treaty. Al-Haydari's book is therefore one of the first works of history in the period to affix an Ottoman-Iraqi-Sunni identity on what had historically been a fluctuating frontier region. Multi-tiered as it was, this identity perfectly expressed the flexibility and practicality of 'belonging' and affiliation in what had been for centuries a regional world.

The permutations of identity aside, al-Haydari's work also redraws the configurations of the regional commercial class in Basra, showing that many of these long-distance merchants had homes (and businesses) throughout the region and yearly plied their occupations in areas as diverse as Najd or Bombay. By the end of the 19th century, however, this merchant class had lost the war to European shipping concerns. Trade was re-routed to British India and Europe by means of British commercial firms (many with 'native' agents in Baghdad and Basra) and British ships. Al-Haydari's book is therefore a bittersweet look at the regional market in its heyday, when Kuwaiti horse dealers fielded the best mares in the India trade and Basrawi date merchants sold their product at regional fairs. It explains the dynamics of culture within the context of a constantly changing economic picture. It portrays socio-cultural ferment within a readily understandable context where intellectual change is perceived as a reflection of economic disruption, and the loss of one's livelihood correspondingly injects an urgency into the reformulation of an individual's worldview. ◆

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Middle East

AHMAD S. MOUSSALLI

Political Islam in Sunni Communities of Lebanon

Most recent scholarly publications on and interests in political Islam in Lebanon cover primarily Hizbullah, the leading fundamentalist movement in Lebanon. A number of smaller movements, in particular within the Sunni community, have attracted less attention. Like their Shi'ite counterparts, most of these groups surfaced during the war years, in particular after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982.

The political landscape of Lebanon in the late 1990s differs markedly from that of a decade earlier. For instance, the new leadership of Hizbullah were well able to prepare the party for the new and difficult stage of post-militia politics. Many positive steps have been taken in terms of relations with the Lebanese state, whose legitimacy the party endorses. Hizbullah leaders now hold meetings with various Lebanese political factions, including bitter enemies of yesterday, like the Phalangists and the Communists. They have even met with representatives of the Lebanese government and its army. This would have been inconceivable until recently. Among the various Sunni fundamentalist groups, support for the reconstruction of the country and the State, too, has increased. But due to their limited size and failing popular support, some of these movements find difficulty in participating in post-militia politics.

Al-Ahbash

The Sunni political groups include al-Ahbash, Harakat al-Tawhid, and al-Jama^{c}a al-Islamiyya. Recently Al-Ahbash has begun to receive scholarly attention. The group, legally known as Jam^{c}iyyat al-Mashari^c al-Khairiyya al-Islamiyya (Association of Islamic Philanthropic Projects), is a small Sunni group of the traditional fundamentalist thought. Its headquarters are in the area around the Burj Abi Haydar mosque in Beirut. Al-Ahbash is spiritually headed by al-Shaykh ^{c}Abd Allah al-Habashi, a former *mufti* from Ethiopia. The group is involved with theological issues and is anti-Shi'ite and very secretive. For the last few years, al-Ahbash has become very active against Islamic fundamentalist movements in Lebanon, and one of the presidents of the association, Shaykh Nizar al-Halabi, was assassinated in 1995 by a militant fundamentalist group. The group seems to be supported by Syria, which wants to further Syrian political objectives in Lebanon.

Al-Ahbash opposes the basic doctrines of modern fundamentalist movements, which it accuses of neglecting the Prophet's traditions. It harshly criticizes other Islamic movements and accuses their leaders, such as Sayyid Qutb and Hasan al-Banna, of unbelief (*kufr*). The group conceives itself as a moderate Islamic movement that is concerned with ethics. Its current president is Shaykh Husam al-Din Qaraqira, a graduate of an Islamic seminary in Syria. Al-Ahbash's activities became more apparent when one of its members was elected to the Lebanese parliament in 1992. Al-Ahbash lost that seat during the 1996 elections, and the assassination of its leader by the Islamic Band of Helpers (^{c}Usbat al-Ansar al-Islamiyya) reduced its activities. The group has an elaborate structure that includes schools, centres, sports, and scouts. It is unclear as to who the sources of al-Ahbash funding are, especially given its spending on activities in many parts of the world.

The Islamic Band of Helpers was unknown until 1995 when it was condemned for assassinating the head of al-Ahbash, Nizar al-Halabi. Three of the assailants were executed. The leader of the group, the Palestinian Ahmad ^{c}Abd al-Karim al-Sa^{c}di (nicknamed Abu Muhjan), is still free in one of the Palestinian camps in southern Lebanon. This group is not active publicly; its members live away from Lebanese society. It is nonetheless active in Palestinian camps.

The group was founded by Shaykh Hisham Sharidi in 1985 and was allied with Palestinian organizations that opposed Yasir Arafat. It set up a training camp east of Sidon. When Sharidi was killed in 1991, Abu Muhjan became the *amir* (commander) of the group. The group takes a very strict position against those who do not follow exactly the *sunna* (way) of the Prophet. It believes that all political systems are living the life of paganism (*jahiliyya*). Al-Ahbash is targeted as its foremost enemy because of its justification of un-Islamic governments and of its very strong opposition to Islamic fundamentalism.

Harakat al-Tawhid al-Islami

Harakat al-Tawhid al-Islami is the most important radical Sunni movement in the northern town of Tripoli. It was founded in 1982, and its leader is Shaykh Sa^{c}id Sha^{c}ban, a former member of al-Jama^{c}a al-Islamiyya(Islamic Group). He was able to assert his power over the city in 1983 against Syria's wishes. Sha^{c}ban, who comes from a lower-middle-class family, has been successful in attracting the classes of the poor in Tripoli. Sha^{c}ban had been a member of the pro-Saudi Muslim Brotherhood before setting up his movement in 1982. It was the outcome of unifying three fundamentalist groups: Soldiers of God (Jundullah), al-Muqawama al-Sha^{c}biyya (Popular Resistance), founded by Khalil ^{c}Ikawi, and the Movement for Arab Lebanon (Harakat Lubnan al-^{c}Arabi), founded by Dr ^{c}Ismat Murad. However, the first two groups split from the Islamic Unification Movement by the summer of 1984, denying Sha^{c}ban an important power base. Al-Muqawama al-Sha^{c}biyya formed al-Lijan al-Islamiyya (Islamic Committees), and the Movement for Arab Lebanon formed Lijan al-Masajid wa al-Ahya' (Committees for Mosques and Neighbourhoods).

Sha^{c}ban believed the civil war could end only if *shari^{c}a* (Islamic Law) were applied in Lebanon under an Islamic government. He was very antagonistic of the communists, who were subject to the deadly massacres of his movement in Tripoli. The movement controlled the city for a few years and imposed strict Islamic laws on the people. But when Syrian forces entered the city, the movement was defeated. In recent years, Sha^{c}ban has become a close ally of Iran, and he has improved his ties with Syria.

Al-Jama^{c}a al-Islamiyya

The last Sunni group treated here is al-Jama^{c}a al-Islamiyya. This fundamentalist group was established in 1964 in Tripoli by young members of ^{c}Ibad al-Rahman (the Worshippers of the Merciful). According to one of its leaders, ^{c}Abd Allah Babati, the split took place because some younger members wanted to be involved in politics. The movement was led by the influential Sunni fundamentalist thinker Fathi Yakan, Judge Faysal al-Mawlawi, and writer Muhammad ^{c}Ali al-Dinnawi. It called for an Islamic society and state whose bases were derived from *shari^{c}a.* This call led to its advocating and using political violence and radicalism, and to the establishment of its own military wing in 1976.

The group fought during the civil war on the side of the leftist-Islamic coalition in Tripoli. While it opposes secularism and communism, it considers Islam to be the best solution to the Lebanese crisis. Later on, however, some of its members, like Yakan and Zuhayr ^{c}Abd al-Rahman al-^{c}Ubaydi, became members of the secular, though confessional, Lebanese Parliament. The group still calls for the abolition of confessionalism.

During the Israeli invasion of 1982, the group launched military activities against the Israelis. However it is not, for the time being, trying to set up an Islamic state in Lebanon, because it believes that the Islamic state should be a natural outcome of a particular environment, which Lebanon lacks because it is composed of groups that have different religions and sects. Its participation in the electoral process has reduced its original claims and led to its moderation. ◆

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Middle East

YOUSSEF COURBAGE

Christianity and Islam: Demography in the Middle East

At all four corners of the earth: the Balkans (Kosovo, Bosnia), Indonesia (Moluccas, East-Timor), Africa (Sudan), as well as the Holy Land (Nazareth), Islam and Christianity seem to be in a position of mutual rejection. Hence, the representation, which currently prevails over Europe, of a perpetual conflict. However, this vision maintained by events that indeed highlight religious conflicts, remains in a state of partiality and partialness. We thus see Islam reigning undivided over the societies south of the Mediterranean, all the while forgetting that in the Arab world as well as in Turkey, religious uniformity – currently the norm – does not date back to the beginning of time. Between the 7th century, which witnessed the warriors of Islam leaving Arabia, and the preceding century, the relationship between the two religions was not just conflictual. On more than one occasion and in more than one place Christianity would come to know unexpected recoveries.[1]

In order to estimate the changes in the relationship between Christianity and Islam, it is important to banish *a priori* the ideologies and the explanations while having recourse to guides as impartial as possible. In this respect, demography is a particularly efficient tool to gage the relative variations of the two groups by means of five processes: 1) conversion of individuals, families or entire groups, 2) massacres, which remained exceptional until the early 20th century (Armenians in the Ottoman Empire), 3) immigration and emigration, by coercion or by free choice, differentiated on the basis of religion, 4) inter-marriage, between Muslim men and Christian women, which leads to a second generation of uniquely Muslim children, and 5) birth and death rates of different magnitude leading to diverging rhythms of growth amongst Christians and Muslims.

The existing data demonstrate that for Islam to be durably installed in the Arab Orient, nine long centuries were to be necessary, from the Hegira to the end of the Mameluks. It is thus not an instantaneous religious mutation as many imagine. The conquest of souls was accelerated by the theological and national rivalries which undermined Christianity from within. The status that Muslims reserved for the People of the Book had demographic effects in the opposite sense: it allowed for Christian communities to perpetuate themselves, but stimulated conversions at the same time. The Christian nucleus which subsisted to the east of the Mediterranean revealed itself incompressible, which was not the case for the Maghreb, where the dynasties threatened by the Christian reconquest (Almoravides and Almohades) and spurred on by the zeal of neophytes, drove the last survivors of autochthonous Christianity to conversion.

The native Christianities were more than once victim to East-West confrontation, which overwhelmed them. The shock of the Crusades naturally opposed Christianity and Islam but it also placed face to face the Christians of the East and Christians of the West, who had little in common. Intimidation and humiliation imposed by the crusaders and their Latin clergy quickly transformed the mistrust into a rupture. This more than two century-long intrusion of the West was to have after effects, one of which being the appearance of a fundamentalist Islam mistrustful of difference. It imposed itself on the Christianity of the East, reducing it in terms of population and spiritual influence. The spirit of the Crusades did not vanish all of the sudden. When, in 1830, Charles X sent his troops to tackle the coasts of North Africa, autochthonous Christianity had been gone since several centuries prior. Reviving the spirit of the Crusades, half a millennium after the fall of Acre (1291) the monarch still retained the objective of reconquest, for the benefit of the 'true' religion, of the ancient lands of Christianity. The failure of the colonial venture was patently obvious in terms of religion, but paradoxically, not at all for language: nearly 40 years after independence, the imprint of the French language continues to become more profound.

Because they had conquered the Christian Balkans before the East and the Arab Maghreb, by means of frequent marriages with Christian, Greek, or Armenian princesses and ordinary women, the Ottomans arrived with much experience in inter-denominational dialogue. The special treatment they reserved for Christian minorities, notably in permitting them to regroup themselves into nations (*millet*), gave rise to a revival – which was as spectacular as it was unexpected – of Christianity. The Ottomans, contrary to the generally accepted notion that was widespread since the creation of the first nation-states in the Balkans (Greece, Serbia) and followed by those of the national entities in the Middle East, sought to control – not to denature – the populations of the immense empire they had built. For the first time since the Byzantine Empire, Christianity of the East found itself again in an immense area of trade. In Anatolia, the Ottomans permitted the recomposition of a territory where Christianity had paid the price of a religious and political anarchy, virtually having disappeared. On the contrary, under the reign of the Ottomans, the proportion of Christians in Turkey (within the current borders) and in the northern Middle East (Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Israel, Iraq) was tripled: from less than 7% at the end of the Mameluk or Seldjoukide epoch to 20-21% before World War II. Istanbul counted as many Christians as Muslims in its 1881 census. On the other hand, further away from the heart of the empire, Egypt did not take part in the re-Christianization movement.

The reasons for this exceptional rise in Eastern Christianity up to the beginning of the 20th century reside in the quasi-disappearance of conversions to Islam (sometimes even acting in the opposite sense, as did the Chebab emirs in the Lebanese mountains). It also resides in the rarefaction of mixed marriages, and immigration of Christians encouraged by the Ottoman leaders from the Balkans or even Western Europe towards Arab or Turkish cities (Aleppo or Istanbul, for example). Still more decisive was the differential demographic growth which worked in favour of the Christians: stronger stability of marriage favouring greater procreation, a phenomenon which seems to go back far in time, for the 9th-century writer Al Jahiz had already noted that thanks to their monogamy the Christians 'filled the earth'. In Lebanon and in Turkey, censuses attest the superiority of the Christian birth rate. In turn, the differences in mortality increased the gap between the two religious groups, the Christians being traditionally exempt from military service, whose duration was reduced to 12 years of service only in 1812. The hundreds of armed conflicts in Ottoman history accentuated an exceptionally high death rate among Muslims, who were already vulnerable in times of peace. Epidemics, indeed, were far more lethal amongst Muslims than Christians, due to differences in the practices implemented to deal with them. Lastly, the development of training and modern medicine, both linked to the institutions of the *millet*, would contribute to the relatively early decrease in mortality amongst Christians.

The end of the Ottoman Empire strongly marks the end of Christianity in its Turkish component and its decline or eclipse in its Arab component. In the Ottoman Empire, or more precisely, under the Young Turks and then under the Kemalist Republic, nearly 3 million Christians were to pay the shock of nationalisms and the birth of modern Turkey with their lives or by their exile. There were 1.2 million Armenians in 1914 and only 77 thousand left in 1927; 1.5 million Greeks before the 1914-1918 war, of which only 136 thousand were to survive in Istanbul and just 10 thousand in Anatolia 13 years later. In the Arab world, on the other hand, it was not massacres or exile but rather a differential demography that was to mark the receding numbers of Christians. The proportion of Christians within the total population had culminated around 1914 with 26% in the whole of the Near East: 59% in Lebanon (Greater Lebanon), 11% in Palestine, 10% in Syria, 8% in Egypt and 2% in Iraq. Today, Christians have fallen below 10% (9.2 % in 1995): 40% in Lebanon, 6.4% in Syria, 5.9% in Egypt, 3.8% in Palestine (West Bank of Jordan, East Jerusalem and Gaza), 2% in Israel, 1.5% in Iraq. This spectacular drop which brings Christianity back to the pre-Ottoman era owes nothing to conversions, which remain extremely rare, or to forced population displacement, nor to massacres (apart from such cases as the Nestorians and Chaldeans in Iraq in 1933 and in Lebanon from 1975-1990 where all the communities paid a common toll with human lives). It does perhaps have a little to do with mixed marriages. The international migrations, on the other hand, contributed to a strong recomposition of the population: long-distance emigration towards America, Africa or Australia of Christian populations – more than that of Muslims. From a regional point of view, the emigration of Christian Egyptians, Syrians, Palestinians, and Iraqis to Lebanon, where Christians were well represented, accelerated the reduction of their presence in the countries of departure, all the while allowing Lebanon to conserve an important Christian minority. However, it was principally the trends in fertility, reversed in disfavour of the Christians at the eve of the 20th century, which were decisive in the decrease in Christianity. Having entered earlier than the Muslims in the process of demographic transition and having opted for smaller families, the Christians would paradoxically pay the price of this early modernization process with a decrease in their relative numbers: a phenomenon which worsened over the generations. Today, however, the differences in fertility according to religion are fading. Muslims are entering, just the same, into the current of demographic transition. ◆

Christianity of the East by Rite and Country (in thousands) 1995

Church	*Egypt*	*Lebanon*	*Syria*	*Iraq*	*Jordan*	*Israel*	*Palestine*	*Turkey*	**All countries**
Copt (all rites)	3238.9	1.9	0.0	1.8	1.2	0.8	2.8	0.0	3298.0
Greek Orthodox	4.4	294.8	503.0	0.8	81.4	33.0	41.6	13.9	972.9
Maronite	2.5	490.9	28.0	0.0	0.0	7.3	0.3	0.0	529.0
Greek Catholic	4.7	255.2	111.8	0.7	22.1	43.9	4.4	0.0	442.8
Armenian Apostolic	7.6	196.4	111.8	25.0	3.5	1.3	2.9	68.3	416.8
Chaldean Catholic	0.5	4.9	6.7	390.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.8	409.2
Jacobite	0.2	14.7	89.4	37.2	2.2	0.1	2.5	39.9	186.2
Latin	3.8	2.9	11.1	5.2	34.9	13.2	15.2	5.7	92.0
Protestant	20.9	20.2	20.1	5.8	4.4	4.5	4.8	5.2	85.9
Syrian Catholic	1.3	19.7	22.4	55.5	0.0	0.1	0.5	1.7	101.2
Nestorian	0.0	4.9	16.8	87.7	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	110.3
Armenian Catholic	0.6	19.7	24.6	5.5	0.4	0.1	0.3	5.1	56.3
Total Christian	**3336.4**	**1326.2**	**945.7**	**615.5**	**150.1**	**104.3**	**76.2**	**146.6**	**6700.6**
Percentage in population	5.7	43.8	6.4	2.9	4.2	2.1	3.8	0.2	4.0

Source: Youssef Courbage and Philippe Fargues, Christians and Jews in Islam, London/New York, Tauris, 1997, p.209

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Notes

1. For more developments, see Youssef Courbage and Philippe Fargues, *Christians and Jews in Islam*, London/New York, Tauris, 1997, 242 p. and Philippe Fargues, *I cristiani arabi dell'Oriente: una prospettiva demografica*, in Andrea Pacini (ed.); *Comunità cristiane nell'islam arabo: la sfida del futuro*, Fondazione Agnelli, Torino, 1996, 406 p.

East Africa

LIDWIEN KAPTEIJNS

Somali Women's Songs for the First Ladies of Early Islam[1]

When a Somali woman is about to give birth, older women often arrange a ceremony to call blessings on the mother-to-be, in which they sing *sittaat*[2] – songs of praise for the leading women of early Islam, especially Faduumo (Fatima), daughter of the Prophet. Although there is no doubt that this genre of songs is old – it may even have a relationship to non-Islamic Oromo songs for the goddess of fertility – scholarly references date back only to the late nineteenth century and do not include song texts.[3]

There are three reasons why *sittaat* did not receive scholarly attention during the colonial period (c. 1885–1960). Firstly, the Orientalist paradigm in Islamic studies gave preference to what were regarded as foundational core texts from the 'Islamic heartlands', written, of course, in Arabic by men. African women's devotional oral poetry in Somali, not Arabic, was marginal to this type of Islamic studies. Secondly, it was part of especially British colonial strategies towards Islam to promote an Islamic elite (e.g. judges) trained outside of Somaliland in Islamic centres of learning that were solidly under British rule, such as Cairo, Aden or Khartoum. By insisting on 'upgrading' local Islam, the colonizers undermined representatives of popular local Islam.[4] Finally, irrespective of colonial policies towards Islam, the new educated elite in all the Somalilands (French, British, and Italian), even if undoubtedly Muslim, were deeply influenced by secular European culture and European languages. While its nationalist project included an articulation of the Somali pastoral tradition as cultural authenticity,[5] older women's religious songs did not fall within its purview.

The group of *sittaat* singers with whom I became familiar in Djibouti in 1989, held small weekly semi-private devotional sessions in their leader's home. They also performed on special occasions, for example to call upon the Sittaat (the first ladies of Islam) to bless a woman about to give birth, or on a much larger scale, to celebrate a religious holiday (such as the Prophet's birthday). When *sittaat* are sung, women sit in a circle on mats on the ground, while the leader beats a round, low and wide drum with a stick. The atmosphere is festive as between songs the women pass around herbal tea, orange sherbet, coffee, popcorn (*salool*) and Turkish delight (*xalwad*), as well as bottles of perfume and incense burners. The singing always begins with praise to God, the Prophet, and the *awliya* (those saintly individuals of Islamic history who continue to inspire many Muslims today), including the twelfth-century founder of the Qadiriyya, ᶜAbd al-Qadir al-Jilani.

God, we begin with God's bissinka [the phrase 'in the name of God,
the Merciful, the Compassionate']
God, we begin with my heart loving you.
God, we begin with the blessing of Prophet Muhammad
God, through the merit of Faduumo, daughter of the Prophet,
we seek succour.[6]

Once the women begin to address the Sittaat, Xaawo (Eve), the 'mother of the believers', is the first to be praised.

Before you, [the name] 'mother' did not exist
Before you, 'mama' did not exist
Before you, respected one, people did not say 'mother'
to each other […]
Mother, Eve, don't sleep, spread a bed of silk for us
Mother, Eve, don't sleep, weave your ropes for us.[7]

After Eve, the *sittaat* address the Prophet's mother (Amina), foster-mother (Halima), wives and daughters. It is with the songs for Faduumo (Fatima) that the session reaches it climax, for these are the songs that are believed to bring about the Prophet's daughter's actual presence in the women's midst. Some women get up and dance, at times carrying incense burners with burning coal on their heads; others are overwhelmed by emotion and are lovingly covered with shawls and sprayed with perfume by friends trying to calm them.

Madaad, madaad,[8] *Faduumo, daughter of the Prophet*
Give us that for which we call upon you
Ecstasy has me in its grip, my body is burning
Madaad, madaad, Faduumo, daughter of the Prophet
Give us that for which we call upon you.[9]

In the *sittaat* Somali women explicitly assert the common bond and plight of womanhood in two ways. First, the singers address their common problems as wives, mothers and providers in the urban slums of underdeveloped and French-dominated Djibouti. Second, as women, they appeal to the women of early Islamic history, asserting the values central to their own self-image, those of good wife- and motherhood. They praise Xaawo (Eve) as humanity's first wife and mother, Khadija as the Prophet's loyal and most beloved wife, and Faduumo (Fatima) as the Prophet's only daughter (as well as wife of ᶜAli and mother of Hasan and Husayn).

Reinforcement of the Status Quo?

The values that the women singing the *sittaat* assert are mostly dominant values that appear to reinforce the *status quo*. They do not complain about difficult husbands, but pray for help to get along with them; they do not complain about unemployed or disobedient children, but pray that their children will not go astray. As I watched the participants in these sessions – middle-aged and older women, some widows, others divorcees, many the mothers of grown (often unemployed) children, and almost all compelled to still provide for themselves as well as others – one aspect struck me as an act of resistance to their *status quo*. For these women, however old or run down by life, insist vociferously and explicitly on their own daughterhood in relation to the Sittaat in heaven. Using metaphors such as 'teaching a child how to walk', and being allowed to hold onto their 'mothers' skirt hems', they ask their heavenly mothers for the love, care and teaching daughters receive from their mothers. By expecting and asking that the Sittaat in heaven take care of them in infinite and intimate detail in this life, on the Day of Judgement, and in paradise, Somali women challenge in song the harsh age and gender-based realities of their daily lives.

That you take and welcome us, daughter of the Prophet, for that we clamour
That you come and teach us how to walk, daughter of the Prophet, for that we clamour.
You child of the Prophet, most obedient of women, give us that for which we call upon you.
[….]

Lady Faduumo, lead us with your light
Lady Faduumo, make us as you are
Lady Faduumo, give us your musk to smell
Lady Faduumo, spread your bed for us
Lady Faduumo, bring us in the presence of the good Muhammad
Lady Faduumo, help us climb your ladder
Lady Faduumo, spread your wrap as our bedding
Lady Faduumo, wrap us in your silk. [….]

Teach us how to walk, look upon us as your children
Merciful God, don't keep Faduumo away from us
May she take us by the hand on the Day on which One is Sorrowful
Make us their [the Sittaat's] companions, Compassionate God
May we all live in one home with their mothers and daughters
May we all eat together with the Sittaat and the Prophet's family
May we come to live in paradise.

In Djibouti, Somali intellectuals and scholars such as Muhammed ᶜAbdillahi Rirash and ᶜUmar Maᶜallin (who introduced me to the *sittaat*), have begun to reverse the colonial marginalization of Islamic Somali orature and to record and preserve it as part of the Somali cultural heritage. However, as they undertook this project in the 1980s, other middle-class men (merchants, shopkeepers, teachers and civil servants) adopted a lifestyle of intensified Islamic piety and looked upon Islamist movements further East for guidance. While deeply critical of any colonial or neo-colonial Western influences, the latter share with the erstwhile Orientalists a focus upon a relative small number of foundational Islamic texts. As they have resolutely turned their backs on local Somali expressions of Islamic devotion and wisdom, they appear, for the moment at least, to have contributed to the increasing marginalization of Somali Islamic orature. ✦

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1. This article is based on Lidwien Kapteijns, '*Sittaat*: Somali Women's Songs for the "Mothers of the Believers"'. Boston: African Studies Center, Boston University, *Working Papers in African Studies*, No. 25 (1995). See also *The Marabout and the Muse*, ed. Kenneth Harrow (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1996), pp. 124-141.
2. *Sittaat* refers both to the distinguished women of early Islam and the songs Somali women sing for them. The latter are also referred to as *Xaawiyo Faduumo* ('Eve and Fatima'), *madaxshub* ('the anointing of the head') and, especially in southern Somalia, *Abbaay Sittidey* or *Abbaay Nebiyey*.
3. For an early reference, see Leo Reinisch, *Die SomaliSprache*. Sudarabischen Expedition. Band I (Vienna: Alfred Holder, 1900) p. 256. Georgio Banti, 'Scrittura', in *Aspetti dell' Espressione Artistica in Somalia*, ed. Annarita Puglielli (Roma: Bagatto Books, 1988), pp.19-29. The latter gives a photograph of a late nineteenth-century *Abbaay Sittidey* text (pp.24-25), which is, however, too bastardized to deserve the name.
4. Lidwien Kapteijns, 'Islam in Ethiopia and the Horn', in *The History of Islam in Africa*, eds. Nehemia Levtzion and Randall Pouwels (Athens: Ohio University Press, forthcoming).
5. See Lidwien Kapteijns, *Women's Voices in a Man's World: Women and the Pastoral Tradition in Northern Somali Orature, c. 1899-1980* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, forthcoming).
6. *Sittaat* session led by Luula Saalih, recorded by Muhammad ᶜAbdillahi Rirash and ᶜUmar Maᶜallin for Radio and Television Djibouti in 1988. The song texts, as are all texts quoted in this article, were transcribed and translated by Lidwien Kapteijns and Maryan ᶜUmar Ali.
7. *Sittaat* session led by Luula Saalih, Djibouti, 2 October 1989.
8. This is an invocation often used in Sufi devotional practice.
9. *Sittaat* session led by ᶜAsha Muhammad (from Hargeisa), Djibouti, 13 November 1989.

