I write this MESA update as a challenging academic year comes to an end. Although the possibility of returning to our university campuses in the fall appears good at the moment, we continue to deal with the uncertainties in prospects and nature of employment created by changes, now compounded by COVID-19 realities, in institutions of higher education. The resilience, creativity and activism of colleagues, students, and the MESA community are a testament to the critical work that goes into building and supporting scholarship in our field.

MESA members come together at the annual meeting during the fall of every year. It is the time we engage with one another’s work, meet in the hallways of hotels or conventions centers, gather around meals, and have impromptu conversations that may develop into more sustained personal or professional engagements. Although last year’s virtual meeting was a success, we do hope to meet in person in Montréal in October. The MESA Secretariat has been working hard and thinking creatively on how to organize and put together the annual meeting, keeping in mind several options that allow us flexibility. Executive Director Jeff Reger will report on the meeting and the work of the Secretariat (see pages 4-5). I want to draw attention to the flexibility and imaginative thinking of the staff as they adjust to our new normal.

The Board of Directors’ Committee on Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination, chaired by President-Elect Eve Troutt Powell, has met to consider methods of combating racial and other discrimination in the field, supporting scholars from underrepresented groups, and encouraging and sustaining the emerging field of scholarship on race in the Middle East and North Africa. For their enthusiasm and commitment, we thank its members: Beeta Bagholizadeh, Marie Grace Brown, Brahim El Guabli, Neda Maghbouleh, Taylor Moore, Laura Robson, and Sherene Seikaly.

The Publication Committee’s members, Joel Gordon and Heather Ferguson, the editors of IJMES and RoMES respectively, together with Board Member Orit Bashkin and Sara Palmer the editor of our newsletter IMES, have met to map out strategies to attract new scholarship and disseminate knowledge about recent research and publication trends in the field to our members in succinct and accessible format. The editors of IJMES and RoMES are considering broadening the diversity continued on page 3
The Middle East Studies Association (MESA) is a private, non-profit, learned society that brings together scholars, educators and those interested in the study of the region from all over the world. From its inception in 1966 with 51 founding members, MESA has increased its membership to over 2,800 and now serves as an umbrella organization for approximately forty institutional members and forty affiliated organizations. The association is a constituent society of the American Council of Learned Societies, the National Council of Area Studies Associations, and a member of the National Humanities Alliance.

As part of its goal to advance learning, facilitate communication and promote cooperation, MESA sponsors an annual meeting that is a leading international forum for scholarship, intellectual exchange and pedagogical innovation. It is responsible for the International Journal of Middle East Studies, the premiere journal on the region, the MESA Review of Middle East Studies and Issues in Middle East Studies, a biannual newsletter. An awards program recognizes scholarly achievement, service to the profession, undergraduate education, and exemplary student mentoring. MESA is governed by a nine-member Board of Directors elected by the membership.

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President Dina Rizk Khoury, George Washington University
President-Elect Eve Troutt Powell, University of Pennsylvania
Executive Director Jeffrey D. Reger

Members of the Board:
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Orit Bashkin, University of Chicago
Asli Iğsız, New York University
Miriam R. Lowi, The College of New Jersey
Taylor Moore, University of California, Santa Barbara
Nadia G. Yaqub, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

MESA Membership is available to individuals and institutions who are interested in the study of the Middle East. To learn more about membership, visit mesana.org or contact Sara Palmer (sara@mesana.org).

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Issues in Middle East Studies is the biannual newsletter (April, October) of the Middle East Studies Association of North America, Inc. and is a benefit of membership. Hard copies are available to members upon request; postage will be collected for those residing outside the United States.

All MESA Publications available digitally
Login to your myMESA account, select the MESA Publications button to access pdf versions of IMES and links to searchable issues of IJMES and RoMES.

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Current Prices and Specifications
Full page (7.5” x 10”) ........................................ $625
Half-page horizontal (7.5” x 5”) .................. $375
Half-page vertical (3.625” x 10”) ................. $375
Quarter-page (3.625” x 5”) ......................... $225

Upcoming Deadlines:
November 1, 2021 for November 2021 issue
March 15, 2022 for April 2022 issue
Please note that due to the earlier dates of the 2021 annual meeting, the October 2021 issue will be published after the conference.
Letter from the President continued from front page

of publications to include topics that engage with the latest scholarship in ethnic and critical race studies among our members, scholarship that is usually published in other disciplinary journals. Orit Bashkin has reached out, on behalf of IMES, to several members to publish short pieces that update our membership on new developments in various fields of study.

MESA’s Anti-Sexual Harassment Committee (ASH) members Carole Woodall and Lisa Nielson, together with Bryan Roby of the Queer Studies group are putting together a workshop for the annual conference on identifying and combating microaggressions, a topic they chose based on a 2017 survey that ASH conducted. We hope the workshop is well attended and helpful in combatting sexual harassment.

The Global Academy’s work continues apace. The call for the submission to next year’s fellowship has gone out and we hope to get a diverse pool of applicants by the May 3rd deadline. In the meantime, our current fellows have presented their work at the Global Academy’s partner institutions and their scholarship continues to be featured as part of Jadaliyya’s Scholars in Context Series. We are grateful to our partner institutions and to Jadaliyya for their support of the Global Academy’s mission.

The threat to the independence of institutions of higher learning and to academic freedom posed by the policies of President Erdogan has elicited a significant number of letters by Committee on Academic Freedom’s Middle East and North Africa wing. Yet, the violent suppression in January of this year of student and faculty protests against the government’s unilateral appointment of a university rector closely associated with the ruling party at Bogazici University compelled the Board of Directors to issue a statement on February 12, condemning such violence and asking the Turkish government to protect the student and faculty’s academic freedom rights. MESA co-sponsored with the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association a webinar entitled “Higher Education and Academic Freedom in Turkey: Bogazici yesterday and today.” In the well-attended webinar, we heard of the experience of students and professors at Bogazici and their assessment of the threats to higher education posed by the policies of the current government.

The ability of our community to teach, research and organize around history and politics of the Palestinian and Israeli conflict without facing threats to their academic freedom and civil rights has been under attack for some time. The many letters written by the North America wing of our Committee on Academic Freedom testifies to MESA’s engagement with this issue. More recently, the adoption by government agencies such as the Department of State, state legislatures in Florida and South Carolina, and university administrations of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism compounds the attempts to limit critical discussions of Palestinian and Israeli history and politics. IHRA’s broadening of the definition of antisemitism to include “Contemporary Examples” such as criticism or opposition to Israel and Zionism and poses a serious threat to free speech and academic freedom. The Board of Directors issued a statement on March 31 pointing to the dangers to the free exchange of ideas that the “Contemporary Examples” of antisemitism listed by IHRA and calling on federal, state, provincial and local governments, as well as on university administrators in the US and Canada to refrain from adopting it.

MESA is indebted to the members of the Committee on Academic Freedom’s two wings for their commitment and the amount of research that goes into their efforts to document violations to academic freedom. I continue to be grateful for the thoughtfulness exhibited by the drafters of the 26 letters that the Committee has issued since October of last year.

I wish you all a pleasant summer break and hope to see you in person in Montréal in October.

The resilience, creativity and activism of colleagues, students, and the MESA community are a testament to the critical work that goes into building and supporting scholarship in our field.
Thank you first and foremost for your membership in MESA, which has allowed the Board of Directors and the Secretariat to continue implementing the organization’s mission through these tumultuous times.

The MESA Secretariat has been working remotely for over a full year. I am grateful to report that both MESA as an organization and MESA as a staff of people finished 2020 in as good health as possible.

Over the winter, with the help in particular of Sara Palmer and our database consultant Sam Sadat-Wexler, MESA rolled out the first update of our myMESA database in many years. We kindly ask you to review your myMESA profile to make sure that we have current information on you, whenever you have the chance to update it.

We also recently learned that our longtime conference home in Washington DC, the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel, where our 2020 and 2023 meetings were supposed to be, has declared bankruptcy. The franchise holder and the national chain are incommunicado, pending litigation. (Thus, after this year, we are contracted only for Denver in December of 2022.)

We are now less than half a year away from a potential late October meeting in Montréal, Québec, Canada. Our able Program Committee Chair Wilson Jacob and his committee have done a spectacular job, with the active assistance of Kat Teghizadeh. We thank them all for their assiduous work putting together a high quality and diverse selection of innovative research across the broader field.

This year, we are planning to offer additional travel funding for the 2021 meeting, as well as adding a reception following the presidential address and awards ceremony, plus complimentary coffee breaks for all registered attendees. We want to make the most of the opportunity to gather again, socially, should governments and the global pandemic permit.

The contingency plan in the works is that MESA may ultimately need to hold two meetings – splitting the program between an in-person meeting in Montréal, if possible, and a virtual component.

In January we welcomed Sophia Angeletti to the DC Secretariat staff as MESA’s Programs Assistant. Sophia is a 2019 Tulane graduate in Middle East studies. She speaks Italian and Spanish, studied Arabic in Jordan, and was a CUMES workshop participant in San Antonio. She was previously a Fulbright English teaching assistant in Turkey until the pandemic forced her return to the US. Most recently, she worked on the Biden campaign in her home state of Florida. Sophia has already proved a strong addition to the MESA staff in taking on the work of handling MESA’s social media, assisting with the book exhibit, among a multitude of other tasks with critical committees.
and a virtual one a few weeks later. (A truly hybrid, simultaneous meeting is essentially impossible due to staff and cost, which would be roughly triple for all of the audio-visual and internet bandwidth needs.)

Our hope remains that Canada and Montréal in particular will be able to pick up the pace of vaccinations and reopen safely along with the rest of the world. For those who still will not be able to travel, we can accommodate some remote participation at the in-person meeting in late October, coupled with fully virtual sessions in mid November or early December.

