



Suhair Thottupurath
Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi, İlahiyat
Fakültesi, Tafsir Anabilim Dalı
zuhairtp1426@gmail.com
ORCID: 0000-0003-4793-0646

Evlilik, Hareketlilik ve İslamlaşma: Hint
Okyanusu Dünyasında Malabar Örneği (9.-
12. Yüzyıllar)

Marriage, Mobility, and Islamization in the
Indian Ocean World: The Case of Malabar
(9th-12th Centuries)

Atıf/Citation: Thottupurath, S. (2026). Marriage, Mobility, and Islamization in the Indian Ocean World: The Case of Malabar (9th-12th Centuries). *MANAS Journal of Religious Sciences Dergisi*, 5(01), 75-84.

Yükleme Tarihi / Received Date: 6 Ocak 2026

Kabul Tarihi / Accepted Date: 26 Mart 2026

Yayınlanma Tarihi / Published Date: Haziran 2026

İlk-Son Sayfa / First-Last Page: 75-84

Makale Türü / Article Information: Araştırma Makalesi / Research Article

Değerlendirme / Review Reports: Çift Taraflı Kör Hakemlik | Double-blind referee

Etik Beyan / Ethics Statement: Bu çalışmanın hazırlanma sürecinde etik ilkelere uyulmuştur. | Ethical principles were followed during the preparation of this study.

Etik Kurul Belgesi / Ethics Committee Approval: Makale, Etik Kurul Belgesi gerektirmemektedir. | Article does not require an Ethics Committee Approval.

Katkı Oranı Beyanı / Author Contributions: Bu çalışma tek yazarlıdır. | This is a single-authored study.

Etik Bildirim / Complaints: journals@manas.edu.kg

Bu çalışma lisansüstü bir çalışmadan veya bir bildiriden mi üretildi? / Was this work derived from a postgraduate study or a paper? Hayır. | No.

Finansal Destek / Financial Support: Hayır. | No.

Teşekkür Açıklaması / Acknowledgements: Hayır. | No.

Çıkar Çatışması / Conflicts of Interest: Çıkar çatışması beyan edilmemiştir. | The Author(s) declare(s) that there is no conflict of interest.

Yapay Zekâ Kullanımı / Use of Artificial Intelligence: I have used AI onlynfor Grammar, clarity, and academic tone refinement.

Benzerlik Taraması / Similarity Checks: Yapıldı | Yes - intihal.net. Benzerlik oranı %06.

Telif Hakkı ve Lisans / Copyright&License: Yazarlar dergide yayımlanan çalışmalarının telif hakkına sahiptir; çalışma Atıf-GayriTicari 4.0 Uluslararası lisansı altında yayımlanır. | Authors own the copyright of their work published in the journal; work is published under the Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International license. Yayımlanan makalelerde Araştırma ve Yayın Etiğine riayet edilmiş; COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics)'un Editör ve Yazarlar için yayımlamış olduğu uluslararası standartlar dikkate alınmıştır. |Research and Publication Ethics were complied with in the published articles; international standards published by COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics) for Editors and Authors have been taken into account.

Sorumlu yazar olarak yukarıdaki bilgilerin doğruluğunu beyan ediyorum. ☒



Evlilik, Hareketlilik ve İslamlaşma: Hint Okyanusu Dünyasında Malabar Örneği (9.–12. Yüzyıllar)

