Islam, Trade and Politics Across the Indian Ocean is a research project which was funded by the British Academy over the period 2009–2012 and administered by the Association of South-East Asian Studies in the United Kingdom (ASEASUK) and the British Institute at Ankara (BIAA). The project was directed by Dr Andrew Peacock (BIAA and St. Andrews University) and Dr Annabel Gallop (ASEASUK and British Library).

The aim of the project was to investigate links between the lands of the Ottoman Empire and early Republican Turkey on the one hand and the Muslim peoples of South East Asia on the other over the sixteenth to twentieth centuries. The project was interested in all forms of interaction between these two regions, political, religious, literary, commercial and cultural, including exchanges and mutual influences in material culture. The project conducted research on evidence for these links, and offered small grants to researchers of all nationalities working on relevant themes.

At the conclusion of the project, an International Workshop From Anatolia to Aceh: Ottomans, Turks and Southeast Asia was held in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, 11–12 January 2012, in association with the International Centre for Aceh and Indian Ocean Studies (ICAIOS) and the State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Ar-Raniry. The results of the project and workshop were presented in a travelling photographic exhibition, launched in London in 2012 in association with the British Library, which travelled to venues throughout the UK during 2012–2013. Two books will be published: an edited collection of papers from the International Workshop, and a volume of selected documents in Ottoman Turkish, Arabic and Southeast Asian languages.
**Project Background**

*Islam, Trade and Politics Across the Indian Ocean* was initiated because research by many scholars has stressed how Southeast Asia has long been connected by trade, religion and political links to the wider world across the Indian Ocean, and especially to the Middle East through the faith of Islam. However, little attention has been paid to the ties between Muslim Southeast Asia – encompassing the modern nations of Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore and the southern parts of Thailand and the Philippines – and the greatest Middle Eastern power, the Ottoman empire.

The rise of Muslim states in Southeast Asia coincided with the sixteenth century competition between the Portuguese and the Ottomans for control of the Indian Ocean trade routes, and the Ottomans assisted Muslim sultanates like Aceh with military aid against the Portuguese threat in return for some acknowledgment of Turkish sovereignty. At the same time, Ottoman cultural influences started to appear in the region, and can be observed in manuscripts and art. The memory of contacts with the Ottomans is preserved in Malay literature. The pilgrimage also strengthened Ottoman-Southeast Asian links, and scholars from Ottoman territories often went to Southeast Asia to propagate Islam. However, influences were not all one way, and Southeast Asian ceramics have been found in Ottoman archaeological sites.

Political links were renewed in the nineteenth century as Muslim sultanates in Southeast Asia sought Ottoman protection from European colonialism, often seeking to become Ottoman subjects themselves. Even after the end of the Ottoman Empire, links between Turkey and Indonesia remained strong, for Atatürk was considered a role model by Southeast Asian independence leaders like Sukarno, the first President of Indonesia.

Since the year 2000 Turkish groups have increasingly forged new connections in Southeast Asia, especially in intellectual, humanitarian and educational circles. After the 2004 tsunami in Aceh, Turkish agencies were prominent in rehabilitation efforts. Nowadays, in both Ankara and Jakarta politicians evince a similar outlook as they try balancing political pragmatism, social conservatism, and manifestations of cultural Islam in their attempts to grapple with internal ethnic and religious pluralism and the external pressures of globalization.

Header image: Seal of al-Sayyid al-Sharif al-Safi bin 'Ali bin Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Habshi al-'Alawi. He wrote to the Dutch official Eliza Netscher on 3 December 1865 announcing his appointment as Turkish consul in Singapore, although there is no record of this in the Ottoman archives. *National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia, Riouw 119*

The Indian Ocean, from an Italian Portolano, 16th century. British Library, Harley 3450, no.6
The project was initiated by Dr Andrew Peacock (BIAA) and Professor Michael Hitchcock (ASEASUK), and was subsequently directed by Dr Andrew Peacock and Dr Annabel Teh Gallop (ASEASUK).

Overall management of the project and its finances was in the hands of a committee:

- Professor Ben Fortna (BIAA, SOAS)
- Dr Rebecca Elmhirst (ASEASUK, Brighton University)
- Professor Michael Hitchcock (ASEASUK)
- Dr Annabel Teh Gallop (ASEASUK, British Library)
- Dr Andrew Peacock (BIAA, St Andrews University)

The project was also advised by Professor İsmail Hakkı Göksoy (Süleyman Demirel University, Isparta).

The project administration was facilitated by Gülgün Girdivan (Ankara Manager) and Claire McCafferty (London Manager) of the BIAA.

Dr İsmail Hakkı Kadi (Istanbul Medeniyet University) was appointed Research Fellow in Ottoman Studies based at the British Institute at Ankara (2009-2011) and was responsible for the project's research in the Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives.

Header image: Envelope of a letter in Arabic from Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin Halim Syah of Kedah, to the Ottoman emperor, asking for help against the Siamese who had invaded Kedah, 1825 (detail). BOA HAT 785/36657
In 2009 Dr İsmail Hakkı Kadi was appointed Research Fellow in Ottoman Studies based at the British Institute at Ankara, and was responsible for the project’s research in the Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives (BOA) in Istanbul, identifying and documenting materials relating to Southeast Asia. Most of these are in Ottoman Turkish, but a significant number are in Arabic, the principal language used for diplomatic communications between the Ottoman Empire and Southeast Asia. French, the major language of diplomacy in the nineteenth century, is also represented, while smaller amounts of material in Dutch, English, Malay, Tausug and Burmese have also come to light. The bulk of the documents date to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but smaller quantities of material in Ottoman and Arabic survive from the sixteenth century.