East Africa

BEATRICE NICOLINI

Religion and Trade in the Indian Ocean: Zanzibar in the 1800s

Near the coast of equatorial Africa, separated from the continent by a canal some 50 kilometres long, is the island of Zanzibar (*Unguja*). It is the largest of the coral islands of the eastern coast of Africa and forms part of a coral reef that extends from the near island of Pemba (*al-khudra*, the green, or emerald island), to the north, as far as the island of Mafia to the south. It constitutes a type of extraneous coastline to the continent. The city of Zanzibar is situated to the west of the island and its port, one of the best of Africa, allows deep anchorage for the docking of the ships. Zanzibar has always been strategically important due to two fundamentally important points: its proximity to the continent and the monsoons. The regular recurrence of these latter allows continuous contacts with India, the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf; while the closeness of Zanzibar to the coast places it in an ideal position for commerce between the interior of the African continent and the Indian Ocean.

Notwithstanding a marked heterogeneity of its population – a polyethnic and a multi-religious society – south-eastern Zanzibar is inhabited principally by Bantu-speaking people known as Hadimu (Wahadimu), while the Tumbatu (Watumbatu) are found in the northern part of the island. The Wapemba tribe, however, inhabits the island of Pemba. These groups are Sunni Muslims of the Shafi'i school, despite strong connections to animism (during times of political and economic uncertainty witches, sorcerers, and an aggressive dwarf with one eye named Popobawa played a crucial role in Zanzibar). Both the Hadimu and the Tumbatu are dedicated to fishing, agriculture and animal breeding, whilst the Hadimu women are entirely responsible for the manufacture of cord made from coconut fibre in villages in the south of the island.

According to James de Vere Allen, the spread of Islam in East Africa occurred around circa AD 1050-1150.[1] Islam undoubtedly made a tremendous impact upon the people of Zanzibar. During the late 13th-14th centuries, due to an increasing number of merchants, travellers and immigrants coming from southern Yemen, from Hadramawt and from other non-Shiite areas, a solid Sunni-Shafi'i community emerged.

The mercantile power of Zanzibar

At the beginning of the 1800s, the links between the East African Coast and the Indian Ocean opened up a great deal of commercial contacts, which then flourished. With this in mind, the hegemonic accession of the Omani tribe of Al Bu Saᶜidi (Ibadhi) to Zanzibar can be seen as highly symbolic. During the 19th century, the island of Zanzibar represented one of the four terminals of Oman-Arab mercantile powers of the Al Bu Saᶜidi tribe, together with the port of Maskat in Oman, the ports of the Asiatic coastal strip of Baluchistan, Makran, the mercantile centres of the coast of West India and the coasts of East Africa. There were clear power connections among the Baluch of Makran, the Arabs of Oman, the mercantile communities of West India and the Africans of Zanzibar: the Omani were the political leaders, the Baluch the military force, the Indians were brokers, financiers, bankers and tax collectors, and the Africans were slaves. The Al Bu Saᶜidi and in particular their most glorious exponent, Saᶜid bin Sultan Al Bu Saᶜidi (1791–1856), proposed a division of power – thanks also to their ethnic-religious superiority, as one is Ibadhi only through birth and not conversion. This division would not be without conflict, although the Ibadhi sultans were highly tolerant, and it has to be remembered that the centrality of Islam, together with the power of magic and ritual of the Zanzibar tribes, decreased since the early 19th century. Inevitably, the presence of Omani governors (*liwali*) with their Baluch mercenaries, and of Indian merchants was bitterly resented by the local population.

The Asiatic community of Baluch warriors represented strength, the *shawkah*. They were Sunni Muslims of the Hanafi school and, those coming from Makran, Zikris; as they were famous for their tactics and courage, the Arabs always considered the Baluch more trustworthy than the Arab mercenaries. Another essential and decisive factor for the extraordinary development of Zanzibar in the 1800s was the even more active presence of the Indian mercantile communities. The *banyan*, considered by the Arabs as *mushrikun* (polytheists), were absorbed into and protected by the institution of *aman* (protection). The first Indian merchants to trade in Maskat and in the Persian Gulf were the Bhattia (from *bhatti*, *subhatta*, Hindu warriors from the Vaishnavi caste), originally from Rajahstan. Another group of Bhattia was the Kutchi, also comprised of Hindus who enjoyed great privileges in Maskat and who were exempt from paying taxes to the Arabs. Together with this group of Hindu merchants were the *Khojas* (*khwajahs*), Ismailites. They were described by explorers and English merchants of the 1800s as being slight of figure, with a lighter complexion than that of the Arabs, with long moustaches, no beards and a Chinese ponytail at the base of their shaved heads. The richness and elegance of their clothing, as distinguished by silk tunics with long, ornate sleeves, was a sure sign that manual work was foreign to them. Socially isolated from the Arabs, they observed a strict endogamy and were principally devoted to boat construction. The Ismailite Indians were numerically the largest group in East Africa. Yet at the beginning of the 19th century, it was the Hindu merchants who maintained and intensified an undisputed financial hegemony. Islam in Zanzibar was often used as a political weapon, defining hierarchical differences and ethnic origins. But, it should be stressed that profit, not power, was what counted.[2]

Consequently, the Omani dynasty of Al Bu Saᶜidi respected the Hindu merchants' wide-ranging connections in the western Indian Ocean, which allowed them to enjoy the functions of both mediators and lenders in the various Indian mercantile communities present in Zanzibar, and also to benefit from their widespread presence within Swahili society. It was this emergence of a politically powerful elite, in contact with native population that gave rise to the commercial splendour of Zanzibar. The lucrative trading of the West Indian Coast constituted all types of merchandise and spices, which in most cases were valuable.

Slavery in Zanzibar

The most important 'product' brought by the Arabs in Africa, however, were slaves. Bearing this in mind, the growth in the demand for sugar cane from the Mascarene islands and for ivory and cloves from East Africa fired the continual demand for slaves on the plantations (*shamba*) in Zanzibar and for manual labour for the transportation of goods. This caused a widespread migration of slaves from the interior of the African continent towards the coasts and the islands. Slavery did not only occur as a result of direct capture, but also resulted from misleading contracts between the tribes of the interior – among others, the Yao and Nyamwezi – and the slave merchants. Furthermore, there were the recurring periods of drought along the Mrima coast, opposite the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba. Slaves that came from areas not influenced by the Swahili culture were not Muslims (Islam was the religion of all free Swahilis within the Arab dominion); these slaves were the property of their owners. They represented a closed caste not yet absorbed into the coastal population, either having been transported in their childhood within the borders of Zanzibar or born into slavery. The most privileged were naturally the domestic slaves. The demand for slaves came from various quarters: from Arabia, foremost, where the cultivation of dates demanded a high influx of man labour at zero cost; from India, where they were used on oases, on sugar and tea plantations; from Central Asia, where they started the practice of cotton cultivation; from various areas of the Ottoman Empire; and from America. Another 'speciality' was the eunuch, especially appreciated in the Ottoman Empire. The organ mutilation was carried out in totally unhygienic conditions, resulting in a survival rate of one in ten of those eunuchs transported from Africa.

Zanzibar, however, remained undisturbed, almost non-existent to the Europeans, until the French arrived at the close of the 18th century. The influence of the French in Zanzibar was exerted through commercial treaties and agreements with the Arabs present on the island concerning trade in slaves and African ivory – both flourishing and lucrative commodities. Very soon, however, fascination for the blank spaces on the world map, together with the archetype of the 'exotic island' which Zanzibar represented (rich in spices, perfumes, luxuriant vegetation, with drinking water, fruit and good money-making prospects through the commercial trading of slaves, ivory and spices and other commercial temptations) opened the door to a new world scene. The centre of this scene was to take the shape of Anglo-French rivalry for strategic control and political-commercial supremacy over the Indian Ocean – a rivalry that developed from the predominance of Great Britain, which virtually transformed the waters of the Indian Ocean into an English lake. Britain's impact on Zanzibar during the 1800s undoubtedly interfered with the social and religious composition of the island; its strategy was based on commercial-political control of local mechanisms of power, mainly through the banning of slave trade. The power of Al Bu Saᶜidi in Zanzibar in the 1800s was inevitably destined to decline. ◆


ZANZIBAR NATIONAL ARCHIVE MUSEUM.

Portrait of Saᶜid bin Sultan Al Bu Sa'idi (1791-1856)

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Notes

1. J. de Vere Allen, (1993), *Swahily Origins. Swahili Culture & the Shungwaya Phenomenon*, London, Currey, p. 16.
2. J. Middleton, (1992), *The World of the Swahili. An African Mercantile Civilization*, Yale University Press, p. 44.

Central Africa

XAVIER LUFFIN

Muslims in Burundi
Discretion and Neutrality

Today, mentioning Burundi evokes directly the conflicts which opposed Tutsis and Hutus in 1993 and 1995-6, just as in Rwanda. The Muslim community in Burundi does not exceed two to five percent of the population, but their history and their behaviour in the last tragic conflicts between Hutus and Tutsis deserve to be analysed.

Muslims in Burundi live mainly in cities such as Gitega, Rumonge, Nyanza, Muyinga, and Makamba. The largest Muslim community lives in the capital, Bujumbura, especially in the neighbourhoods of Buyenzi, Bwiza and the *quartier asiatique* (originally created for the Indian and Arab traders by the colonial Belgian rulers), where the main mosque is situated. The Islamic Cultural Centre, built by the Libyan government under the Bagaza presidency (1976-1987), is also located there.

The Muslims in Burundi have miscellaneous origins. Besides a small number of converts from among the 'original' Burundians – Hutus and Tutsis – an important Congolese population settled in Bujumbura, which lies some kilometres away from the border with Congo. The large Rwandan community also includes numerous Muslims. The *Warabu* – Kiswahili for 'Arabs' – are Omani and Yemeni traders who have lived in Burundi or in other neighbouring East African countries since several generations. Most of them have forgotten Arabic: they speak Kiswahili and the national language Kirundi, or even French. Other Arabs from Sudan, Mauritania and Lebanon have come more recently to trade in the capital. Muslim *Bahindi*, a name given to the Indians and Pakistanis, also settled in the country long ago and are often confused with the *Warabu*.

Besides those communities, West Africans arrived in the country in the last decades. Originally, they were traders coming from Mali, Senegal and Ivory Coast, importing clothes and fabrics or dealing with gold extracted from Congolese mines. Most of the West African traders left the country when conflict broke out in 1993, although some still have small shops in the central market or in Bwiza.

Diverse Origins

Islam was introduced by Arab and Swahili traders. Since the early 19th century, caravans coming from the Indian Ocean coast penetrated as far as Ujiji (today in Tanzania), on the bank of Tanganyika Lake looking for ivory and later for slaves. Around 1850, they created a colony at Uvira, on the Congolese edge of the lake. Both cities became the meeting points of the caravans and traders – Arabs as well as Africans like Swahili, Banyamwezi, Bamanyema – began to exchange their products with Nyanza and Rumonge, coastal cities located in Burundi.

Little by little, Islam penetrated the country. In 1885, the governor of Ujiji, Mohammed Bin Khalfan (called *Rumaliza* in Kirundi, 'the one who takes everything'), decided to extend his power to the North, aiming to reach more ivory and slaves. Bin Khalfan was a member of the Barwani's, a famous Omani family that had settled in East Africa. He multiplied his incursions on the Burundian coast of the lake – although he never succeeded in penetrating the country in a long-lasting way – firmly defended by King Mwezi Gisabo.

In the 1890s, when the first missionaries arrived in what is now Bujumbura, they found some *Wangwana*, a name given at this time to the Muslim Africans in Central Africa. The presence of Islam in the city then increased with German colonization: a large part of the *askaris* – indigenous soldiers included in the colonial troops – were Muslims, while Indian and Arab traders hastened to the city, wishing to profit from the developing site. The Germans also incorporated many Swahili and Banyamwezi into the police and the administration. Kiswahili became German East Africa's official language, alongside German of course. When World War I broke out, the majority of Bujumbura's population professed Islam. At this time, the Burundians preferred to live inside the country, far from the lake. A local tradition even held that the King could not look at the Tanganyika Lake, for if so he would die. The Burundians started to settle down in this city with the Belgian colonization, which began in 1919. But even then, the phenomenon was slow to increase: in 1957, Burundians constituted not much more than 27 percent of Bujumbura's population. Besides them, there were more than 80 so-called 'tribes' speaking 34 different languages and using Swahili as their lingua franca. And Muslims still constituted 35.6 percent of this mixed population. The Burundian Muslims are Sunnis. However, a small Shiite mosque is located in the *quartier asiatique*, mostly frequented by Indians and Pakistanis. There are also some Ibazi – Swahili for Ibadites – coming mainly from Zanzibar and Oman.

In Burundi, Muslims have a close relationship with Kiswahili, a Bantu-language containing an important vocabulary from Arabic. It is even rare to meet a Muslim who does not speak this language. In the same way, 'Swahili' is the term commonly used to say 'Muslims' in Burundi, and the Muslim neighbourhood of Gitega, the second city of the country, is called the *quartier swahili*. Prayers are uttered in Arabic, as is the reading of the Koran, although believers use Kiswahili translations of the *masafi* (from Arabic *mushaf*) and the *juzu* (Arabic *juz'*) of the Holy Book as well. Recently, a local intellectual translated some prayers into Kirundi, which were published in Kenya with Saudi funds. It should be said that Kiswahili does not belong to the Muslims alone: most of Bujumbura's inhabitants understand it. It is even used for mass in some churches, and television and radio programmes are broadcast in this language.

Away from Politics

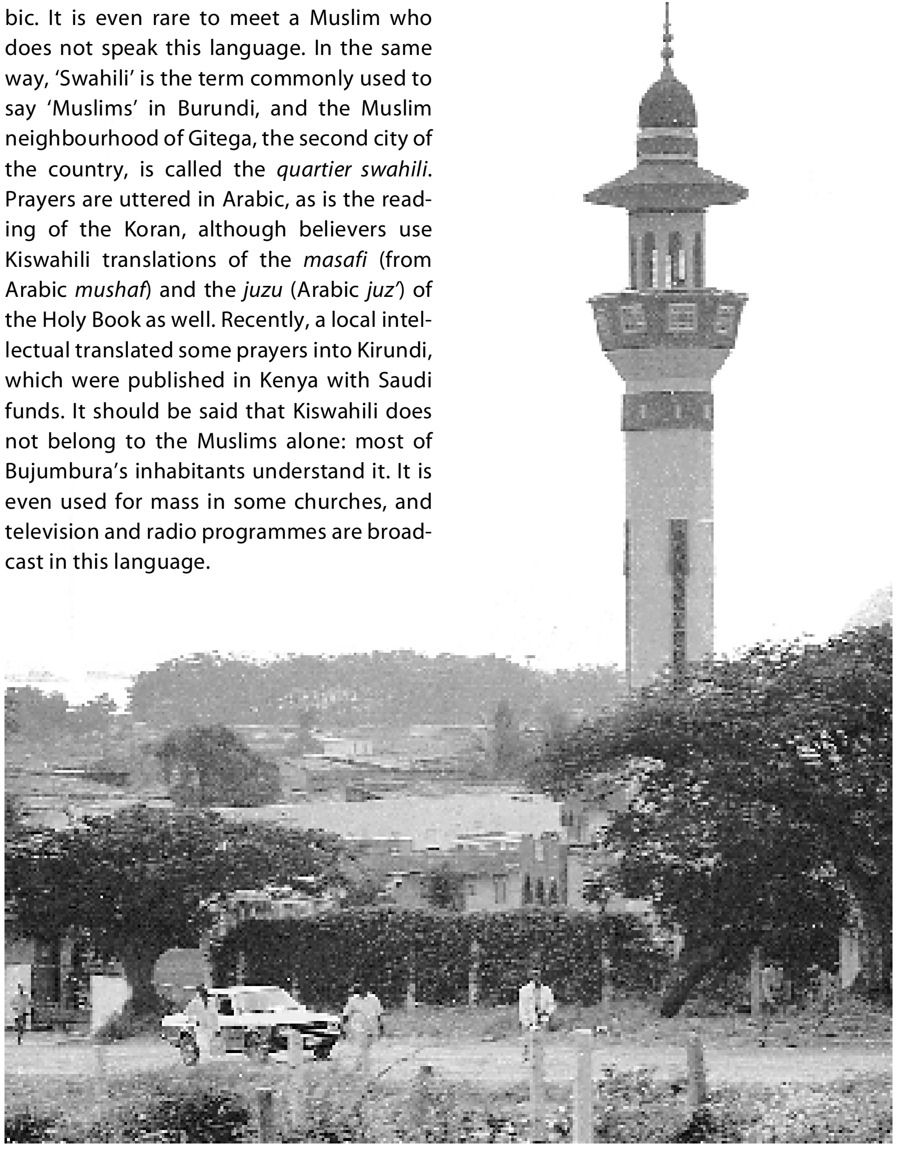
During the tragic conflicts between Hutus and Tutsis in 1993 and 1995-6, Muslims stayed out of the clashes. In Buyenzi, a man remembers that 'during the events, our neighbourhood was called 'Swiss', until the army threatened to transform it in a new Tchetchenia!' In 1995, when the army did away with the Hutu neighbourhood of Kamenge, its inhabitants fled directly to the 'neutral' Buyenzi, which is now overcrowded. In Rwanda, the situation was much the same. This does not, however, mean to imply that all Muslims completely withheld from participation in the massacres. Certain Muslims are wanted by the Burundian Justice for their participation and some are now being judged in Arusha for participation in the Rwandan genocide.

During the last years, conversion to Islam in both Burundi and Rwanda has firmly increased. Of course this could be due to a general need for spirituality after such a tragedy. There is also an observable new enthusiasm for Catholic and especially Protestant churches. It is nonetheless obvious that Islam attracts many for its having been neutral during the conflicts. How can this neutrality be explained? Many Muslims say it is due to the fact that they identify themselves as Muslims, and not as Hutus or Tutsis. This idyllic point of view, however, is not always true. Some Burundian Muslims emphasize their 'ethnic' roots; others do not. A Muslim clerk of Bujumbura stated that the newly converted insist more than the others on their ethnicity and he does not hide his fear of this new phenomenon.

Issa Ngendakumana is a Muslim and a former minister, currently residing in Belgium. He remembers very well that he understood his ethnic origin only in 1972, when the army killed thousands of Hutus. Before this, he never wondered whether he was a Tutsi or a Hutu. According to him, this was not due to his religion: at the time, a lot of peasants did not really care whether they were Hutu or Tutsi. Ngendakumana stresses that most of the Muslims are of foreign origin and so they do not identify with this dual vision of society. He also recalls that Muslims do not participate in political life. And it is the politicians who emphasize the so-called difference between Hutu and Tutsi. To date there have been only five Muslim ministers, and this, only since the nineties.

How can the distance from power be explained? A local Muslim journalist in Burundi asserted that his co-religionists were excluded from schools, and thus were excluded from political activities. Some have taken a Christian name in order to pursue their studies. Again, Ngendakumana placed that assumption into perspective: 'There has never been a real discrimination toward Muslims at school, even if we can observe much less education among Muslims. But schools in Burundi have been first created and managed by the Catholic Church. Thus, Muslim students didn't feel at ease in these institutions…'

This leads to another part of the explanation. The Catholic Church cannot be separated from Burundian (and Rwandan) contemporary history. It may be positively or negatively perceived, but it is never seen as a neutral observer. Catholicism was implanted in Burundi and Rwanda as a tool of colonial power, and it has developed theories which reinforced the difference between Hutu and Tutsi. After the independence, it maintained the role at times of an ally, at others as an opponent of the government. The churches were used by some priests to exhort or to justify their crimes. But Islam is never associated with political events in the area. On the other hand, the few Muslims who took part in the massacres generally acted as individuals, never as believers using their faith to exterminate their brothers. A last point to put forward is that Muslims are traders and live in towns. They are not directly involved in land possession and exploitation, both key elements in the understanding of the conflict in an overcrowded and agricultural area. Whatever the reasons, the behaviour of Burundian Muslims is worth mentioning. It is a proof that the 'ethnic' scission is not a fatality in Burundi. ◆



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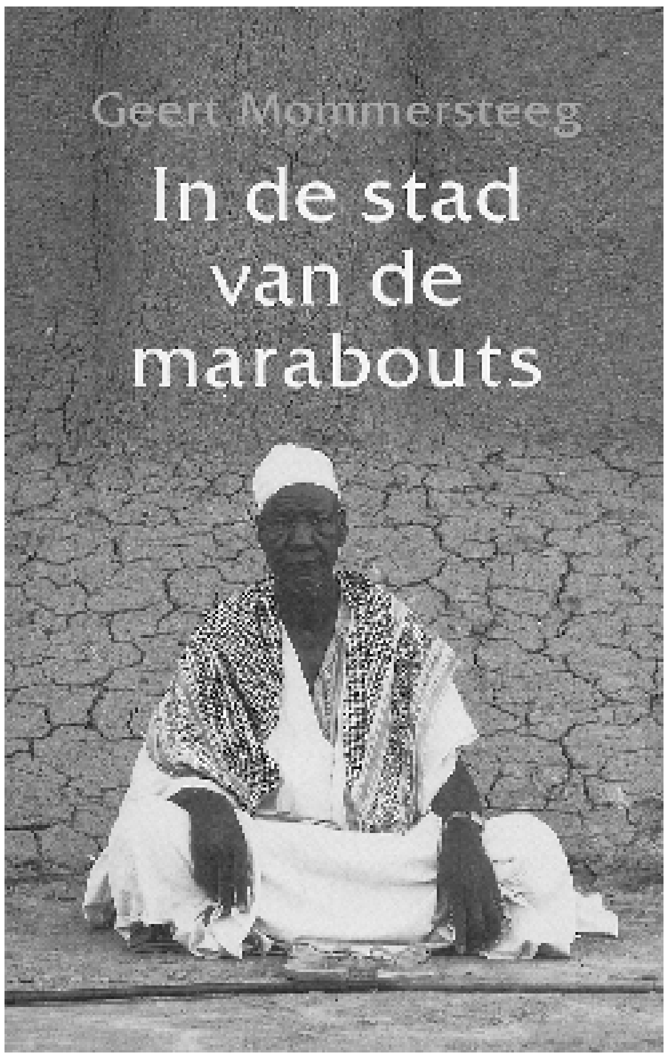
West Africa

GEERT MOMMERSTEEG

Qur'anic Teachers and Magico-Religious Specialists in Djenn

'May God give him a long life. May God give force to his mother's milk. May God make him strong so he will join our ranks. May God let him lead the live of a Muslim. May God give him a good life when he will stay in our town and may He give him a good life when he will settle elsewhere.' When seven days old, a baby is blessed by a Qur'anic teacher. After he has first announced the name of the newborn child, the marabout asks God to give it a long life, health and strength.

The town in which an infant is welcomed in this way is the ancient town of Djenné, situated in the Inner Niger Delta in the republic of Mali. Djenné was once an important commercial centre. Although the town was never as famous as its 'sister', the legendary city of Timbuctoo, during its heyday in the 15th and 16th centuries Djenné played a important role in the trans-Saharan trade. It was here that the salt merchants from the desert in the North met the gold traders from the South. Islam was part of urban life in Djenné from an early date. When at the beginning of the 13th century, the 26th chief of Djenné proclaimed his conversion to Islam, 4200 *ulama* were present, as written by the West African historian es-Sa'di in approximately 1650. Although the writer, himself once imam of the town, may have exaggerated, clearly Islam was significant in the city at that time, and it remains so today.



Djenné is now a small town with about 13,000 inhabitants of ethnically diverse origin – mostly Marka/Sonray, Fulani and Bozo. It is of only minor economic importance to the region. But Djenné's famous mosque (placed on UNESCO's world heritage list) and its many Qur'anic schools still reflect the glorious days of the past.

The town has some 35 schools for elementary Qur'anic education as well as a dozen schools for 'secondary' education where law, Arabic grammar, rhetoric and literature, theology, the traditions of the Prophet and Qur'anic exegesis are taught. Teachers at these schools are known as *alfa* (derived from the Arabic *al faqîh*) in Songhay, or *môdibo* (from the Arabic *mu'addib*) in Fulfulde. Young children are entrusted to an *alfa* for instruction in reciting the Qur'an. Older students seek his guidance in their pursuit of Islamic knowledge. In French, the language of the former colonizer, the teachers are known as *marabout*, a term which is employed throughout Muslim West Africa.

Marabouts, as my research assistant Boubakar Kouroumanse once told me, 'teach how to follow God and marabouts know how to ask God'. In this concise way, he referred to the two kinds of knowledge marabouts possess. A distinction is made between so-called 'public' knowledge and 'secret' knowledge. Public knowledge is associated with the praxis of education at the Qur'anic schools and secret knowledge is applied in 'maraboutage' – the complex of magico-religious practices of which amulet production and divination are the most significant.[1]

Marabouts and the individual's well-being

Marabouts play an important role in the life of the individual in Djenné. This becomes especially clear at the critical stages of life – birth, circumcision, marriage and death. At an infant's naming ceremony a marabout announces the child's name and blesses it. At the time of their circumcision, young boys are provided with amulets to protect themselves against evil and dangers. When the boys return to their families, after a fortnight of seclusion, a marabout pronounces benedictions for them. A marriage is contracted by a marabout and, finally, it is a marabout who leads the last prayers over a corps and directs the reading of the Qur'an or the Dala'il al Khairat – a panegyric in honour of Muhammad – at the condolence gatherings to facilitate the afterlife of the deceased.

The individual's well-being, however, is not only taken care of at the critical stages of life. In everyday existence, marabouts also render a variety of services to ensure a person's health, to offer security and to guarantee spiritual and material welfare. By means of divination, supererogatory prayers and amulet production they may contact and employ the hidden powers of the supernatural world for the benefit of their clients.

The following fieldwork experience was a revelatory incident in this context. During one of our weekly visits to a marabout, I was asked to read a letter for him. He handed me the letter, which he had received that day, and I began to read the short French text. Each time when I had read a couple of words I took a short pause to allow Boubakar to translate into Songhay. The letter was sent by a man from Bamako (the capital of Mali) and contained a request for the marabout's help in obtaining a job at a certain company. The man literally asked the marabout to 'pray' for him to get the job. When I read this aloud, Boubakar, slightly hesitating, translated the French *prier* with the Songhay *dyingar*; the verb which stands for performing the *salât*. At that moment the *marabout* burst out laughing and said: '*Dyingar*? *Gara* I suppose he means!'

Gara is the Songhay term for what is called in Arabic *du*^{c}*â'*: a 'prayer of request' or 'personal invocation'. The difference between *dyingar* and *gara* is essential. As a follow-up to the incident in which the marabout juxtaposed the two terms, Boubakar and I (first together and later on with some marabouts) elaborately discussed the issue. In these discussions, more than once reference was made to the Qur'anic verse 'Call upon Me and I will answer' (40:62) or to the *hadîth* 'Petitions are the weapons of the believer'. Given these sayings, so my interlocutors argued, it is possible to attain certain things by asking God for them.

Blessings, amulets and divination

Blessings pervade social life in Djenné. Unremittingly, God is asked to take care of His servants. 'May God save us.' 'May God protect you during your trip.' 'May God approve it.' 'May God give you strength.' 'May God protect our town.' These and numerous other benedictions can be heard during special occasions as well as in everyday life. Everyone can call upon God and everyone's request may be granted by Him.