While our preference remains for an in-person annual meeting, the success of the 2020 virtual meeting has raised the possibilities of developing virtual forums to encourage the wider dissemination of and access to the scholarship of our members across the globe.

Part of the Secretariat’s work in the coming years is to think through how to use digital platforms to hold virtual conferences, ideally in conjunction with in-person events.

The costs of travel have become prohibitive for many of our members, yet digital tools simply do not offer the same aspects and benefits of the informal spaces at MESA, from the hallway to the café table. Online platforms also have privacy and censorship challenges, to say the least.

This summer, in collaboration with the board and external members, I will be constituting an advisory committee to begin considering the future model of the MESA meeting, which we hope will combine the best of both models: the spectacularly lower costs of attendance for virtual conferences, with the opportunities for exchange and networking provided by special events and social interaction in person.

Our hope is that in the not-so-distant future, MESA can hold multiple meetings a year, with both physical and virtual events, to encourage exchange beyond the fall meeting. Until then, we will remain in touch and try to remain as flexible as we can.

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**Updated Demographic Options in myMESA**

To understand and best serve our membership, MESA’s Board of Directors and relevant board-constituted committees would like to have the most up-to-date demographic data. With the recent myMESA database upgrade, we have expanded the options for professional positions and titles, added nonbinary gender options, as well as for self-identification by ethnicity. We are also in the process of adding new sub area specialties as options for member profiles.

You may always of course opt out of having your name or profile appear publicly, but your member record provides important data for statistical and planning purposes. Any demographic data shared with MESA committees is anonymized and confidential.

If you have a public profile, it is also important to maintain your membership profile so that you can be found as an expert in your field through PERMES and the Find-A-Member search function.

Thank you for allowing us to capture a current picture of the state of the field (membership by discipline, area of focus, and so forth), which requires up-to-date data in myMESA. Simply provide any changes to your contact information, research interests, and other details when logged into myMESA.
New & Returning Members
MESA welcomes 410 new members (170 full, 208 students, 32 associates) for 2021, and 998 returning members who were not members last year.

MESA’s Institutional Members
We recognize the following organizations as institutional members of MESA. Our institutional members share with MESA a commitment to recognizing excellence in the field, encouraging the growth and vibrancy of all the different disciplines within Middle Eastern studies, and defending the rights of scholars and academics around the world.

Aga Khan University, Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations
American University in Dubai
American University of Kuwait
AMIDEAST Education Abroad
Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, Doha Institute
Arab Center Washington D.C. (ACW)
Boston College
Brandeis University, Crown Center for Middle East Studies
Bridgewater State University, Middle East Studies Center
Brown University
California State University, San Bernardino
Columbia University, Middle East Institute
Cornell University, Department of Near Eastern Studies
Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC)
Dartmouth College
Duke-UNC Consortium for Middle East Studies
Florida State University, Middle East Center
Foundation for Iranian Studies
Georgetown University, Center for Contemporary Arab Studies
Georgetown University, Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding
Harvard University, Center for Middle Eastern Studies
ILEX Foundation
Indiana University, Center for the Study of the Middle East
Marquette University
McGill University, Institute of Islamic Studies
Middle East Institute at the National University of Singapore

New York University, Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies
Ocean County College
Portland State University, Middle East Studies Center
Princeton University, Department of Near Eastern Studies
Simon Fraser University
Stanford University, Sohaib and Sara Abbasi Program in Islamic Studies
Syracuse University, Middle Eastern Studies Program
University of Arizona, Center for Middle Eastern Studies
University of Arkansas, King Fahd Center for Middle East & Islamic Studies
University of California, Berkeley, Center for Middle Eastern Studies
University of California, Santa Barbara, Center for Middle Eastern Studies
University of Exeter, Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies
University of Massachusetts at Amherst
University of Michigan, Center for Middle Eastern & North African Studies
University of Pennsylvania, Middle East Center
University of Southern California
University of Texas at Austin, Center for Middle Eastern Studies
University of Toronto, Department of Near & Middle Eastern Civilizations
University of Washington, Middle East Center
Vanderbilt University
Washington University in St. Louis
Yale University

To apply for institutional membership, an institution should submit to the Secretariat a letter of interest, a list of directors, and descriptive information about the institution and its programs (e.g. brochures, sample publications). Submit materials to secretariat@mesana.org. Institutional membership annual dues are $1100.
Contributions

For the period November 10, 2021 - May 1, 2021, a total of $17,465 in individual contributions was received for MESA funds. We acknowledge with great thanks the following:

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Mirna Lattof
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Sherry Vatter

Contributions to MESA are tax-exempt (TIN 13-6220175). If you have made a contribution this year and need a receipt, you can print one from your myMESA account. Simply click “payment” button, then “payment history”. A list of payments will appear; select the appropriate payment to obtain the pdf file to print.

- at least $100
- at least $250
- at least $500
- at least $1000

**MESA Elections**

The 2021 MESA Board election will take place later this summer via MESA’s website. All voting-eligible members will receive an email from the Secretariat, and subsequent reminder messages, when the election is live. The Nominating Committee is given the task of choosing the candidates for the 2021 Election of Officers. We thank the 2021 Nominating Committee for their service.

Attiya Ahmad, George Washington University
Michelle Campos, Penn State University
Ziad Fahmy, Cornell University
Tsolin Nalbantian, Leiden University
Zainab Saleh, Haverford College
Wisam Alshaibi, UCLA (Student Member)

**Nominating Committee Election Statistics, 2014-2021**

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<td>2445</td>
<td>2443</td>
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<td>2374</td>
<td>2422</td>
<td>2304</td>
<td>1955</td>
<td>2417</td>
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<td>540</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>430</td>
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<td>% of voting membership</td>
<td>15.95</td>
<td>22.75</td>
<td>19.10</td>
<td>15.80</td>
<td>16.41</td>
<td>14.77</td>
<td>16.20</td>
<td>18.10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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- student position added with 2016 election
We are happy to introduce here a section on new directions in Middle East studies. In recent years, Middle East studies has experienced substantial growth in scholarship that intersects in exciting ways with fields in the humanities and social sciences, from linguistics, to anthropology, to history, to comparative literature. Online platforms, from Jadaliyya to the Library of Arabic Literature, have been producing blogs, seminars, and other activities. The horrible pandemic cut short many of our seminars and lectures, and yet our colleagues in the field have responded to these challenges with incredible ingenuity: organizing global lectures, panels, seminars, and workshops on Zoom; publishing on their websites, on Facebook, and on YouTube.

In fact, it is difficult to keep up with everything that goes on in our field. We therefore wanted to launch this new section, in which colleagues inform us about new directions in Middle East studies: new books just out, special issues recently published, and conferences held. We hope to expand this section and so we encourage you to email us about your activities and publications. We would be happy to publish more about them.

The first two entries in this new section represent innovative domains of inquiry. The first, by Alda Benjamen, reflects some developments in Iraqi studies. While Iraqi studies has always benefited from the field’s luminaries, in particular Hanna Batatu and his student Dina Rizk Khoury and Afaf Marsot and her student Hala Fattah, the past five (!) years have witnessed a wave of new publications that attempt to write the history, analyze the literatures, and produce ethnographies, of Iraq, in ways that challenge sectarian, nationalist, and essentialist narratives. Stanford University Press published The Dangers of Poetry: Culture, Politics, and Revolution in Iraq by Kevin M. Jones; Familiar Futures: Time, Selfhood, and Sovereignty in Iraq by Sara Pursley; Ungovernable Life: Mandatory Medicine and Statecraft in Iraq by Omar Dewachi; Between Muslims: Religious Difference in Iraqi Kurdistan by Andrew Bush; Return to Ruin: Iraqi Narratives of Exile and Nostalgia by Zainab Saleh; and City of Black Gold: Oil, Ethnicity, and the Making of Modern Kirkuk by Arbella Bet-Shlimon, adding to a larger body of scholarship such as Women and Gender in Iraq: Between Nation-Building and Fragmentation by Zahra Ali (Cambridge) and Rivers of the Sultan: The Tigris and Euphrates in the Ottoman Empire by Faisal H. Husain (Oxford). Benjamen’s interests in historical anthropology, archives, and pluralism echo some of the new dynamics in this field.

The second field pertains to the Arabic language: its history, as well as Arabic socio-linguistics and Arabic linguistics. Scholars like Fred Donner, Sidney H. Griffith, and in particular Ahmad Al-Jallad have looked at archeological evidence and studies of material culture to better comprehend Arabic’s history and its interactions and entanglements with other languages and other Arabic languages. Socio-linguists, such as Enam Al Wer and Uri Horesh are thinking about the Arabic language in relationship to urbanity, migration, religion, and multilingualism, shifting the discussion beyond the debates about diglossia we have heard so much about. Reem Khamis’s work with Arab Americans has contributed to our understanding of speech and language pathology. Here, Uri Horesh presents some of the recent developments in the field.

We look forward to reading more about your activities!

