

Issues in Middle East Studies

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Biannual Newsletter of the Middle East Studies Association

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From the President

Eve Troutt Powell | University of Pennsylvania

Black Lives Still Matter

In the spring of 2020, protests and outcries for racial justice arose all over, as yet again the spotlight was thrown on the rash of police killing unarmed African-American citizens. The news media throughout the world posted pictures of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, to name only two of the people who would become tragic symbols of the United States' violent policing of Black folks. Within our field, there were a host of webinars on race in the Middle East. Al-Jazeera English did a number of stories about blackface performance in the Middle East. For perhaps one of the first times, the expertise and experience of Sudanese scholars and students was seen by our field. The presence of Afro-Turks, of Afro-Iranians and Afro-Iraqis was brought into clearer view in our Zoom meetings, our annual meetings (online) and on our social media.

As any American with a sensitivity to Black history could have predicted, the backlash did not take very long. Soon there were Blue Lives Matter and then All Lives Matter. It was with a certain horror that a friend and I saw, as we were walking on a beach, a sign of Black Labs Matter, with the picture of said dog. This brought home a chilling idea of what my parents and my grandparents faced generations ago, for daring to walk or drive while Black. The backlash is growing, particularly around American universities, against BDS and against Critical Race Theory; often support for Palestinians is muzzled with the same heavy hand that would silence all discussions of the legacies of slavery and racism in this country.

With our combined experiences and expertise, MESA is an excellent community for holding serious discussions about race and racism. My predecessor Dina Khoury saw this clearly and created the Committee on Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination (CAA), a huge part of her effort to integrate, literally, Blackness and Black Studies into MESA's range of studies. And the work of this committee is not easy; sometimes it is quite painful. In the 30 years that I have studied how race and racism works in the Middle East, I have been repeatedly told that racism is not, cannot, be indigenous to Middle Eastern societies and cultures. It has been a sorrow for me to hear my younger colleagues on this committee repeat their experience with these same statement, or other conclusions that there is racism, but it was imported from Western European colonizers and American imperialists.



2021 Members Resolution Passes

On March 22, 2022, the voting membership of MESA passed a resolution (768 votes in favor, 167 votes against) endorsing the 2005 call of Palestinian civil society for the boycott, divestment, and sanction of Israel.

For the full text see page 6

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.

Officers:

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

Members of the Board:

Ziad M. Abu-Rish, Bard College
 Sinan Antoon, New York University
 Senem Aslan, Bates College
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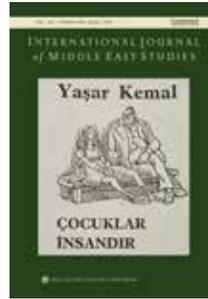


Issues in Middle East Studies is the biannual newsletter (April, October) of the Middle East Studies Association of North America, Inc. and is a benefit of membership. Hard copies are available to members upon request; postage will be collected for those residing outside the United States.

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*.

To receive email alerts when a new issue is published, register a **Cambridge Core account** and then “My Alerts”



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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).

Advertising in IMES

Please visit <https://mesana.org/publications/advertising> for the advertising insertion order form and for any updates or changes in prices.

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:

October 1, 2022 for October 2022 issue
 March 15, 2023 for April 2023 issue

Letter from the President

continued from front page

It is never easy to have conversations about race, in any language. One of the initiatives the CAA is undertaking, under the leadership of Prof. Marie Grace Brown, is an exploration of the lexicons of race in the Middle East. Over the summer Marie is organizing, with the help of other committed members of the CAA, a series of roundtables in 4 Middle Eastern languages: Arabic, Turkish, Persian and Hebrew. When MESA meets – in person insha'allah! – in Denver this December, we will be able to offer a special session to

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the entire MESA community to join these discussions of vocabularies of race that are not English.

Another member of the CAA team is Prof. Brahim El Guabli, who is leading a current discussion of racial discrimination in publishing, particularly in the field of Middle East studies. We will be exploring how our own organizational networks – within MESA – can unfortunately work to exclude the work of people of color, and what steps need to be taken to prevent this in the future.

Finally, we, as a committee and as an academic organization, need to steady ourselves to not only battle the backlash but also to investigate new questions of race in

our field. I recently attended a webinar from Georgetown about Black Arabic which raised questions that I had never thought of before. Ethiopian Israelis have reached out to members of the CAA to talk about where they fit into the interstices of racism and racial identity in Israel and Palestine. There is fascinating new scholarship coming out on the lives and experiences of people who identify as Black throughout the Gulf and North Africa as well.