God, however, has many names by which He can be invoked and some of these are more powerful than others. Making a particular request to God using a powerful name will bring about a quick and certain result. Moreover, everywhere in His Holy Qur'an, God has spoken powerful words. If employed properly, the inherent powers of these words can be used for all kinds of purposes. Dissolved in a potion of 'holy water' or written in an amulet, the powers ascribed to Qur'anic words can be applied for different curative, protective or causative purposes. Yet, neither the special names and the specific Qur'anic passages, nor the often intricate techniques to apply them are common knowledge. These are the secrets in which the marabouts are specialized. This knowledge enables them to ask God to render a trader successful in his business, to provide a woman with a long desired child, to cure someone from a disease or to let a woman fall in love with a man who has his eye on her.

In West Africa, the legitimacy of amulets is a matter of debate, as elsewhere in the Islamic world. According to orthodox opinions – in particular the Wahhabiyya – magical practices corrupt the Islamic religion. The true believer has to refrain from them. However, when amulets are defined as 'requests to God', justification for them can be found in the Qur'an and in the sayings of the Prophet. Thus the activities of the marabouts in this field acquire a religious basis.

Regarding the practice of divination, whose status is comparable to that of amulets in terms of ambivalence, the following may be noted. When a marabout examines the 'situation' of a client, the outcome of the divination frequently includes instructions for the client to give away a specific present in order to favour the outcome of his or her affair. In this sense, the act of charity, which is in and of itself religious and meritorious, is of an unequivocal purposive character. 'Giving' goes explicitly together with 'asking'. Not only the receiver of the gift will bless the generous giver so that God may recompense him or her, but also the marabout will, subsequent to the divination, write an amulet to ask God to approve the specific request of his client.

In Djenné, the marabouts' knowledge covers the entire realm of well-being. The various features of the human plight, from existential problems to the uncertainties of daily life, are dealt with. Their knowledge concerns as much the religious rules the believer has to follow in order to be rewarded in the afterlife as it does the ways in which prosperity can be obtained in the here and now. ◆

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Notes

1. In the second half of the eighties and the early nineties I conducted anthropological fieldwork among the marabouts of Djenné. See my PhD thesis *Het domein van de marabout. Koranleraren en magisch-religieuze specialisten in Djenné, Mali* (Proefschrift Universiteit Utrecht) Thesis Publishers, Amsterdam 1996. A popular version appeared as *In de stad van de marabouts*, Prometheus, Amsterdam 1998. A French translation of the latter is anticipated.

The Balkans

MICHAEL SELLS

Balkan Islam and the Mythology of Kosovo

The curse below was revived with a vengeance at the 600th anniversary commemoration of the death of Serb Prince Lazar at the battle of Kosovo in 1389. Religious nationalists in Serbia accuse not only the Ottoman Turks who fought Lazar, but also the Balkan Muslims of today of being stained with the blood of Christ-prince Lazar.[1]

Whoever is a Serb of Serbian blood
Whoever shares with me this heritage,
And he comes not to fight at Kosovo,
May he never have the progeny
His heart desires, neither son nor daughter;
Beneath his hand let nothing decent grow
Neither purple grapes nor wholesome wheat;
Let him rust away like dripping iron
Until his name be extinguished.[2]

In a Passion play, the actors who kill the martyr (Jesus, for example, or Imam Hussein) exit the stage quickly to avoid being pummelled by the audience. When an excited crowd rushes the stage to beat the actor, time is collapsed. The crowd reacts not as an audience watching a representation of a past event, but as if they were actually living the original event. While stage re-enactment was not an important part of the Kosovo pageant of 1989, a similar collapse of time was evident. The relics of Lazar were transported around Serbia, arriving at the monastery nearest the battle site on the feast day of Lazar (Vidovdan). There they were ceremonially unveiled for the first time in history. Slobodan Milošević then mounted a stage on the battle site and, with a backdrop of Kosovo symbolism and before an excited audience of more than a million people (some of them waving his picture alongside images of Lazar) boasted of his plan to revoke Kosovo's autonomy.

This time collapse was tied to other powerful symbols: 1) the sacred space of the 'Serb Jerusalem' – as Kosovo, with its magnificent monasteries of the medieval Serb kingdoms, is called by Serb nationalists; 2) the historical memory of atrocities suffered by Serbs in World War II – a memory heightened by ritual disinterment in the late 1980s of remains of Serb victims amidst calls for revenge and the stereotyping of all Bosnians, Albanians, and Croats as genocidal; and 3) false claims by Serbian bishops and academics that Albanians in Kosovo were engaged in mass rape, systematic annihilation of Serb sacral heritage, and genocide. Religious nationalists exploited the mythology of Kosovo throughout the 'ethnic cleansing'. Paramilitaries wore shoulder patches depicting the battle of Kosovo, sang songs about the Kosovo battle, forced their captives to sing songs, and decorated themselves with medals named after heroes of the Kosovo battle.

The nexus of primordial time, historical memory, sacred space, and accusations of present genocide – all brought together around the 1989 Kosovo commemoration – was inflamed further by a particularly virulent form of Orientalism. In the 19th century, Serbian nationalists made explicit the portrayal of Prince Lazar as a Christ-figure: a Last Supper with twelve knight-disciples, including one traitor, and a Mary Magdalene figure. The most important work of 19th century Serb nationalism was *The Mountain Wreath*, a verse drama published in 1857 by the Montenegrin Orthodox bishop known as Njegoš. It opens with Serb bishops and knights deciding to 'cleanse' Montenegro of non-Christians. The Vlad (Prince-Bishop) summons the Slavic Muslims and offers them a last chance to convert. The Muslims reply that Orthodox and Muslims are one people and request a 'godfather' (*Kum*) ceremony through which blood feuds were healed. When Serb elders reply that the ceremony requires baptism, the Muslims suggest baptism for the Christian child and ritual tonsure for the Muslim child. The inter-religious *Kum* ceremony is rejected and the Muslims are driven away as 'Turkifiers' and 'spitters on the cross'. The play ends with a glorification of the Christmas extermination of the Muslims, the annihilation of all traces of their existence, followed by ritual communion (without the confession obligatory after all killings) for the Serb knights. In the view of the Njegoš, the antagonism between Christian and Muslim is not only age-old: it is eternal, built into the very structure of the cosmos. *The Mountain Wreath* was reprinted and disseminated in 1989. Later, Serb nationalists celebrated the 'cleansing' of villages in Bosnia by posting on the Internet verses from *The Mountain Wreath* celebrating 'the extermination of the Turkifiers'.[3]

Burning of the National Library in Sarajevo by Serb shelling in late August 1992.

PHOTO: US MEMBER OF THE SFOR IN DOBOJ

This concept of 'Turkifier' reflects Christoslavism, the notion that a Slav who converts from Christianity is transformed ethnically into a Turk. Twentieth-century writers (both Catholic and Orthodox) combined Christoslavism with racial ideas. Conversion was simultaneously a race-betrayal and race-transformation that left one perpetually outside of the 'people' and placed one alongside those with the blood of the Christ-prince Lazar on their hands. Ottoman rule was portrayed as one of unremitting savagery in which the Ottomans 'stole the blood' of Serbs and Serb culture and destroyed the great monasteries of Kosovo. Ironically, the latter claim is often made on tours of the monasteries that in fact survived very well the five centuries of Ottoman rule.[4]

The monasteries also survived centuries surrounded by Kosovar Albanians. Yet, motivated by repeated false claims that the 'Turks' (i.e. the Albanians) were destroying the monasteries, Serbian militias destroyed thousands of Islamic monuments in areas of Bosnia they controlled, including major masterworks of the 16th century such as the Ferhadiya in Banja Luka and the Coloured Mosque of Foča. In Sarajevo, the Serb army burned the National Library (more than a million volumes and a hundred thousand rare books) and the Oriental Institute (with over 5,000 manuscripts in Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Slavic, and Aljamiado). One goal of destroying the evidence of shared civilization was to help establish as fact the Serbian nationalist myth, which holds that Muslims and Christians never were 'one people' and are doomed to repeat age-old antagonisms. Tragically, Western policy makers and especially UN commanders adopted the aggressor mythology of inevitable age-old hatreds to excuse their refusal to protect the victims of 'ethnic cleansing' or to allow them to defend themselves. In Kosovo, Serbian religious nationalists have been equally methodical in effacing identity – from libraries and mosques to wedding rings and identity cards.[5]

Bosnian Serb leader Biljana Plavšić, a biologist and former head of the Academy of Natural Sciences in Sarajevo, announced in 1994 that:

> *[…] it was genetically deformed material that embraced Islam. And now, of course, with each successive generation this gene simply becomes concentrated. It gets worse and worse. It simply expresses itself and dictates their style of thinking and behaving, which is rooted in their genes.*[6]

As shown by Plavšic´ and her formerly secularist and communist colleagues, the effectiveness of the Kosovo nexus of religious and historical mythologies is not dependent upon self-conscious beliefs or sincerity. For leaders like Plavšic´ and their followers, it provides an alternative system of logic that makes plausible their sudden conversions and justifies their acts to themselves and their audience.

A Bosnian refugee told me the following story: When her Serb neighbours protested against their participating in 'cleansing' the Muslims, Serb paramilitaries shot them dead in front of their son and then forced the son into the army. The Muslim woman's husband was the *Kum* (godfather) of the Serb son. Break the inter-religious *Kum* bond, which presupposes that Christians and Muslims are 'one people', is the currently the goal, just as it was in *The Mountain Wreath*. Proposals to validate that goal and partition the Balkans along religious lines, placing Balkan Muslims in economically and politically untenable enclaves (landlocked equivalents of Gaza) would lead to further violence or – if the consistent history of non-Christian ghettos in Europe since 1096 is any guide – to an even worse outcome. Meanwhile, the Bosnian Muslim family has preserved the home of their Serb friends for the return of the son, for whom they are now searching.

After years of propaganda, Njegoš-style mythology, and complicity in genocide, Serbian society has been radicalized. Serbia's most popular politician is Vojislav Šešelj, an open proponent of annihilation of Kosovar Albanians, and its most popular celebrity is the indicted war criminal Arkan. Even so, when the radical elements in a society are defeated, a society can turn quickly to its better values (witness the transformation of formerly fascist states after WWII). The international community can support the many who still refuse the ideology of religious apartheid or it can betray them by ratifying 'ethnic cleansing'. The stakes are high, both for the moral universe we will inhabit and for the already delicate relations between the Islamic world and the West. ◆

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Notes

1. The full argument and documentation for the following remarks are found in Michael Sells, *The Bridge Betrayed: Religion and Genocide in Bosnia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2nd edition, 1998) and at the Bridge Betrayed War Crimes and Human Rights documentary page at http://www.haverford.edu/relg/sells/reports.html
2. Translated by Milorad Ekmecic, 'The Emergence of St. Vitus Day', in Wayne Vucinich and Thomas Emmert, eds., *Kosovo: Legacy of a Medieval Battle* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), p. 335.
3. Bishop Petar Petrovic II (Njegoš), *The Mountain Wreath*, translated by Vasa Mihailovich (1986).
4. This essentialist view of Islam has been adopted by the popular writer Bat Ye'or, who bases many of her generalizations on the writings of Serbian nationalists. Bat Ye'or, *The Decline of Eastern Christianity under Islam* (Madison: Farleigh Dickenson University Press, 1996), p. 239.
5. See Andras Riedlmayer, 'Bosnia's Cultural Heritage and Its Destruction' (Philadelphia, 1994), videocassette, and the photo essays on the Community of Bosnia Web page: http://www.students.haverford.edu/vfilipov
6. Biljana Plavšic, *Svet,* Novi Sad, September 1993, cited and translated by Slobodan Inic, 'Biljana Plavšic: Geneticist in the Service of a Great Crime', *Bosnia Report: Newsletter of the Alliance to Defend Bosnia-Herzegovina* 19 (June-August 1997), translated from *Helsinška povelja* (Helsinki Charter), Belgrade, November 1996.

Balkans

NATHALIE CLAYER
ALEXANDRE POPOVIC

A New Era for **Sufi Trends in the Balkans**

Sufism has always marked the practice of Islam in the Balkans, since the Ottoman conquest, especially through the implantation of brotherhood networks. With the withdrawal of the Ottomans, from the end of the 17th up to the beginning of the 20th century, part of these networks disappeared, since a lot of their members either perished in the wars or fled to Turkey. Another part of these networks remained – especially on the western side of the Peninsula – and continued to regulate the religious as well as the social life of significant Muslim groups. However, in the latter half of the 20th century, the communist regimes in Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Romania and Albania endeavoured to weaken the religious institutions. In Albania, they were even completely dismantled by the authorities in 1967.

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the new political situation is fraught with 'positive' consequences for Muslims in the Balkans: liberty of expression and of circulation, intensification of contacts with the Muslim world, and the possibility for foreign missionaries to come and proselyte. On the other hand, these Muslims, and their Christian neighbours, are confronted with extremely troubled economic and social situations, and even with conflicts – sometimes armed (e.g. Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo). Religious practices, those of the Sufis in particular, are dependent on developments in local history, as well as on the present political and social context in each country or region. We will not give here a complete and detailed panorama of the Sufi reality in the Balkans of today (whose importance is quite limited in comparison with the size of local Muslim communities), but rather shall try to emphasize the main characteristics of its evolution – from the surviving ancient networks to the appearance of new ones.

The weight of the past

In the eastern part of the Peninsula, in Bulgaria, Romania and Greece (i.e. Western Thrace), ancient Sufi networks have been almost totally destroyed in the 20th century, except for the special case of the Alevi-Kizilbash communities, which in fact have their own heterodox and syncretistic religion. On the western side, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, it seems that the Sufi tradition, which despite much suffering since the end of the Ottoman domination, survived mainly through Mathnawi 'lessons', *mevlud* ceremonies and the activities of a few Nakshbandi *tekkes* and Rifa'i and Kadiri circles. This tradition has experienced a certain revival in the last years. Did the Sufi members play a role, as such, in the recent events? This we do not know, but Sufism and Sufi networks could have been utilized for certain political and ideological reasons. In the other ex-Yugoslav provinces, that is to say in Kosovo and Macedonia, where the bulk of the Muslim population speaks Albanian (and not Slavic as in Bosnia and Herzegovina), the Dervish brotherhoods were, to a certain extent, less challenged than those in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Especially in the second half of the 1970s, a Rifa'i shaykh of Prizren had the possibility to give a new impetus to the local *turuq*, by unifying them within an organization, and by using the funds offered by emigrant workers. Nevertheless, in these regions, an interesting phenomenon is the appearance of gypsy networks, whose members are often in search of a greater legitimacy within the Muslim society. Although these networks are linked with different *turuq* (Halvetiyye, Rifa'iyye, Sa'diyye, etc.), we have to admit that the practice of rites tend to be homogenized, with the *ijrah*, a very spectacular ritual of mortifications, becoming for all of them the central point of the *dhikr*.

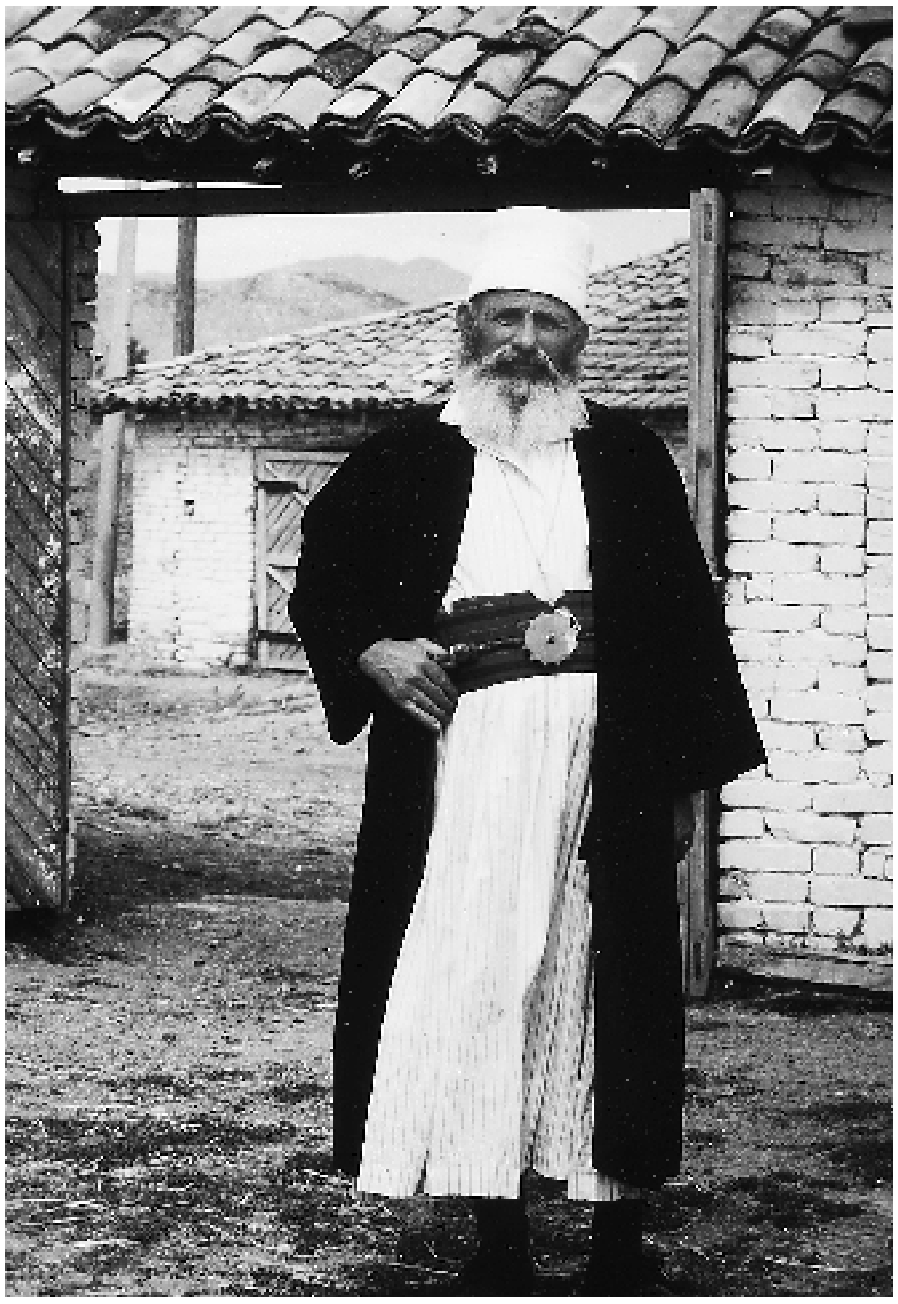

PHOTO: NATHALIE CLAYER

Bektashi-dervish in Korç , SouthAlbania.

The case of Albania differs greatly for two reasons. There, the Sufi current, which continued to flourish even after the end of Ottoman domination, was totally smothered during the communist period, as were all religious manifestations. The second reason is that, one of the Sufi brotherhoods – the fervent heterodox and syncretistic Bektashiyye – became an independent religious community alongside the Sunni community. When, at the end of 1990, religious practices were re-authorized by the government, the Bektashi community as well as the other mystical brotherhoods tried to re-establish themselves. Descendants of shaykhs first rebuilt *türbes* (mausoleums) in order to regain legitimacy via the saints' *baraka* and thereby to obtain believers' donations for financing. Some of them then attempted to gather small congregations and to perform rituals. Certain new 'shaykhs' came to be helped by Albanian Sufi shaykhs from Kosovo, as was the case for the Rifa'iyye, or for those from other regions. It is often like a slow re-apprenticeship of practices and doctrines, as can be witnessed in the Kadiri *tekke* of Tirana, where in 1993 men and unveiled women performed the *dhikr* in the same circle, while two years later there was already a clear segregation of men and women during these ritual prayers; the latter wearing white veils for the occasion. The *ilahi* (religious hymns) had also been learned and sung to greater perfection.

Recent evolutions

However, besides the restoration or consolidation of ancient networks, three important evolutions in the Balkan Sufi scenery are noteworthy: first was the introduction of new networks, via 'missionaries' who come to the Balkans, as well as the young Balkan Muslims who go to study in different Muslim countries where some establish contacts with Sufi groups; and second was the introduction and development of movements in the region, which can generally be considered as 'neo-brotherhoods', such as the Süleymanjis or the Nurjus-Fethullahjis, both having originated from Turkey and having been issued from the Nakshbandiyye. For example, the Süleymanjis are implanted in Albania, where they have begun religious classes and have opened a Turkish-Albanian religious centre. The followers of Fethullah Gülen, for example, extended their network and activities in various countries such as Romania, Bulgaria, Macedonia and Albania. They are publishing local editions of their newspaper (*Zaman*) and have opened private secondary schools – in some cases also religious schools.

The third important evolution is Shiite proselytism, which is particularly effective among Sufi milieus of the Western Balkans. In fact, in the same way that they are trying to introduce their doctrine in Turkey among the Alevi groups, the Shiites are working to diffuse Shiism in the Balkans, especially through the re-emerging Sufi networks. In Albania, for example, the Shiites approached the representatives of the Bektashis, the Halvetis, the Rifa'is and other Sufi brotherhoods (whose mystical knowledge is as poor as their financial means). They help them to publish Shiite-oriented books and offer fellowships to allow for young Albanians to study in Iran. In Kosovo and Macedonia, Shiite groups from Iran as well as from Western Europe get in touch also with Muslims who are now convinced of seeing in Shiism the 'true Islam' of the third stage, which is to succeed Sufi Islam – itself considered the second stage after Sunni Islam.

It is difficult to know how the Sufi currents, which remain somewhat marginal with respect to the mainstream of Islam, will develop in the Balkan Peninsula in the future. Already it is clear that they have entered a new era. The Muslim community of these regions is closer to the rest of the *Umma* than before. New trends are being introduced, not only from the East as in the past, but also from the Muslim diasporas of Western Europe. The Sufi networks in the Balkans will certainly carry out the same transformations that were undergone in other parts of the Muslim world concerning the adaptation of their social role in modern society. Furthermore, internally, because of the important political changes, they will have to re-position themselves vis-à-vis the new Muslim religious (and political) authorities. ◆

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Russia

ALEXANDER G. SELEZNEV

The Northernmost Outpost of Islamic Civilization

According to certain legends still very much alive today in the local collective memory, the first Muslim missionaries came to the territory of Western Siberia and began to disseminate the true belief in Allah among locals in 1394-1395. Today, amidst conditions of burgeoning ethnic, cultural and religious self-awareness of the citizens of Russia, this legend has taken on the character of a genuine historical fact. The Siberian cities of Omsk and Tyumen – centres of dense Siberian Muslim populations – celebrated the 600th anniversary of Siberian Islam as national and religious holidays, which were accompanied by festivals of traditional culture and scientific conferences.

Islam is the official religion of an overwhelming majority of Turkic language speakers living in the south of Western Siberia. More specifically, this population professes Sunnism. There are three large Muslim ethnic groups in the Siberian region: Siberian Tartars (over 180,000 persons), Western Siberian Kazakhs (over 160,000), and the Volga-Ural Tartars (60,000 persons). Siberian Islam draws its historical significance from the fact that it constitutes the northernmost outpost of Islamic civilization in the world. Siberian Muslims are compactly settled in national villages (Aul, Jurt) and also live in large cities together with representatives of various nationalities such as: Russian, Ukrainian, German, Latvian, and Estonian. The national culture of Tartars and Kazakhs has been preserved in villages. It is thus still possible to observe traditional modes of cattle breeding, hunting, fishing, as well as traditional dwellings, food, clothing, and art. Almost every Tartar and Kazakh settlement has a mosque and Muslim priest – *mullah*. Western Siberia is an example of the peaceful coexistence of different cultures and religious systems: Orthodoxy, Protestantism, and Islam.

Islam entered the Siberian Khanate as an official religion in the 1570s, the time of Khan Kuchum. Archaeological findings testify that subjects of Islam in Western Siberia in the 17th and 18th centuries are practically non-existent. It is probable that Islamic ideas did not spread among the population groups in this period. However, in the mid-19th century a legend was recorded which stated that in 797 of the Muslim Era (1394-1395 AD), 366 horse-riding sheikhs and their ally Sheibani-Khan, together with 1,700 soldiers, arrived on the banks of the Irtysh River. There they fought a great battle to spread the Islamic faith to the Siberian inhabitants, consisting in the Khotan, Kara-Kypcjak, and Nogaj. The Muslim missionaries coming to Siberia were said to be disciples of the mystic Hadji Baha ad-Din Naqshband (1318–1389).

Another version of this legend, still alive in the national memory of Siberian Tartars, holds that all 366 sheikhs were treacherously killed and then buried by disciples in special sacred cemeteries – *ostana*. Some modern surnames of Siberian Tartars and names of their settlements stem from the word sheikh (preacher), such as the surname Shihkov, and the village Shykhcha. All groups of Siberian Tartars have legends of old religious wars, during which Muslim missionaries destroyed old idols – *qurchak* (dolls). These legends are found in relation to information about the Naqshbandi Sufi order, one of the most widespread Sufi brotherhoods in the 15th century. The Naqshbandi order was characterized by a high degree of socio-political activity. The members of the order played an important role in the final establishment of Islam in Central Asia and East Turkestan, as well as among Kirghiz and Kazakh tribes. Intervening in secular authority and contact with the various political circles form the most important postulate of this brotherhood.

Surely, the dissemination of Islam was a very long, inconsistent and tragic process, and undoubtedly cannot be reduced to any one legendary event or historical episode. However, the spread of Islam among Siberian Tartars and Kazakhs meant important changes in their political and ethnic structure. The nucleus of the Kazakh people was formed in the 15th and 16th centuries within the framework of the Kazakh Khanate. The Siberian Khanate was transformed into an independent state in the second half of the 16th century, a period which saw the beginning of Tartar's ethnic groups. The distribution of Islam was the external expression of these social and ethnic processes. For example, the forming of Baraba Tartars (one of the ethnic groups of Siberian Tartars) occurred in the 17th and early 18th centuries. Baraba Tartars practised shamanism in the beginning of the 18th century. However, already by the mid-18th century, Islam had spread extraordinarily quickly among this group. Interestingly, the Chulym Turks (a small group of Turkic-language speakers, surrounded by Muslim and Christian populations) have maintained shamanism as the main form of religious practice, not superseded by Christianity or Islam.

The dissemination of Islam promoted the establishment of a basis of Muslim culture among Siberian Tartars and Kazakhs: The norms of Muslim justice and morals, Muslim rituals and holidays, and even Muslim names became tradition for these peoples. Muslim schools were founded to offer education to the Kazakhs and Tartars, and to acquaint them with Arabic and Persian languages. Furthermore, mosques were built in Siberian cities and villages.

In the 1920s and 1930s, the terror Stalin exerted upon the Tartar and Kazakh peoples was directed especially against the Islamic preachers. It is interesting to note here that the people of Siberia were long acquainted with the regional religions up to the spread of Islam. The medieval Central Asian state associations – the Old Turkic Khanate I and II (552–630 and 682–745), the Uygurian Khanate (745-840) and the state of Yeniseien Kyrghyzs (6th–13th centuries) – all played an important role in the history of these peoples. Shamanism served as the ideological basis of the Old Turkic Khanates. Manichaeism, however, was the official religion within the frameworks of the Uygurian confederation of the peoples of Central Asia and Southern Siberia, and then among the ancient Kyrghyzs. Manichaeism constitutes a religious-philosophical system, based on a synthesis of Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and Christianity. Thus, the peoples of Siberia had experience in interacting with ancient religious systems and with the world religions. This experience is reflected in the ethnographies of Siberian Muslims.