Orit and Sara

Orit Bashkin, Publications Committee Chair (orith@uchicago.edu)
Sara Palmer, IMES Editor (sara@mesana.org)
Special Issue on Northern Iraq
Journal of Contemporary Iraq & the Arab World
Alda Benjamen | UC Berkeley

In March 2021, the *Journal of Contemporary Iraq & the Arab World* featured a special issue on northern Iraq, the region of the modern Iraqi state north of Baghdad, including the governorates of Salah ad-Din, Kirkuk, Sulaymaniyyah, Erbil, Duhok and Ninawa. Northern Iraq’s ethnic and religious plurality are often neglected by both modern scholarship and in the media, whose reports on the region routinely assert monolithic nationalisms and religious fanaticism, linking the two in ways that serve contemporary political agendas. The region’s ethnic and religious diversity, its many spoken and written languages, and the strong trans-regional and transnational connections that endure within and between its component communities have been depicted in nationalist historiographies as a deviation, and even a burden on the governance of the Ottomans, and their successor, the Iraqi state. The majority of historical works on Iraq have focused on Baghdad, making use predominantly of Arabic-language sources that obfuscate the country’s multilingual reality. Similarly, studies of the north have dealt chiefly with cosmopolitan urban centers such as Mosul, and on Kurdish nationalism and national movements and their struggles against the state, rather than addressing a provincial history encompassing pluralistic engagements.

The articles in this special issue offer a presentation of this fascinating space of cultural heterogeneity and diversity of voices. The authors assess the native pluralism of this region in depth, introducing new historical perspectives and making use of sources in languages ranging from Arabic and Aramaic to Judeo-Arabic, Kurdish, Turkish and Ottoman Turkish. The issue concludes with the central question of knowledge production itself. Focusing on archival politics, we examine the ways in which states and empires amassed information about the north’s human geography, how this knowledge was classified and archived, and the ways in which these practices shaped – and were shaped by – politics and discourses.

As a borderland region, northern Iraq was home to many communities that became divided and minoritized within newly formed nation-states at the turn of the twentieth century. Janet Klein enriches our understanding of this process, linking minoritization to territoriality as she explores the case of the Armenians, and especially of the Kurds. Orit Bashkin deconstructs local identities in northern Iraq, focusing on Jewish travel narratives. She notes feelings of familiarity while showing cultural tensions between and among Jews from different localities. Michael Sims uses late-nineteenth- and twentieth-century sources in languages ranging from Syriac to Ottoman Turkish and Kurdish, shedding light on the Ezidi experience. Annie Greene traces the emergence of print and press culture in the Ottoman frontier province of Mosul. My own contribution explores the hybridized and multilingual character of Iraqi culture in the 1970s, examining Iraqi publications concerned with folklore, women and leftist politics, while focusing on bilingual Arabic and neo-Aramaic Assyrian publications.

Joseph Sassoon and Michael Brill discuss the history of the North Iraq Dataset (NIDS). First made accessible to western researchers in the 1990s, this archival collection examines the impacts of the Ba’th regime on the recent history of northern Iraq. Judith Tucker and Laurie Brand raise ethical concerns over the presence of the NIDS and other Iraqi archives from the Ba’th period that were found in US institutions, focusing on the ISIS Files that were removed from Mosul. Sara Farhan illuminates current processes of archival recovery by locals in Mosul following its liberation from ISIS. I conclude with an interview with the Dominican Archbishop of Mosul and Aqra, Fr. Najib Mikhail, who was responsible for salvaging a trove of manuscripts from ISIS. This section also builds on Camille Cole’s review of Arbella Bet-Shlimon’s book on northern Iraq, *City of Black Gold: Oil, Ethnicity, and the Making of Modern Kirkuk* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2019). Finally, Arbella Bet-Shimon explores the themes covered elsewhere in the issue through the lens of the legacy of Sargon Boulus, one of Kirkuk’s most famous poets.

This special issue aims to deepen our understanding not only of northern Iraq, but also of Iraq’s unique contribution to the experience of pluralism in the broader Middle Eastern. It sheds light on Iraqi provincial history, exploring the interplay between center and periphery, and between state and society.

Focus on Language Variation & Arabic Dialects
The Essex Arabic Sociolinguistics Research Group
Uri Horesh

The Essex Arabic Sociolinguistics Research Group has been active for over a decade now. It was established as an informal forum for faculty and graduate students in the Department of Language and Linguistics at the University of Essex to exchange ideas and share ongoing research on language variation and change, mostly as these issues pertain to Arabic dialects. In recent years, the group has been led by Professor Enam Al-Wer and Dr. Uri Horesh. Many of the group members have remained on board as they graduated from Essex and took up faculty positions elsewhere, mostly in the Middle East. We also work closely with colleagues at other institutions in Europe, North America and the Middle East.

Sociolinguistics is a relatively broad field, and at Essex we believe that the study of language and its relation...
to societal factors must be grounded in linguistic theory and based on solid empirical data. The researchers in the group spend months, sometimes years, conducting ethnographic fieldwork in Arabic-speaking communities, recording naturally occurring speech in the community, and later returning to carry out careful analysis of the data. The analysis often encompasses observations of linguistic phenomena and their interactions with social factors such as speaker’s age, gender and social class. Among the guiding principles in our research is that communities should be observed in the light of their local characteristics, in additional to these rather static factors, which are, by-and-large, shared by speakers of many languages. A good example of this is the incorporation of religious affiliation as a sociolinguistic factor. Members of our group have explored this element in depth in a 2015 article in Zeitschrift für arabische Linguistik and in an international workshop held at Essex in 2019. We aim at formulating generalizations about language through our observations of the many different societies in which Arabic varieties are spoken. These formulations are supported by linguistic and social scientific theories as well as by statistical tests that we carry out in order to establish patterns of linguistic use stratified socially.

Work in sociolinguistics worldwide is concerned with the VERNACULAR, broadly defined as the style of language in which the speaker pays as little attention to how they speak as possible. It is the vernacular that exhibits the most variation and is most susceptible to changing over time. In Arabic, the vernacular is manifest in the many regional and social dialects of the Middle East and North Africa. Classical Arabic and diglossia, while pertinent to the understanding of the macro-linguistic configuration of the region, are not prominent objects of sociolinguistic research, as language variation and change predominantly affect spoken varieties. This is true for Arabic as much as it is for English and other so-called Western languages.

Our work thus far spans communities in the following countries (in alphabetical order): Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Saudi Arabia and Syria. In many of the communities we have studied, linguistic usage is characterized by varying degrees of contact between speakers of different neighboring dialects and/or between different languages spoken by members of the community. Examples for the former are found abundantly in Jordan, Palestine and Saudi Arabia, for instance. Contact between indigenous Jordanians and relative newcomers from Palestine has led to the formation of the new dialect of Amman: Palestinians have increasingly experienced contact among themselves, connecting north and south, as well as urban, rural and historically nomad communities; in Saudi Arabia, Najdi and Hijazi speakers have begun living in shared towns and cities, and the expansion of large cities such as Riyadh, Jeddah and Dammam has led to the dialects of these cities becoming supra-local standards for the many small communities that surround them.

As for contact between Arabic and other languages, this is seen all over North Africa, where Amazigh languages interact with Arabic varieties, and both languages are influenced by French, which had been introduced as a colonial language and has left its marks in current usage. Colonial languages such as French and English have also affected other countries, such as Lebanon and Jordan, respectively, and Hebrew-Arabic bilingualism is rampant among Palestinians. All of these add an additional dimension to the sociolinguistic investigations in which we are involved.

Two major publications in Arabic sociolinguistics have recently emerged out of the Essex Arabic Sociolinguistics Research Group. A third publication is complete and will be published in late 2021 or early 2022.

The first is The Routledge Handbook of Arabic Sociolinguistics (2019), edited by Enam Al-Wer and Uri Horesh, comprising over twenty chapters illuminating many aspects of language variation and change in Arabic across the MENA region. Secondly, Al-Wer, Horesh, and six additional members of the group: Deema AlAmmar, Hind Alaodini, Aziza Al-Essa, Areej Al-Hawamdeh, Khairia Al-Qahtani, and Abeer AB Hussain, published an article entitled “Probing Linguistic Change in Arabic Vernaculars: A Sociohistorical Perspective” in the journal Language in Society (published ahead of print in 2020). Finally, a textbook entitled Arabic Sociolinguistics (by Al-Wer, Horesh, Bruno Herin and Rudolf de Jong) is forthcoming with Cambridge University Press, which promises to shed much needed light on Arabic dialectology, sociolinguistics, and the theoretical connections between the empirical study of Arabic speech patterns and general linguistics, and the social sciences more broadly.
As our third Covid-19 semester staggers to an end, time marches on for IJMES. I have to say that for all the times I have been in touch with friends, colleagues, authors, reviewers, fellow editors, etc. via all the available “zoom-like” options, I still very miss that one-time crunch of the annual meeting. It is such a valuable time, for quick fixes and brainstorming, and of course the annual embrace of old friends and comrades.

As an editorial team we finished our first full year of production in January 2021 (volume 52, no. 1 was the first to feature articles, reviews and other essays that had all been initiated under our lead). We like to think we are maintaining standards while pushing into new directions, ever widening and perhaps redefining the scope of what we might call “Middle East Studies.” Fulfilling our duty to offer a wide variety of inter-disciplinary approaches across time – more than modern! – and space, and with an ever wider gaze for scholarly concerns that address both time-tested and innovative approaches. To publish material that represents the best of global scholarly production. And to do so in as timely a manner as possible, especially with an eye towards scholars who are facing the panopticon of hiring-retention-tenure-promotion committees.

As I reported to the MESA Board and general membership (albeit virtually) last October, the pandemic has rendered editorial work (in addition to all other aspects of life) totally unpredictable. Some of us, locked out of offices and libraries, have found time to churn away and turn around peer reviews and revisions; others have been less blessed – and all this leaves out personal and family health issues. We emphasize that we set no deadlines, especially for revisions – and try not to lean too heavily on those who are reading/reviewing for us.

I do want to thank all of you who have taken the time to review manuscript submissions, even or especially if we overrule you and/or you find yourself outnumbered. Some of you know that we may still come back to you after a negative review if we think the author has attempted to address your concerns, which sometimes are just as important/conditional to us as the more positive comments.

