

MOAIN SADEQ**Associate Professor, Department of Humanities, Qatar University, Doha, Qatar**

Dr. Moain Sadeq (Mohammedmoin Sadeq) is an Associate Professor of history and archaeology at Qatar University since 2010. He received his PhD from the Free University of Berlin 1991, followed in 2002 by a post-doctorate research at the Oriental Institute, the University of Chicago. In 2000 he joined an advanced study program in museology and cultural heritage organized by the US Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. He has over 25 years' experience in teaching and developing curricula of history and archaeology. Just before joining Qatar University he taught at the University of Chicago and the University of Toronto. His major teaching and research interests

are history and archaeology of the Middle East, including archaeological excavations such as at the early Islamic site of Murwab and the late Islamic site of al-Zubarah in Qatar (1980-1984) and at pre-Islamic sites in Gaza (1994-2000). He has multi lingual publications. Among his most recent publications: Gaza Art and Architecture, Encyclopaedia of Islam (Edition III, Print and Online) - September 2014); "Mamluk Cartouches and Blazons in the Museum of Islamic Arts, Doha, IJBHT, Vol. 4 2014 USA; "An Overview of Iron Age Gaza in Light of the Archaeological Evidence", in Material Culture Matters, Eisenbrauns, USA, 2014. He is an associate member of the graduate faculty, the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations (NMC), the University of Toronto, an elected board member for the seat of Middle East archaeology in the American Anthropological Association (AAA).

Dr. Sadeq is active in students exchange programs and in organizing study abroad courses. The most recent two courses are dedicated to students from Portland State University and a course for Qatar University students in Andalucía. He is also active in International programs aiming to bridging cultures and fostering mutual understanding.

Dr. Sadeq has co-organized series of International historical and archaeological exhibitions in Europe jointly with professional institutions. The most recent one is the exhibition of Islamic manuscripts of Leiden University at Qatar University in 2014.

Islamic Maritime Connection and Trade with China and the Mediterranean during the Abbasid and Mameluke Periods

Arabs managed before Islam to achieve active relations with China and Mediterranean regions. China, for instance, had already been well known to the peoples of the central Middle East because of the frequent land and sea communication. Since China was known as a source of multifaceted knowledge long before Islam, the Prophet Muhammad said *Utlubil 'ilmawa law fis-Sin* "Seek knowledge even as far as China" (Al-Tirmidhi, Hadith 74). From the 7th century CE onwards, Arabs, Persian and other ethnic groups were engaged in business with China by land and sea silk roads. According to Chinese geographers the Arabs (Dàshí or Dashi as known by the Chinese at that time) established good relations with the Tang dynasty. The third Muslim Caliph 'Uthman Ibn 'Affan in the very Early Islamic period (reigned 644-656) sent an embassy to the Tang court at Chang'an (Twitchett 2000).

Maritime trade with China flourished during the Abbasid period (750–1258). Despite their fight against the Chinese at Talas (June 11, 758), the Abbasids sent embassies to the Chang'an court and established long lasting relations with China. The observations and accounts of Du Huan in his return in 762 from his capture city, Baghdad, to Guangzhou are primary non-Muslim sources for the history and geography of the Abbasid territories. In addition the works of the Chinese Jia Dan, "Huanghua Sida Ji" and the Persian Ibn Khurdadbeh, "*Kitāb al-Masālikw'al- Mamālik*" (The Book of Roads and Kingdoms) describe major maritime trade routes between China and the Muslim World in the 9th century. They mention hubs such as Wula (Ubolla or Al-Ubullah east of Basra) as a major Abbasid hub and Guangzhou as the largest port of southern China.

Muslim and Chinese goods started to flow into both regions. The varieties of high quality items in shipwrecks along the maritime route between both regions have been witnessing not only the strong trade contact between both sides but also the prosperity, strong economy and high manufacturing technology that they experienced at that time.

It is important to note that the maritime route and trade between the central Muslim world and the Mediterranean regions are attested thousands of years before Islam. In Islam, particularly during the Mameluke period (1250-1517) a series of well-established ports of trade along the Syrian Mediterranean coast flourished and played major roles. Ceramic apothecary jars of Syrian origin have been excavated at archaeological sites in UK, Spain and Italy and also illustrated in museum objects in the Netherlands.

In light of textual sources and the archaeological record this paper endeavours to shed light on the maritime routes and trade relations between the central Muslim world and China on the one hand and the Mediterranean regions on the other during the Abbasid (750–1258) and Mameluke (1250-1517) periods, highlighting major maritime hubs that contributed in the maritime trade at that time.



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