But shamanism has left the greatest mark on Siberian Muslim culture. For example, the term *tengre* (meaning God, deity) has been maintained among Kazakhs and almost all groups of Siberian Tartars. The same word meant 'supreme deity' in the Old Turkic epoch and in modern times it has spread among the followers of shamanism in the Sajan-Altai region. Other deities and spirits known to Siberian Tartars and Kazakhs (*jer'-su*, Earth/water, *umaj*, *qut*, *natigaj*), were considered sacred by Medieval shamanist-Turks and Mongolians as well. The traces of a fire cult, preserved among the Kazakhs and Tartars, can be explained by the influence of Middle Asian cultures. The word *Qudai* (*Huudai*), signifying God, is Persian in origin and is known to Western Siberian Muslims and Sajan-Altai shamanists. Animistic beliefs are also connected with the ancient shamanic beliefs. They are expressed in the form of hunting-fishing cults of the spirits (*ijasy*, *ese*): the spirits of the water (*su ijasy*), the forest (*picin*, *pichin*, *urman-isasy*), houses (*oj ijasy*), fire (*ot ijasy*) and others.

Shamanistic beliefs were preserved to the greatest extent by Baraba Tartars. Ethnographic sources at the end of the 17th–early 18th centuries, offer detailed descriptions of Baraba shamans (*kam*), shamanic practice, attributes of a shamanic cult, and shamanic rituals and customs.

Shamanistic notions penetrate the whole complex of Siberian Tartar's spirit culture. For example, Siberian Tartars' burial buildings comprise frames (*kirtme*, *sukky*, *oj*) and poles (*bagan*, *orma*), which have deep and very ancient analogies among the non-Islamic peoples. Poles on graves symbolize the 'world tree', connecting in one unit: the universe; the shamanic stairway, used by shamans for contacting the upper spirits; and the sex distinction of buried persons. Frames on graves symbolize the house of the deceased. On the other hand, Islamic features (invitation of *mullah*, non-participation of the women at the burial ritual) are typical for the rituals of Siberian Tartars as well.

The formation of an original Muslim-shamanist syncretism based on the organic synthesis of Islamic and pre-Islamic beliefs and cults of the Turkic-language population of the Western Siberian plain. The strata include not only traces of the early religious forms (e.g. shamanism), but also of relics of pre-Islamic religious systems, which have found expression in the worldviews of these peoples. ◆

Funeral prayer, Siberian Tartars

PHOTO: ALEXANDER SELEZNEV

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Eastern Europe

GEORGE GRIGORE

Muslims in Romania

Romanian principalities, once known as the 'gates of the Levant', have a history of religious and ethnic diversity. In Romania today, the Muslim population traditionally lives together with the Romanian majority (Christian-Orthodox) in an area called Dobrudja, a territory bordered to the east by the Black Sea, to the west and north by the Danube River and to the south by the Romanian-Bulgarian frontier.

The Muslim community from Dobrudja, which is Sunni, Hanafitic rite, is composed of two major ethnic groups: the Tartars and the Turks. Nowadays, Muslims from Dobrudja or from abroad live in all the important Romanian cities, being structured in more or less stable communities. According to the official census of 1992, there were 29,533 Turks and 24,649 Tartars registered, meaning that the Turks as well as the Tartars represent each an approximate percentage of 0.1% of Romania's 22,760,449 inhabitants.

Ottoman presence

The Muslim presence in Dobrudja is explained by the fact that this territory was under the domination of the Ottoman Empire for almost five centuries. The Ottomans conquered Dobrudja in several stages. The first stage is represented by the conquest of the strategic points of Inisala and Isaccea by the Sultan Bayezid I (1389-1402). After a short re-conquest of these territories by the *voivode* of Wallachia, Mircea the Old, most of Dobrudja was conquered by the Sultan Mehmet I between 1419-1420. This marks the second stage in the process of settling Ottoman power in the region. The third and last stage is represented by the conquest of the fortresses Chilia and Cetatea Alba by the Sultan Bayezid II (1481-1512) in 1484. As a result, Dobrudja became a constituent of the Ottoman Empire, belonging to the great *beylirbeylik* of Rumelia. Dobrudja had been under unceasing Ottoman domination until 1877 when, after the Russian-Romanian-Ottoman War, Romania gained independence as a state, subsequently acknowledging Dobrudja's annexation by the Treaty of Berlin (1878).

The first Muslims – a group of 10-12,000 Anatolian Turkomans led by Sari Saltik – settled down in Dobrudja in 1263-1264. The famous Arab traveller, Ibn Battutah (1334), made the first documentary attestation of Tartars living in this area. According to the discovered traces, the first groups of Tartars, as part of the empire of the Golden Horde, seem to have settled here during the time of the Tartar leader Noghai (1280-1310), who ruled over the northern side of the Balkan Peninsula up to Dobrudja. The name of Noghai assumed by a part of Dobrudja Tartars must have its origins in the colonization of that time.

Sultan Bayezid I brought Tartars to the area of Babadag. Later on, Sultan Mehmet I (1413-1421) colonized in Dobrudja both Tartars and Turkomans from Asia Minor. Another stage of the colonization in Dobrudja is connected with the Sultan Bayezid II who invited Volga Tartars to settle in the southern Basarabia (Budjak) and northern Dobrudja. During several stages, Anatolian Turks were colonized in Dobrudja. During the 17th and 18th centuries, the Crimean Tartars continually migrated to Dobrudja. This migration grew to a considerable size at the time the Crimea was annexed by the Russians in 1783, after the Russian-Turkish War. After the Crimean Tartar emigrants had established themselves in Basarabia, as a first stage of the emigration process, they then crossed the Danube and settled down in Dobrudja in 1812. As a result of these successive emigrations, there are three Tartar dialects in Dobrudja: the Crimean dialect or the steppe dialect (in Tartar: *krim* or *sol tili,* 70%), the Noghai dialect (in Tartar: *noghai tili*, 20%) and the seaside dialect (in Tartar: *yaliboyi tili*, 10%).

In order to accentuate the element of Islam in Dobrudja, the Ottomans brought in other populations from all over the Empire: Persians, Kurds, and Arabs. The latter, for instance, consisted in 150 Syrian families of *fellahs* who were brought to Dobrudja between 1831-1833. All these populations mingled with the Turks, being assimilated within a short period of time.

The King Carol I Mosque in Constanta

PHOTO: MIHAI NESTOR

Turks, Tartars, Albanians and Gypsies

At the beginning of the 20th century, as a result of the deterioration of the economical conditions, Turkish and Tartar populations migrated massively to Turkey, so that many villages were left entirely abandoned. The number of religious shelters can also demonstrate the decrease of the Muslim population. Whereas in 1900 there were 260 mosques in Dobrudja, at the end of World War II there were only 151 left. The decrease has remained in process up to the present day, the number of functional mosques coming down to about 80. The number of Muslim graveyards has also decreased from 300 to 108, which are still in use.

Apart from the Turks and the Tartars, other Muslim ethnic groups can also be found in Romania, such as the Albanians who emigrated in great number after World War I from many regions of the Balkan Peninsula. According to certain studies, there are approximately 3,000 Muslim Albanians in Romania. They are fully integrated into the Tartar-Turkish community, not only by means of marriage, but also through the bonds of custom and tradition and by the sharing of mosques and graveyards. This makes it very difficult to establish their exact number. A fact that is worth mentioning is that the first translation of the Koran to modern Albanian (written with Latin letters), entitled *Korani* (*Kendimini*) was published by Ilo Mitko Qafezezi – an Albanian from Romania – in 1921 in Ploiesti.

Another Muslim group in Romania is comprised of Muslim gypsies living in Dobrudja. These are local gypsies who converted to Islam during the Ottoman domination, or Muslim gypsies who emigrated from other parts of the Ottoman Empire. Some of them seem to have mixed with the vagrant Anatolian Turks who were present in Dobrudja, becoming an ethnic group now called 'Turk gypsies'. Their number is not exactly known as they generally declare themselves Turks in the census.

After 1989, new Muslim ethnic groups appeared in important cities of Romania such as Bucharest, Iasi, Cluj, and Timisoara. Such groups are the Arabs (who came mostly from the countries of the Arab Mashriq like Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine); the Iranians; the Kurds (who came from northern Iraq and south-eastern Turkey), etc. Some of these communities have their own mosques, schools (such as the Iraqi School in Bucharest), bilingual periodicals (Romanian-Arabic) such as *Al-'Usbu' Al-'Arabi* (The Arab Week), and cultural and religious centres (especially in Bucharest). These new communities have not joined the old Muslim community in Romania, the two groups living almost parallel lives. Very few of these newcomers to Romania have obtained Romanian citizenship and those that have, generally did so through marriage; most of them emigrate to Western Europe after they have remained in Romania for a while, which makes these communities very unstable. On the other hand, many Turks from Turkey have joined the old Turkish community in Romania and consolidated it. There is also a small number of Romanians that have recently become Muslims, yet have not formed a unified community.

Culture and education

Dobrudja is a place with lots of vestiges of the Ottoman domination period, such as mausoleums and tombs of some Muslim saints and Ottoman magistrates that can be found at Isaccea, Cernavoda and Babadag. In Medgidia are the ruins of one of the oldest Muslim schools (*medresa*) in the region. There are also some mosques, still in use, which are real masterpieces of architecture, such as Esmahan Sultan Mosque in Mangalia (constructed in 1590); Ghazi Ali Pasa Mosque in Babadag (constructed in 1522); and Hunkiar Mosque (constructed in 1870) and Anadolkoy Mosque (constructed in 1860) in Constanta. During the Ottoman times, education was mostly religious. In Dobrudja, the oldest *medresa* was built in Babadag in 1484, by the order of the Sultan Bayezid II. After 1878, the Romanian State reorganized the educational system in Dobrudja, secularized it and introduced the Romanian language in schools. The theological seminary in Medgidia, which had been moved from Babadag in 1903, was abolished in 1965. School education in Tartar and Turkish was gradually eliminated after 1959, and the study of these languages became optional. After the fall of the communist regime in Romania in 1989, the Turkish language was reintroduced as study language for both Turkish and Tartar ethnic groups in the schools with Tartar and Turkish pupils. Furthermore, in 1993 the Muslim theological and pedagogic secondary school 'Mustafa Kemal Atatürk' opened its doors, continuing the tradition of old seminary. ◆

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There are two monthly publications, issued in Constanta, worthy of mention: Hakses *(in Romanian and Turkish) and* Karadeniz *('The Black Sea'; in Romanian, Turkish and Tartar). In addition, the Kriterion publishing house in Bucharest has been printing books in Turkish and Tartar languages since 1980. In the High Institutions of the State, there are two deputies in Parliament representing two political organizations of the Turkish-Tartar community in Romania, namely the Democrat Union of the Turkish Muslim Tartars in Romania and the Democrat Union of the Turks in Romania.*

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Scandanavia

JONAS OTTERBECK

’A School for All’
Muslim Pupils in Sweden

The limits of normality in Swedish public schools are defined by the majority society.[1] Structures that are somewhat invisible to participants in the school system uphold a structural marginalization of Muslim pupils and exclude them from normality. This is not only a question about what is taught in class as subjects or how questions about diet are resolved, it is also about how symbolic Muslim identities are viewed. This can be seen in the light of how time and space are structured in school.

In 1975, the Swedish government made a declaration that from then on Sweden was to be a multicultural society. A programme of three goals was put forward. Equality, freedom of choice and partnership were the keywords. Since then, Sweden has changed in many ways, and institutions to support the multicultural society have been created, become obsolete, reformed or closed down.

The discussion on the role of multiculturalism has affected the curriculum of the Swedish public school. Today the school is described as nondenominational and multicultural. The school is ‘for all’, no cultures or religions being subject to discrimination. The school is, however, not neutral. Certain key values are to be honoured, for example equality and democracy. The school is also meant to protect the freedom and integrity of the individual, and the teachings and atmospheres there are to be characterized by pluralism, tolerance, openness and respect for the dignity of each human being.

The idea of a nondenominational school was put forth in the curriculum of 1962, and in that of 1969 the instruction in ‘Religion’ changed its profile from Christianity to all religions (but with the main focus on Christianity). These reforms were not made to meet the demands of immigrant parents. Instead they mirrored the ideas of the Swedish majority society, especially the Social Democratic Party who then had political hegemony. Today the situation is different. Actual pluralism exists in the schools. The rest of this article will develop the difficulties of implementing the above-mentioned ideals in the everyday life of schools.

The rhythm of the majority

In school there is a certain rhythm of time for the day, week and year. It consists in public holidays, feasts, working hours, etc. It creates ideas of what normal distribution of time is. The rhythm reflects a Swedish secular worldview, but also a Swedish Christian heritage. It includes Christmas celebrations, Lucia, the Easter celebrations, a ceremony in a local church at the end of the term, etc. This idea of a normality of distribution of time is one plausibility structure of the majority society and as such it is often taken for granted. Parents, teachers and educators from the majority culture presuppose this normality and when they meet with other’s opinions and traditions, they are forced to relativize their own tradition. There is a wide range of reactions, from protectionism to a will to change. One common reaction is: ‘But it is important for all pupils to get to know the Swedish traditions to be able to participate in the society’. Besides presupposing a fixed ‘Swedish culture’, this is a kind of protectionism. Other things that are likewise important to understand in Swedish society are taught in class and not enacted as rituals. It sanctions some pupils’ normalities; while others that would like to see, for example, other time normalities, are excluded.

The rhythm of the minorities

Muslim pupils are not just Muslim pupils. They carry other identities apart from the religious: national, ethnic, gender, and class background. Furthermore, they also carry subcultural identities formed around musical styles, consumer patterns, political engagement, etc.[2] At the same time, however, ‘Muslim’ is a symbolic identity that connects a person to discourses on ‘Muslim-ness’ among both Muslim and non-Muslim groups.

In Swedish schools there are no special activities in connection with religious feasts other than traditional Swedish Christian ones.[3] Thus, Id al-fitr and Id al-adha are not celebrated by a break in the normal timeflow of the week. Teachers do not read from a *sira* of Muhammad, or talk about the importance of the pilgrimage to Mecca. Instead Muslim pupils (and their parents) have to negotiate for the right to be free on certain extra days every year. Slowly, pragmatic solutions have developed. As late as 1993, the board of the Schools of Stockholm sent out a recommendation, advising the schools to give Muslim pupils some days off for the Ids if they so desired. The paper sent out by the board was called ‘Fundamentalistic Muslims’ demands on the School’. The choice of words signals that these demands are made by ‘difficult’ persons excluded from Swedish normality.

Some pupils want to try to fast during Ramadan. It is common for parents (if they place importance on Ramadan) to encourage their children to try to fast a couple of years before it turns into a religious duty. This begins with a day or two and then increases over time. The children get feedback and encouragement if they succeed in fasting. It is part of growing up and of taking on a grown person’s responsibility.

One boy told me how he had to go to the school nurse during Ramadan. He had stomach-ache and head pain. The nurse suggested that he take a painkiller, but the boy said that he could not because he was fasting. The nurse then told him that it was not good for the body to fast and that all it resulted in was that pupils had difficulties following the lectures. She obviously became irritated because her proposed solution could not solve the problem.

This is only one example amongst many, but it fits into a pattern where Muslims are excluded from normality. The Ramadan fasting period and its rituals do not fit into the time flow at school (I am not arguing that it should or should not). Significant persons for the secondary socialization of the pupils, like teachers and other staff at school, generally do not confirm this kind of normality.

To move in school space

At certain schools in Sweden there are quite a few girls who wear the veil. As a female pupil from Eritrea recounted: ‘When you go out, there are a lot of people who stare at you when wearing the veil. I mean outside of school’. The girl felt that inside the school no one cared if she wore a veil. But outside, she frequently had to deal with conflicts.

At another school with many Muslim pupils, a teacher conducted an experiment after a discussion that I had with her about positive recognition. She noticed that a girl had a new veil and remarked that it was beautiful. The girl turned that teacher into her new idol and followed her around for almost a week. As the teacher claimed, this was probably the first time she had ever heard a non-Muslim adult saying something positive about her veil or even about her faith.

Amongst pupils I think the veil is seen more as a part of normality than amongst the adults at schools. For several teachers, especially female, the veil symbolizes female oppression. They find it hard to accept it as something normal to wear the veil. This dislike may be well hidden, but is sometimes detected by the pupils. When the above-mentioned teacher expressed something positive about the veil this came as a surprise for the girl.

The school is connected to the larger society’s understanding of time and space. In it, the time and space normalities of the majority society are enacted. Being Muslim (committed or not) means to have a symbolic identity connected to time and space normalities other than those of the majority society. My point is that it is possible to see that in the socialization process of Muslim youth their symbolic identities as Muslims are often denied in school. But it is not as simple as it is sometimes presented: If the schools meet the needs and demands based on normative Islam, everything is fine. The symbolic identities will still be a problem. This is not about Islamic theology, nor is it very much about the practice. It is rather only about certain parts of the faith and practice that have consequences on behaviour and symbolic identities that contrast the time and space normalities of the majority. If schools are to be multicultural and ‘schools for all’, this will have to be looked into, especially since Islam as a phenomenon is highly disliked by the general public (we have good statistic material to prove that).

Some adjustments could easily be made. An important part of this is communication. Both the schools and the parents have to take their responsibility. On the one hand, parents could inform the school about religious feasts. On the other, schools could buy a multicultural calendar (there are at least two Swedish ones) with the dates of the main religious celebrations. Clearly, a well thought out strategy is necessary in changing the everyday experience of time and space normalities that tend to marginalize Muslim pupils into one which is truly multicultural. ◆

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Notes

[1] ‘Normality’ refers to everyday practices that are sanctioned as normal in a given group. The practices are ordered in discourses. ‘The view of the Swedish majority society’ refers to values or systems of values promoted as representative for the majority of Swedes. In connection with schools, this often reflects middle class values.

[2] There are at least 250,000 persons with a Muslim background in Sweden (no unobjectionable statistics are available). The largest groups are the Bosnians, Iranians, and Turks. There are also numerous groups from Iraq, Somalia, Palestine, Kurdistan, and smaller groups from several other countries.

[3] Some changes have occurred during the last year. Certain schools in Malmö have rescheduled to fit in Ramadan.

Western Europe

MOCH. NUR ICHWAN

Prayer in the Surinam-Javanese Diasporic Experience

The Surinam-Javanese community in the Netherlands is divided over the question of the prayer direction; some perform their prayers facing the East, but most turn to the West. The majority are *kejawen*, following the syncretic practices and beliefs of Java. In this community the *keblat (qibla)* expresses a unique diasporic experience and identity.

The main route of Javanese diaspora in the Netherlands was through Surinam. From 1890 onward, the Dutch colonial authorities in the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) recruited villagers from Java as contract workers for the plantations in another Dutch colonial land, Surinam. Most of them were *kejawen* Muslims. *Kejawen* Islam, which was dominant in Javanese villages, is a syncretic Islam which incorporated old Javanese beliefs, including Hindu-Buddhist elements. The Javanese arrived in Surinam without persons learned in religion. It was not until the beginning of the 1930s that – partly through contacts with Hindustani Muslims – some realized that the Ka^{c}ba was not located to the West, but to the northeast of Surinam. Subsequently, a number of Javanese Muslims started praying in that direction. This small group, led by Pak Samsi, encouraged people to change their direction of prayer to the Northeast, usually simplified as East. Since then, this small group has been called *Wong Madhep Ngetan* (east-*keblat* people). Later some became very critical of what was seen as the superstition and religious innovation (*bid^{c}a*) among the Javanese Muslims. Others did not openly criticize the practice of praying to the West as most of the Javanese Muslims continued to do; hence they are called *Wong Madhep Ngulon* (west-*keblat* people).[1]

Javanese prayer in the Netherlands

When Surinam became independent in 1975, a number of Javanese opted for the Dutch nationality and migrated to the Netherlands. At present, over 22,000 Surinam-Javanese live in this country, concentrated in the cities of The Hague, Amsterdam, and Rotterdam.[2] The majority of Javanese in the Netherlands adhere to *kejawen* Islam, although a number of reformist organizations have gained some ground within the community. The organizations of *kejawen* Muslims in the Netherlands are generally cultural organizations, but several, like Pitutur Islam, carry religious names. Unlike their counterparts in Surinam, they do not have their own mosques. There are several active organizations amongst the Javanese Muslims praying to the East. One such organization is the Al-Jami^{c}atul Hasanah, which shares its mosque in Rotterdam with the PPME (Persatuan Pemuda Muslim Eropa) the Young Muslim Association of Europe, an organization which entertains relations with the large Indonesian traditionalist organization, the Nahdlatul Ulama. Members of the reformist Rukun Islam organization in The Hague are associated with the main reformist movement in Indonesia, the Muhammadiyah.

The *kejawen* Muslims conceive the reformists as belonging to an 'Arabic Islam'. In their attempts to preserve their Javanese identity, the question of *keblat* occupies an important position. The debate on the *keblat* that began in Surinam has been continued in the Netherlands, but the debate is not as heated as it was in Surinam. One of the reasons for this is that mosques do not serve as the centre of activities for the *kejawen* Muslims in the Netherlands: there are no *kejawen* mosques in the country. Thus as yet they are not confronted with the question of the direction of mosque's *mihrab*. Despite praying towards the West at home, when visiting a mosque, *kejawen* Muslims follow others and pray facing East. This small group argues that it is not the direction of west or east that is of prime importance, but rather the way one purifies his or her soul. Religious devotion is regarded as having no value when one hurts and offends others. Some refer to the Qur'an (S 2: 177): 'Righteousness is not to turn your faces towards the East or the West; the righteous is he who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book and the prophets.' The leader of the Sido Muljo, a *kejawen* organization in Rotterdam, holds that one can face in any direction, not just west or east, because God is omnipresent. In a recent radio broadcast, however, he stated that to be a devout Muslim one should apparently behave like an Arab and abandon his or her Javanese identity. He pointed to the practice of rendering certain prayers in Arabic and to the fact that some Javanese texts are written in Arabic script (*pegon*).

The head of the Pitutur Islam pleads for the continuation of the western *keblat*:

'Facing East is done according to the people of Saudi Arabia. We heard that in Indonesia our ancestors faced to the West, in the direction of the so-called Ka^{c}ba. That was in Negari Jawi [the land of Java].'

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North America

RICHARD BRENT TURNER

Mainstream Islam in the African-American Experience

Mainstream Islam has deep roots in the African-American experience, roots that reach back to the history of slavery and early 20th-century black Sunni communities in the United States. How has the issue of race in the United States affected the practices and the community experiences of black Sunni Muslims who traditionally see Islam as 'a colour and race-blind religion?'

Malcolm X's hajj in 1964 and Warith Deen Mohammed's transformation of the Nation of Islam into an orthodox community in 1975, are two of the more recent visible signs of the importance of mainstream Islam in the African-American experience. African Americans comprise about 42% of the Muslim population in the United States, which is somewhere between four to six million; and Sunni African-American Muslims are the predominant community in the United States today. Yet, the involvement of black Americans with mainstream Islam is not a recent phenomenon. It reaches back to the earliest days of the transatlantic slave trade and has roots in early 20th-century African-American Sunni communities.

Mainstream Islam and slavery

Muslim slaves – involuntary immigrants, who had been the urban-ruling elite in West Africa, constituted at least 15% of the slave population in North America in the 18th and 19th centuries. Their religious and ethnic roots could be traced to ancient black Islamic kingdoms in Ghana, Mali, and Sohghay. Some of these West African Muslim slaves brought the first mainstream Islamic beliefs and practices to America by keeping Islamic names, writing in Arabic, fasting during the month of Ramadan, praying five times a day, wearing Muslim clothing, and writing and reciting the Quran.

The fascinating portrait of a West African Muslim slave in the United States who retained mainstream Islamic practices was that of the Georgia Sea Island slave, Bilali. He was one of at least twenty black Muslims who are reported to have lived and practised their religion in Sapelo Island and St. Simon's Island during the antebellum period. The Georgia Sea Islands provided fertile ground for mainstream Islamic retention thanks to their relative isolation form Euro-American influences. Bilali was noted for his devotion, for wearing Islamic clothing, for his Muslim name, and for his ability to write and speak Arabic. Moreover, available evidence suggests that he might have been the leader of a small local black Muslim community. Islamic traditions in his family were retained for at least three generations. By the eve of the Civil War, the old Islam of the West African Muslim slaves was, for all practical purposes defunct, because these Muslims were not able to develop community institutions to perpetuate their religion. When they died, their version of Islam, which was African-American, private, with mainstream and heterodox practices disappeared.

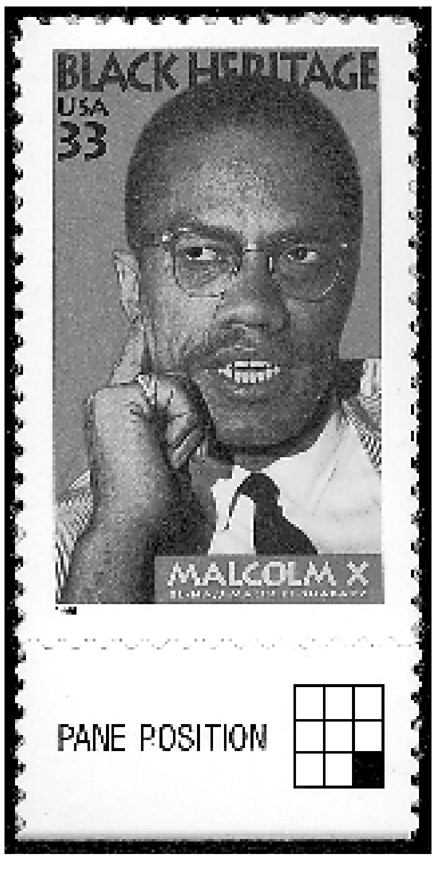
Early 20th-century mainstream communities

In the late 19th-century, the Pan-Africanist ideas of Edward Wilmot Blyden (1832-1912), which critiqued Christianity for its racism and suggested Islam as a viable religious alternative for African Americans, provided the political framework for Islam's appeal to black Americans in the early 20th century. Moreover, the internationalist perspective of Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association and the Great Migration of more than one million black southerners to northern and midwestern cities during the World War I era, provided the social and political environment for the rise of African-American mainstream communities from the 1920s to the 1940s. The Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, a heterodox missionary community from India, laid the groundwork for mainstream Islam in black America, by providing African Americans with their first Qurans, important Islamic literature and education, and linkages to the world of Islam.

Black Sunni Muslims can trace their roots in the United States, in the early 20th century, to two multi-racial communities: the Islamic Mission of America, led by Shaykh Dauod Ahmed Faisal in New York City and the First Mosque of Pittsburgh. Influenced by the Muslim immigrant communities, by Muslim sailors from Yemen, Somalia, and Madagascar, and by the Ahmadi translation of the Quran, Shaykh Daoud, who was born in Morocco and came to the United States from Grenada, established the Islamic Mission of America, also called the State Street Mosque, in New York City in 1924. This was the first African-American mainstream community in the United States.

Shaykh Daoud's wife, 'Mother' Khadijah Faisal, who had Pakistani Muslim and black Caribbean roots, became the president of the Muslim Ladies Cultural Society. The Islamic Mission of America published its own literature, including *Sahabiyat*, a Muslim journal for women. This influential community spread mainstream practices among black Muslims on the East Coast in the 1920s and 1930s and has continued to be significant to African-American Sunni Muslims for the remainder of the 20th century.