Since I cannot yet strong-arm any of you in a conference corridor, I do want to let the general membership know that we are always open to suggestions for review essays, roundtables and, for those of you who have attained shaykh-hood, a re-read of a “foundational text” that shaped your career early on, even if – something we assume from the start – the wave of subsequent scholarship has left that text behind. Recalling and rethinking our origins is always a healthy endeavor.
At the end of the Spring 2012 semester, I changed my email signature to include one translated line from Mahmoud Darwish’s short poem “Think upon Others” and appended all 14 lines to an invite for a student party I hosted at my new home. The line reads: “And as you search for meaning with fancy metaphors, think upon others, who have lost their right to words.” Darwish captured the dissonance I felt when welcoming students into my home for a feast in the midst of escalating disruptions across the MENA region. As such, the poem stood as a marker of privilege: the privilege to “study” the lived experiences of those caught in suspended states of emergency; the privilege to “pay water bills,” as Darwish would have it, as well as to eat and drink in a convivial atmosphere in the midst of global food and water scarcity; and the privilege, above all, to assume the right to physical safety when coercive violence and surveillance is the norm for so many.

That signature line remains in my email and stands as an even more pointed critique of privilege as the years pass. Indeed, academic publications themselves all too often remain rarified spaces of privilege. RoMES remains committed, first, to recognizing this privilege, and then to implementing practices that may gradually disrupt institutional, generational, and geographic hierarchies. With this commitment comes responsibility, including that of mentoring junior and multi-lingual contributors as they seek new outlets and claim their “right to words.” Our upcoming (and admittedly long delayed) issue embraces these responsibilities fully and presents a Special Focus on “Pluralism in Emergenci(es in the Middle East and North Africa.” Guest Editors Kristin Soraya Batmanghelichi (University of Oslo), A. George Bajalia (Columbia University), and Sami Al-Daghistani (Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society; Middle East Institute, Columbia University; Brooklyn Institute for Social Research) assembled a diverse group of junior and senior scholars who collectively embody the potential import of interdisciplinary and transnational research practices. These contributors tackle, in quite provocative ways, the histories of privilege often buried in categories of academic analysis. They further highlight the disingenuous mechanisms by which calls to “pluralism” mask asymmetries of power and capital. Finally, and perhaps ironically due to our ever lengthening and alarming global pandemic experience, contributors to this Special Focus argue against the complacency that arises when our research agendas reinforce divisions between the lived experience of others “over there” from the day-to-day actions of us “here.”

RoMES builds from this Special Focus issue to offer a call to action for us all. As we teach our classes, publish books, articles, and reviews, convene workshops and begin to travel for research and fieldwork we should carry our collective experience of pandemic “emergencies” with us. Crises reveal inequities, and as MESA members our positions of academic privilege also entail the responsibility to intervene in rather than reinforce unequal access to those “tools of the trade,” so to speak, that we manage and rely on for our own work. My hope is that this issue of RoMES will serve as a reminder that knowledge production should be an ethical practice and not just a mechanism for promotion and advancement.

Interested in reading the latest from RoMES? Read the latest issue from the Publications link in myMESA, and follow us on Twitter at @RevoMES. Any questions or inquiries concerning content or potential submissions should be sent via email to Editor Heather Ferguson and Managing Editor Blaise Malley at romes@cmc.edu.
Below are summaries of letters sent to heads of state, other high-ranking officials, or educational officials in response to an issue of academic freedom. The country listed represents the country receiving the letter. To view the full content of the letter, please see MESA’s website (mesana.org).

24 November 2020 (Egypt)—Letter to Egyptian authorities protesting the arrest, under disturbing circumstances, and lengthy pre-trial detention of Professor Ahmad Al Tohamy Abel-Hay, and the fallacious charge of membership in a terrorist organization that has become routine against Egyptian scholars and activists who express their opinions.

24 November 2020 (Egypt)—Letter to Egyptian authorities protesting the recent arrests of Mohamed Basheer, Karim Ennarah, and Gasser Abdel Razek, employees of the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR), and the continued targeting of human rights activists and institutions and levelling false accusations against them in an effort to obstruct their work.

1 December 2020 (Iran)—Letter to Iranian authorities objecting to the unjust prosecution and sentencing of Prof. Sedigheh Vasmaghi for her peaceful protests against police brutality, and the banning of her books in Iran.

14 December 2020 (Iran)—Letter to Iranian authorities objecting to the unjust prosecution, sentencing, and prolonged detention of Dr. Ahmadreza Djalali for unfounded allegations of espionage in Iran.

7 January 2021 (Turkey)—Letter concerning the January 1st government-appointment of a new rector of Bogazici University and the ensuing police crackdown on campus and detention of students for protesting the appointment.

15 January 2021 (Morocco)—Third letter to Moroccan authorities protesting the ongoing mistreatment of scholar and human rights advocate Dr. Maati Monjib, and specifically, his recent abduction and detention on baseless charges; and calling for his immediate release and exoneration.

20 January 2021 (Turkey)—Letter concerning the ongoing erosion of the autonomy of Turkish public universities resulting from President Erdoğan’s unilateral appointments of university presidents.

25 January 2021 (Saudi Arabia)—Letter to Saudi authorities regarding the ongoing imprisonment without due process of Salman Alodah, a religious scholar of international renown and advocate for political reform and human rights in Saudi Arabia.

4 February 2021 (Turkey)—Letter to President Erdoğan regarding the detention and mistreatment of Boğaziçi University students protesting against the partisan authoritarian appointment of rector, the homophobic language and policy adopted in relation to the student protesters, and the placement of snipers on the roofs of buildings adjacent to the campus gate.

9 February 2021 (Turkey)—Letter to President Erdoğan regarding the recent attacks against Boğaziçi University’s students and faculty and the government’s politically motivated decision to alter the university’s academic structure.

18 February 2021 (Egypt)—Letter to Egyptian authorities protesting the ongoing detention of Patrick George Zaki, a graduate student in Italy and human rights researcher with the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR) without due process, charging him with spreading false news and statements to disturb the peace, and inciting protest without permission from relevant authorities with the goal of undermining state institutions, overthrowing the Egyptian government and instigating terrorism.

22 February 2021 (Egypt)—Letter to Egyptian authorities protesting the unwarranted detention of Egyptian national, Ahmad Samir Santawy, a master’s student at the Central European University in Vienna, and the mistreatment he has been subjected to—including enforced disappearance and torture, and call for immediate release.

15 March 2021 (Iran)—Letter to Iranian authorities objecting to the unjust prosecution and sentencing of Touraj Amini for scholarly research on Qajar history and Iranian Constitutional movement.

17 March 2021 (Egypt)—Letter to Egyptian authorities expressing profound concern regarding the recent raid of the family residence in Egypt of Berlin-based scholar, Taqadum Al-Khatib and the questioning of his father by security officials. CAF urges Egyptian authorities to investigate the case and other similar cases of harassment of family members, and to stop such unjust practices.

13 April 2021 (Israel)—Letter to Israeli officials protesting the Israeli army and judiciary’s targeting of students at Palestinian universities in the West Bank.
MESA Guidelines for Evaluating Digital Scholarship for the purpose of Hiring, Tenure & Promotion

MESA has prepared a set of guidelines to encourage fair and adequate evaluation of digital scholarship. These MESA guidelines point to best practices that are being widely adopted and is provided as a resource for members and to the field. Posted here: https://mesana.org/resources-and-opportunities/guidelines-for-evaluating-digital-scholarship

Members’ Acknowledgments on Website

Members’ announcements about achievements, honors, and awards, as well as for notices of deceased Middle East studies scholars are posted on the MESA website under the News tab. We welcome individuals and organizations to submit such acknowledgments (https://mesana.org/news/web-posting-form-for-member-acknowledgments). Questions and announcements may be directed to Sara Palmer at sara@mesana.org.
MESA Global Academy: The First Full Year

The MESA Global Academy, currently in its first full pilot year, has had a productive period despite the challenges posed by Covid-19. Before the pandemic, the Global Academy distributed travel grant to its awardees to present their research at US universities and attend and participate in the MESA annual meeting. In the spring of 2020, with the spread of Covid-19, the project shifted to awarding grants to support displaced scholars’ academic output and organizing virtual events at universities as well as at the 2020 MESA annual meeting.

This year’s cohort of 12 scholars hailed from Turkey, Iran, and Syria, and each presented at least twice at many of the Global Academy’s partner universities across the country, from USC and UCLA to the University of Chicago to Harvard and Northeastern. The Global Academy also provides publication opportunities to its awardees through partnerships with outlets such as Jadaliyya, Middle East Report (MERIP), and the MESA journals, the International Journal of Middle East Studies and the Review of Middle East Studies, and the scholars undertook Q&As, podcasts, roundtables, and standalone articles with these publications. The project also hosted or organized five professional development workshops for the awardees, including those on journal and book publishing, conference presentations, and careers adjacent to academia.

The project’s biggest success lies in the access it provides for scholars of and from the Middle East to the MESA community. Global Academy scholars have expressed excitement and pleasure at the opportunity to connect with this network. They have also expressed gratitude for the solidarity they feel from the field – a form of collegial solidarity that focuses on them as scholars rather than as displaced persons. And, in turn, Global Academy scholars have been making major contributions to panels at the MESA meetings and academic events across the country and to knowledge production in their fields of study.

The Global Academy Committee is currently reviewing applications for the next cohort of 12 scholars for the 2021-2022 academic year and looks forward to supporting this next group of awardees. The short-term plan is to expand the project incrementally with additional faculty mentorship as well as assistance for the program’s alumni, and the ultimate goal is to fully fund a number of fellows from the region annually to spend two-year stints at North American universities.