I hope that you will join me in the pride I feel in MESA for being an association that is always ready to discuss such difficult questions with clear-eyed honesty.

Mark Your Calendar!

Lexicons of Race Project

September 12-15, 2022

The Committee on Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination is launching its **Lexicons of Race Project** with a cluster of four public online roundtables September 12-15 (Noon-1:30pm EDT). The roundtables will serve as initial conversations on how racial histories and hierarchies are embedded in the languages of the Middle East and North Africa. Recognizing that the complexities of race, otherness, and Blackness are often lost in translation to English, each of the four roundtables will be conducted in a major language of the Middle East: Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, and Turkish.

[Roundtables will be open to the public.](#)

We are intentionally looking beyond the MESA membership to bring new and non-academic voices into these discussions.

Please mark your calendar to join us in this important conversation. More details and registration information to come.

Monday, September 12—TURKISH
moderated by Heather Hughes, University of Pennsylvania

Tuesday, September 13—HEBREW
moderated by Nimrod Ben Zeev, Van Leer Jerusalem Institute

Wednesday, September 14—PERSIAN
moderated by Beeta Baghoolizadeh, Bucknell

Thursday, September 15—ARABIC
moderated by Sherene Seikaly, UC Santa Barbara

Secretariat News

From the Executive Director

Jeffrey D. Reger | Executive Director



Lately, I have been thinking a lot about two topics connected by MESA's eponymous conference: the diversity of our membership and representation at the Annual Meeting; and the future itself of the MESA Annual Meeting — specifically how and why we meet.

Variants willing, we will meet in person in Denver this December for our first in-person meeting since 2019. Next year, in November 2023, we will have our rescheduled Montréal meeting.

So much has changed in the ruptures of the past three years, and yet continuities abound.

MESA's Board of Directors and Secretariat remain committed to our mission of serving the field and our members, and our vision statement as fully elaborated in our [strategic plan](#). I copy our new vision statement as adopted in 2021 here in case you have not seen it yet:

The strength of MESA lies in its dual commitment to scholarship and advocacy. MESA fosters and disseminates inclusive scholarship, intellectual exchange beyond borders, and pedagogy about the Middle East and North Africa. MESA advocates for academic freedom. It is committed to supporting struggles against racism and anti-Blackness. It opposes anti-Muslim racism, anti-Semitism, and all forms of discrimination based on gender and sexuality.

As Eve has written in her first column, our commitment to anti-discrimination and anti-racism is foremost served by the committee with the same name, but it is not exclusive to those efforts.

In line with MESA's mission and vision, our membership has adopted by referendum a [resolution](#) in solidarity with Palestinian higher education. This follows the Board's [statement](#) last spring in defense of academic freedom in Palestine. (For more information on the new resolution, please see the answers to some [frequently asked questions](#) prepared by MESA's Board of Directors.) Since then, our Committee on Academic Freedom Middle East and North Africa wing has [detailed the problem of the new proposed restrictions](#) on foreign students and faculty in the West Bank, which would give administrators the discretionary power to exclude international scholars and students from Palestinian universities, limiting their numbers significantly, and restricting both disciplines and research subjects. In addition to undermining Palestinian universities and Palestinians' rights to education and their academic freedom, it would also threaten to cut Palestinian faculty and students, whose ability to travel varies widely, off even further from their international colleagues and the broader community of higher education. And so, our advocacy work continues, as it does across the entire region and North America.

In addition to the Secretariat's work supporting our Board of Directors and its extraordinary committees, this year I am taking part in two external, grant-funded workshops on behalf of MESA. The first, organized by the American Council of Learned Societies and funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, is known as the ACLS Intention Foundry. It brings together graduate students and executive directors to think through moonshot ideas, paradigm-shifting proposals, seeking to change our field for the better, specifically by making it more equitable, welcoming, and just for all. For MESA, we continue to be focused on the [Board's June 2020 statement](#) in solidarity with the uprisings against systemic racism and anti-Blackness, and thinking through what policy and administrative changes we can make so that the Annual Meeting is a more welcoming place for all scholars, at all stages of their career, particularly for scholars from communities that have been histori-

cally underrepresented in our field. This continues to build as well on the critical work of MESA's Anti-Sexual Harassment Committee. One measure taken by the Board of MESA has been to explicitly include diasporas in the call for papers for the Annual Meeting (which had been on occasion a stumbling block for the program committee accepting work on areas geographically located outside of Southwest Asia and North Africa). A new idea generated by one of our IF Fellows is to advocate for the elimination of letters of recommendation (LOR) in various application processes, as an undue burden on applicants and advisers, and as a reproducer of inequities of access and resources. We would welcome similar ideas in terms of how to streamline procedures, of course within the bounds of what MESA can advocate for — because, to put it mildly, we have more leverage in some areas than others. For LORs, as an example, we want to first think through why they are used (practically, to winnow pools), in addition to how they operate. Only then can we make our recommendations, ideally to those who can make the changes.