The First Mosque of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania was established in 1945, by African-American Muslims who wished to spread the teachings of Islam; build mosques; establish the Jumah prayer in their community; aid its members in case of death or illness; and unite with the Muslim communities in the United States. This mainstream community was the result of a spiritual metamorphosis after its previous associations with the heterodox philosophies of the Moorish Science Temple and the Ahmadiyya. In the 1950s, they established Young Muslim Women's and Young Men's Muslim Associations which provided social services to the local community. Eventually, the First Mosque of Pittsburgh issued subcharters to African-American Sunni communities in several other cities.



In the early 20th century, there is strong evidence of a vibrant multi-racial mainstream Islamic community in New York City which included black Americans, African, Turkish, Polish, Lithuanian, Russian, Indian, Albanian, Arab, Persian, and Caribbean peoples. However, this multi-racial model, which also developed among Sunni Muslims in the midwestern United States, does not suggest a race and colour-blind community experience, as immigrant Muslims were noted for their ethnic, racial, and linguistic separation from African-American Muslims during this period. Finally, these early African-American Sunni communities were overshadowed by the successful missionary work of the heterodox Ahmadiyya and later by the ascendancy of the Nation of Islam in the 1950s. Mainstream Islam did not become a popular option for African-American Muslims until the 1960s.

Mainstream Islam in contemporary Black America

Large numbers of African Americans have turned to mainstream Islamic practices and communities since Malcolm X's conversion to Sunni Islam in 1964 and his establishment of the Muslim Mosque, Inc. in New York City. Like Malcolm X, African-American Sunni Muslims see themselves as part of the mainstream Muslim community in the world of Islam and study Arabic, fast during the month of Ramadan, and pray five times a day. The dramatic growth of Sunni Islam in black America is also related to the arrival of more than one million Muslims in the United States after the American immigration laws were reformed in 1965.

Elijah Muhammad's son, Warith Deen Mohammed, has played an important role within mainstream Islam in the United States. He became the Supreme Minister of the Nation of Islam after his father's death in 1975. During the first years of his leadership, he mandated sweeping changes, which he called the 'Second Resurrection' of African Americans, in order to align his community with mainstream Islam. He refuted the Nation of Islam's racial-separatist teachings, and praised his father for achieving the 'First Resurrection' of black Americans by introducing them to Islam. But now the community's mission was directed not only at black Americans, but also at the entire American environment. The new leader renamed the Nation of Islam the 'World Community of Al-Islam in the West' in 1976; the 'American Muslim Mission' in 1980; and the 'Muslim American Community' in the 1990s. Ministers of Islam were renamed 'imams' and temples were renamed 'mosques' and '*masjids*'. The community's lucrative financial holdings were liquidated and mainstream rituals and customs were adopted. Although Warith Deen Mohammed's positive relationships with immigrant Muslims, the world of Islam and the American government are important developments in the history of mainstream Islam in the United States, his group has diminished in members since the 1980s.

Darul Islam, founded in Brooklyn, New York in 1962 and having branches in many major American cities, is probably the largest and most influential community of African-American Sunni Muslims. The Dar's practices and community experience focus on the utilization of the Quran and hadith, as such the members of the community do not follow the teachings of a particular contemporary leader. Prestige and leadership are based on knowledge of the Quran, the hadith and the Arabic language. Darul Islam is a private decentralized community, which did not allow immigrants in its midst until the mid-1970s. The Hanafi Madh-hab Center, founded by Hammas Abdul Khalis in the 1960s, is an African-American Sunni group that made headlines in the 1970s because of its conversion of the basketball star, Kareem Abdul Jabbar and the assassination of Khalis' family in their Washington D.C. headquarters.

Although African-American Muslims populate multi-ethnic Sunni *masjids* and organizations across the United States, reportedly there are subtle racial and ethnic tensions between African-American and immigrant Muslims today. Immigrant Muslims talk about 'a colour and race-blind Islam' and the American dream, while African-American Muslims continue to place Islam at the forefront of the struggles for social justice, as the United States enters a new century of frightening racial violence and corruption. Certainly, African-American and immigrant Muslims have a lot to learn from each other and need to present a united front on social justice issues, as mainstream Islam's appeal and ascendancy in the United States in the next century may depend on American Muslims' ability to claim a moral and political high ground on those social justice issues that have historically divided the American Christian population. ◆

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Information is derived from: Richard Brent Turner, Islam In The African-American Experience, *(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997); Aminah Beverly McCloud,* African American Islam, *(New York: Routledge, 1995); Sulayman S. Nyang,* Islam In The United States of America, *(Chicago: ABC International Group, Inc., 1999); Allan D. Austin,* African Muslims In Antebellum America: Transatlantic Stories and Spiritual Struggles, *(New York: Routledge, 1997).*

The Carribean

GUSTAV THAISS

Muharram Rituals and the Carnivalesque in Trinidad

Beginning in the 19th century, a wave of indentured workers were brought by the British from India to Trinidad to work the plantations which had been abandoned by former slaves who had been freed by the abolition of slavery in 1838. By 1917, the end of indentureship, nearly 144,000 workers had been brought to Trinidad. The majority came from the North Indian areas of Agra and Oudh (Awadh), and while most were Hindu, there were Muslims among them, a minority of whom were Shi'a.

The Muslims brought their devotional practices with them to the Caribbean and they continued to commemorate the Muharram rituals on the plantations. Workers on the estates, including Muslims, Hindus, Creoles and Chinese, donated funds for the construction of the *taᶜziyahs*, which were carried in processions. Competition (sometimes violent) often arose between the estates for the most attractive *taᶜziyah*, or Hosay as it was often called (a colloquial pronunciation of Husayn). In Trinidad, as in India, a *taᶜziyah* (also known as *tadjah*) is an elaborately decorated, colourful simulacrum of the tomb of Husayn which is conveyed in processions.[1] In Iran, of course, *taᶜziyah* refers to ritual dramatic performances or 'passion-plays'.

The Muharram rituals quickly became the main symbol of Indian nationalism in the face of British colonialism and of a sense of identity vis-à-vis Indian minority status in the Black Caribbean. Despite their differences, however, the Creoles, Indians and others joined together in the Hosay processions to protest various injustices, including the reduction of wages on the plantations and the concomitant increase in workload. It has even been said that the Hosay gave symbolic form to a growing working-class consciousness throughout the Caribbean.[2] Such activities began to cause anxiety because of the allegedly increasing tendency to riotous behaviour. Throughout the 19th century, great alarm was expressed by British authorities and other colonists over the threat to public order of the Muharram rituals (as well as Carnival celebrations) culminating in the Hosay massacre of 1884 (referred to by the British as the 'Coolie Disturbances in Trinidad').

'Hosay' domes under construction

PHOTO: GUSTAV THAISS

Interestingly, despite the violence often associated with Muharram rituals, the day of ᶜAshura itself (the tenth of Muharram) has a somewhat ambiguous meaning in the Muslim world. It is a day on which numerous rituals of joy and happiness have been celebrated for centuries throughout the Sunni world, especially in North Africa and Egypt. On the other hand ᶜAshura, for the Shi'a, is a day for rituals of remembrance and mourning commemorating the tragic martyrdom and self-sacrifice of Husayn at the battle of Karbala in 61/680. Indeed, some medieval scholars such as Ibn Taymiyya and al-Maqrizi have even suggested that the joyous celebration of ᶜAshura among the Sunni was a later 'innovative' attempt to insult the Shi'a followers of Husayn ibn ᶜAli, since such joyful practices are not supported by authentic *hadith*.[3] In India, many of the Muharram commemorations bring together both sorrowful and festive features.

Muharram and the carnivalesque in Trinidad

Over the last century or so, what has been the major tragic event in the Shi'a Muslim ritual calendar has been increasingly transformed into a *'fête'* with a carnival-like ambience, second only to the main carnival in the festival schedule of Trinidad. The Shi'a Muslim organizers deeply believe in the religious significance of this event while the 30-40,000 spectators/participants have little knowledge of its religious purpose. The non-Muslim spectators/participants (Afro-Trinidadians, Hindus, some Sunni and others) treat it as a *fête*, using terms borrowed from carnival such as 'bacchanal', 'jump-up', 'shake-up', and 'mas', which are appropriate to their definition of the situation. They view the Muharram rituals in this way partially because of the actions of the Shi'a themselves who borrow aspects of Carnival in the construction, style of public presentation and decoration. The Hosay is built in the *Imambara* in the *'yard'* of the builder and when they *'come* out' onto the streets on Tasuᶜa and ᶜAshura, the event is transformed into public entertainment, into street theatre.

The Hosay/*taᶜziyah* structure varies in height, averaging 10 to 15 feet and is totally covered with brightly coloured tinfoil with added variations depending on the design in a given year, sometimes with strings of coloured lights, flowers, mirrors, or coloured cloth creating a dazzling display.[4] The upper section is decorated with domes of varying shapes and sizes and other impressive decorative features (Interestingly, while researching the construction of the Hosay/*taᶜziyah*, I noticed the builder was copying the dome-style of St. Basil's Orthodox Church in Moscow from the cover of a *National Geographic* magazine sitting on his workbench).

As the procession gains momentum on the streets, it is met by more participants who join in the rising emotional tension. The battle drums evoke a feeling of great excitement and are evaluated by the spectators in terms of the 'sweetness' of their sounds. Many of the *tassa* drums have identifying 'names' painted on them as do the *pan* or steel drums in Carnival. Some are traditional such as 'Husayn', 'Karbala', or 'Hasan', while others have such 'names' as 'Conan', 'Rock and Roll', or 'Poison'. The latter is an interesting double-entendre in the best tradition of Calypso, representing both a significant word in the Muharram tradition, namely the poison associated with the death of Hasan, as well as being the name of a currently popular hard-rock group. As the Shi'a chant 'Hosay', 'Hosay', 'Hosay', spectators join in with slight, quickly spoken modifications such as 'Hosay, I say', 'Hosay, I say', the rhyming patterns of which are borrowed from the Calypso tradition in Trinidad.

Popular foods, soft drinks, rum and beer are available from street vendors, unlike water, which was traditionally available as a remembrance of the thirst of the martyrs. The Shi'a recognize that changes are occurring over which they seem to have little control; but at the same time they say 'We are living in Trinidad where 45% of the population is Negro and 42% is Indian, we must integrate. I've always maintained that the *taᶜziyah* in itself is a form of togetherness. It keeps us together'. This new multicultural interpretation of the Hosay is also reflected in the views of others. A Hindu Sadhu, for example, understood the Hosay to be a ritual remembrance of a conflict between two brothers, Hasan and Hosayn, one of whom had been a Muslim and the other a Hindu, and 'they died together battling over their Faiths. People now make the tadjahs to commemorate their deaths, and "to show we should all live in unity together".'[5]

Sunni Muslims in Guyana, Fiji and elsewhere were able to have similar *taᶜziyah* edifices and processions banned in their countries as un-Islamic and a 'mockery' of a 'pure' Islam. The Sunni in Trinidad, despite protests for the past century, have not been successful in banning the Hosay. One reason for this is government recognition, especially in recent years, of the value of tourism.

While the government acknowledges the Sunni Anjuman Sunnatul Jamaat Association as the official spokes-group for Muslims in Trinidad, it nevertheless has turned to tourism to gain needed foreign currency and has not hesitated to exploit its 'natural' cultural resources – the cultural performances and tourist 'productions' of its heterogeneous society. Carnival and the music of the steel band or Pan are two of the most important ethnic practices which have become objectified and displayed as heritage objects, distinctive of Trinidad as a national entity. Thus, while Carnival is largely an Afro-centric spectacle reflecting the very essence of the Trinidadian colonial experience, the Hosay represents the Indian and the broader multicultural unity of the country and hence a value to be exploited. In many respects the *taᶜziyah* has become a moving, processional exhibit, an objectification not only of the architectural beauty, colours and display of the *taᶜziyah*, but also, to the government of Trinidad as well as to the people themselves (the Shi'a and non-Muslim participants), an embodiment of the ethos of the *fête* – the oneness and brotherhood of a heterogeneous society.

To whom does the Hosay belong?

What is presently occurring in Trinidad is an implicit process of negotiation, which is defining and socially creating the reality of Hosay. But who 'owns' the 'rights' to a religious ritual? It may seem a patently ridiculous question, but the issue of authenticity and multi-vocality lies at its very core. If various religious and ethnic groups participate in a ritual such as the Hosay and give it idiosyncratic meanings, is it then not 'theirs', as well as belonging to organizers and sponsors, who have a different meaning of its 'truth'? In a very real sense the Hosay is an articulation of socio-cultural differences and similarities. In the discursive process, a ritual and social world is given meaning, but one which is always contestable and open to rearticulation. It is a never-ending process of negotiation. What *taᶜziyah* once was in India, it is not today; and what it is today, it will not be tomorrow, although in that process various participants try to fix its meaning to reflect their view of the world. ◆

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Notes

1. On the *taᶜziyah* in India, see Shakeel Hossain, 'Tazia: Ephemeral Architecture in India', *Mimar: Architecture in Development*, 35, June, 1990, pp.10–17.
2. Rodney, Walter (1981) *A History of the Guyanese Working People 1881-1905*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
3. Maribel Fierro, 'The Celebration of ᶜAshura in Sunni Islam', in: *The Arabist: Budapest, Studies in Arabic*, vols 13-14, 1995, pp. 193-208.
4. Excellent colour photos of the Hosay can be found in Judith Bettelheim and John Nunley, 'The Hosay Festival', in: John W. Nunley and Judith Bettelheim (eds.), *Caribbean Festival Arts: each and every bit of difference*, Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1988, pp. 119-206.
5. Gustav Thaiss, 'Contested meanings and the politics of authenticity', in: Akbar Ahmed and Hastings Donnan (eds.) *Islam, Globalization and Postmodernity*, London: Routledge, 1994, p. 60, fn.18.

Fieldwork

HELENE BASU

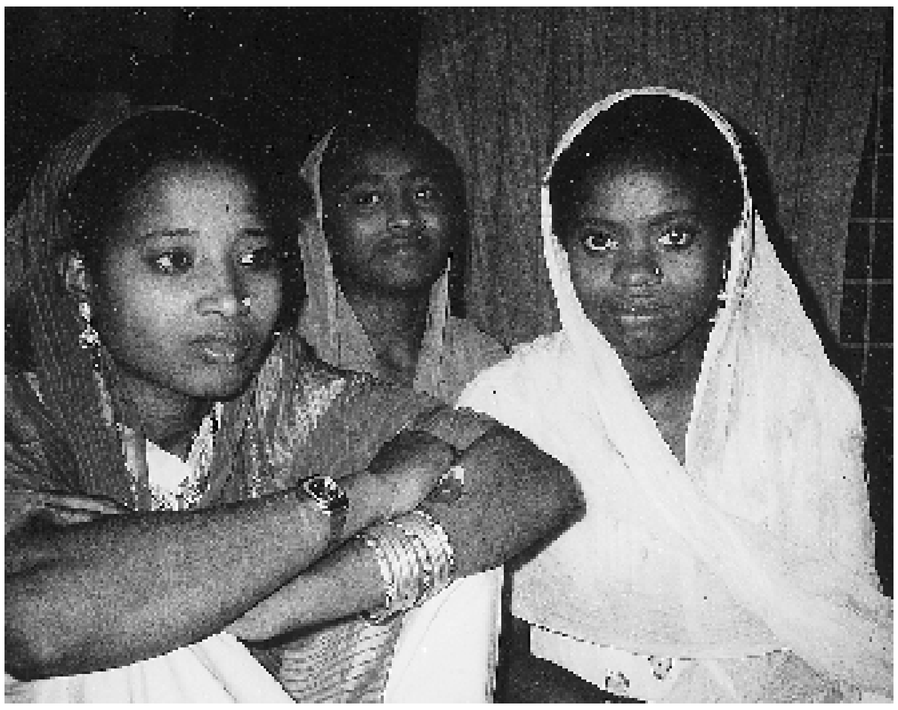
Going for Visits with a Woman-Fakir:

the African Diaspora in Gujarat

Among the diverse practitioners of Islam in Gujarat, the Sidi stand out for their unique combination of a Sufi saint cult with the veneration of their African ancestry. Members of the small African Diaspora numbering ca. 6–7000 in Gujarat, trace their origins to slaves from the hinterlands of the East African coast captured and sold to India by Gujarati, Arab and Persian traders till the late 19th century. Today their descendants, the Sidi, live in ramshackle houses in urban slums or villages at the fringes of Gujarat society.

Amongst the regional Muslim population, the Sidi belong to the poor who are exempted from undertaking the *hajj* or giving alms. Rather, they themselves are receivers of *zakat* and other types of alms. Considering the unsteady and low income men and women derive – mainly from domestic service – some resort to begging, which is at times the only way to meet the daily demands for food in the household. However, individual begging outside a ritual context is considered shameful, whereas gifts received for group performances of dancing or other activities related to the cult are seen as expressions of emotion and respect accorded to the Sidi ancestors. Therefore, in times of need, people seek to develop strategies of begging that allow for avoiding the shame and humiliation associated with standing at the roadside with open hands. This latter applies typically to women who ultimately have to feed men and children, even when the men are unemployed or otherwise incapable of supplying enough money. In addition, there are quite a number of households run by women without a husband. During my fieldwork (1987-1989), I often wondered about the hundreds of little sources women could mysteriously tap when a household seemed at the verge of a major collapse. As an instructive example of Sidi women's ingenuity in mobilizing social obligations to give gifts or alms, I would like to present the following case which also sheds light on how the presence of the fieldworker may be used tactically by the people studied in following their own pursuits.

Throughout my fieldwork I spent much time in the village neighbouring the main shrine of the Sidi, the *dargah* of Bava Gor in the South of Gujarat. The twenty Sidi families of this village all basically see themselves as religious virtuosos involved in *faqiri,* although they also grow some grain and do odd jobs here and there. But whereas in the past the income of the shrine was distributed equally amongst the resident Sidi *faqirs*, nowadays it is in a process of expanding its clientele and one family has managed to control the *dargah* and its income more or less to the exclusion of the others. Amongst the latter was Madina, a woman who was around sixty years old when we first met. Madina had no children of her own but lived with her brother's recently divorced daughter and her two daughters and one son between the ages of three to ten. In addition, there was the old husband of Madina who suffered from tuberculosis. Formerly, he had been one of the main *faqirs* at the shrine but then became ill and contributed nothing to the household subsistence. They owned a small plot of land on which the women grew lentils, sufficient for about four to five months a year. Madina and the younger woman worked occasionally as domestics in one of the nearby towns in order to feed the children, the sick husband and themselves. On *jumma rat*, holy Thursday, which was the busiest day at the *dargah* attracting up to 150 visitors (many of whom seek a cure from possession), they sat with other Sidi women near the tomb hoping for alms.



Sidi girls

PHOTO: HELENE BASU

The visit

Once Madina suggested I accompany her to a 'brother' whom, she said, was a Hindu but a stout follower of Bava Gor, filled with sympathy for her and whom he treated as his 'sister'. She was full of praises for the man's generous and sympathetic ways and insisted that I meet him myself. The next day we left, Madina carrying a shabby bag that looked rather empty. After having travelled by bus some thirty kilometres, we walked from the road through dry fields until we reached the village. It took some time before Madina found her destination, the house of Rambhai, which was larger compared to the other houses in the street, but by no means resembling a rich peasant's shelter. A middle-aged woman sat near the door and looked apprehensively at the tall and dark figure of Madina approaching. She gave no sign of knowing her. Madina greeted the woman with a broad smile and asked for Rambhai. He was expected to return from the fields at lunchtime. Only after Madina had introduced herself as a *Bavagorvali* and me, the foreigner who, she said, wanted to meet all sorts of people in villages and therefore she had thought it a good idea to take me to Rambhai, were we asked inside the house and offered a glass of water. While we waited, the woman busied herself in the background and talked extensively about this year's bad crop due to the draught (the rains had failed), the loss of a buffalo cow and the general difficulty of making a living these days. Madina agreed. Finally, Rambhai turned up. Startled by the strange foreigner sitting in his living room next to an unmistakably poor Muslim woman, recognizable from the long dress Madina wore over her loose trousers, Rambhai asked the other woman, apparently his wife, who these visitors were and what they wanted. She did not know either. Madina reminded him of his visit at the *dargah* some four to five years back when he had brought a female relative possessed by an evil spirit. Didn't he remember, Madina asked undisturbed, that she had looked after his relative and that he, Rambhai, had called her sister? It seemed, Rambhai had forgotten about it. Still, he ordered his wife to prepare a meal for us.

A neighbour dropped in, a young man who spoke a little English and said he was 'B. Com'. He explained to me that 'these people' (the Sidi) are rather good-for-nothings and beggars and I should be very careful associating with them but that they are very powerful when it comes to evil spirits which may harm 'good people' like himself and his caste. This is, the young man clarified, because these Habshis are much closer to demons and spirits than ordinary people. Therefore, they may control them in a way other people can not – and look, he said, now roaring with laughter, at how black they are, almost like demons! I looked at Madina who sat somewhat behind the young man and who, though she did not exactly understand the words, smiled broadly at me while making an obscene gesture pointing with her finger to the lower parts of her body. Then the meal was ready and the young man disappeared.

A sister's right to a gift

Meanwhile, I had become increasingly confused about the whole venture of our visit, not seeing any point in Madina's wanting to come here in the first place. After lunch, though, things became clearer. While Rambhai fulfilled his obligations as host sitting with us through the final cup of tea, Madina produced a red string with some glittering silver paper at one side from her bag and confidently announced that now, like a true sister, she would give *rakshabandhan* to her brother. Although the proper day for this Hindu ritual – when the sister ties a string round the wrist of her brother who reciprocates the gesture with a gift according to his means – had passed since several weeks, Rambhai could not but accept Madina's sisterly act. Our departure then was postponed for another half an hour. First, the wife filled Madina's bag with grain and then brought another sack for me. My protests, from utter embarrassment and thinking of the dead buffalo, the draught and all the rest, went unheard (I secretly thought I could just buy for Madina what she would have lost by my refusal). On top of it, we were both given a fifty-rupee note. When I tried, at least, to return the money, I was told that since we had come together I was no different from Madina and therefore had to accept whatever was given, otherwise they would have to suffer the evil consequences of improper response to a sister's tying the string to her brothers wrist. This could not be argued. Back in the Sidi village, Madina was quite satisfied with the outcome of our trip and kept reminding me of her nice 'brother'.

With the Sidi, one is likely to encounter situations such as these during fieldwork, when one's own estimation of the interactions observed seem contrary to people's rationalizations of what has happened. For example, the Sidi consciously reject the name 'Habshi' (from Arabic 'Habash') because it is used with a derogatory and often racist meaning such as the young man had deployed. However, Madina and other Sidi have their own ways of countering condescending attitudes and racism – the assumed superiority of the Other is ridiculed and debased. By exploiting custom and cultural values such as gift giving, the Sidi are able to re-interpret and thus subvert attitudes and behaviour that would otherwise undermine the self-respect and dignity of the people. ◆

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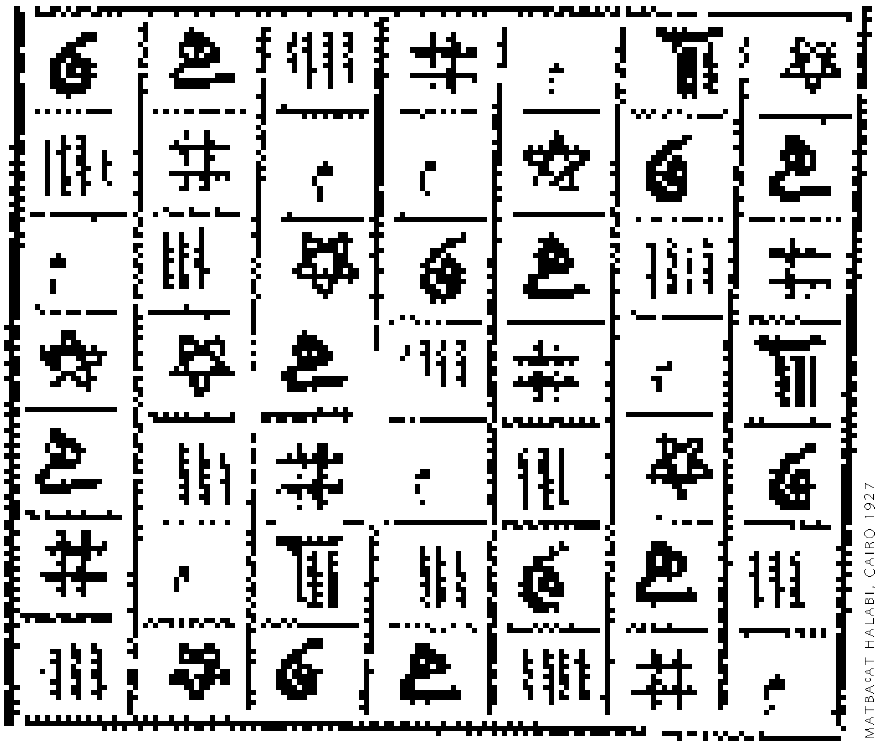
Approaches

CONSTANT HAMÈS

Magic, Islam and Scientific Research

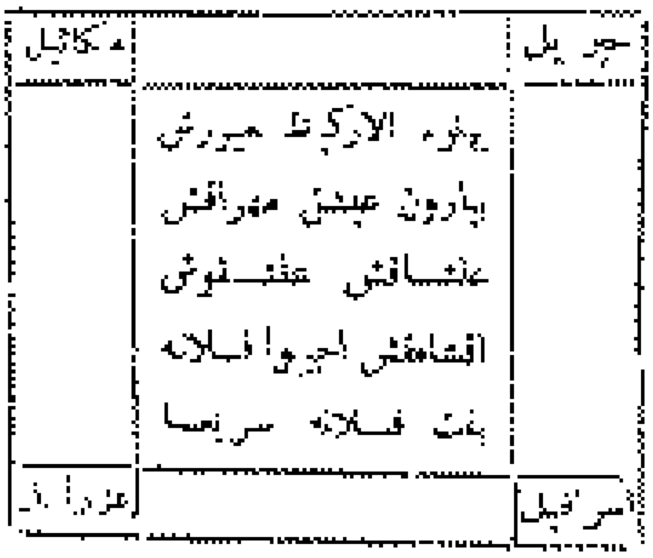
Scientific research, especially in the social sciences, is extremely tributary to the ideas and the practices in the societies where researchers live. It is thus that studies conducted on religious phenomena, and notably on Islam, experienced an eclipse characteristic of the sixties and seventies. The reason for this, amongst others, was that the class of intellectuals and politicians were essentially preoccupied with struggles and a social utopia of progress without reference, and even in opposition, to the traditional religious institutions. In an inverse yet equally excessive movement, the eighties and nineties were witness to a veritable explosion of these same studies in the context of identity, political, and social re-vindication, particularly coming from the Muslim world and advocating an overtly religious ideology.



