
Special Issue

Isna 'Ashari and Isma'ili Shi'ism: from South Asia to the Indian Ocean

Isna 'Ashari and Isma'ili Shi'ism: from South Asia to the Indian Ocean, edited by Dr Justin Jones of Oxford University and Dr Ali Usman Qasmi of the Lahore University of Management Sciences, is our fifth special issue in recent years. Its articles, by scholars from a range of disciplines – history, religious studies, anthropology, political science – explore the historical and contemporary dynamics of various South Asian Shi'i communities living in, and moving between, places that border the Indian Ocean. Indeed, taken *en masse*, they demonstrate the enduring vitality of these communities, whose members have responded in a range of ways to the opportunities and challenges of the complex religious, social and political context of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The Journal's intention in publishing this collection of papers is to facilitate an informed discussion of South Asian Shi'i lived experience both past and present that we hope will interest not only staff and students in university departments worldwide but equally 'lay' readers outside formal academic circles, within and beyond the Royal Asiatic Society itself. Thus we see it as our small contribution towards building the larger framework of understanding that is so necessary for more nuanced appreciations of Muslim 'denominations', communities, contexts, developments, histories and points of departure. Moreover its publication provides us with an excellent opportunity to fulfil the aims of the Society's founders in a contemporary context, namely a world in which developments in global communications and transnational mobility are responsible for creating an increasingly complicated set of exchanges, interchanges and, all too often, misunderstandings.

SARAH ANSARI
Editor

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