For more information on the Global Academy, please visit our website at https://mesaglobalacademy.org. To be added to our email list, please contact mimi@mesana.org.

MESA’s Global Academy

MESA’s Global Academy is an interdisciplinary initiative sustaining essential research collaborations and knowledge production among MENA-focused scholars from the Middle East and North Africa and their counterparts outside the region. By awarding competitive scholarships to displaced scholars from MENA currently located in North America to attend meetings, workshops, and conferences, the project harnesses the strengths of MESA’s institutional and individual members to support the careers of individual researchers whose academic trajectory has been adversely affected by developments in their home countries.

Global Academy Committee

Asli Bali (Chair)
UCLA
Beth Baron
CUNY
Aslı Iğsız
New York University
Greta Scharnweber
Institute of International Education
Judith Tucker
Georgetown University
Dina Rizk Khoury (ex-officio)
George Washington University
Jeffrey Reger (ex-officio)
MESA Executive Director
Mimi Kirk
Program Manager
mimi@mesana.org
The MESA Board has released several statements and co-signed others in recent months. Members are sent email announcements when a statement or letter is released. We provide the full text of each statement here.

**STATEMENT CONDEMNING REPORT OF ADVISORY 1776 COMMISSION**

January 20, 2021—The just-released “1776 Report” claims that common understanding of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution can unify all Americans in the love of country. The product of “The President’s Advisory 1776 Commission,” the report focuses on these founding documents in an apparent attempt to reject recent efforts to understand the multiple ways the institution of slavery shaped our nation’s history. The authors call for a form of government indoctrination of American students, and in the process elevate ignorance about the past to a civic virtue.

The report actually consists of two main themes. One is an homage to the Founding Fathers, a simplistic interpretation that relies on falsehoods, inaccuracies, omissions, and misleading statements. The other is a screed against a half-century of historical scholarship, presented largely as a series of caricatures, using single examples (most notably the “1619 Project”) to represent broader historiographical trends.

The sections on the founders envision godlike men who crafted documents that asserted “universal and eternal principles of justice and political legitimacy.” Ironically, the report erases whole swaths of the American population-enslaved people, Indigenous communities, and women—the way the founders excluded those groups from the body politic in a wide variety of founding documents as well as actual public practice. In listing threats to the ideals of the nation, the report ignores the Confederate States of America, whose leaders, many clearly guilty of treason, initiated a civil war that claimed more than 700,000 lives more American lives than all other conflicts in the history of the country combined. Instead, the authors focus on early 20th-century Progressive reformers and bizarrely suggest they were similar to Mussolini and other World War II European fascists. Of particular note is the implied condemnation of Progressive Era legislation-workplace health and safety legislation, regulation of the production of food and drugs, the elimination of child labor, and other social goods we take for granted today.

The report concludes with a full-throated assault on American universities, which, the authors claim, have produced what they call “deliberately destructive scholarship.” This scholarship is described as the “intellectual force behind so much of the violence in our cities,” including the “defamation of our treasured national statues.” The vast majority of targeted statues, as the AHA has noted before, honor either men who committed treason by violating oaths of office and taking up arms against the United States government, or whose main historical significance lay in their defense of slavery or other forms of white supremacy.

Written hastily in one month after two desultory and tendentious “hearings,” without any consultation with professional historians of the United States, the report fails to engage a rich and vibrant body of scholarship that has evolved over the last seven decades. Americans across the nation, perhaps including some of the commissioners, have encountered this history not only in books and classrooms, but also at museums, in national parks, and even in their homes as they watch documentaries.

Though it extols (narrowly defined) family and faith as the ultimate forces for good, the “1776 Report” also observes that the “bedrock and faith as the ultimate forces for good, the bedrock of the American political system is built is the rule of law.” Yet its condemnation of contemporary social movements ignores recent efforts to undermine the legitimacy of the very institutions enshrined in the Constitution itself.

The following organizations have cosigned this statement:

American Anthropological Association
American Catholic Historical Association
American Folklore Society
American Sociological Association
American Studies Association
Immigration and Ethnic History Society
Middle East Studies Association
National Council on Public History
Organization of American Historians
Phi Beta Kappa Society
Radical History Review
Society of Civil War Historians
Southern Association for Women Historians
Southern Historical Association

**STATEMENT URGING KANSAS BOARD OF REGENTS TO UPHOLD EMPLOYMENT PROTECTIONS FOR FACULTY**

January 27, 2021—American colleges and universities are facing severe financial and operational challenges. The temptation to reduce faculty and staff is great. Even faculty members with tenure—a structure that has been long established to protect the freedom to conduct independent inquiry without facing constraints from political or cultural forces—might face layoffs if an institution is insufficiently dire financial straits.

Precisely because financial pressure can lead to shortsighted decisions with the potential to do irreversible damage to institutions and to current and future generations of students, the preservation of the established process of tenure except in thoroughly documented cases of the deepest financial exigency has been long upheld by US colleges and universities. It is key to the principles of academic freedom and tenure first articulated by the American Association of University Professors in 1915, promulgated in the 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure by the AAUP and the Association of American Colleges (now the Association of American Colleges and Universities), and now endorsed by hundreds of educational and scholarly organizations in the United States.

ACLS proudly stands by those principles. We urge the Kansas Board of Regents to withdraw its endorsement of the proposed policy to ease the path to suspending, dismissing, or terminating employees, including tenured faculty members, without undertaking the processes of formally declaring a financial emergency.

As a nation, we should remain steadfastly focused on the urgent need to invest in the future of higher education, maintaining our commitment to the promotion of knowledge—what George Washington called “the surest basis of public happiness.”

We call attention to the statement co-signed in summer 2020 by leaders of cultural institutions and scholarly societies across the country attesting to the importance of teaching and research to sustaining a robust economy and a just democracy. We invite additional institutions to sign on now.

The following ACLS Member Societies have signed on to this statement:

American Academy of Religion
American Anthropological Association
American Folklore Society
American Historical Association
American Philosophical Association
American Society for Environmental History
American Society for Theatre Research
American Sociological Association
American Studies Association
Association for Jewish Studies Executive Board
Assoc for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies
College Art Association
Linguistic Society of America
Middle East Studies Association
Modern Language Association
National Communication Association
National Council on Public History
Organization of American Historians
Renaissance Society of America
Society for Ethnomusicology
Society of Architectural Historians
Society of Biblical Literature
World History Association
MESA BOARD STATEMENT IN SOLIDARITY WITH PROTESTS AT BOĞAZIÇİ UNIVERSITY

February 12, 2021—The Board of Directors of the Middle East Studies Association of North America condemns the ongoing and intensified government assault on higher education in Turkey. We join our voices to the demands raised by faculty and students at Boğaziçi University—one of the premier institutions in the region and the site of the most recent government attacks—that academic freedom, freedom of expression, and academic and democratic norms be respected and the autonomy of the higher education sector in Turkey be protected.

Since early January 2021, students and faculty at Boğaziçi University have been protesting the appointment of a new rector by Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The appointment was made unilaterally, without consulting members of the university, in a move that contravenes the university’s tradition of self-governance. Not only had the appointee, Melih Bulu, been a political candidate for the governing party, but also, his academic credentials have been publicly contested.

The government’s response to the ensuing protests has been deeply troubling. Demonstrating students have faced police brutality, protesters have been described by government officials as terrorists, and those detained have been subjected to abuse, including strip searches and sexual harassment. Faculty have also been targeted by both government officials, denouncing individual professors by name, and by the pro-government media, which has published photographs of faculty members describing them as traitors. These same media platforms have also doubled down on the demonization of student protesters as terrorists while using sensational coverage that traffics in sexist, homophobic, and transphobic depictions. Two enduring images of the government’s disturbing response to the protests are emblematic: the use of handcuffs on the gates of the university’s campus to lock protesters out and the placement of snipers on the roofs of buildings adjacent to that entrance. Other cities, too, have joined the protests with more than 550 students and protestors detained to date.

The government’s attack on Boğaziçi University has not been limited to these measures taken against students and faculty. President Erdoğan used an overnight presidential decree as the vehicle for unilaterally creating two new faculties at the university. There is little doubt that the decree is designed to alter the structure of the university by creating an opportunity for the newly-appointed rector to recruit a large pool of partisan faculty members, to join the university. Indeed, the decision by the government to create new faculties without consultation suggests an expansion intended to alter the composition and character of the university’s academic personnel in ways that align more closely with the government’s preferences. By targeting one of Turkey’s most prestigious universities in this way, the government appears to be demonstrating its intention to remove the final vestiges of academic freedom and university autonomy in the country.

Indeed, the systematic and multi-faceted attacks on higher education in Turkey that have accelerated since 2016, including the closure of some universities and expropriation of others, suggest that not only political, but even, in some cases, economic interests take priority over intellectual and professional development in the country, to say nothing of academic freedom. There is no doubt that subjecting the higher education sector to ongoing and inappropriate encroachments by the government of the sorts we have been witnessing has the deeply consequential effect of stifling intellectual life, constraining the acquisition of knowledge, and extinguishing the dynamism of the academy and of civil society.

As a scholarly association, MESA declares its solidarity with student and faculty protesters of the recent developments at Boğaziçi University. We urge President Erdoğan to restore the autonomy of universities and the protection of academic freedom—including freedom of expression, opinion, and association—in Turkey’s legal order.