We have also given support to smaller individual research projects:

- Seventeenth and eighteenth century Ottoman influences on Southeast Asian Islam based on Arabic manuscripts (Oman Fathurahman, Andrew Peacock)
- Representations of Turkey and Turks in Malay literature (Vladimir Braginsky)
- Ottoman influence on Qur’an manuscripts and calligraphy in Southeast Asia (Ali Akbar)
- Ottoman paper used in Malay manuscripts (Russell Jones).
- Ottoman cannon in Southeast Asia (Fiona Kerlogue)
- Southeast Asian material culture in Istanbul (Michael Hitchcock)
- Ottoman subjects from Syria in Southeast Asia, 1850s-1918 (William Clarence-Smith)
- Kemalism in Indonesia (Chiara Formichi)
- Civil society Islam in Turkey and Indonesia (Carool Kersten)
- Ottoman influence on Malay diplomatics (Annabel Gallop)
The International Workshop, *From Anatolia to Aceh: Ottomans, Turks and Southeast Asia*, was held in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, from 11-12 January 2012, in association with the International Centre for Aceh and Indian Ocean Studies (ICAIOS) and the Postgraduate Programme of the State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Ar-Raniry, Banda Aceh. Two keynote speeches and 16 papers were presented.

Header image: Keris with a Madurese hilt, ca. 19th c. Military Museum, Istanbul
In association with the British Library, the travelling photographic exhibition *Islam, Trade and Politics across the Indian Ocean* was launched in London in May 2012, presenting the results of the research project to a general audience. **Exhibition venues:**

**UK**
- **30 May – 10 June 2012:** British Academy, London
- **14 June – 29 August 2012:** Library, School of Oriental and African Studies, London
- **5 – 26 Sept 2012:** Oriental Museum, Durham
- **3 – 31 October 2012:** Highfields Community Library, Leicester
- **7 – 21 November 2012:** Ancient India and Iran Trust, Cambridge
- **28 Nov 2012 – 5 Jan 2013:** University of Leeds, Parkinson building, Leeds
- **12 Jan – 27 March 2013:** University of Exeter, Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, Street Gallery
- **12–13 June 2013:** De Montfort University, Leicester
- **1–31 July 2013:** Yunus Emre Turkish Cultural Centre, London
- **7 October – 7 December 2013:** British Museum, John Addis Gallery

**TURKEY**
- **1–18 April 2013:** Sultanbeyli Muhsin Yazıcıoğlu Cultural center, Istanbul
- **20–30 April 2013:** Atatürk Library (Atatürk kitaplığı), Istanbul

**INDONESIA**
- **8–10 June 2013:** Universitas Malikussaleh, Lhokseumawe, Aceh, 4th International Conference on Aceh and Indian Ocean Studies
- **9–23 September 2013:** UPT Perpustakaan Unsyiah / Library, Universitas Syiah Kuala, Aceh
- **24 September–8 October 2013:** Museum Aceh, Banda Aceh
- **13–25 January 2014:** Perpustakaan dan Arsip Banda Aceh
- **August 2014:** Bayt al-Qur'an dan Museum Istiqlal, Jakarta

**MACAU**
- **24–27 June 2013:** A digital version of the exhibition was displayed during the 8th International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS) at the Venetian Macao-Resort-Hotel.

Exhibition panels and leaflet designed by Hannah Yates | [hanbag-design.co.uk](http://hanbag-design.co.uk)

Header image: Winged tree-dwellers of Zabaj, referring probably to Sumatra or Java, from *'Aja'ib al-makhluqat* by Qazvini, Persian text with Ottoman paintings, 1654/5 (detail). British Library, Or.13935, f.76r

Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations. Sources from the Ottoman Archives, edited by İsmail Hakkı Kadı and Andrew Peacock.


Header image: Large Vietnamese jar, probably made in Chu Dau kilns, Red River Delta, 1440 – 1460. This jar is said to have been found in the Yemen (detail). British Museum 2009.3014.3


De Menthon Bake, R. W. J. C. 1873?. *Brieven aan den Minister van Buitenlandsche Zaken te ’s Gravenhage, over Djeddah en Atchin*. Groningen.


[Meheen Ziya Bey], *Osmanlı Gölgesinde bir Uzakdoğu Devleti: Açe*. İstanbul, 2010

Officiele bescheiden betreffende het ontstaan van de Oorlog tegen Atjeh (The Hague, 1881)


Header image: Aden was the main Yemeni port for travellers from the Hadhramaut heading for Southeast Asia. Aden, 1 January 1871, watercolour by Alfred Harcourt (1836–1910) (detail). *British Library, WD 2974*.
Links

British Academy
The UK’s national academy for the humanities and social sciences.

ASEASUK
The Association of South-East Asian Studies in the United Kingdom (ASEASUK) is one of 15 recognised learned societies of the British Academy.

BIAA
An overseas institute of the British Academy, the British Institute at Ankara (BIAA) is internationally renowned for supporting, enabling and encouraging world-class research in Turkey and the Black Sea region in the fields of history, archaeology and related social sciences.

British Library
The national library of the UK, the British Library is a world-class cultural and intellectual resource that serves the needs of today's researchers as well as being the custodian of the nation’s written and spoken heritage.

Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri
Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives, Istanbul

ICAIOS
The International Centre for Aceh and Indian Ocean Studies (ICAIOS) is a joint effort between three Acehnese state universities (Universitas Syiah Kuala, IAIN Ar-Raniry, Universitas Malikussaleh) and several international academic institutions, supported by the Government of Aceh and by the Indonesian Ministry of Research and Technology.