MATBAʿAT HALABI, CAIRO 1927

In the eighties and nineties a 'pendulum' phenomenon can be observed in terms of magic, both in practice and in studies consecrated to it. However, comparison with religious phenomena allows a significant difference to appear. Research on all that is qualified as 'Muslim' abounds, except that which concerns the sector of magical practices and ideas. It is not that the latter do not exist: on the contrary, all the indications attest to their dynamism and vitality. In France, since some 20 years, the West African – and now North African – Muslim marabouts counsel numbers of people in their homes and some by means of radio communication. These same practitioners in Senegal, for example, prescribe recipes and talismans for years on end, which can be found by the hundreds in rubbish bins after use.[1] Private manuscript libraries in West Africa almost always have their fair share of manuals on magic, divination, prayers of request, Quranic talismans, etc. So-called 'Islamic' book stores all over the Muslim world publish and republish small and large books on magic – encouraged to do so by the tangible benefits that create belief in an increased social demand. It is also not that research on magic is faltering; on the contrary, its development follows, albeit in smaller proportions, the rising curve of studies on the 'religious'. But oddly enough, its point of application concerns societies of antiquity. Henceforth, it must be questioned whether there are obstacles to developing the study of magic within the framework of Islam.

Illustrations taken from Ahmad al-Buni *Shams al-Maʿarif al-Kubra wa-Lata'if al-ʿAwarif*



MATBAʿAT HALABI, CAIRO 1927

Magic and European Rationalism

In reality, all that was considered pell-mell, magic, superstition, and witchcraft was, in Europe, subject to reprobation, even condemnation, by triumphant scientistic thought at the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries and by Christian churches anxious to eliminate, or at least relegate, a non-institutional and uncontrolled 'sacred' to the margins of folklore. However, it seems that European colonialism, which was launched at that time, with that rationalist frame of mind – as lay as it was religious – had naturally been tempted to classify into the categories of magical thought a substantial part of the beliefs of the colonized peoples, including Muslims. In the colonial period, works on magic experienced an hour of glory, all the more significant since they also placed within an evolutionist theory the ideas of magic as an inferior or primitive stage of an evolution of beliefs. Here religion and, according to some, science represented superior or ultimate stages. While Islam was well recognized as a religion in the field, colonial thinking deemed it embroiled in a jumble of 'survivals' and magical behaviours. The European discourse in which magic (inferior stage of religion) is the concern of 'others' (in other words the colonized) is found in many examples, in some respects erudite and elaborate, such as *Magie et religion dans l'Afrique du Nord* (1908) by E. Doutté, or more unexpectedly, in the analyses of the sociology of religion by Max Weber (1864-1920).[2]

Europeans' rationalist and normative way of looking at certain beliefs and practices of the colonized peoples provoked in turn, attitudes of censorship, discomfort and suppression by the latter when faced with behaviour and ideas that earned them accusations of credulity, charlatanism, and backwardness. Taking upon themselves these value judgements – made in the name of reason, science, and progress – the intellectual and political elite of the Muslim world, at the moment of decolonization, took their ideas even further and contributed to the silencing of a substantial part of social practices to which the populations turned to find solutions to or relief for their problems and anxieties.

That Europe itself suffered from this atmosphere of censorship and avoidance of magic is not at issue here. The point is the particular discredit that – for Muslims and Europeans alike – adversely affected all magical activities and consequently the scientific studies thereof.

Magical Rituals and Consultations

With some distance, in relation to the ideas of the colonial period and equally in relation to the rationalist simplifications, the moment may seem favourable for placing anew the concept of magic within Islamic thought into perspective. The materials have been gathered – notably concerning talismans with written engravings – and theoretical analyses such as those contained in the collective work of Mirecki and Meyer[3] have progressed. It is time to fit the Islamic practices and ideas that M. Mauss did not have at disposition in his time into *Esquisse d'une théorie générale de la magie* (1902).

Our own analyses bring us to certain observations and hypotheses. Utilization of a magic containing Islamic, oral, or more often written elements is found to be present in every period and in every region of the Muslim world. What is so surprising? The notions of magic-witchcraft (*sihr*), of the magician or sorcerer (*sâhir*), or the bewitched person, are strongly attested to in the Quran and the hadith and constitute part of the psychological and social realities of the universe of Muslim thought. The questions posed by the Muslim world concerning these realities often concern knowing how to benefit from these available forces or how to use them in such a way that is canonically licit. From this point of view, the Quranic condemnation of *sihr*, completely unclear in terms of those practices which were in fact condemned, often accentuated the secrecy of this sector of activity and thought. Thus, the position of an author of treatises of magic was most likely not always comfortable, if seen the light of recourse to pseudonyms (pseudo-Aristotle, pseudo-Hermès, pseudo-Ghazâlî, pseudo-Suyûtî, etc.) or in terms of the difficulty in determining whether a well-known author such as, for example, al-Bûnî, represents more than a name. It is noteworthy that this situation is no longer true today. It is thus that Shaykh Mâl'aynîn (died 1910), great religious man of letters and man of politics of western Sahara, openly took up and reworked, in certain works published in Fez at the turn of the century, the magical formulas attributed to al-Bûnî. In the same sense, we observe that certain West African marabouts no longer hesitate to demonstrate their skills in astrology, despite the fact that this 'science' had been formerly subject to formal religious condemnation.

It seems important, theoretically, to return all scientific autonomy to the concept of magic and to consider it as a complete structure of the human relation to the world. That notably implies not defining magic negatively, in relation to religion as well as to science. Many domains of research on Islamic magic have yet to be covered. In addition to field investigations on the process of consultations, and of making/carrying out magical rituals, it is necessary to complete the inventories of ancient texts, and gather data on the transmission and teaching of the occult sciences about which we know almost nothing. And beyond the numerous 'technical' questions, such as the analysis of the printed transformation of the Quran when used in a talismanic way, we must compare the 'powers' of holy figures to those of magicians. Furthermore, we must reflect upon the significance and impact of all the practices concerned at a societal level: is magic genuinely 'a battlement against social destructions' as R. Girard[4] holds? ◆

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MATBAʿAT HALABI, CAIRO 1927

Notes

1. Corpus ALEP, constituted by Alain Epelboin (CNRS-MNHN). See Hamès C. and Epelboin A. 'Trois vêtements talismaniques provenant du Sénégal (Décharge de Dakar-Pikine)', Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales, XLIV, 'Sciences occultes et Islam', Damas, 1992 (1993), 217-214, phot.
2. M. Mauss(1872-1950) is one of the few researchers not to adhere to an evolutionist vision of the relation between magic and religion. See Hubert H. and Mauss M., 'Esquisse d'une théorie générale de la magie', *L'Année sociologique*, VII, 1902-1903.
3. Meyer M. et Mirecki P., *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1995, 476 p.
4. R. Girard, interview accorded to the weekly journal *L'événement du jeudi*, n 380, 13-19 February 1992, 71-73.

CFEY
FRANÇOIS BURGAT

The French Center for **Yemeni Studies**

Research

Since 1982, the mission of the French Center for Yemeni Studies (CFEY) is to initiate, coordinate and to support the works of the French, Yemeni, or foreign teams in the Social Sciences and Archaeology focusing on Yemen and its neighbouring countries (Oman, Saudi Arabia, Eritrea). The fields of current research are broad: from South Arabian civilization to the construction of the modern State; cultural heritage, identity and change in Yemen; the archaeology and history of Southern Arabia in the pre-Islamic and Islamic periods; the study of the social significance of traditional practices and of the evolving dynamics in contemporary Yemeni society.

The CFEY provides students and researchers the scientific, documentary, administrative and accommodation services necessary for their projects. In the social and political sciences, the CFEY attempts to train specialists on Yemen and to encourage researchers on the Arab cultural area to more systematically integrate comparative contributions on this country, which is often seen as the 'historical matrix' of the Arab and Muslim world. Research results, whether preliminary or final, are regularly presented to interested audiences through public lectures given in French, Arabic or English. These conferences take place either at the centre itself or in other locations in Sanaa.

Cooperation and Formation

The CFEY cooperates in its research missions with several Yemeni, French and/or foreign academic institutions. These collaborations can develop into partnerships with the establishment of joint programmes. Alongside its own programmes or in cooperation, the CFEY is able to support individual projects of students or researchers who are designated by their universities. The requests, accompanied by a brief presentation of the research project and a letter of recommendation, must be submitted to the centre at the beginning of the university's academic year. The CFEY is also able to facilitate the stay of students wanting to attend intensive sessions or individual courses on Arabic language at local language institutes. Lastly, the CFEY may offer internships to interested students (e.g. office work, public relations, documentation and research). The conditions of the internships (i.e. salary, accommodation, etc.) vary according to the nature of the requirement and the time needed to complete the assignment.

Statutes

The French Center for Yemeni Studies is a research body in the social sciences which depends administratively on the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Department of Social Sciences and Archaeology. It is part of a worldwide network of 28 French research centres and institutes. Its management is supervised by a scientific council of 12 members. Under the initiative of Pr Christian Robin, the CFEY was created in 1982. Its current director, François Burgat, a political scientist, succeeded anthropologist Franck Mermier (1991-1997) on 1 October 1997.

Library and Publications

CFEY's library comprises close to 3000 works, half of which are in Arabic (including periodicals), which focus mainly on Yemen and about twenty running titles from the Yemeni press. CFEY is currently computerizing this collection (software DAD) and planning its progressive expansion to other countries of the Arabian Peninsula.

In the attempt to further critical discourse and the exchange of ideas on Yemen and the Arabian Peninsula, it is CFEY's policy to organize lectures and produce scholarly material. The CFEY publishes in French, and occasionally translates into Arabic, the works of its own researchers and its Yemeni colleagues on the Arabian Peninsula. The centre produces *Les Chroniques Yéménites* (reviews of the centre's annual activities complemented by original articles) and *Les cahiers du CFEY* (monographs or travel literature). It also publishes in conjunction with scholarly journals (*Monde Arabe Maghreb-Machreq, Peuples Méditerranéens*) or commercial publishers (*Actes Sud*), as well as independently or in association with other research centres such as IFEAD (Syria), IREMAM (Aix-en-Provence), URBAMA (Tours), American Institute for Yemeni Studies (Sanaa), Deutsches Orient-Institute (Hamburg), etc. Recent publications include:

- CFEY-Centre de Recherche franco-allemand de Berlin–Deutsches Orient Institut de Hambourg, *Le Yémen contemporain*, Franck Mermier, Rémi Leveau, Udo Steinbach (Director) Paris, Karthala, 1999;
- Al-'Ansi, Yahya, *Traditional agricultural knowledge in Yemen*, CFEY-American Institute for Yemeni Studies, 1998 (in Arabic) (This is a collection of Yemeni popular local practices in Agriculture related to Astronomy);
- Mercier, Eric, *Aden. Un parcours interrompu*, Sanaa-Tours, CFEY-URBAMA (Villes du Monde Arabe collection), 1997, ISSN 0247-8498, ISBN 2-86-106-1080. (This is the first scientific French-language work on the city of Aden, a preliminary work for a doctoral thesis in geography, interrupted by the premature death of the author in October 1996.);
- Mermier, Franck (directed by), *L'Etat face à la démocratie*, *Monde arabe Maghreb-Machrek*, 155, January-March 1997, ISSN 1241-5294. (This is a multidisciplinary approach to contemporary Yemen by a French-Yemeni research team.);
- Zayd Ali Muhammed, *Trends of mu'tazilite thought in Yemen*, CFEY, 1997 (in Arabic); and
- Al-Akwa' Ismaïl b. Ali, *Les hijra et les forteresses du savoir au Yémen* (translated from Arabic by Brigitte Marino), Cahiers du CFEY 2, 1996, ISSN 1248-0568, ISBN 2-909194-05-1.

The following are forthcoming:

- Al-Hadrami, Abd al-Rahmân, *History of Zabid and the Tihama*, CFEY-IFEAD (in Arabic);
- *Raydân*, 7, IREMAM-CFEY: Revue des antiquités et de l'épigraphie du Yémen antique (in French and Arabic);
- Jazem, Mohamed, *Les registres de l'Etat rasoulide*. (edition of a 13th century Arabic Manuscript);
- Ory Solange-Maury Bernard, *Les ors du Sultan. La mosquée al-'Abbâs à Asnâf*, CFEY-IFEAD; and
- Tuchscherer, Michel, *Chronique de 'Abdal-Rahmân al-Bahkali (1182/1768-1248/1832)*, CFEY-IFEAD (in Arabic).

Publications may be ordered from the CFEY or from:

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Universidad Islamica Averroes
ALI KETTANI

Re-establishing **Islamic Learning** in Al-Andalus, Cordoba

The revival of Islam in Al-Andalus, the Spain of today, has been a cherished ideal of many Muslims. After the fall of Granada in 1492, the brutal persecution, forced conversion and expulsion of the Andalusian Muslims (and Jews) by the Spanish Catholic Church and royal court obliterated a famed multicultural society. Today, Islam – and with it Islamic learning – is making a comeback.

In spite of the horrors during and after the Christian Castellan Conquista, apparently wiping out any presence of Islam in the country, a feeling of identification with a Muslim past remained alive in the hearts of many Spaniards, especially in the Andalusian south. This historical identification also finds expression in an increasing number of conversions to Islam, a process that began soon after the death of Franco and the return of democracy and freedom of conscience to the country. Thousands embraced Islam within a short span of time and their numbers continue to increase. By the 1980s the new Muslims started to form associations. Mosques were opened, mainly in Andalusia, but also in other places like Madrid, also for the benefit of the rising number of migrant Muslims. The autochthonous Muslims include people from all walks of life, men and women, the majority being in their twenties at the time of their conversion.

In 1989 the government of Spain granted official recognition to Islam, thus acknowledging its roots in Spain. The government requested the Muslims to organize nationally, which they did under the auspices of the 'Comision Islamica de España' (The Spanish Muslim Commission) which represents the Muslim community. The commission negotiated an agreement (signed in 1992) with the government over the rights of Muslims, the most important aspect of which concerns education. It stipulates the right to establish Muslim schools and universities. Moreover, the State committed itself to include Islam and Arabic in the curricula of the public schools for those students desiring to follow the courses. The Comision Islamica de España devises the curricula and recruits teachers.

The Universidad Islamica Averroes was established within the 1992 agreement. Named after the famous Andalusian philosopher Ibn Rusd, the university was opened in 1995 in the old medina of Cordoba, near the famous Mezquita Aljama, the Great Mosque (now a Catholic Cathedral). Attached to it, a new beautiful small mosque was built, with its Andalusian minaret on the street. Some neighbouring buildings were purchased since then, allowing sufficient space for expansion in the future. The founders of this private Andalusian Spanish university consider it to be the resurrection of the medieval university situated in the Great Mosque (Mezquita Aljama) during Muslim times. The university is run by a board, which is headed by Prof. A. Mahtar M'Bow (Ex-Secretary General of UNESCO). The university is a member of the Federation of the Universities of the Muslim World and has cooperation agreements with several universities in Europe and the Muslim world.

The Universidad Islamica Averroes offers Islamic education to all those desiring it, be they Muslim or not. Its plans of education are adapted to the Spanish system by using credit hours. The academic year is divided into two semesters, giving 21 credit hours per semester, i.e. a total of 168 credit hours for the 4-year course. The courses are divided into three important themes: Arabic language and literature, Islamic studies and Andalusian studies. The languages of education are Arabic and Spanish, but Persian and Turkish are also taught.

In September 1996, the university initiated a correspondence course offering a programme identical to that which is conducted *in situ*. The university has a dedicated staff and faculty, most of whom are Spanish Muslims. Students have to pay a tuition fee; however, for the studies carried out *in situ* ($2000 per year) no valid candidate has been rejected on the grounds of inability to pay. The university has a scholarship programme to aid deserving students. The fee for the correspondence course is very modest ($400 per year), but no scholarships are available in this case. ◆

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CSIC

JØRGEN S. NIELSEN

Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations

The CSIC was founded in 1976 as a central teaching department of the federation of Selly Oak Colleges. Its roots lay in a lectureship by the Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust (ECCT) in the 1930s, when Dr Alphonse Mingana was the first incumbent. With Cadbury family support he had been able to collect a large amount of Arabic and Syriac manuscripts still housed today in the library at Selly Oak. Dr Mingana started a tradition of text-based study of Islam and Christian-Muslim relations which was notably continued by Dr John Sweetman in his magisterial work on *Islam and Christian Theology*.

In the early 1970s, the existence of an increasingly self-aware Muslim community in Britain was becoming obvious. At Selly Oak Colleges in Birmingham the then lecturer in Islamic Studies, Dr John Taylor, became involved in the ecumenical discussions on Christian approaches to other faiths, which led to his becoming the first officer for Christian-Muslim dialogue at the World Council of Churches in 1973. His successor, Dr David Kerr, confirmed this change of emphasis from the traditional orientalist to the contemporary when he was able to call together an international consultation in 1975.

This joint meeting of Muslims and Christians recommended the creation of what was to become the CSIC. The idea was for the Centre to comprise a joint venture of Christians and Muslims, true to both traditions while also meeting the criteria of the British university system. Given the institutional context of the Centre, both of these targets were problematic. The various colleges of the federation at Selly Oak are of Christian foundation, some of them mission training colleges, which in itself tended to raise questions about academic credibility and hence support had to be earned.

It is probably safe to say today that both targets have been reached. Academic staff, today counting five lecturers and three researchers, have academic recognition at the University of Birmingham through its Department of Theology, and the academic degrees are awarded by the University. For the first decade or so, student numbers were low, seldom exceeding 20. Today there are nearly 70, all on postgraduate degree programmes. For the first many years only very few Muslim students came. Today 80% of students are Muslims. Two thirds of all students come from Africa and Asia, including countries like Malaysia, Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Jordan and Lebanon.

The process has now reached culmination: after successful completion of negotiations, on 1 August 1999 the CSIC will become an integral part of the University of Birmingham's Department of Theology, retaining its specific identity and programmes within a new graduate institute for theology and religions.

As a postgraduate teaching and research centre, the CSIC for many years concentrated on developing its teaching programmes and a couple of quite specific research and documentation projects. The teaching programmes include a Postgraduate Diploma, a Master of Arts, a MPhil and a PhD. As generally is the case throughout the British system of higher education, the first two are based on a combination of taught courses and a short dissertation completed altogether in 12 months of full-time study. The MPhil and PhD are research only leading to submission and examination of a thesis. We are now beginning to develop an MA in Middle Eastern Christianity, which should be available from September 1999, and as we become part of the University of Birmingham, we are looking at working in conjunction with other departments and faculties, particularly education, law and social studies. The Centre has also gradually expanded its cooperation with other academic institutions around the world. Some of these links have taken the form of joint seminars – a list with related publications is available from j.nielsen.islam@sellyoak.ac.uk. Formal agreements with the University of Jordan and Al-Azhar involve exchanges of students and staff.

In terms of research and documentation, the Centre has had a particular interest in Africa and Europe. We can fairly claim to have been among the earliest to direct attention towards Islam in Europe. Apart from numerous publications in this field, this focus has now led to the award of a research project grant from the Economic and Social Research Council within its Transnational Communities Programme (reported in the last issue of the ISIM Newsletter by Dr Steven Vertovec). This project, which deals with a transnational Sufi order, includes fieldwork in Britain, Dagestan, and Lebanon. Details can be found on the project website at www.sellyoak.ac.uk/csic/research. At the same time, it has been possible to revive the areas of study with which Drs Mingana and Sweetman were identified. Since 1990, we have hosted three 'Woodbrooke/Mingana Colloquia on Arab Christianity and Islam', and our website is now the home for a newsgroup on the subject (contact d.thomas.islam@sellyoak.ac.uk).

The Centre's interests determine that we cannot be limited to academic work narrowly defined. From the beginning, staff have been involved in both Christian and Muslim agencies as consultants or members of working groups and the like. As the field of Christian-Muslim relations has broadened into and become part of wider social and political processes in the 1990s, so has the CSIC become more widely involved with governments – local and national – and international agencies.

While the first almost quarter century has been a period of establishing ourselves and getting our feet firmly on the ground, it seems probable that the coming merger into the University of Birmingham will provide a foundation for both expansion of the existing work and the development of new programmes of teaching and research. ◆

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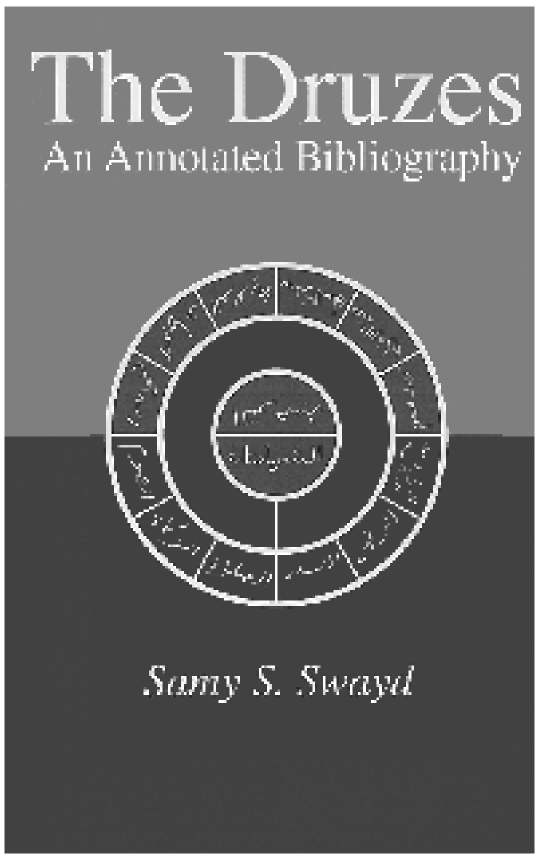
IDS

SAMY S. SWAYD

The Institute of Druze Studies

The Druzes are a Middle Eastern minority group with their formal origins in 11th century Fatimid Cairo, where they began as a reform movement within the esoteric Ismaili tradition during the caliphate of al-Hakim Bi-Amr Allah (r. 996–1021). The Druze doctrine contains specific moral lessons and rules of individual and communal conduct that are embodied in approximately 30 manuscripts, some of which have been lost. Political and religious power were normally separated within the Druze communities, the religious specialists forming a class of initiates in the esoteric principles. In contrast to related religious groups, women were traditionally initiated.



Today, there are nearly one million Druzes living in mountainous regions in Lebanon, Syria, Israel, and Jordan. During the 19th and early 20th centuries, smaller Druze immigrant communities established themselves elsewhere around the world and can be found in Australia, Canada, Europe, the Philippines, South and Central America, the United States, and West Africa. Since World War II, small communities can also be found in the Gulf States. In order to preserve their traditions and maintain frequent contact with their co-religionists, they have formed associations, organized conventions, and published pamphlets and newsletters. In the United States, for example, the American Druze Society (ADS) has convened annual gatherings since 1946 and, more recently, established a main cultural centre in Eagle Rock, California. Other established immigrant Druze societies include the British Druze Society (BDS), the Canadian Druze Society (CDS), and the Sydney Druze Society (SDS) in Australia. The Druzes are generally one of the most understudied Middle Eastern minorities and Islamic sects. Due to the ubiquitous misconceptions of the Druzes in both medieval and especially in 18th and 19th-century literature, the Institute of Druze Studies (IDS) was established.

The IDS was founded in early 1998 as an international academic research institute and then, in September of that year, was incorporated as a non-profit organization of the state of California. The IDS board of directors consists of more than 20 members from seven countries and 15 universities. The Institute aims to (1) provide information on Druze history, society, and faith, (2) encourage research and studies on historical and contemporary Druze communities and (3) promote academic discourse and other public forums about Druze-related topics.

The IDS will pursue these objectives through an international annual conference, a publication series, and a newsletter. The annual conference will bring together senior and junior scholars who are working on Druze-related topics. In collaboration with the G.E. von Grunebaum Center for Near Eastern Studies, University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), the Institute's first International Conference will take place at UCLA Faculty Center on June 11-12, 1999. The theme of the conference is: The Druzes: 1000 Years of History, Reform, and Tradition. More than 20 scholars from 15 universities and other research institutions are participating in the conference. Conference panels include the following themes: Deconstructing 11th Century Cairo; History and Historiography: Perceptions and Misconceptions; Cosmology and Theology; Identity and Community; and Identity, Solidarity, and Nationality. The conference proceedings will be published subsequently as the third volume in the Institute's publication series.

The first book in the IDS publication series was published in May 1998 by Samy S. Swayd who is the founder of the IDS. The book is titled: *The Druzes: An Annotated Bibliography* (Kirkland, WA: ISES Publications, xx+199pp.). In addition to a bibliography of 328 books and 427 articles, a chronology, glossary, selected translations, maps, genealogical tables, and plates, this book includes a concise 50-page introduction to Druze society, history, and faith. The second book in the IDS publication series by the same author, *The Druze Scriptures: Exoteric and Esoteric Hermeneutics,* will be published in late summer 1999. It examines the study of Druze scriptures and includes annotations of more than 80 Druze manuscripts, and provides a compendium of Druze beliefs and practices.

The newsletter, which is scheduled to be published tri-annually beginning this summer, will provide updates about published works and public talks, as well as research reports on Druze villages and towns, prominent families and individuals, and other activities and programmes that are relevant to the Druzes. ◆

The IDS encourages submissions of book manuscripts for consideration in the Institute's publication series. It also encourages articles or research reports for inclusion in the newsletter.
IDS Internet: www.idspublications.com

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DAVO

GÜNTER MEYER

German Middle East Studies Association
Research and Documentation

The Deutsche Arbeitsgemeinschaft Vorderer Orient für Gegenwartsbezogene Forschung und Dokumentation (DAVO) was established in 1993. Since then, more than 500 scholars and other persons interested in the Middle East have become part of DAVO. Membership does not only consist in those from Germany, but also from other European countries, North America and the Middle East.

DAVO is a scholarly, non-political and non-profit professional association open to all persons with an interest in the Middle East. The main aim of DAVO is to improve the exchange of information on Middle East studies between its members and various national and international institutions. Middle East studies include disciplines relevant to the study of an area comprising all Arab states and territories, Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, the Muslim states of the former USSR and Israel, as well as the impact of this region on the development of other parts of the world.

The association publishes the *DAVO-Nachrichten*, a biannual guide to German and international Middle East studies. The publication includes a roster of members, announcements of meetings, conference reports, introduction of new research projects, presentations of institutions engaged in Middle East studies, internet news, and book reviews. Furthermore, the guide contains an overview of the latest publications of DAVO members and current articles in journals on the Middle East. Each issue of the *DAVO-Nachrichten* contains up to 200 pages of information; many articles are in English and French. Generally, less than two weeks transpires between the deadline for contributions and the distribution of the printed issue. Recipients include DAVO members, almost 200 libraries, research centres and other institutions in the Middle East, Europe and North America.

In addition, DAVO operates a weekly updated homepage 'DAVO-Info Aktuell' on the World Wide Web (http://www.geo.uni-mainz.de/davo). It contains a global calendar of Middle East conferences, information on research centres and other institutions, a register of websites, recent articles in journals, announcements of grants and other recent information relevant to Middle East studies.

DAVO also organizes an annual congress which is gradually changing from a German conference to an international meeting with rapidly growing numbers of participants from all over the world. Although the majority of the papers are still delivered in German, English papers and discussions are strongly encouraged.

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The Sixth Annual Congress of DAVO will take place in Hamburg from 2–4 December 1999. The deadline for the registration of papers is 2 November 1999. For further information on this congress contact the DAVO Conference Organization: Deutsches Orient-Institut, Mittelweg 150, D-20148 Hamburg, Fax: 040/441484, e-mail: doihh@uni-hamburg.de

Those interested in the activities of DAVO may obtain a trial copy of the latest issue of DAVO-Nachrichten *free of charge by contacting the DAVO secretariat:*
Centre for Research on the Arab World (CERAW)
Institute of Geography, University of Mainz
D-55099 Mainz, Germany.