The MESA Meeting remains a defining annual event for our field, and the principal work of the Secretariat in collaboration with our phenomenal Program Committee — chaired this year by Nasrin Rahimieh who we thank for her exceptional leadership — and we cannot wait to see all of our colleagues again after such a long layoff. While virtual meetings expanded participation, they simply cannot offer the same intangible social and professional benefits of formal networking and informal socializing. Yet funding for conference travel for our members continues to decline. MESA will do what we can to offset these challenges. Last year, the Board of Directors approved an increase of our graduate student travel awards, doubling the amount to \$500. In conjunction with our Committee on Precarity and Adjunctification, this year we also plan to offer parallel travel grants to contingent faculty members as well. We hope that offsetting some travel costs will help those early-career lecturers and others with doctorates stay connected.

Relatedly, the second workshop is on the [future of the annual meeting](#), organized by Ithaca S+R and funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. [Along with 16 other societies across both the sciences and humanities](#), we are collectively evaluating the potential of new conference models, particularly after the experiences of the rapid shift to virtual in 2020-2021. There are crucial inequalities that could be solved by a permanent switch to virtual. Yet I sense that almost all of our peer associations are eager to switch back to the traditional model of solely in person. As MESA, we have found new audiences internationally and domestically who are not often in attendance at in-person meetings, and we want to continue to serve them. Due to our size, hybrid meetings are not feasible, so it is an either/or question. I would like to hear more from our members about their thoughts on possibly alternating in-person with virtual annual meetings — for many reasons, but foremost accessibility and equitability to all audiences, particularly those who cannot travel, due to the many obstacles we have identified (such as disabilities and unequal access to resources like visas and travel funding). I can easily see a future in which, for example, every third MESA Annual Meeting is online, so that MESA every few years is a virtual one.

It is not new that we live in perilous times. Our vulnerabilities as scholars and as people are as apparent as ever. My aim is that MESA continues to serve as an effective collective vehicle, not only for scholarly collaboration and for calling attention to the best work in our field, but also for the continued defense of academic freedom in order to ensure the most equitable, active, and engaged participation of all of our members.

I would like to hear more from our members about their thoughts on possibly alternating in-person with virtual annual meetings — for many reasons, but foremost accessibility and equitability to all audiences, particularly those who cannot travel.

Referendum on 2021 Members Meeting Resolution Passes

The membership of MESA has voted in favor of a resolution endorsing the Palestinian call for boycotts, divestment, and sanctions of Israel as a way to hold the government accountable for ongoing human rights violations. MESA's Board of Directors will implement it in a manner consistent with MESA's bylaws as well as relevant U.S. federal, state, and local laws. The resolution states that the boycott will not target individual students or scholars, and reiterates the right of individual MESA members to choose whether or not they wish to participate in an academic boycott of Israeli institutions.

To view answers to some commonly asked questions about this resolution, how it came about, and what it means for MESA, please see the [FAQ](#) on MESA's website.

Resolution

*Passed by the membership at the 2021 Members Meeting on December 2, 2021
and affirmed by membership vote on March 22, 2022.*

Whereas, Palestinian civil society issued a call in 2005 for boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) against Israel; and

Whereas, Members of the Middle East Studies Association (MESA) have organized various forums for discussion and debate of that call through MESA's commitment to academic freedom; and

Whereas, International intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations, including Palestinian and Israeli monitoring groups, have documented and verified successive Israeli governments' systematic violations of the human rights of Palestinians living under Israeli direct or indirect control; and

Whereas, Systematic violations include restricting freedom of movement for Palestinians; isolating, undermining, or otherwise attacking Palestinian educational institutions; harassing Palestinian professors, teachers, and students; harassing Israeli professors and students criticizing Israeli policies; destroying, confiscating, or otherwise rendering Palestinian archival material inaccessible; and maintaining inequality in educational resources between Palestinians and Israelis; and

Whereas, Israeli universities are imbricated in these systematic violations through their provision of direct assistance to the Israeli military and intelligence establishments; and