Endorsements:
American Anthropological Association
American Historical Association
American Philosophical Association
American Sociological Association
Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies
International Society for Third Sector Research

LETTER TO IOWA LAWMAKERS OPPOSING LEGISLATION TO END TENURE AT PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

On Friday, March 5, 2021, Iowa lawmak...
erate the achievements of their great public universities and recognize the need for the limited protections tenure affords. We call on them to work with the Board of Regents and administrators to reinforce principles and practices that advance knowledge for the greater good, especially in communities beyond campus; to promote the circulation of knowledge and truths based in facts; and to encourage healthy, respectful debate and critical thinking on all perspectives on your campuses.

Dr. Linda K. Kerber, the renowned legal historian and May Brodbeck Professor in the Liberal Arts and Professor of History Emerita, Lecturer in Law at The University of Iowa, recently delivered the 2020 Charles Homer Haskins Prize Lecture, ACLS’s highest public honor, to a virtual audience of more than 500 peers, students, and friends. A New Yorker by birth and a graduate of Barnard and Columbia, as a woman in the early 1970s she found few opportunities to teach in higher ed, until she received an invitation from the University of Iowa. “Living in Iowa,” she commented of her early postdoc years there, “I learned that New York City is not necessarily the intellectual center of the world.”

At ACLS we believe every state should invest in building outstanding institutions like Iowa’s. We hope that this latest act of political posturing does not set back a system of public higher education admired across the country.

Sincerely,
Joy Connolly
President
The American Council of Learned Societies

The following ACLS Member Societies have signed on to this statement:

American Academy of Religion
American Anthropological Association
American Association of Geographers
American Folklore Society
American Historical Association
American Musicological Society
American Philosophical Association
American Political Science Association
American Society for Environmental History
American Society for Theatre Research
American Sociological Association
American Studies Association
Association for Jewish Studies
Assoc for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies
Economic History Association
College Art Association
German Studies Association
History of Science Society
Linguistic Society of America
Middle East Studies Association
Modern Language Association
National Communication Association
Organization of American Historians
Rhetoric Society of America
Sixteenth Century Society & Conference
Society of Architectural Historians
Society of Biblical Literature
Society for Cinema and Media Studies
Society for Film and History
Society for Music Theory
Society for the Study of Social Problems
Society of the Four Arts
Society of Medieval and Renaissance Studies
Society of Musical Research
Society for Music Theory
Society for the Study of Social Problems
Society of Hispanic American Historical Scholars
Society for the Study of the USSR
Society of Medieval and Renaissance Studies
Society of Music Theory
Society for the Study of Social Problems
Society of Hispanic American Historical Scholars
Society for the Study of the USSR
Society of Musical Research
Society for the Study of Social Problems
Society of Hispanic American Historical Scholars
Society for the Study of the USSR
Society of Musical Research
Society for the Study of Social Problems

STATEDMMENT CONDEMNING ANTI-ASIAN VIOLENCE

March 22, 2021—ACLS is angry and saddened by the recent increase in incidents of violence against Asians and people of Asian descent in the United States and around the world.

We find ourselves in a moment where, for good reason, we and many other Americans have been and continue to be focused intently on anti-Black racism. But we are reminded by the horrific events in Georgia this week and increased acts of violence over this past year linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, of the deep prejudices affecting Asians in this country. These and other attacks against the Asian-American community represent the latest chapter in our history of xenophobia, which tends to flare during times of crisis.

As an organization invested in supporting and advancing the study of what it means to be human, we believe the humanities and social sciences provide essential learning needed to unlock understanding of our historical pasts, good and bad, and help cultivate knowledgeable empathy for all of us in the present and the future.

ACLS is committed to elevating perspectives on the human experience that have traditionally been marginalized or ignored. Our work and practices are firmly grounded in values led by inclusive excellence and anti-racism.

We encourage educators, lawmakers, and community leaders to take this moment to listen closely to Asian and Asian-American voices and work with them in stemming this latest scourge of prejudice and violence. In the coming week, we will launch a new scholarly resource page focused on histories of anti-Asian bias, as well as the movements that have stood against them. This new page will appear as part of the “Race and Society” resource we first published in Summer 2020.

Our thoughts are with the families of the victims and with the communities impacted, including members of our ACLS family, among which there are many scholars and students of Asian history and life, as well as staff, members, and partners carrying the extra burden of processing these hateful events personally while being asked to operate normally on other fronts.

We commit to learning more and we encourage you to learn more about ways to support anti-violence and anti-hate efforts against the Asian community:

Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Atlanta
AAPI Women Lead
Stop AAPI Hate
Joy Connolly, President

The following ACLS Member Societies have signed on to this statement:

African Studies Association
American Anthropological Association
American Comparative Literature Association
American Folklore Society
American Historical Association
American Musicological Society
American Philosophical Association
American Political Science Association
American Society for Environmental History
American Society for Theatre Research
American Studies Association
Assoc for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies
Association of College and Research Libraries
Association of Research Libraries
Center for Research Libraries
College Art Association
Dance Studies Association
German Studies Association
International Center of Medieval Art
Middle East Studies Association
Modern Language Association
National Communication Association
National Council of Teachers of English
National Council on Public History
Oral History Association
Organization of American Historians
Phi Beta Kappa Society
Renaissance Society of America
Rhetoric Society of America
Shakespeare Association of America
Sixteenth Century Society & Conference
Society for Cinema and Media Studies
Society for Ethnomusicology
Society for Music Theory
Society of Architectural Historians
Society of Biblical Literature
World History Association

The following ACLS Member Societies have also issued statements on this issue:

American Society of International Law
Association for Asian Studies
Association of Research Libraries

JOINT LETTER TO THE EU REGARDING THE CASE OF MAÂTI MONJIB

March 23, 2021—Letter to the EU: the case of Franco-Moroccan journalist Maâti Monjib

Josep Borrell, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the European Commission

Eamon Gilmore, EU Special Representative for Human Rights

Paris, 19 March 2021

Re: The case of Franco-Moroccan journalist Maâti Monjib

Dear High Representative Borrell,
Dear EU Special Representative Gilmore,

We, the undersigned organisations, are writing to draw your attention to the case of journalist Maâti Monjib and call for your urgent intervention.

The Moroccan and French journalist Maâti Monjib began a hunger strike on 4 March. Mr Monjib has lost more than 8 kilos and as he is
diabetic with heart problems, his health and life are now in danger. He is visited twice a day by a doctor because of his fragile health.

Also known as a human rights defender, Mr. Monjib has been held in solitary confinement since 29 December 2020 and he was subsequently convicted in absentia on 27 January 2021 to one-year imprisonment on grounds of ‘undermining state security’ and ‘fraud’. No substantive handling of the lawsuit preceded this ruling, which had been postponed over 20 times since 2015. Moreover, neither the lawyers nor the convicts could attend the hearing, while it was the Moroccan state’s responsibility to allow Mr Monjib to attend his court case as he was in their custody at the time. They failed to do so — in clear violation of his right to a fair trial. Mr Monjib still faces charges of money laundering, which was the reason for his arrest on the 29th of December 2020. There has been no progress on this case since then.

The case of Maâtî Monjib is illustrative of the increasing repression of independent and critical voices over the last decade in Morocco.

Eleven years after the Arab Spring, the situation for press freedom and freedom of expression in Morocco is dire. Since the end of 2013, journalists, activists and dissidents continue to face ongoing systematic targeting, harassment and detention. Repression has increasingly been used as the answer to the growing social resistance against corruption and social inequality in Morocco.

A pattern can be seen in recent years with the Moroccan authorities filing trumped up criminal charges accusing journalists of rape or fraud in retaliation for their critical work. We are also seeing an increase in prosecutions based on offending public officials or insulting the monarchy.

Other prominent prisoners include:
- Moroccan journalist Omar Radi, who is currently in pre-trial detention on charges of rape and espionage,
- Moroccan journalist and founder of the daily paper ‘Akbar Al-Youm’ Taoufik Bouachrine, who is currently completing his 15 year prison sentence on charges of “trafficking in human beings, violent and indecent assault, rape, attempted rape and sexual harassment”.
- Moroccan editor in chief of the independent newspaper ‘Akhar Al-Youm’ Soulaïmane Raissouni, who is currently imprisoned awaiting for his trial on charges of “violent and indecent assault and forced detention” to be continued.
- At least five journalists are currently imprisoned for their work in Morocco, while the country ranks 133 out of 180 countries on the Reporters Without Borders 2020 World Press Freedom Index.

We urge you:
- to strongly condemn the sentencing and imprisonment of Maâtî Monjib and to press the Moroccan authorities for his immediate release, in light of his rapidly deteriorating health situation;
- to urge the Moroccan authorities, and in particular His Majesty King Mohammed VI, for the unconditional and immediate release of all those imprisoned solely for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association, including Maâtî Monjib, Omar Radi, Slimane Raissouni, Taoufik Bouachrine and Abdelkabir al Horr;
- to call on the Moroccan Government to stop the harassment of human rights defend- ers and journalists, and to ensure the right to freedom of expression and freedom of the press;
- to urge Morocco’s government to take concrete and measurable steps towards justice reform and respect for human rights as a key element for enhanced EU-Morocco cooperation;
- to call on the EU Delegation in Rabat to fully implement the EU Guidelines on Freedom of Expression and Human Rights Defenders, to provide all appropriate support to human rights defenders and journalists detained, including through arranging prison visits, trial monitoring and public statements, and to offer support to civil society and access to protection for people at risk of persecution.