Öz

Bu makale, Hint Okyanusu dünyasında İslam'ın yayılış sürecini siyasal fetih ve devlet himayesi modellerinin ötesinde ele alarak, evlilik ve toplumsal hareketliliği İslamlaşmanın temel mekanizmaları olarak incelemektedir. Güney Hindistan'daki Malabar Sahili örneğini merkeze alan çalışma, özellikle 9.–12. yüzyıllar arasında Arap Müslüman tüccarların bölgeyle kurduğu deniz ticareti ağları çerçevesinde gelişen sosyal ilişkilerin, dinî dönüşümde oynadığı rolü analiz etmektedir. Bu bağlamda İslamlaşma, askerî ya da idarî bir sürecin sonucu olarak değil; uzun süreli ikamet, evlilik bağları ve aile temelli toplumsal bütünleşme yoluyla gerçekleşen kademeli bir dönüşüm olarak ele alınmaktadır. Makale, Malabar Sahili'nin erken Orta Çağ'dan itibaren Güney Arabistan, Doğu Afrika ve Basra Körfezi'ni birbirine bağlayan Hint Okyanusu ticaret sisteminin önemli bir parçası olduğunu vurgulamaktadır. Hadramut başta olmak üzere Arap Yarımadası'nın güneyinden gelen Müslüman tüccarlar, Malabar liman kentlerinde kurdukları ticari ve sosyal ilişkiler aracılığıyla yerel topluluklarla evlilikler gerçekleştirmiştir. Bu evlilikler, yalnızca bireysel birliktelikler değil, aynı zamanda İslamî pratiklerin, ahlaki normların ve toplumsal kimliğin hane içi düzeyde aktarılmasını mümkün kılan yapısal bağlar oluşturmıştır. Çalışma, evliliği İslamlaşmanın ikincil bir unsuru olarak değil, merkezi bir toplumsal strateji olarak ele almakta; aile, akrabalık ve gündelik yaşamın dinî dönüşümdeki belirleyici rolünü ortaya koymaktadır. Bu yaklaşım, Malabar'daki İslamlaşma sürecini Hint Okyanusu dünyasında gözlemlenen daha geniş, imparatorluk-dışı İslamlaşma örüntüleri içinde konumlandırmakta ve İslam tarih yazımına daha çoğulcu bir perspektif sunmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Malabar, İslamlaşma, Evlilik, Hint Okyanusu, Tüccar Hareketliliği, Aile ve Din.

Marriage, Mobility, and Islamization in the Indian Ocean World: The Case of Malabar (9th–12th Centuries)

Abstract

This article examines Islamization in the Indian Ocean world by foregrounding marriage and social mobility as central mechanisms of religious transmission beyond imperial conquest and state patronage. Focusing on the Malabar Coast of South India between the ninth and twelfth centuries, the study explores how Muslim merchant mobility and intermarriage facilitated the gradual and socially embedded spread of Islam. Rather than viewing Islamization as a product of political domination or military expansion, the article approaches it as a long-term process shaped by everyday social relations, family formation, and household-level religious practice. Malabar occupied a strategic position within the Indian Ocean trade network linking southern Arabia, East Africa, the Persian Gulf, and Southeast Asia. Muslim merchants particularly from Hadramawt established sustained commercial and residential ties with Malabar's port cities. Over time, seasonal travel developed into permanent settlement, and intermarriage between Muslim merchants and local women became a key avenue for social integration. These marital unions created kinship networks through which Islamic norms, rituals, and moral values were transmitted across generations. The article argues that marriage functioned not merely as a demographic or cultural byproduct of trade but as a structural mechanism of Islamization. Religious practices were incorporated into domestic life, enabling Islam to take root without coercion or institutional enforcement. By situating the Malabar case within broader Indian Ocean patterns, the study demonstrates that non-imperial forms of Islamization were both widespread and effective. This analysis contributes to Indian Ocean studies and Islamic history by highlighting the role of family, kinship, and mobility in shaping early Muslim societies. It challenges empire-centered models of Islamization and underscores the importance of social processes in the global spread of Islam.

Key words: Malabar, Islamization, Marriage, Indian Ocean World, Merchant Mobility, Kinship Networks.