Prof. Dr. Günter Meyer is president of DAVO.
E-mail: DAVO@geo.Uni-Mainz.de

PUBLICATIONS

Arabic Literature of Africa
A Contribution to the Intellectual History of Islam

John Hunwick and R.S. O'Fahey have embarked upon a joint project in collaboration with a number of other scholars, for the publication of a seven-volume work under the general title 'Arabic Literature of Africa'. The work is being published by E.J. Brill of Leiden and the first two volumes of the series have already appeared (1994 and 1995). The series is under the joint general editorship of Hunwick and O'Fahey.

The editors take it as axiomatic that we cannot understand the trends and currents of Muslim discourse in Africa, its relationship to wider Islamic discourses and its local shaping by historical and cultural factors unless we consider the broader picture of Islamic scholarship in the region. For this we need to know not only who the scholars were and what they wrote, but also how they are related to one another intellectually, and how learning was nurtured, transmitted, explicated, revived, revised, contested.

It is the task, then, of the several volumes of the series 'Arabic Literature of Africa' to explore this intellectual heritage. The aim of the series is to produce for sub-Saharan Africa a guide to its Islamic literature and scholarly production in Arabic and in certain African languages that goes beyond a mere enumeration of scholars and their writings. Rather it aims to open up the intellectual history of the region's Muslims and to relate it to the intellectual history of the larger world of Islam.

Volume I, compiled by R.S. O'Fahey is subtitled 'The Writings of Eastern Sudanic Africa to c. 1900', and it was prepared with the collaboration of Muhammad Ibrahim Abu Salim, Albrecht Hofheinz, Yahya Muhammad Ibrahim, Berndt Radtke and Knut Vikør. It deals with authors living in the area of the present Republic of the Sudan and their writings, as well as the writings of the Idrisiyya tradition both within the Sudan and outside it, and the Sanusiyya tradition. Volume II is sub-titled 'The Writings of Central Sudanic Africa' (i.e. Nigeria, Chad, Niger, Cameroun). It was compiled by John Hunwick with the collaboration of Razaq D. Abubakre, Hamidu Bobboyi, Roman Loimeier, Stefan Reichmuth and Muhammad Sani Umar. Within each chapter writers are grouped according to their family, tariqa, or teaching affiliation and also (so far as is possible) chronologically. Information on works in Fulfulde and Hausa (and some Yoruba) by the authors who wrote in Arabic is also given. Currently in preparation are volumes on Ethiopia, Sudan and Eastern Africa, which includes Islamic literature in Swahili and volumes on the Arabic writings of scholars in Ghana, Mali, Senegal and Niger. Yet another will deal with Mauritania. A supplementary volume will treat the writings of Central Sudanic Africa and will be prepared in collaboration with Nigerian scholars.

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Continued from page 36:
Prayer in the Surinam-Javanese Diasporic Experience / *by Moch. Nur Ichwan*

Having migrated to Surinam, they still maintained the westward direction of prayer. Saudi teachers told them: 'No, you should not do that. In Surinam you should face East.' But the people from Java replied: 'No, in the land of Java we faced to the West, we can not make a change. I also follow my parents. Because originally our ancestors faced to the West, we do so too. If we are forced to do otherwise, we absolutely say: No!'

The equation of Islamization with Arabization is foreign to the reformist Javanese Muslims in the Netherlands. In their eyes, the change of prayer direction follows from religious imperative and rational reasoning. They quote the verse (2:144): 'Turn your face then to the Sacred Mosque; and wherever you are, turn your faces towards it.' Since Mecca is located southeast of the Netherlands, they see no alternative but to oblige. They argue that praying and reciting in Arabic should not be considered Arabization because it is part of religion, not of culture.

Preserving Identity

The debate on the *keblat* is part of a much longer discourse on Javanese identity. Almost from the beginning of the Islamization of Java, attempts have been made to reject the centrality of Mecca and – what is seen as – the Arabization of the Javanese. Preserving identity has become an important and complicated problem for Javanese Muslims in the Netherlands as well. This is primarily due to the fact that most of the second and the third generations no longer speak Javanese, although some still understand it. Being a creator and re-creator, and transmitter of culture, the loss of the original language marks an important transformation. Moreover, they do not have diasporic memories of Java, as they were born and raised in Surinam or the Netherlands.

Today, Java is represented as a Holy Land, but also as an experience of the past generation, the first generation of the Javanese in Surinam, who are regarded as the original Javanese (*Jawa Tus* or *Jawa Asli*). The *kejawen* Muslims demonstrate a far stronger commitment to the preservation of the Javanese culture than the reformist Javanese. Their organizations focus on Javanese dances, music and songs and on the Javanese literature like the Primbon and Mujarabat literature, which combine Javanese prediction and other popular elements, including Islamic ones. However, young people show less interest in literature.

Above all, in their resistance to the perceived Arabization of the Javanese, the *kejawen* Muslims attempt to Javanize Islam, the preservation of the western *keblat* serves as the clearest example of this quest. In the Netherlands this tendency is even stronger than that in Java at the present time. Moreover, the diasporic experiences and challenges in the Netherlands force them to contextualize their tradition. It can even be argued that they have created a new identity that is a 'Surinam-Javanese' identity, which differs in some of its manifestations from that of the Indonesian Javanese.

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This article is based upon observation of meetings of various Surinam-Javanese organizations and interviews with a number of their members. A larger and more detailed article will be published in Sharqiyyat, *journal of the Netherlands Organization for the Study of Islam.*

Moch. Nur Ichwan is an MA student of Islamic Studies at Leiden University and a fellow of the Indonesia-Netherlands Cooperation in Islamic Studies (INIS), the Netherlands. E-mail: MN.Ichwan@mailcity.com

Notes

1. On the Javanese in Surinam, see Joseph Ismael, *De Immigratie van Indonesiers in Suriname*. PhD dissertation of Leiden University 1949; Annemarie de Waal Malefijt, *The Javanese of Surinam: Segment of a Plural Society*. Assen: Van Gorcum Com. N.V., 1963; G.D. van Wengen, *The Cultural Inheritance of the Javanese in Surinam*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1975.
2. See Yvonne Towikromo, *De islam van de Javanen uit Suriname in Nederland*. Den Haag: Amrit, 1997.

AAS
OMAR KHALIDI

Differentiation and Homogenization among **Indian Muslims**

Differentiation and homogenization was the theme of a panel at the Association of Asian Studies meeting in Boston on 12 March 1999. Sponsored by the South Asian Muslim Studies Association (SAMSA) and chaired by Prof. Theodore P. Wright, Jr (retired, State University of New York-Albany), the panel brought four papers, one read in the absence of the presenter, and a discussant, Prof. Ali Asani of Harvard University. The ideology of Muslim nationalism in India dominant during the 1940s held that Muslims constituted a nation distinct in every respect from other Indians. The fieldwork of the anthropologists published in the 1970s contended that contrary to the ideology of 'two nations,' Muslims were regionally, linguistically, ritually and behaviourally diverse, in addition to the division by sect. Our panel re-examined this issue, interrogating both differentiation and homogenization in recent decades.

Omar Khalidi (MIT) presented a paper on the homogenization of Konkani Muslims of coastal Maharashtra to Urdu, a language spoken in North India and the Deccan. Konkani Muslims are adopting Urdu instead of native Konkani for education, formal speech, and mass communication amongst themselves and others on a large scale. Khalidi argued that if the present trend continues, it is likely that this group will be fully homogenized with the Urdu speaking communities of North India and the Deccan.

Similarly, Jonah Blank (a recent Harvard PhD and presently with US News & World Report) presented a paper on the Islamization and modernization of the Daudi Bohras of Mumbai and western India. Over the past decades, the clergy of the Bohras has attempted – with great success – to establish a group identity that is at once universally Islamic and unique to the denomination. It has done so not by rejecting modern or Western ideas and technologies, but rather by embracing them: the Bohras have used modernity as a tool to reinvigorate their core traditions. Jonah's case study should serve as a powerful refutation to those who would essentialize Islamic revivalism or even (to use a more ideologically-laden term) Islamic fundamentalism as anti-modern.

Jonah's argument seems to confirm some of the conclusions reached by Ali Asani of Harvard University (panel discussant) in a 1987 paper on the Khojahs, an Ismaili denomination similar in many ways to the Bohras. Asani had concluded that within the short span of half a century, the Khojah sense of identification with the larger Islamic tradition has become so strong that many young members have come to regard their community's earlier beliefs as belonging to a phase in history when the early missionaries had to make concessions to the Hindu milieu. At present, they affirm that they are merely returning to their proper fold in Islam.

The third paper delivered by Laura D. Jenkins (University of Cincinnati) was on 'Caste, Class and Islam: Debating the Boundaries of "Backwardness" in India.' While normative Islam is caste-free, educationally and economically poor Muslim groups are often associated with low social status, some of whom are grouped as Other Backward Classes (OBC), a bureaucratic category comprising both Hindu and Muslim poor. Many Muslim OBCs are seeking affirmative action to improve their conditions, but the question is beset by the problem of group definition of backwardness, which has the potential of splitting Muslims along quasi-caste lines. Jenkins' paper thus shows the persistence of differentiation based on caste or caste-like clusters among Indian Muslims, particularly if some groups benefit from inclusion in the OBC category and others not.

Finally, the paper by Frank Fanselow (University of Brunei-Darussalam), read in his absence by Khalidi, described and analysed the conversion of Dalits to Islam in the early 1980s. Although it was a local affair confined to an obscure village called Minakshipuram in Tamilnadu, the publicity surrounding the conversion drew national attention souring Hindu-Muslim relations in a state known for inter-communal harmony, thus negatively homogenizing it with the national trend.

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University of Chicago
SCOTT LUCAS

The 14th Annual **Middle East History and Theory Conference**

The 14th Annual Middle East History and Theory Conference held at the University of Chicago from 10-11 April 1999, was both an educational and enjoyable event for all those involved. Twenty graduate students and professors from thirteen different American universities presented papers in seven panels, which took place over a two-day period. Five of these papers covered issues concerning Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, such as vulnerability management, state and identity formation, and the decolonization of national discourse. One panel explored how Palestine was used by other national movements as a tool for the achievement of political legitimacy, while another panel stimulated discussions about the dramatic rise in international stature of Iranian art films as well as the possibilities inherent in the study of the vernacular architecture of Gecekondu neighbourhoods in modern Istanbul. The remaining papers were related to the interpretation of pre-modern/early-modern classical Islamicate texts and modern socio-political issues in Jordan, Algeria, and Egypt.

The keynote address was delivered by Professor John L. Esposito and consisted in a critique of the dominant 'secular fundamentalist' attitude of the Western academia, which refuses to study Islam and Muslim society as a dynamic religious phenomenon and, thus, finds itself issuing wildly inaccurate explanations of modern Muslim societies, as well as serious underestimations of the political power which revivalist Islamic groups wield. The conference closed with its annual lamb roast, which was satiating for participants and attendees alike.

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University of Helsinki
HOLGER WEISS

Social Justice, Social Welfare and Praxis in **Islamic Societies in Africa**

In April 1999, the University of Helsinki's research project on 'Zakât: poverty, social welfare and Islamic taxation' arranged a two-day workshop, together with the Department of Asian and African Studies of the University of Helsinki, on 'Social justice, social welfare and praxis in Islamic societies in Africa'. Researchers from the Nordic countries and Germany presented papers dealing with issues such as the possibilities of Islamic economy and Islamic banking as well as case-studies of how various forms of social welfare programmes have worked in Islamic communities in Africa (including North Africa). Seven scholars presented papers at the workshop:

Holger Weiss (University of Helsinki, Finland) pointed out that much of the debate in the field of Islamic economics has been dealing with morals and ethics rather than pure economics. He presented in his paper the position of two Nigerian scholars, Sule Ahmad Gusau and Ibraheem Sulaiman, and underlined that most of their writings are critiques of the present military rulers in Nigeria, but are vague in their dealings with social or economic questions.

Endre Stiansen (Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala, Sweden) gave an overview of Islamic banking in the Sudan as well as an overview of the network of Islamic economics. He presented the problems connected with *riba* and its translation and reflected upon the connection of Islamic economics and John Hunwick's idea of a 'moral economy of salvation'. Stiansen remarked upon the rather divided character of the current debate in the Sudan, where some forms of Islamic banking have been criticized by Muslims themselves.

Ruediger Seesemann (University of Bayreuth, Germany) presented a welfare project run by the Tijaniyya shaykh Ibrâhîm Sîdî in El Fasher. The programme is namely one of social rehabilitation for problem children and street kids. He underlined the problems of the insufficient attempts by the Islamist government in the Sudan to improve the living conditions of the northern Muslim population. Instead, the long-neglected social welfare activities of the various Sufi orders are providing an informal social security system.

Knut Vikør (Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, Bergen, Norway) discussed how and why the economic and social effects of the Sanûsîya order was the result of an interplay between choices made by the brotherhood and by the social actors of the surrounding community. The brotherhood's role in providing 'social welfare' was inscribed into this dynamic relationship. For example, the brotherhood provided former nomads not only with economic aid in terms of lending land for cultivation or handouts, but it also offered symbolic capital by means of attachment.

Tuomo Melasuo (Tampere Peace Research Institute, Finland) gave an overview of the Algerian Ulama Movement and Social Action during French colonialism. The focus of his presentation was on the Ulama Movement's establishment of schools, through which it sought to restore Muslim society in Algeria as well as to improve Islamic civilization. Thus, the Ulama Movement combined a cultural call with social action but was, at a later stage, to have political implications as well.

Franz Kogelmann (University of Bayreuth, Germany) discussed the possibilities of religious-motivated welfare institutions, such as pious endowments (*waqf/habus*) in pre-modern societies. His case study was based on the development of Sidi Fredj in Fez, which was the most important endowment complex in Morocco and had devoted itself exclusively to social welfare activities. He pointed out that under French colonial rule, the pious endowments became more tightly organized and economically efficient. However, the administrative centralization process meant that this previously highly autonomous form of welfare now fell outside the area of responsibility of the local community.

Roman Loimeier (University of Bayreuth, Germany) gave an analysis of the campaign against the Quranic schools in Senegal between 1992 and 1996. The secular State and global development agencies such as UNICEF, as well as Islamic reformers were united in their attempt to dissolve the existing Islamic system of socialization as maintained by the Quranic schools. They were all of the opinion that the autonomy of the Quranic school as a central institution of Islamic society had to be destroyed and the social and political influence of the marabouts, the established religious scholars, must be eliminated.

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The participants of the workshop are revising their papers for a collective volume, which is to be published in late 1999.

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CIRA

KAMRAN DADKHAH

The 17th Annual Conference of the **Center for Iranian Research and Analysis**

The 17th annual CIRA conference, jointly sponsored by CIRA and Northeastern University, was held April 23 and 24 in Boston, Massachusetts, USA, with the theme of 'Iran at the Threshold of the New Millennium'. More than 100 researchers, journalists, students, poets and artists from several countries participated.

The CIRA conference was opened with a welcome address delivered by Dr Richard Freeland, President of Northeastern University. Sessions were held in the mornings and afternoons in the Egan Research Center at Northeastern University, which boasts a number of state-of-the-art facilities for research and conferencing. The most popular sessions were those dealing with the current political situation in Iran, its relationship with the United States, media coverage of Iran, and issues related to Iranians abroad. Michael Dukakis, former governor of Massachusetts and Democratic candidate for the presidency in 1988, chaired a session on foreign and defence policies of Iran, where the relationship between Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan, and the conflict with Afghanistan were discussed. James Bill gave a keynote speech on the United States-Iran relationship, characterizing it as a conflict between two hegemones, one global and the other regional. In another session, Ali Jalali of the VOA, Stephen Fairbanks and Iraj Gorgin of Radio Free Europe, and Baqer Moin and Setareh Alavi of the BBC discussed the effect of foreign broadcasting on Iranian society.

Other topics included Islam and modern-day problems, women, human rights, civil society, and evolution of Iranian society in the post-revolution decades. Homayoun Katouzian addressed a plenary session and presented a theory of Iranian revolutions. In sessions devoted to the Iranian economy, analysis was provided on monetary policy and the independence of the central bank, Iran's membership in the World Trade Organization, banking laws, the agrarian question, development problems, and the role of foundations that are gigantic economic conglomerates. One of the most popular sessions was on assimilation, identity, and community among Iranians in diaspora. In addition to current economic and political questions, the agenda included talks on literature, cinema, architecture and history. In one session, two poets – Ahmad Ghazinoor and Morteza Rezvan – read their poetry, and Hamid Mossadegh, who recently passed away, was remembered. Four sessions had the format of 'author meets critics' in which the author of a book on Iranian society engaged in a dialogue with a number of critics. Participants were treated to a showing of *The Pear Tree*, a film by Darius Mehrjui. ✦

The 18th annual CIRA conference will be held April 28–29, 2000, at the Hyatt Regency, Bethesda, Maryland, USA, with the theme of 'Iran 2000: The Challenges Ahead'.

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Samarkand

REUEL HANKS

Uzbekistan in the 21st Century

The international conference 'Uzbekistan in the 21st Century: Transition and Integration' convened at Samarkand State Institute for Foreign Languages on 12-13 May 1999. The conference was co-sponsored by the institute and the Association for the Advancement of Central Asian Research (AACAR), with Yusuf Abdullaev (Rector, SSIFL) and Reuel Hanks (Editor, *Journal of Central Asian Studies*) serving as co-directors. Several hundred people were in attendance, and the event was extensively covered by local and national media in Uzbekistan.

A total of 45 scholars participated from Uzbekistan, the United States and the United Kingdom, with papers organized into four broad sessions: 'Economic Issues', 'Political Issues', 'Spirituality Issues' and 'Educational Issues'. The first session included commentary on strategy for economic reform, investment potential, the possibility of creating 'free economic zones' in Uzbekistan, and the future development of tourism in the country. This spectrum of topics certainly is crucial to economic development, but many commentators avoided the most serious issues: a rapidly-expanding workforce without corresponding economic expansion, the lack of substantial and geographically-dispersed foreign investment, and political instability, as evidenced by the February bombings in Tashkent.

The session on political issues included papers on the mass media in Uzbekistan, women's role in the political process, and the status of Karakalpakstan, among others. One paper dealt with the concept of 'eastern democracy' in Uzbekistan, an attempt to cast the country's authoritarian administration in the most favourable light possible by redefining the character of 'democracy'. The most interesting and enlightening presentations dealing with 'spirituality' focused on the traditional role of Sufism in Uzbek society, the role of the *mahalla*, and the difficulties of reconstructing the country's history and the creation of a 'national awareness' among Uzbekistan's citizenry.

The final session included a detailed presentation on educational reform by Yusuf Abdullaev, the country's leading specialist on Western educational systems, and two papers on the challenges of training educational specialists in modern pedagogical techniques. The speakers were in general agreement that Uzbekistan's educational system, particularly higher education, is in need of restructuring, but the suggested methods and means of achieving reform were quite varied. Many participants, both Uzbeki and foreign, expressed enthusiasm for the rare chance to dialogue directly with colleagues working on similar issues and problems. Select papers from the conference will be considered for forthcoming issues of the *Journal for Central Asian Studies*. The co-directors envision organizing a similar conference for the spring of 2001. ✦

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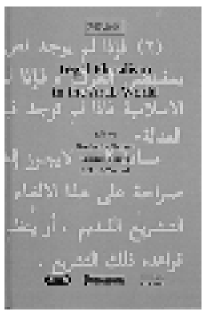
Book Presentation

LAILA AL-ZWAINI

Legal Pluralism in the Arab World



The notion of legal pluralism is known to both lawyers and social scientists. From the lawyers' point of view, it expresses the recognition by the State (the legislator) of the existence of a multiplicity of legal sources, which either constitute the official legislation, or are admitted as subsidiary sources in case of a legal lacuna. These sources can be religious law, customary law, or international treaties, amongst others. This concept thus assumes a more or less ideological dimension, by which the State wishes to accentuate its pluralistic orientation, yet does not call into question its legal monopoly.

Several socio-legal scientists have refuted this prescriptive approach to law, and reformulated the concept of legal pluralism as the parallel existence of a plurality of legal norms that are produced by different autonomous 'social fields'. These social fields possess their own normative and regulatory capacities, and are capable of enforcing these on their members. This implies that external legislation has not and cannot have the impact that it presumes to have. Studying law in this theoretical context therefore means reversing the perspective from the legislator to the social fields.

In December 1996, the Centre d'Etudes et de Documentation Economique, Juridique et Sociale (CEDEJ) and the Netherlands-Flemish Institute in Cairo (NVIC) jointly sponsored a two-day round table in Cairo on the theory and practice of legal pluralism in the Arab world. The organizers of the round table (editors of the book), wanted to develop an approach to the legal phenomenon in the Arab world which, from a sociological perspective, takes into consideration the complex of social fields adhered to by the individual, as well as the normativity and type of interaction they develop. From the different case studies that were presented, it became apparent that although the theory of legal pluralism is a handy tool for analysing socio-legal activities, there is not only 'one' such theory. Legal pluralism is a model for analysis that necessitates modification according to each specific case.

In order to grasp the subject from its multiple angles, contributors from a wide variety of disciplines and nationalities were invited: sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists, legal theoreticians, and practising lawyers originating from France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Great Britain, Germany, the United States, and Egypt. Starting with a preface by John Griffiths, whose seminal article on legal pluralism denoted the starting point of the seminar, the present publication consists of three main parts:

Part One discusses the various theories of legal pluralism (Gordon Woodman); the impossibility of sorting out norms, law, and practices (Jean-Noël Ferrié); the implications of terminology on the study of legal pluralism, as well as the need to develop an anthropology of the *actors* of the norms, especially in the Arab world where law is intertwined with religion (Baudouin Dupret); and a critical survey of Western law studies on Arab-Muslim countries (Jörn Thielmann).

Part Two presents case studies from a comparative perspective: a comparison between the court systems of Belgium and Egypt, especially with regard to the interpretation of norms presented as Islamic (Marie-Claire Foblets and Baudouin Dupret); a discussion of Palestinian law as a clear case of internal pluralism of state law (Bernard Botiveau); the conflict between legal pluralism and cultural unity in Morocco (Lawrence Rosen); the dissonance between Islamic law and the International Convention of the Rights of the Child (Murielle Paradelle); the shortcoming of legal pluralism to approach an emotionally-charged subject like Islamic law, as in the Syrian context (Maurits Berger); and the effects of legal pluralism in the treatment of unfair contractual terms in the United Arab Emirates and Egypt (Hassan Gemei).

Finally, Part Three deals with the phenomenon of legal pluralism in Egypt: a case of feuding families in 19th-century Egypt involving statute, and Islamic and customary law (Rudolph Peters); the working of *haqq al-arab*, i.e. customary arbitration in Upper Egypt (Sarah Ben Nefissa); the responsibility of legal pluralism in the setback of modernity in Egypt (Nabil `Abd al-Fattah); the enclosure of the Egyptian legal field as illustrated by the Youssef Chahine-case (Nathalie Bernard-Maugiron); the interplay of Islamic law, family law and social customs in the Egyptian Personal Status Law of 1985 (Nagla Nassar); financial law and practices between Islamic law and the current Egyptian legal system (Ziad Bahaa-Eldin); the use of several legal sources in Egyptian courts regarding the rights of apostates (Ahmed Seif al-Islam Hamad); and the secular reconstruction of Islamic law by the Egyptian Supreme Constitutional Court in its decision regarding the veil in state-run schools (Kilian Bälz). ✦

About the Editors

- Baudouin Dupret is educated in Law, Arabic and Islamic Sciences at the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium, and has a PhD in Political Sciences from the IEP (Institut d'Etudes Politiques), Paris. He is currently a researcher at CNRS researcher at CDEJ, Cairo.
- Maurits Berger studied Dutch Law and Arabic Studies with a specialization in Islamic Law at the University of Utrecht, the Netherlands. He has practised as a lawyer and is currently a PhD student at the University of Amsterdam.
- Laila al-Zwaini studied Dutch Law and Arabic Studies at Leiden University, the Netherlands has a degree in Islamic and Middle Eastern from SOAS, London. She presently works as a PhD student at Leiden University.

Legal Pluralism in the Arab World
edited by Baudouin Dupret, Maurits Berger, Laila al-Zwaini
ISBN 90-411-1105-0 Hardback, 304 pages
Kluwer Law International, February 1999

Art & Culture Agenda

THE NETHERLANDS

Exhibitions

Bijbels Openluchtmuseum

Profetenlaan 2
6564 BL Heilig Landstichting
(Nijmegen)
Tel: +31 24 3823110
Fax: +31 24 3823111

Through 2 November 1999

- *The World of Islam. The exhibition, with photographs by Isphording and objects of art, depicts Islam today in the Middle East and Far East.*

Gemeentemuseum Den Haag

Stadhouderslaan 41,
2517 HV Den Haag
Tel: +31 70 3381111

Continuing exhibition

- *Islamic crafts. The renewed exhibition from its own collection, in particular ceramics. Other objects illustrating Islamic art.*

Museum of Ethnology

Willemskade 25
3016 DM Rotterdam
Tel: +31 10 2707172
Fax: +31 10 2707182
mediatheek@wereldmuseum.rotterdam.nl

- *Due to renovations the museum will be closed until October 2000. It will reopen with a permanent exhibition of Islamic art from its own collection.*

De Nieuwe Kerk

Dam
Amsterdam
Tel: +31 20 6386909
e-mail: mail@nieuwekerk.nl

26 June – 17 October 1999

- *The dancing demons of Mongolia. Over 100 art treasures from Mongolia such as textiles, masks, paintings and sculptures to be shown for the first time in the Netherlands.*

Forthcoming Winter 1999 – 2000

- *Treasures from Islam*

Thermenmuseum Heerlen

Coriovallumstraat 9,
6411 CA Heerlen,
Tel: +31 45 5604581

3 October 1998 – January 2000

- *The bathhouse. Bath culture inEast and West*

Tropenmuseum Amsterdam

Linnaeusstraat 2
1092 CK Amsterdam
Tel: +31 20 5688215

Through 15 August 1999

- *Ethiopia: The Heritage of an Empire exhibits several hundred diverse objects and recreates market, court and home scenes in a survey of art and daily life in one of Africa's most culturally variegated nations.*

Theater Zuidplein

Zuidplein 60,
3083 CW Rotterdam
Tel: +31 10 2030207

17 October 1999 – 24 October 1999

- *Cultural week Turkey. Events such as art, music and dance, theatre, lectures and debates organized in almost all well-known places of art inRotterdam.*

Galerie A

Oldenzaalsestraat 256
7523 AG Enschede
Tel/Fax: +31 53 3413788

Continuing

- *Intercultural art*

Galerie Fi Beiti

Prinsengracht 157-hs
1015 DR Amsterdam
Tel: +31 20 6264432
Fax: +31 20 6264433

- *Contemporary art exhibitions by artists from the Islamic world.*

Music

Stichting Kulsan

WG-plein 126
1054 SC Amsterdam
Tel/Fax: +31 20 6182164

20 – 30 October 1999

- *Turkish pop star Sezen Aksu & the Dutch Willem Breuker Kollektief.*

RasaNetwerk Non-Western music

Pauwstraat 13a
3512 TG Utrecht
Tel: +31 30 2319676
Fax: +31 30 2315507

Lectures/Societies

Nederlands-Arabische Kring

Secretariaat:
H. Zwaardecroonstraat 17
2593 XK Den Haag.
NAK Magazine:
Korte Jufferstraat 42
3512 EZ Utrecht
Tel: +31 30 2319553
e-mail: raz@casema.net

- *Organizes lectures and other activities in four regional branches: Amsterdam, The Hague, Groningen, Nijmegen, and Utrecht.*

FRANCE

Grand Palais

Porte Champs-Elysées,
3, Avenue du Général-Eisenhower
75008 Paris
Tel: +33 1 44131717
Fax: +33 1 45635433

9 April through 12 July 1999

- *Egyptian Art in the Age of the Pyramids spans from the third through the sixth dynasty, covering the first great era of Egyptian art with some 200 works from reliefs and unpainted limestone heads to furniture and monumental sculpture.*

Institut du Monde Arabe

1, Rue des Fosses St-Bernard,
75236 Paris.
Tel: +33 1 40513960/3310

18 May – 29 August 1999

- *Bahrain, a civilisation of two seas. From Dilmun to Tylos. This exhibition traces the history of Dilmun (2500–1200 BC), recently of renewed interest to archeologists and historians. Bahrain again flourished between the 300 BC until the 400 AD under the name of Tylos; the impulse given by the conquests of Alexander the Great.*

13 May – 20 June 1999

- *Photographs of Arabia: the Hedjaz 1907- 1917. The photographs are from the Collection of the Ecole Biblique et Archeologique Francaise de Jerusalem. Parallel to these pictures are exhibited photographs of the contemporary city of Jeddah by Reem Al Faysal.*

29 June – 29 August 1999

- *De Sumer a Babylone. Photographs by Yves Gellie. Between 1997 and 1999 Yves Gellie made several journeys into Iraq. He reports a different view from the picture given by most media; drawing attention to the richness of the cultures and the diversity of the people.*

19 October 1999– 27 February 2000

- *Morocco, a way of life. Evoking the magic of the places and discovering the refined mosaics and the architecture of private houses, the exhibition resorts to the past without neglecting certain aspects of the more contemporary urban life. Music, films and poetry try to recreate the specific spheres of the vie citadine in Morocco.*

Hassan Massoudy Atelier

18 Quai de la Marne
75019 Paris
Tel/fax: +33 1 42031551
Open: Every last Saturday of the month from 2pm – 7pm.
Upon appointment by telephone on other days.

