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**Trade, Settlement, and Migration: Persian-Arab mobility across the Gulf, 16<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> centuries**

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**Abstract**

The sixteenth to twentieth centuries saw the zenith and decline of the Persian coast port towns in the Persian Gulf. Starting from the eighteenth century, a network of trade centers emerged and expanded on the Arab shores, due greatly to trade intensification and a period of economic prosperity based on the rise in the global demands for pearls. It is in this context that this study examines Persian-Arab mobility in the Gulf by looking at an array of historical, archaeological and architectural sources. Urban heritage in the Gulf, it is argued, is directly linked to migration, trade and settlement.

This research looks at various trade and migration patterns from an interdisciplinary perspective as a way of visualizing the impact of migration in the historic urban landscape of maritime communities. A look at different established and emerging patterns of interconnectivity allows us to evaluate intra-Gulf mobility and its impact in the region's urban heritage. In this respect, ceramics, settlement growth, urbanization and architecture are used as proxies to analyze the development of different, and intrinsically mobile communities during the Late Islamic and Early Modern periods, to suggest that migration can be seen as both the cause and the effect of trade and settlement, as evidenced by Persians and Arabs across the Gulf.