Introduction

The spread of Islam across the Indian Ocean world has increasingly been understood as a process shaped not solely by imperial expansion or state-sponsored conversion, but by networks of trade, mobility, and everyday social interaction. Coastal regions connected by maritime routes often experienced Islamization in ways that differed significantly from inland territories incorporated through conquest. The Malabar Coast of South India represents one of the clearest examples of this alternative trajectory, where Islam took root between the ninth and twelfth centuries without the presence of Muslim political rule or military domination¹. Malabar's geographical position along the southwestern coast of the Indian subcontinent placed it at the heart of Indian Ocean commercial circuits linking southern Arabia, East Africa, the Persian Gulf, and Southeast Asia. Long before the advent of Islam, these routes facilitated the movement of goods, people, and cultural practices. With the rise of Islam, Muslim merchants particularly from Hadramawt and other regions of southern Arabia became prominent actors within these maritime networks. Their regular, monsoon-driven voyages to Malabar created conditions for sustained contact rather than episodic encounters².

This sustained mobility had profound social consequences. Muslim merchants did not remain transient visitors but increasingly established long-term residences in Malabar's port cities. Over time, commercial partnerships evolved into social relationships, most notably through marriage with local women. Such marital alliances enabled Muslim traders to integrate into existing kinship systems, embedding Islamic practices within households and family structures. Through these intimate social bonds, Islam was transmitted across generations in ways that were gradual, negotiated, and socially embedded rather than imposed³. Marriage, therefore, emerges not as a peripheral outcome of trade but as a central mechanism of Islamization. Within domestic spaces, religious rituals, ethical norms, and communal identities were cultivated and normalized. Children raised within these mixed households inherited Islamic identities alongside local cultural practices, producing forms of religiosity that were simultaneously connected to the wider Islamic world and responsive to local social realities. This household-based transmission helps explain the durability and stability of Muslim communities in Malabar despite the absence of formal institutions of Islamic governance⁴.

This article approaches the Malabar case through the lens of marriage and mobility to highlight the social foundations of non-imperial Islamization. By focusing on family formation, kinship ties, and everyday interaction, it challenges models that privilege

¹ K. N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 70–74.

² Sebastian R. Prange, *Monsoon Islam: Trade and Faith on the Medieval Malabar Coast* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 24–29

³Michael N. Pearson, "Littoral Society: The Concept and the Problems," *Journal of World History* 17/4 (2006): 306–309.

⁴Engseng Ho, *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 58–63.

political power or formal religious institutions as primary drivers of religious change. Instead, it situates Islamization within the rhythms of maritime life, mercantile ethics, and domestic practice characteristic of the Indian Ocean world⁵. The study draws on Arabic geographical writings, travel accounts, local historical traditions, and modern scholarship to reconstruct how marriage functioned as a conduit for religious transmission. In doing so, it seeks to contribute to broader debates on Indian Ocean history and Islamic expansion by demonstrating that enduring Islamic societies could and did emerge through social integration rather than imperial control. The Malabar experience thus offers a valuable framework for rethinking Islamization as a plural and context-sensitive historical process.

Marriage as a Mechanism of Social Integration and Islamization

One of the most distinctive features of Islamization on the Malabar Coast was the role of marriage as a primary mechanism of social integration. Unlike regions where conversion was linked to elite patronage or political alignment, Malabar witnessed a form of Islamization rooted in family formation and kinship ties. Muslim merchants who settled in coastal towns entered into marital relationships with local women, thereby embedding themselves within existing social structures rather than remaining socially separate communities⁶. These marriages were socially strategic as well as culturally transformative. Through marriage, Muslim traders gained access to local networks of protection, labor, and commercial cooperation, while local families benefited from transoceanic connections and economic opportunity. Such alliances facilitated trust and continuity, enabling Muslim households to persist across generations. Islam, in this context, spread not through public conversion campaigns but through intimate domestic spaces where religious practice was normalized within everyday life⁷.