We hope you will take our concerns into consideration and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Free Press Unlimited
Reporters Without Borders
International Media Support

Article 19
PAX
IFEX
OMCT (in the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders)
FIDH (in the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders)
Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies
ACAT France
Index on Censorship
Middle East Studies Association
PEN Club Français
Project on Middle East Democracy
International Press Institute

MESA BOARD STATEMENT REGARDING THE IHRA WORKING DEFINITION OF ANTISEMITISM (AND "CONTEMPORARY EXAMPLES")

March 31, 2021—The Board of Directors of the Middle East Studies Association of North America expresses its grave concern about a number of the “Contemporary Examples of Antisemitism” that accompany the definition of antisemitism formulated by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) and have been adopted or endorsed by some government agencies and university administra-
security forces following his arrest. The undersigned organizations consider that Ahmed Samir Santawy, a researcher and master’s student of anthropology at the Vienna-based Central European University (CEU), is arbitrarily detained solely because of his academic work focusing on women’s rights, including the history of reproductive rights in Egypt.

On 23 January 2021, seven masked and armed policemen raided Ahmed Samir Santawy’s family home when he was not there, and instructed for Ahmed Samir Santawy to present himself to the National Security Agency (NSA), a specialized police force, without providing any reasons. When he did as instructed on 1 February, security forces arrested him and forcibly disappeared him until 6 February. He said that during this period NSA officials beat him, including by slapping him on the face, and punching him in the stomach, while handcuffed and blindfolded, at the Fifth Settlement Police Station.

On 6 February 2021, Ahmed Samir Santawy was brought for questioning before the Supreme State Security Prosecution (SSSP) in New Cairo, a special branch of the Public Prosecution responsible for prosecuting crimes that relate to “state security”. The prosecutor accused Ahmed Samir Santawy of “membership in a terrorist group,” “spreading false news,” and “using a social media account to spread false news” in Supreme State Security case no.65/2021. On 23 February, at a separate hearing, another prosecutor said he was also being investigated for “funding a terrorist organization.” The prosecutors based their accusations upon an NSA investigations file, which neither Ahmed Samir Santawy nor his lawyers were permitted to examine, as well as social media posts he denied authoring.

The prosecutors questioned Ahmed Samir Santawy about his academic work and studies, including his work on Islam and abortion, and about anti-government posts from a Facebook account that he denied authoring. Ahmed Samir Santawy told the SSSP that during his initial detention, NSA officers also questioned him about his research work and involvement in a Facebook page critical of the authorities, which he denied as well. Ahmed Samir Santawy further told the SSSP during a hearing on 23 February that he has been held in solitary confinement, in a cold cell without access to adequate clothing and bedding. The SSSP failed to order an investigation into his allegations of being forcibly disappeared and beaten by the NSA, and did not respond to requests by Ahmed Samir Santawy’s lawyers to refer him to the Forensic Medical Authority for examination.

Ahmed Samir Santawy continues to be held in pre-trial detention at Liman Tora Prison. His pre-trial detention was renewed in his and his lawyers’ absence three times, denying him the right to challenge the legality of his detention.

The undersigned organizations call on the Egyptian authorities to ensure that, pending his release, Ahmed Samir Santawy is granted immediate and regular access to his family and lawyers, provided with adequate healthcare, and protected from torture and other ill-treatment, including prolonged solitary confinement.

Background:

Ahmed Samir Santawy’s arrest comes against the backdrop of an unprecedented crackdown on the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly in Egypt. In recent years, security forces have rounded up hundreds of human rights defenders, activists, lawyers, politicians, peaceful protesters, journalists, medical workers, as well as researchers and academics, and subjected them to enforced disappearance, torture and other ill-treatment, and prolonged pre-trial detention pending investigations into unfounded terrorism-related charges. In February 2020, security forces arrested Patrick George Zaki, a gender rights researcher at the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights and master’s student at the University of Bologna in Italy, upon his arrival to Egypt. He has been held in pre-trial detention over arbitrary terrorism-related charges since then. In May 2018, Walid Salem, a PhD researcher at the University of Washington was arrested after returning to Egypt for his field work. Walid Salem was provisionally released pending investigations in December 2018, after spending seven months in pre-trial detention. These attacks against academics and researchers further undermine the already limited academic freedom in the country.

Signatories:

Amnesty International
Human Rights Watch
Scholars at Risk
Association for Freedom of Thought and Expression
Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies
EuroMed Rights Network
FIDH, within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders
OMCT (World Organisation Against Torture), within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders
International Service for Human Rights
Egyptian Front for Human Rights
Initiative franco-égyptienne pour les droits les libertés
Committee for Justice
The Freedom Initiative
Project on Middle East Democracy (POMED)
The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy
People in Need
MENA Rights Group
Middle East Studies Association of North America
PEN International
Center for Reproductive Rights
Pan African Human Rights Defenders Network (AfricanDefenders)
Intersection Association for Rights and Freedoms
Regional Center for Rights and Liberties
Human Rights First
Hungarian Europe Society
Clean Air Action Group (Environmental Association)
Democracy for the Arab World Now (DAWN)
El Nadim Center
Ankh (Arab Network for Knowledge about Human Rights)
Cairo 52 Legal Research Institute
HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement (HUwMENA Regional)
Hätté Society
Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB)
Öirs - Hungarian Environmental Partnership Foundation
Kenya Human Rights Commission
Center for Civil Liberties
humanrights.ch
Tunisian Human Rights League
CIVICUS
Comité de Vigilance pour la Démocratie en Tunisie - Belgique
Mwatana for Human Rights
Egyptian Human Rights Forum
Tunisian Association for the Defense of Individual Freedoms
CALAM
DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION AND HUMAN RIGHTS Support Center “DAAM”
Tunisian Coalition Against the Death Penalty
Association of Tunisian Women for Research and Development-AFTUDR
Nachaz Association
Utcáról Lakásba Egyesület
Vigilance for Democracy and the Civic State
Comisiones Obreras
Hungarian Civil Liberties Union
Réseau des Organisations de la Société Civile pour l’Observation et le Suivi des Elections en Guinée (ROSE)
Tunisian Association of the Democratic Women (ATFD)
Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights (FT-DES)
Organisation du martyr de la liberté Nabil Barkati : Mémoire et fidélité
MEDITERRANEAN CITIZENS’ ASSEMBLY FOUNDATION (FACM)
Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression (SCM)
CEAR PV
Syndicat National des Journalistes Tunisiens-SNJT
Aufstehn
Caminando Fraternas
Reprieve
Robert F Kennedy Human Rights
ARCI
Reporter ohne Grenzen Österreich (RSF)
ICID (Iniciativas de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo)
Österreichische Liga für Menschenrechte
Kvinna till Kvinna
Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Fundamental and Human Rights
ZARA (Zivilcourage und Anti-Rassismus-Arbeit)
European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (ETC Graz) – Host of thegfx Center “DAAM”
Desarrollo)
Österreichische Liga für Menschenrechte
Kvinna till Kvinna
Hungarian Civil Liberties Union
Comisiones Obreras
Vigilance for Democracy and the Civic State
Utcáról Lakásba Egyesület
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Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Fundamental and Human Rights
ZARA (Zivilcourage und Anti-Rassismus-Arbeit)
European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (ETC Graz) – Host of theInternational Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels under the auspices of UNESCO
Epicenter.works - for digital rights
Südwind
The Annual Meeting Program will offer around 300 sessions in diverse offerings from early to modern, Spain to Pakistan, art history to sociology. An interactive preliminary program will be available on the website in June. You can look up a paper or panel on a number of criteria such as presenter name, country of study, discipline, or key words (contingent upon the person submitting the abstract having identified the proposal as such.) A printable preliminary program (pdf) will be available in August. Please check the website for the most current information, as we will have further updates regarding the meeting over the course of the summer.

The MESA Book Exhibit will feature university presses and other publishing houses, plus vendors of interest to our members. Take the opportunity to browse all of the latest publications in the field, mingle with exhibit staff, network with editors, and maybe make a deal for your next publication. For individuals, independent authors, and smaller presses, please visit MESA’s Cooperative Book Display. Additional information about exhibiting at MESA 2021 is posted on MESA’s website.

The MESA FilmFest presents recent documentary and narrative films from and about the region. In addition to contemporary events, films cover other aspects of culture and history. Films are ideal for classroom use to help introduce students to the beauty, diversity, and complexity of the Middle East. The documentaries are augmented with short and feature films. Beyond the chance to view otherwise hard to see independent films outside of the festival circuit, the FilmFest offers the opportunity to meet filmmakers and discuss their work. The FilmFest selection committee welcomes volunteers to preview submissions beginning after the deadline in June.

CONTACT Kat Teghizadeh at kat@mesana.org if you have questions about the annual meeting, exhibiting, or to submit a film for consideration in the FilmFest.
Conference Registration
Pre-register by September 15

Those wishing to attend the annual meeting and who are not on the program may register by September 15 to receive the discounted rate. Onsite registration is required after that date, which will begin in person on Thursday, October 28. To register, use the form located on page 24 or go to https://mesana.org/annual-meeting/registration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Student non-member</td>
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<td>$200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other non-members</td>
<td>$300</td>
<td>$350</td>
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Volunteer Panel Chairs
Posted June 7

Volunteers are invited to chair non-preorganized panels at the MESA 2021 annual meeting. A listing of available panels will be posted June 7. MESA only assigns chairs, who may also take it upon themselves to also serve as discussants, to put-together panels. There are many such panels on the program. If, after consulting the website, you find a panel of interest, please contact Kat Teghizadeh (kat@mesana.org) at the Secretariat. Please note that MESA membership and annual meeting pre-registration are required of all meeting participants on the program, including volunteer panel chairs.

Child Care Subsidy Available

MESA does not directly provide on-site child care, but the Secretariat can put parents and guardians in touch with recommended local providers. Registered MESA attendees can hire a local service to care for children during the Annual Meeting, and MESA will reimburse up to $200 of expenses. We support working parents, and we thank our members for their generous contributions to the MESA Annual Meeting Child Care fund, which permits your association to subsidize the cost of childcare for attendees. For further information, see https://mesana.org/annual-meeting/childcare.