January – June 1999

- *Original Calligraphies, lithographies*

Films

Cine-IMA

Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris
Auditorium
Tel: +33 1 40513814
Through June 1999, Saturdays and Sundays at 3 and 5 pm.

- *The Arab Cinema at the Cannes Festival 1946–1998*

Music

The IMA in L'Abbaye de Royaumont

13 June through 11 July 1999

- *Temps de Maroc. Six concerts of arab-andalusian music.*

GERMANY

Museum für Islamische Kunst

Museuminsel
Am Kupfergraben
Eingang Pergamonmuseum
Berlin-Mitte
Tel: +49 30 20905401

- *Large collection of Islamic Art in Germany.*

Ifa-Galerie Stuttgart

Charlottenplatz 17
70173 Stuttgart
Tel: +49 711 2225173
Fax: +49 711 2225194
http://www.ifa.de

- *Exhibitions and contemporary art from the Middle East.*

KUWAIT

Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah

Ramadi Theatre
Midan Hawalli
Kuwait
Tel: +965 5653006

Until 24 June 1999, everyThursday

- *The Travels of Ibn Battuta. A unique audio-visual programme of his journey from Morocco to China and back, in the 14th century.*

SINGAPORE

Asian Civilisations Museum

39 Armenian Street
Singapore 179939

From November 1997

- *Calligraphy from the Tareq Rajab Museum Kuwait. The Qur'an was central to the development of the art of beautiful writing. In this exhibition the various scripts that developed over the centuries and also calligraphy as a decorative motif on various media like ceramics and metalwork are explored.*

SWITZERLAND

Antiken Museum

St.Alban-Grabens 5,
4010 Basel
Tel: +41 61 2712202
Fax: +41 61 2721861
office@antikenmuseumbasel.ch
Open: Tuesdays to Sundays 10-17h

Through July 1999

- *Egyptian Art: A provisional presentation of the new section. 300 objects spanning four centuries: statues, reliefs, jewellery, ceramics, animal sculptures, etc.*

UNITED KINGDOM

Victoria and Albert Museum

Cromwell Road
London SW7 2RL
Tel: +44 171 9388500
http://www.vam.ac.uk

- *At the Indian and South-East Asian Department, the collection covers the arts of South and Southeast Asia, including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, Burma, Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia. At Metalwork, Silver and Jewelry Department, the collection includes a rich collection of Islamic metalwork and collections of ironwork, Continental silver, arms and armour, enamels, brasswork, pewter and medieval metalwork.*

Brunei Gallery

School of Oriental and African Studies
Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square
London WC1
Tel: +44 181 7802815

July – September 1999

- *Royal Persian Paintings: The Qajar Epoch, 1785-1925, a period where figural painting flourished. The show includes, among others, loans from the Hermitage, the Louvre and the Royal Asiatic Society. The first major exhibition exclusively devoted to Qajar art shown in Europe. A Conference on the Culture, Art and Architecture in Qajar Persia will be held at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London from 2-4 September 1999 (see also 'Academic Meetings' in this issue of the ISIM Newsletter).*

Egee Art Consultancy

9 Chelsea manor studios
Flood Street
London SW3 5SR
Tel: +44 171 3516818
Fax: +44 171 3763510
http://www.egeeart.com
Open: Monday – Saturday 2–6pm

Continuing

- *Contemporary and Antique Middle Eastern Art.*

Soni Gallery

25 Connaught Street Marble Arch
London W2
Tel/fax: +44 171 2629101
http://www.sonigallery.com

Continuing

- *International contemporary art especially from the Indo-Pak subcontinent and the Arab World.*

Visiting Arts

Information: Project manager
Rachel Abedi,
Tel: +44 171 3893019
Fax. +44 171 3893016
rachel.va@dial.pipex.com
http://www.britcoun.org/visitingarts/islam/
or: The British Council
Arts Division
11 Portland Place, London W1N 4EJ
Tel: +44 171 9308466
Fax: +44 171 3893199

February 1999 through July 1999

- *Mutualities: Britain and Islam. Cultural and Arts Programme. A programme of cultural and arts events that draws attention to Islam-related arts events in Britain and to encourages new ones. The programme reflects the expressive relationship between the arts and Islam and highlights contemporary artistic thought as it seeks to address the challenges and meaning of Islam in the modern world. The programme will culminate in a one-day seminar in July addressing the promotion of Islam-related events.*

British Museum and Museum of Mankind

Great Russelstreet
London WCIB 3DG
Tel: +44 171 4127111
Fax: +44 171 3238614/8480

- *Permanent Oriental collection*

UNITED STATES

The Art Museum

Princeton University
Princeton, New Jersey 08544-1018
Tel: +1 609 258-3787/3788

Autumn 1999 or Spring 2000

- *Islamic Art*
  Letters in Gold Ottoman Calligraphy from the Sakip Sabanci Collection, Istanbul.
- *Draws upon one of Turkey's leading private collections to display 70 exceptional examples of Ottoman-era calligraphy.*

Joslyn Art Museum

2200 Dodge Street 68102-1292
Omaha, Nebraska
Tel: +1 402 3423300
Fax: +1 402 3422376
info@joslyn.org

27 March – 25 July 1999

- *Egypt, Gift of the Nile: Ancient Egyptian Art and Architecture from the University of Pennsylvania Museum. Displays highlights of the university's century-old archeaology programme.*

Metropolitan Museum of Art

1000 Fifth Avenue at 82nd Street
New York, New York 10028
Tel: +1 212 5357710

17 March 1999 – 18 July 1999

- *The Nature of Islamic Ornament, Part III: Geometric Patterns explores the history of complex patterns derived from simple figures (circles, triangles, polygons). The third of a four-part series on Islamic ornament dating from the 9th to the 18th centuries. Some 25 objects that feature predominantly geometric decoration, drawn from the Metropolitan Museum's own collection, including illuminated manuscripts, rugs, carved and inlaid woodwork, and pottery, reflect the variety of production of Islamic art and the wide range of application of geometric patterns.*

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery

Harvard University Art Museums,
Cambridge, Massachusetts
Tel: +1 617 4959400

21 May – 22 August 1999

- *Courts and Countryside: Islamic Painting of the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Century. Works of art produced in Iran during the Il-Khanid, Timurid and Safavid periods form the core of the exhibition, supplemented by paintings from Ottoman Turkey and Mughal India, whose rulers shared a common nomadic imperial heritage.*

9 October 1999 through 2 January 2000

- *Letters in Gold: Ottoman Calligraphy from the Sakip Sabanci Collection, Istanbul Calligraphy is the quintessential visual art form of the Islamic world. This exhibition will feature approximately 70 exceptional works of Islamic calligraphy, dating from the fifteenth through the early twentieth century, from Ottoman Turkey. Drawn from the largest private collection of Ottoman calligraphy in Turkey, these works illustrate the brilliant development of this art form over five centuries with examples by its greatest masters, including Seyh Hamdullah, Ahmed Karahisari, Hafiz Osman and Sami Efendi.*

9 October 1999 through 2 January 2000

- *A Grand Legacy: Arts of the Ottoman Empire. Founded seven hundred years ago, the Ottoman Empire (1299-1922) as its zenith stretched onto the continents of Africa, Europe and Asia. The ambition, grandeur and complexity of the empire were brilliantly expressed in the arts. As a complement to Letters in Gold, this exhibition will examine the grand legacy of Ottoman painting, ceramics, textiles and metalwork, using works from the permanent collection at the Art Museums.*

The Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and Freer Gallery of Art

Smithsonian Institution
Washington, D.C, 20560
Tel: +1 202 3572700 (voice);
3571729

23 January 1999 – 8 August 1999

- *Masterworks of Indian Painting III. On view is a changing selection of 16th- through 19th-century Indian paintings from the Mughal dynasty (1526-1858) and the Rajput courts that controlled northern and western India between the 17th-19th centuries. Included are pages from the Kevorkian Album, a page from a manuscript of Hamzanama, a page from a manuscript of the Mahabharata, a page from a manuscript of the Ramayana, a page from a Shahjahan album, and others.*

3 May 1998 – Indefinitely

- *Arts of the Islamic World. Some 60 works – Koran pages, metalwork, ceramics, glass, paintings, and calligraphy – from the 9th to 17th centuries explore Islamic artistic traditions. Themes include the forms and functions of the works of art, the role of calligraphy, the use of figurative decoration, and the meaning of abstract designs.*

The Los Angeles County Museum of Art

5905 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90036
Tel: +1 323 8576000

13 June – 10 August 1999

- *The Ardabil Carpet. This carpet, whose better-known mate hangs in London's Victoria and Albert Museum, is arguably one of the most important works in LACMA's collection. Brought to England sometime in the late nineteenth century, the carpets were reported to have come from the Safavid shrine at Ardabil. According to their dated signatures, this matched pair of carpets were made in 1539-40 by a certain Maqsud of Kashan.*

Ghost Ranch

New Mexico
Tel: +1 505 6854333
awair@igc.apc.org

11 July through 18 July 1999

- *Understanding the Islamic Paradigm: A Summer Program, sponsored by Arab World and Islamic Resources of Berkeley, California. Art, poetry, chanting lectures and dialogues will help non-Muslims understand the faith journeys and worldviews of Islam.*

The Agenda is produced by the Centre of Islamic Culture in Rotterdam, The Netherlands. Please send all information with regard to activities related to culture and art in the Islamic World to:
The Centre of Islamic Culture,
P.O. Box 361,
3000 AJ Rotterdam,
TheNetherlands
Fax: +31 10 270 71 82
E-mail: mediatheek@wereldmuseum.rotterdam.nl

Academic Meetings

Alexandria: From Book to Text, the Invention of Philology
Date: 23-25 June 1999
Venue: Bibliothèque nationale de France (Tolbiac), Paris, France
Information: This international conference is linked to the future opening of the new Alexandrian Library in Egypt. A second conference 'Alexandria: the metamorphoses of reading' will be held at the Alexandrian Library in Egypt, 27-30 November 1999. Christian Jacob, CNRS, Paris, cjacob@ehess.fr

Globalization and Identities. International Conference Research Unit for Global Studies
Date: 30 June – 2 July 1999
Venue: Department of Sociology, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, UK
Information: Nadeem Hai, tel +44 161 2473009, N.Hai@mmu.ac.uk; Paul Kennedy +44 161 2473006, P.Kennedy@mmu.ac.uk; fax +44 161 2476321

German and International Research on Oman
Date: 2-3 July 1999
Venue: DETECON Building, Oberkasseler Str. 2, Bonn-Ramersdorf, Germany
Information: Oman-Tagung, c/o Joachim Duester, Thomas-Mann-Str. 62, D-53111 Bonn, Germany, fax +49 228 1752357, omandoc@pobox.com
URL: http://www.oman.org/bonn.htm

Conference on the Foreign Policies of Middle East States
Date: 12-15 July 1999
Venue: University of St. Andrews, Scotland
Information: Raymond Hinnebusch, Department of International Relations, University of St. Andrews, Fife, KY16 9AL, Scotland, UK, tel +44 1334 462938, fax +44 1334 462937, rh10@st-andrews.ac.uk
URL: http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk

Third Biennal Conference of the Association for the Study of Travel in Egypt and the Near East, Cambridge, UK
Date: 15-18 July 1999
Information: Janet Starkey, Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, University of Durham, South End House, South Road, Durham DH1 3TG, UK, fax +44 1388 731809, j.c.m.starkey@durham.ac.uk, or Caroline Williams, 6 Coventry Rd, Williamsburg VA 23188

Visual Arts as Contact Zones: Europe and the Three Empires of Islam in the Early Modern Period
Date: 22-23 July 1999
Venue: Headley Lecture Theatre, The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, UK
Information: Liz Will, The Barakat Trust, c/o The Oriental Institute, neareast@orinst.ox.ac.uk
URL: http://users.ox.ac.uk/~neareast/conferen.htm

The 18th Annual Australasian Middle East Studies Association (AMESA) Conference
Date: 23-24 July 1999
Venue: University of Sydney, St John's College, Australia
Information: Dr Ahmad Shboul, ahmad.shboul@semitic.usyd.edu.au, fax +61 2 93513574; Dr Christine Asmar, C.Asmar@ctl.usyd.edu.au, fax +61 2 93514331
URL: http://www.nettl.usyd.edu.au/amesa/conference.htm

Iranian Constitutional Revolution
Date: 4-5 August 1999
Venue: Tehran, Iran
Information: Institute for Iranian Contemporary Historical Studies, 128. Fayyazi (Fereshteh) Ave., PO Box 19395-1975, Elahieh, Tehran 19649, Iran, tel +98 21 2005425, fax +98 21 262098
URL: http://www.neda.net/iichs

The 11th International Congress of Turkish Art (ICTA-XI)
Date: 23-28 August 1999
Venue: Utrecht University, Utrecht, The Netherlands
Information: ICTA-XI@let.uu.nl
URL: http://www.let.uu.nl/oosters/icta0.html

The Qajar Epoch: Cuture, Art & Architecture in Qajar Persia
Date: 2-4 September 1999
Venue: School of Oriental and African Studies, London, UK
Information: Qajar Conference, c/oPO Box 2256, London W1A 1YS, fax +44 171 4317923, info@iranheritage.com
Deadline: Applications by 15 February 1999

New Approaches to Migration: Transnational Communities and the Transformation of Home
Date: 21-22 September 1999
Information: Dr Nadje Al-Ali, Sussex Centre for Migration Research, tel +44 1273 606755, fax +44 1273 620662, N.Al-Ali@sussex.ac.uk; Dr Khalid Koser, Migration Research Unit, Department of Geography, University of College London, tel +44 171 3807564, fax +44 171 3807565, kkoser@geography.ucl.ac.uk

Europe and the South in the 21st Century: Challenges for Renewed Cooperation. 9th General Conference of EADI
Date: 22-25 September 1999
Venue: GEMDEV, 9 rue Malher, Paris, France
Information: EADI Secretariat, 24, rue Rothschild, P.O. Box 272, CH 1211 Geneva 21, Switzerland, tel +41 22 7314648, fax +41 22 7385797, eadi@uni2a.unige.ch
URL: http://www.eadi.org

Sufi Psychology Association's East Coast Conference: The Science of the Soul
Date: 25 September 1999
Venue: American University, Washington DC, USA
Information: Tel +1 301 6541569; Lynn Wilcox, P.O. Box 19922, Sacramento CA 95825, USA, tel +1 800 3381467, fax +1 916 9231201, sufipsy@pacbell.net
URL: http://www.sufi-psychology.org

Third Triennal European Association for Middle Eastern Studies Conference (EURAMES) 1999
Date: 27-29 September 1999
Venue: Department of Law, and the Department of Political and Social Sciences, University of Ghent, Belgium
Information: EURAMES Committee, Centre for Third World Studies, Universiteitstraat 8, B-9000 Ghent, Belgium, tel +32 9 2646955, fax +32 9 2646997, christopher.parker@ping.be
Deadline: Abstracts by 15 July 1999

8th Conference of Africanists on Africa at the Threshold of the Third Millenium
Date: 28-30 September 1999
Venue: Institute for African Studies (IAS), Moscow, Russia
Information: IAS, 30/1 Spiridonovka Str., Moscow, 103001, Russia, tel +7 95 2906385, +7 95 2902752, fax +7 95 2020786, dir@inafr.msk.su
Deadline: Abstracts by 1 March 1999

The Thirteenth Turkish Congress of History
Date: 4-8 October 1999
Information: Prof. Dr. Yusuf Halacoglu, Turk Tarih Kurumu, Kizilay Sokak No. 1, 06100 Sihhiye-Ankara-Turkiye, tel +90 312 3102368, fax +90 312 3101698

1999 International Symposium Beyond the Border: a New Framework for Understanding the Dynamism of Muslim Societies
Date: 8-10 October 1999
Venue: Kyoto International Conference Hall, Kyoto, Japan
Information: Islamic Area Studies, 1999 International Symposium Committee, The University of Tokyo, Bungakubu Annexe, 7-3-1 Hongo, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo, 113-0033, Japan, tel +81 3 56843285, i-inr@l.u-tokyo.ac.jp
URL: http:// www.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/IAS

Islam and Politics in Russia and Central Asia (Early 17th – Late 20th Centuries)
Date: 13-14 October 1999
Venue: Maison franco-japonaise, Tokyo, Japan
Information: Dr Stephane A. Dudoignon, dudoignon@aol.com; Prof. Komatsu Hisao, komatsu@l.u-tokyo.ac.jp
URL: http:// www.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/IAS

Transformation Processes and Islam in Africa
Date: 15 October 1999
Venue: African Studies Centre, room 1A27, Pieter de la Courtgebouw, Wassenaarseweg 52, Leiden, TheNetherlands
Information: Dr Anneke Breedveld, Africa Studies Centre, P.O. Box 9555, 2300 RB Leiden, TheNetherlands, tel (w) +31 71 5273375, (h) +31 71 5120380, brdvld@rulcri.leidenuniv.nl. The conference is organized by the Africa Studies Centre (ASC) in co-operation with the ISIM.

Sixth Annual Conference of the Economic Research Forum for the Arab Countries, Iran and Turkey (ERF)
Date: 29-31 October 1999
Information: Dr Hana' Al-Sabghan, Grants & Conference Officer, ERF, 7 Boulos Hanna Street, Dokki, Cairo, Egypt, fax +20 2 3616042, erf@idsc.gov.eg

Women in Palestine. Fourth International Conference of the Gaza Community Mental Health Program (GCMHP)
Date: 21-23 November 1999
Information: Husam El-Nounou, Public Relations Coordinator, GCMHP, P.O.Box 1049, Gaza City, Palestine, tel +972 7 865949, fax 972 7 824072, pr@gcmhp.net
Deadline: Papers by 1 July 1999

First Annual Conference of the Association of Muslim Social Scientists (UK)
Date: 30-31 October 1999
Venue: University of London
Information: amss@dial.pipex.com or write to AMSS, P.O. Box 126, Richmond, Surrey TW9 2UD, UK
Deadline: Abstracts by 15 April 1999; Finished papers by the end of July

Interdisciplinary Approaches to Third World Studies. Seventeenth Annual Meeting of the Association of Third World Studies
Date: 18-20 November 1999
Venue: Herradura, San Jose, Costa Rica
Information: Dr Tom Leonard, International Studies Program, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, University of North Florida, Jacksonville FL 32224, tel +1 904 6202886, fax +1 904 6201018, tleonard@gw.unf.edu
Deadline: Pre-registration by 15 September 1999

Middle East Studies Association (MESA) 33rd Annual Meeting
Date: 19-22 November 1999
Venue: Marriott Wardman Park Hotel, Washington DC, USA
URL: http://www.mesa.arizona.edu

AAR/SBL Annual Meeting
Date: 20-23 November 1999
Venue: John B. Hynes Veterans Memorial Convention Center, Boston, Massachusetts, USA

Annual meeting of the Dutch Association for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies (MOI)
Date: 26 November 1999
Venue: Nijmegen
Information: Dept. of the Languages and Cultures of the Islamic Middle East, Universiteit Leiden, P.O. Box 9515, 2300 RA Leiden, TheNetherlands

New African Perspectives: 22nd Annual & International Conference of the African Studies Association of Australasia and the Pacific (AFSAAP '99)
Date: 26-28 November 1999
Venue: St George's College, University of Western Australia (UWA), Perth
Information: Professor Cherry Gertzel, gertzelc@spectrum.curtin.edu.au, tel (h) +61 8 92997418 or Dr. Peter Limb, plimb@library.uwa.edu.au, tel +61 8 93802348, fax +61 8 93801012
Deadline: Titles due 15 June 1999; Abstracts by 31 August 1999
URL: http://www.arts.uwa.edu.au/ASCWA/conference99

The Centrality of the Qur'an in Islamic and Middle Eastern Culture
Date: December 1999
Information: A. Jones or R. Nettler at the The Oriental Institute, Pusey Lane, Oxford, OX1 2LE, UK
URL: http://users.ox.ac.uk/~neareast/conferenc.htm

The Sixth Annual Congress of the German Middle East Studies Association for Contemporary Research and Documentation (DAVO)
Date: 2-4 December 1999
Venue: Haus Rissen, Hamburg, Germany
Information: DAVO-Congress Organization, Deutsches Orient-Institut, Mittelweg 150, D-20148 Hamburg, Germany, tel +49 40 4132050, fax +49 40 441484, doihh@uni-hamburg.de
Deadline: Papers by 2 November 1999
URL: http://www.geo.uni-mainz.de/davo

Labour in Pakistan
Date: 26-29 December 1999
Venue: Karachi
Information: Dr Yunas Samad, Department of Social and Economic Studies, University of Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD7 1DP, UK, a.y.samad@bradford.ac.uk, tel +44 1274 234802, fax +44 1274 385295; Dr Kamran Asad Ali, Department of Anthropology, University of Rochester, USA, knar@uhura.cc.rochester.edu, tel +1 716 2758614; Karamat Ali, karamat@piler.khi.sdnpk.undp.org, tel +92 21 4557009, fax +92 21 45557009
Deadline: Abstracts by 1 September 1999; Papers by 1 November 1999

Crossing Borders: Cultural, National and Islamic Identities in Asia
Panel at the 2000 Association of Asian Studies Annual Meeting
Date: 9-12 March 2000
Venue: Town and Country Resort & Convention Center, San Diego, California, USA
Information: Ron Lukens-Bull, Rlukensbul@aol.com

Iran 2000: The Challenges ahead. 18th Annual CIRA Conference
Date: 28-29 April 2000
Venue: Hyatt Regency Bethesda, Maryland, USA
Information: Kamran Dadkhah, Department of Economics, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115, USA, tel +1 617 3732297, kdadkhah@lynx.neu.edu
Deadline: Abstracts and proposals by 31 October 1999
URL: http://www.dac.neu.edu/cira

III International Conference on Islamic Legal Studies: The Madhhab
Date: 4-6 May 2000
Information: Peri Bearman, Harvard Law School, Pound Hall 501, Cambridge, MA 02138, pbearman@law.harvard.edu
Deadline: Papers by 1 November 1999
URL: http://www.law.harvard.edu/Programs/ILSP

The Third Biennial Conference on Iranian Studies
Date: 25-28 May 2000
Venue: Hyatt Regency Hotel, Bethesda, Maryland, USA
Information: SIS Executive Secretary, Kambiz Eslami, c/o Princeton University Library, tel +1 609 2581308, fax +1 609 2580441, keslami@pop3.cit.princeton.edu
Deadline: Abstracts by 30 September 1999

6th Biennial EASA Conference: Crossing Categorical Boundaries: Religion as Politics / Politics as Religion
Date: 26-29 July 2000
Venue: Krakow, Poland
Information: Secretariat European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA), Urgell 259, s.s.3, E-08026 Barcelona, Spain, tel/fax +34 9 33212259, easa@trivium.gh.ub.es
Deadline: Workshop proposals by 3 September 1999
URL: http://www.ub.es/easa/6th.htm

International Interdisciplinary Conference on Language, Thought and Reality: Science, Religion and Philosophy
Date: 1-4 August 2000
Venue: Calcutta, India
Information: Dr Chandana Chakrabarti, Elon College Campus Box 2336, Elon College, N.C. 27244, USA, chakraba@numen.elon.edu
Deadline: Proposals by 25 October '99
URL: http://www.elon.edu/chakraba

XVIII Quinquennial Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR)
Date: 5-12 August 2000
Venue: International Convention Centre Durban, South Africa
Information: Prof. Pratap Kumar, Department of Science of Religion, University of Durban-Westville, Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000, South Africa, kumar@pixie.udw.ac.za; General Secretary of the IAHR, Prof. Armin Geertz, Department of the Study of Religion, University of Aarhus, Main Building, DK-8000 Aarhus C. Denmark, geertz@teologi.aau.dk
URL: http://www.udw.ac.za/iahr

International Congress of Asian and North African Studies (ICANAS) on Oriental and Asian Studies in the Era of Globalization
Date: 27 August – 1 September 2000
Venue: Montreal Convention Center, 201 Viger Avenue West, Montreal, Canada
Information: ICANAS 2000 Secretariat, Bureau des Congrès, Université de Montreal, P.O. Box 6128, Station Downtown, Montréal (Québec) H3C 3J7, Canada
Deadline: Abstracts by 2 August 1999
URL: http://www.bcoc.umontreal.ca

International Conference on Middle Eastern Popular Culture
Date: 17-21 September 2000
Venue: Magdalen College, University of Oxford, UK
Information: Near Eastern Studies Programme, The Oriental Institute, University of Oxford, neareast@orinst.ox.ac.uk
URL: http://users.ox.ac.uk/~neareast/middle.htm

Islamic Studies in Europe Series
The International Institute for Islamic Thought (IIIT) and national academic institutions will be holding a series of seminars on Islamic Studies in Europe in various European cities from February 2000. The seminars will focus on the state of this discipline and identify serious lacunae in the present state of research within its many fields of specialization. The tentative date for UK conference is July 2000. For all other dates and more information, please contact IIIT at pf06@dial.pipex.com.

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