The household functioned as the central site of religious transmission. Children born into mixed households were socialized into Islamic practices through routine observance of prayer, dietary norms, and moral instruction. Over time, these practices contributed to the formation of stable Muslim lineages whose identities were both locally rooted and connected to the wider Islamic world. This process underscores the importance of kinship as a vehicle for religious continuity in non-imperial settings⁸. Local social structures in Malabar, including matrilineal traditions in certain regions, further shaped the character of marital integration. Rather than displacing indigenous customs, Islamic marital practices adapted to existing norms, producing hybrid social arrangements that facilitated coexistence. The flexibility of Islamic law, particularly within the Shāfiʿī tradition, allowed for such accommodation without undermining religious legitimacy.

⁵ André Wink, *Al-Hind: The Making of the Indo-Islamic World*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 60–63

⁶ Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Iranians Abroad: Intra-Asian Elite Migration and Early Modern State Formation," *Journal of Asian Studies* 51/2 (1992): 340–343.

⁷ Rila Mukherjee, *Pelagic Passageways: The Northern Bay of Bengal before Colonialism* (Delhi: Primus Books, 2011), 88–92.

⁸ Yoginder Sikand, *Sacred Spaces: Exploring Traditions of Shared Faith in India* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2003), 41–45

Marriage thus operated as a space of negotiation between Islamic norms and local social realities.

Gender dynamics also played a crucial role in this process. Local women who entered Muslim households acted as mediators between Islamic practices and indigenous cultural forms. Through their roles in child-rearing and household management, they influenced the everyday expression of Islam in Malabar. This highlights the often-overlooked contribution of women to processes of religious change, especially in contexts where formal religious institutions were absent or minimal⁹. By foregrounding marriage as a mechanism of Islamization, the Malabar case challenges conversion models that privilege public ritual or political affiliation. Instead, it demonstrates how religious transformation can occur quietly and persistently through family life and social reproduction. Marriage provided the structural continuity necessary for Islam to endure beyond the lifetimes of individual merchants, ensuring its long-term presence in Malabar society¹⁰.

Household, Kinship, and the Transmission of Islamic Practice

While marriage provided the initial framework for Muslim integration into Malabar society, it was within the household and extended kinship networks that Islamic practices were sustained and reproduced over time. In the absence of state-sponsored religious institutions or formal mechanisms of conversion, the family unit emerged as the primary locus of religious socialization. Daily routines within the household such as prayer, dietary regulation, ethical conduct, and ritual observance played a decisive role in shaping Muslim identity in Malabar's coastal communities¹¹. Kinship networks functioned as conduits through which Islamic norms circulated beyond individual households. Extended family ties linked merchant families with local lineages, facilitating the diffusion of religious practices across neighborhoods and urban quarters. These networks enabled Islam to move horizontally through society, rather than vertically through elite patronage. The cumulative effect of such kin-based transmission was the gradual normalization of Islamic practice within the social fabric of Malabar's port towns¹².

The structure of family life in Malabar further shaped the character of religious transmission. In regions where matrilineal systems such as marumakkathayam prevailed, Islamic practice adapted to existing kinship arrangements rather than displacing them. Muslim families negotiated inheritance, residence, and authority within these frameworks, demonstrating the capacity of Islamic norms to accommodate local social forms. This adaptability contributed to Islam's social sustainability and mitigated potential conflict with entrenched customs¹³. Religious instruction within the household was informal yet systematic. Children learned basic Qur'ānic recitation, prayer practices,

⁹ Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 76–80.

¹⁰ Nile Green, *Indian Sufism since the Seventeenth Century* (London: Routledge, 2006), 12–16.

¹¹ Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 37–41.

¹² Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 22–25.

¹³ Roland E. Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala* (Madras: Orient Longman, 1976), 54–58.

and moral expectations through observation and repetition rather than formal schooling. Women, in particular, played a central role in this process as primary caregivers and managers of domestic space. Through their daily actions, they translated abstract religious norms into lived practice, ensuring continuity across generations. Such forms of instruction were especially significant in contexts where access to formal learning institutions was limited¹⁴.