Whereas, The United States government has systematically shielded successive Israeli governments from being held accountable for such violations and facilitated them through unprecedented diplomatic, military, and economic support; and

Recalling that the BDS campaign against Israel is one that targets institutions and not individuals; and

Recalling that MESA recognizes the right of scholars to academic freedom as well as the right of scholars to choose whether or not to participate in an academic boycott;

Be it resolved that the majority of the MESA membership

(1) Endorses the 2005 call of Palestinian civil society for BDS against Israel; and

(2) Directs the MESA Board of Directors to work in consultation with the Committee on Academic Freedom to give effect to the spirit and intent of this resolution, in a manner consistent with MESA's bylaws as well as relevant US federal, state, and local laws.

Membership Updates

New & Returning Members

MESA welcomes 322 new members (122 full, 165 students, 35 associates) for 2022, and 480 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 of Kuwait

Bridgewater State University, Middle East Studies Center

Brown University, Center for Middle East Studies

Columbia University, Middle East Institute

Cornell University, Department of Near Eastern Studies

CUNY Graduate Center, Middle East and Middle Eastern American Center

Dartmouth College

Georgetown University, Center for Contemporary Arab Studies

Georgetown University, Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies

Harvard University, Center for Middle Eastern Studies

ILEX Foundation

McGill University, Institute of Islamic Studies

New York University, Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies

North Carolina Consortium for Middle East 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 California, Berkeley, Center for Middle Eastern Studies

University of California, Santa Barbara, Center for Middle East Studies

University of Exeter, Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies

University of Maryland, Roshan Institute for Persian 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, Department of Middle East Studies

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

University of Wisconsin-Madison, Middle East Studies Program

Vanderbilt University

Yale University, Council on Middle East Studies

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 September 24, 2021 - May 1, 2022, a total of **\$14,636** in individual contributions was received for MESA funds. We acknowledge with great thanks the following:

MESA General

Najwa Al-Qattan ►
Aida A. Bamia*
Linda Brown
Charles E. Butterworth
Jean B Campbell*
Tuve Floden*
McGuire Gibson#
Liora R. Halperin
Gary R. Hobin*
Khalil Jahshan*
Dina Rizk Khoury ►
Justin Martin
Kenneth Perkins ►
Carolyn Ramzy
Dwight F. Reynolds ▷
Dana Sajdi
Kathryn Spellman Poots
Joseph R. Tamer

Presidents

Judith Tucker#

Albert Hourani Book Award

Sabra J. Webber

Nikki Keddie Book Award

Rudi Matthee*

Fatema Mernissi Book Award

Nancy E. Gallagher ▷
Robert D. Lee*

Malcolm H. Kerr Dissertation Award

Mary Elaine Hegland*
Joseph E. Lowry*
Dwight F. Reynolds*

Student Paper Prize

Anne Betteridge*

Mentoring Award

Nancy E. Gallagher ►

Jere L Bacharach Service Award

Earl L. Sullivan*

Academic Freedom

Armin Bram
Linda Brown
Charles Butterworth
Gregory Starrett

Global Academy

Nancy E. Gallagher ►
Judith E. Tucker*

Student Travel Grant

Hina Azam
James A. Miller*
Thomas M. Ricks

Child Care Contribution

Anne Betteridge
Joseph E. Lowry*
James Tallon
Sherry Vatter

* at least \$100
at least \$250
▷ at least \$500
► at least \$1000

MESA Elections

The 2022 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 2022 President-Elect and incoming Board Members. We thank the **2022 Nominating Committee** for their service.

Kathryn Babayan, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
Fadi Bardawil, Duke University
Noura Erakat, Rutgers University

Mezna Qato, University of Cambridge
Dana Sajdi, Boston College
Ezgi Çakmak, University of Pennsylvania (Student)

Nominating Committee Election Statistics, 2015-2022

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
# of Full Candidates	8	14	11	9	13	15	15	16
# of Student Candidates	*	3	2	6	5	6	5	5
Total Membership at Election	2462	2523	2356	2032	2505	2445	2443	2168
Eligible Members (F & S)	2374	2422	2304	1955	2417	2394	2375	2117
Valid ballots	540	462	365	321	357	388	430	957
% of voting membership	22.75	19.10	15.80	16.41	14.77	16.20	18.10	45.20

* student position added with 2016 election



MESA 2022

Denver, Colorado | December 1-4

Denver was founded in the mid-1800s, and some 160 years later, the Denver metro area boasts around 3 million people, with some 715,000 living in Denver proper.