MESA 2021
Schedule of Events

Thursday, October 28

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>various times</td>
<td>Affiliate meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00-6:00pm</td>
<td>Book exhibit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00-5:00pm</td>
<td>Panel session I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:30-7:30pm</td>
<td>Panel session II</td>
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Friday, October 29

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>various times</td>
<td>Affiliate meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30-10:30am</td>
<td>Panel session III</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00am-6:00pm</td>
<td>Book exhibit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00am-1:00pm</td>
<td>Panel session IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30-3:30pm</td>
<td>Panel session V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00-6:00pm</td>
<td>Panel session VI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00-8:30pm</td>
<td>Presidential address &amp; awards ceremony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30-10:00pm</td>
<td>Reception</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Saturday, October 30

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>various times</td>
<td>Affiliate meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30-10:30am</td>
<td>Panel session VII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00am-6:00pm</td>
<td>Book exhibit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00am-1:00pm</td>
<td>Panel session VIII</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:30-3:30pm</td>
<td>Panel session IX</td>
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<td>4:00-6:00pm</td>
<td>Panel session X</td>
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<td>6:30pm-8:00pm</td>
<td>Members meeting</td>
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<td>9:00pm-1:00am</td>
<td>Dance party</td>
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Sunday, October 31

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>various times</td>
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<td>8:00am-12:00pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:30-10:30am</td>
<td>Panel session XI</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00am-1:00pm</td>
<td>Panel session XII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30-3:30pm</td>
<td>Panel session XIII</td>
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</table>
Complete and return form to the MESA Secretariat by no later than September 15, 2021* for pre-registration rates or register through myMESA and pay on-line.

* Session participants must register by May 15, 2021

Name

Affiliation

Email (req)

Membership Dues
Indians should complete a profile in their myMESA account

<table>
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<th>Category</th>
<th>Dues</th>
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<td>Retired member</td>
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<td>$275 (income $100,001 - $125,000)</td>
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<td>$300 (income $125,001 - $150,000)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>$350 (income greater than $150,001)</td>
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Registration Category

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Full/associate MESA</td>
<td>$175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student, non-MESA member</td>
<td>$150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other non-MESA members</td>
<td>$300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Payment Information

- Visa/MasterCard/Discover/AMEX
- Check (payable to MESA, in US$ and drawn on US bank)

Send to MESA, 3542 N. Geronimo Ave., Tucson AZ 85705

Card Number

Exp Date

CVV* (3 or 4 digit code)

Cardholder Name

Billing Address

Signature

Email receipt to

Refund Policy
Participants: Requests for refunds must be received by August 1, 2021.
All others: Requests for refunds must be received by September 15, 2021.
Send refund inquires to sara@mesana.org
Submissions: Process and Stats

Process

The annual meeting program chair is selected by MESA's Board of Directors. That person recommends and invites people to serve on the committee in order to cover the broadest swath of topics relevant to MESA. To the extent possible, reviewers are matched by discipline and geographic focus, as well as research themes. Each proposal is read “blind” and rated by two committee members according to how, in a maximum of 400 words, the paper or panel will contribute to scholarship or to the field.

Review Criteria

MESA's Call for Papers advises submitters to formulate abstracts that “are scholarly, with a strong, focused statement of thesis or significance, clear goals and methodology, well-organized research data, specified sources, and convincing, coherent conclusions.” However, many abstracts submitted to MESA are short, descriptive paragraphs of research projects, rather than actual abstracts. Lower-rated submissions tend to lack a clear statement of thesis, do not mention methodology, or do not demonstrate the potential to contribute to advancing scholarship in the field in a meaningful way.

This year’s committee reviewed 622 individual paper abstracts, 197 pre-organized panels, and 59 round-tables. Each submission was rated by two reviewers and the ratings were averaged. Submissions with low ratings were discarded; those with high ratings were placed on the program; borderline submissions were either reviewed by the program chair or were not placed on the program due to space constraints. The purpose of the program committee is to read and evaluate submissions, place high-rated ones on the program, and to assemble papers into coherent panels. Due to the volume of submissions, the process does not currently permit the committee to provide constructive feedback to authors. A new program chair and committee each year helps to reduce the risk of favoritism toward any field or specialty. The range of disciplines and geographical areas represented on the meeting program mirrors that of the membership and of what is submitted to the program committee. Underrepresented disciplines or geographical areas tend to reflect the relatively low volume of submissions focused on those areas.

2021 Statistics

The 2021 meeting attracted double our usual Canadian submissions, and more global participation than usual. US membership declined, slightly offsetting increased interest from the rest of the world. Yet many institutions of higher education have restricted travel for faculty and staff, or cut budgets for research and travel funding. It is therefore highly likely that a significant number of submitters are no longer able to participate, due to the economic damage of the lockdown and the pandemic, as well as the travel restrictions that may continue to be in place. MESA has more international participants than usual for the 2021 meeting, who are often least likely to be able to join physically in person, depending on vaccine developments as well as public health and safety measures.

MESA is considering flexible options for remote participation, particularly for members who are no longer comfortable participating in a large in-person gathering necessitating long-distance air travel. We will have further updates on these options over the summer as the global and regional situations become clearer, and we will take all necessary steps to ensure the safety and health of our members, first and foremost.

Despite the potentially elevated rates of withdrawals, the 2021 acceptance rates have normalized in line with recent meetings in the aggregate, though acceptance rates remained below the historical averages for some of the major disciplines (like history and political science), to the benefit of historically less represented disciplines. Remarkably, students had nearly the exact same rate of acceptance as full Ph.D. members, and their submissions comprise nearly 36% of the papers on the program.
Acceptance/Rejection Rates, Recent Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Submission Type</th>
<th>2018 (San Antonio)</th>
<th>2019 (New Orleans)</th>
<th>2020 (Washington, DC)</th>
<th>2021 (Montreal)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proposed</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
<td>Proposed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Papers</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>333 (67%)</td>
<td>164 (33%)</td>
<td>616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-organized Panels</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>152 (87%)</td>
<td>22 (13%)</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roundtables</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20 (91%)</td>
<td>2 (9%)</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Disciplinary Breakdown of Papers
Based upon the number of papers accepted to be on the program for which we have the necessary data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership Category</th>
<th>Papers submitted</th>
<th>Papers accepted # (%)</th>
<th>Papers on program %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full/Associate</td>
<td>873</td>
<td>704 (80.1%)</td>
<td>61.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>407 (80.1%)</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exempted*</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>32 (69.6%)</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*reflects people in departments/programs that do not fit within the standard list of disciplines

*one-time exemption for qualifying applicants who have never been a MESA member or attended a MESA meeting
CALL FOR PAPERS
Deadline is June 1, 2021

Middle East Studies Association
Undergraduate Research Workshop

Thursday, October 28, 2021
1:00-5:00pm

The Committee on Undergraduate Middle East Studies (CUMES) is sponsoring an undergraduate research workshop to be held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association on Thursday, October 28th from 1:00-5:00pm. The workshop is an opportunity for students in any academic discipline with a focus on the Middle East to present their research to other students and to get feedback and research advice from faculty facilitators. The workshop will be led by a diverse group of Middle East studies scholars, drawn from CUMES, MESA award winners, and other leading academics.

The workshop will help students hone their research skills by placing their work in the academic literature, developing research methods, and exposing students to data, archives, and other sources in Middle East studies. The workshop will conclude with a poster session open to all conference attendees.

Students participating in the workshop are invited to attend the full MESA conference, gaining an exposure to the most recent research and experiencing the intellectual vibrancy of a professional academic gathering. This workshop will valuable for students planning graduate work in Middle East Studies.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION INFORMATION AND DEADLINES
The paper proposal deadline is June 1, 2021 . Applicants will be notified by July 1. Proposals should include an abstract and a letter of recommendation from a professor at the student’s home university commenting on the quality of the proposal and why the student would benefit from the workshop. Each paper abstract must be between 200 and 300 words.

Proposals should be scholarly, with a strong, focused statement of thesis or significance, and a discussion of the research methods and data to be used.

Please submit paper proposals and letters of recommendation by email to Dr. Stephen Tamari, Workshop Coordinator, at stamari@siue.edu. Papers will be selected based on the quality of the proposal, diversity of disciplinary areas, and with an eye towards maximizing the diversity of the colleges and universities represented. The workshop will be limited to 16 student participants.

REGISTRATION FEES
The fee for the workshop for 2021 is $50 and it will provide full access to the Middle East Studies Association conference October 28-31. Students are responsible for their own travel and accommodation expenses. Successful applicants will be able to apply for $250.00 in travel support from MESA. Membership in MESA is not required for participation in the workshop.

For more information, contact Workshop Coordinators Dr. Stephen Tamari (stamari@siue.edu; 618-650-3967) or Dr. Jeff VanDenBerg (jvandenb@drury.edu; 417-873-6947).
This book is a compilation of articles by renowned Middle East experts analyzing the Biden Administration’s policies toward the Middle East and North Africa. The book includes 19 chapters covering issues of human rights and democracy as well as specific US policies in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, Turkey, Iran, the Gulf, Iraq, Yemen, Sudan, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and Northwest Africa.

Download your copy or read the book online at ArabCenterDC.org
Take advantage of opportunities to promote your organization, program, or book at MESA’s annual meeting. As we assemble each year to share research and plan future collaborations, you could have their undivided attention! We offer opportunities to rent booth space, advertise in the annual meeting program or mobile app, and to be a sponsor. For the first time, we will hold scheduled coffee breaks in the book exhibit. Sponsoring a coffee break offers particular exposure and attention! Contact the Secretariat for more information.