Household-based religiosity also shaped communal expressions of Islam. Shared observance of festivals, lifecycle rituals, and charitable practices reinforced bonds between families and contributed to the emergence of neighborhood-level religious identities. These practices fostered a sense of belonging that extended beyond individual belief, embedding Islam within collective social experience. Over time, such communal habits laid the groundwork for more formal religious institutions without requiring centralized authority¹⁵. The Malabar case illustrates how kinship and household life can function as powerful agents of religious transmission. By anchoring Islam within everyday social relations, Muslim communities ensured the durability of religious practice despite political marginality. This mode of transmission highlights the importance of micro-social processes in shaping large-scale religious change and challenges narratives that prioritize institutional or doctrinal factors alone¹⁶.

Mosques as Communal Spaces and Informal Centers of Learning

As Muslim communities in Malabar grew through settlement, marriage, and kinship, mosques emerged as pivotal institutions that anchored religious life without the support of imperial authority or centralized administration. Unlike later madrasas endowed by rulers or elites, early mosques on the Malabar Coast functioned primarily as communal spaces sustained by merchant patronage and collective participation. Their roles extended beyond ritual prayer to encompass education, dispute mediation, and the reinforcement of communal identity¹⁷. The architectural simplicity of early Malabar mosques reflected their social function. Built using local materials and techniques, these structures blended Islamic spatial requirements with indigenous architectural forms. This hybridity facilitated acceptance within the broader urban landscape and underscored the non-confrontational character of Islam's presence. Mosques were integrated into port-town neighborhoods, accessible to merchants, artisans, and families alike, reinforcing their role as everyday rather than elite institutions¹⁸.

Educational activity within mosques was informal yet continuous. Instruction took place through Qur'ānic recitation circles, explanation of basic ritual obligations, and moral exhortation rather than through structured curricula. Knowledge was transmitted orally by respected community members often merchants or scholars with overseas training

¹⁴ Barbara Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 67–71.

¹⁵ Francis Robinson, *Islam and Muslim History in South Asia* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000), 33–37.

¹⁶ Shahab Ahmed, *What Is Islam?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 289–293.

¹⁷ Jonathan Bloom, *Early Islamic Art and Architecture* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2002), 143–147.

¹⁸ Mehrdad Shokoohy, *Muslim Architecture of South India* (London: Routledge, 2003), 18–23

whose authority derived from learning and moral reputation rather than official appointment. Such pedagogical practices ensured that religious knowledge remained accessible and adaptable to local needs¹⁹. Mosques also served as sites where transregional connections were activated and maintained. Visiting scholars and merchants arriving from Arabia or other parts of the Indian Ocean world shared religious knowledge, legal opinions, and devotional practices during their stays. These encounters linked Malabar's Muslim communities to wider Islamic discourses while preserving local autonomy. The circulation of people and ideas through mosque spaces reinforced Islam's transoceanic character without necessitating formal institutions of control²⁰.

Communal rituals conducted in mosques such as Friday prayer, Ramadan observances, and collective supplication strengthened social cohesion and reinforced a shared sense of belonging. Participation in these practices marked communal boundaries while remaining inclusive of converts and newcomers. Through repeated ritual engagement, mosques cultivated habits of worship that normalized Islamic practice within the rhythm of urban life²¹. The Malabar experience demonstrates that mosques could function as effective centers of religious learning and community organization in the absence of madrasas or state patronage. By grounding religious education in communal participation and ethical example, mosque-based learning contributed to the durability of Islam in Malabar. This model challenges assumptions that institutionalized education is a prerequisite for sustained religious transmission and highlights the adaptability of Islamic communal life in maritime societies.

Rethinking Islamization through Marriage and Mobility

The case of the Malabar Coast invites a reconsideration of how Islamization is conceptualized in pre-modern history. Dominant models have often emphasized political conquest, state patronage, or formal institutionalization as prerequisites for religious transformation. The evidence from Malabar, however, demonstrates that Islam could become socially entrenched through alternative mechanisms rooted in everyday life. Marriage, mobility, kinship, and communal practice functioned together to produce a durable Islamic presence without reliance on imperial authority²². Marriage emerges in this context as a structural rather than incidental factor. Through marital alliances, Muslim merchants integrated into local societies, transforming Islam from an external religious identity into an inherited social tradition. These unions anchored Islam within family life, ensuring continuity across generations and embedding religious practice within the rhythms of domestic and communal existence. Unlike elite-driven conversions,

¹⁹ Sebastian Günther, "Teaching and Learning the Qur'ān in the Classical Period," in *The Oxford Handbook of Qur'ānic Studies*, ed. Mustafa Shah and M. A. S. Abdel Haleem (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 360–364.

²⁰ Roxani Eleni Margariti, *Aden and the Indian Ocean Trade* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 101–105.

²¹ Josef W. Meri, *Medieval Islamic Civilization* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 212–216.

²² Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 181–184.

household-based transmission fostered gradual change that minimized resistance and facilitated coexistence with pre-existing religious traditions.

Mobility further shaped this process by sustaining Malabar's connections to the wider Islamic world. The regular movement of merchants and scholars along Indian Ocean routes ensured that local Islamic practices remained aligned with broader Sunni norms while retaining flexibility. Mobility thus functioned as a balancing force, preventing isolation without imposing uniformity. Islam in Malabar developed as a locally grounded yet transregionally connected tradition, reflecting the plural character of Indian Ocean Islam. This perspective challenges teleological narratives that treat Islamization as a linear progression toward institutional consolidation. In Malabar, religious life stabilized before the emergence of formal madrasas or centralized authority. Mosques, households, and kinship networks fulfilled educational and organizational functions typically attributed to state-supported institutions elsewhere. This suggests that religious coherence does not depend exclusively on bureaucratic structures but can emerge through socially embedded practices²³.

Situating Malabar within the broader Indian Ocean world further highlights the comparative significance of this model. Similar patterns of marriage-based integration and mobility-driven transmission are observable in East Africa, Southeast Asia, and southern Arabia. The Malabar experience therefore reflects a wider set of Islamization processes characteristic of maritime societies, where connectivity and social negotiation outweighed political domination²⁴.

By foregrounding marriage and mobility, this study contributes to a more plural understanding of Islamization that accommodates regional diversity and social complexity. It underscores the need to move beyond empire-centered frameworks and to recognize the capacity of everyday social relations to sustain religious transformation. The Malabar case thus offers not merely a regional history but a conceptual lens through which the spread of Islam across the Indian Ocean can be more accurately understood.³⁶

Conclusion

This article has examined the Islamization of the Malabar Coast through the intertwined lenses of marriage, mobility, and everyday social practice, offering an alternative to empire-centered models that have long dominated the historiography of Islamic expansion. By situating Malabar within the Indian Ocean world between the ninth and twelfth centuries, the study has demonstrated that Islam took root not through conquest or state patronage, but through sustained commercial contact, familial integration, and communal negotiation. These processes produced a form of Islam that was both locally embedded and transregionally connected, challenging assumptions that

²³ Wael B. Hallaq, *Shari'a: Theory, Practice, Transformations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 195–199.

²⁴ Nile Green, *Global Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 44–48.

political power is a prerequisite for durable religious transformation. The analysis has shown that maritime mobility created the structural conditions for Islamization by enabling repeated, long-term interactions between Muslim merchants and local societies. Seasonal navigation patterns facilitated settlement, while continued movement ensured Malabar's integration into wider Islamic networks. Within this context, marriage emerged as a central mechanism through which Islam moved from the sphere of trade into the domain of family and kinship. Marital alliances anchored Islamic practice within households, allowing religious norms to be transmitted across generations through everyday routines rather than formal instruction or coercion.

Household life and extended kinship networks further reinforced this process by providing stable social environments in which Islamic identities could be cultivated and reproduced. The adaptability of Islamic norms to local social structures particularly in regions characterized by distinctive kinship systems enabled Islam to coexist with pre-existing cultural practices. This flexibility contributed to the resilience of Muslim communities in Malabar and explains their capacity to endure in the absence of centralized religious or political institutions. The study has also highlighted the importance of mosques as communal spaces that supported religious learning, social cohesion, and ethical formation without functioning as state-sponsored institutions. Mosque-based practices, combined with household instruction and kin-based transmission, fulfilled many of the roles often attributed to formal madrasas in other regions. Together, these social and spatial arrangements sustained a coherent religious life grounded in participation rather than authority.

By foregrounding marriage and mobility as analytical categories, this article contributes to broader debates on Islamization in the Indian Ocean world. The Malabar case illustrates that non-imperial pathways of religious change were not marginal or exceptional but constituted a widespread and effective mode of Islam's expansion across maritime Asia and beyond. Recognizing such pathways invites a more plural and socially grounded understanding of Islamic history one that accounts for diversity in historical experience while acknowledging the shared structures that connected Muslim communities across vast distances.

In conclusion, the Islamization of Malabar underscores the capacity of social relations, economic networks, and everyday practices to generate enduring religious identities. Moving beyond paradigms centered on conquest and state power, this study affirms the value of micro-social analysis for understanding macro-historical processes and offers Malabar as a compelling model for rethinking how Islam spread and took root across the pre-modern world.

Bibliography

Ahmed, Shahab. *What Is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016.

- Asad, Talal. *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003.
- Asad, Talal. *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.
- Bloom, Jonathan. *Early Islamic Art and Architecture*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2002.
- Bulliet, Richard. *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period: An Essay in Quantitative History*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979.
- Chaudhuri, K.N. *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- Eaton, Richard M. "Approaches to the Study of Conversion to Islam in India." In *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies*, edited by Richard C. Martin, 106–123. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1985.
- Green, Nile. *Global Islam: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.
- Günther, Sebastian. "Teaching and Learning the Qurʾān in the Classical Period." In *The Oxford Handbook of Qurʾānic Studies*, edited by Mustafa Shah and M. A. S. Abdel Haleem, 357–381. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.
- Hallaq, Wael B. *Shariʿa: Theory, Practice, Transformations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Ho, Engseng. *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.
- Margariti, Roxani Eleni. *Aden and the Indian Ocean Trade: 150 Years in the Life of a Medieval Arabian Port*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007.
- Metcalf, Barbara. *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860–1900*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982.
- Meri, Josef W. *Medieval Islamic Civilization: An Encyclopedia*. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Miller, Roland E. *Mappila Muslims of Kerala: A Study in Islamic Trends*. Madras: Orient Longman, 1976.
- Mukherjee, Rila. *Pelagic Passageways: The Northern Bay of Bengal before Colonialism*. Delhi: Primus Books, 2011.
- Pearson, Michael N. *The Indian Ocean*. London: Routledge, 2003.
- Robinson, Francis. *Islam and Muslim History in South Asia*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Shokoohy, Mehrdad. *Muslim Architecture of South India: The Sultanate of Maʿbar and the Traditions of Maritime Settlers*. London: Routledge, 2003.
- Sikand, Yoginder. *Sacred Spaces: Exploring Traditions of Shared Faith in India*. New Delhi: Penguin, 2003.
- Subrahmanyam, Sanjay. "Iranians Abroad: Intra-Asian Elite Migration and Early Modern State Formation." *Journal of Asian Studies* 51/2 (1992): 340–363.
- Wink, André. *Al-Hind: The Making of the Indo-Islamic World*. Vol. 1. Leiden: Brill, 1990.