Why Denver you ask? MESA tries to meet out West periodically in order to serve our membership located in different parts of the continent. Denver is a major airline hub and is relatively easy to get to for most. It also happens to have large convention hotels that can accommodate a group of MESA's size. When we met there in 2012 and 2015, the Secretariat received a lot of positive feedback, and we look forward to returning once again.

The meeting will take place at the Sheraton Denver Downtown Hotel, which is perfectly located on the 16th Street Mall, a 16-block, tree-lined, downtown pedestrian promenade that boasts numerous outside cafes, lots of shopping, and public art. The Sheraton is comprised of two buildings, the newer Plaza Building

and the Tower Building. The site was originally known as Courthouse Square and was the first major development in the U.S. to include a hotel, department store, and public space. The Sheraton Tower was a Hilton, and a 4-story May D&F Department Store sat where the Plaza Building rests. The original site was designed by architect I.M. Pei among whose more notable designs are the steel and glass pyramid at the Louvre and more recently the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha. His work on what is now the Sheraton's Tower Building is a pioneering example of the use of precast concrete.

The hotel is within walking distance of Denver's large collection of Victorian houses. Examples of Queen Anne, Richardson Romanesque, and Shingle styles are ample. Free electric shuttle buses run up and down the mall. At one end you can walk to the Denver Art Museum and the Colorado State Capitol Building, modeled on the U.S. Capitol. On the other end you can get off the shuttle and walk over three pedestrian bridges, one of which takes you to Denver's hip LoHi neighborhood filled with restaurants and brew pubs.

What's in store for MESA 2022? About 250 sessions, an active book exhibit, and the reunion with old friends.



Conference Registration

Pre-register by November 8

Those wishing to attend the annual meeting and who are not on the program may register by November 8 to receive the discounted rate. Onsite registration is required after that date, which will begin in person on Thursday, December 1. To register, use the form located on page 24 or go to <https://mesana.org/annual-meeting/registration>

Category	By Nov 8	On-site
Full/associate	\$175	\$225
Student/retired member	\$85	\$135
Student non-member	\$150	\$200
Other non-members	\$300	\$350



Hotel Reservation

Cut-off date: November 8

Sheraton Denver Downtown Hotel

550 Court Place, Denver, Colorado 80202
 303-893-3333 (Direct)
 888-627-8405 (Toll Free Reservations)

Online Reservations:

<https://book.passkey.com/event/50298706/owner/3130/home>

Group Rates:

\$179 Single/Double
 \$199 Triple
 \$219 Quad

These rates are lower than 2015!

MESA 2022

Schedule of Events

Thursday, December 1

3:00-6:00pm Book exhibit
 3:00-5:00pm Panel session I
 5:30-7:30pm Panel session II

Friday, December 2

9:00am-6:00pm Book exhibit
 8:30-10:30am Panel session III
 11:00am-1:00pm Panel session IV
 1:30-3:30pm Panel session V
 4:00-6:00pm Panel session VI
 7:00-9:30pm Presidential address
 & awards ceremony
 9:30-11:00pm Reception

Saturday, December 3

9:00am-6:00pm Book exhibit
 8:30-10:30am Panel session VII
 11:00am-1:00pm Panel session VIII
 1:15-2:45pm Members meeting
 3:00-5:00pm Panel session IX
 5:30-7:30pm Panel session X
 9:00pm-1:00am Dance party

Sunday, December 4

8:00am-12:00pm Book exhibit
 8:30-10:30am Panel session XI
 11:00am-1:00pm Panel session XII
 1:30-3:30pm Panel session XIII

MESA 2023

57th Annual Meeting
 November 2-5, 2023
 Palais des Congrès
 Montréal, Québec, Canada



MESA'S 56TH ANNUAL MEETING

The **Annual Meeting Program** will offer around 250 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 September. Please check the website for the most current information, as we will have further updates regarding the meeting over the course of the summer. Program questions should be sent to Kat Teghizadeh at kat@mesana.org.

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 2022 is posted on MESA's website.

The **MESA FilmFest** is staying virtual and will continue to present recent documentary and narrative films from and about the region for a period of time around the meeting. This will allow registrants to view films without conflicting with other conference events. In addition to contemporary events, films cover other aspects of culture and history and are ideal for classroom use to help introduce students to the beauty, diversity, and complexity of the Middle East. The FilmFest selection committee welcomes volunteers to preview submissions beginning after the deadline in June. Contact Sophia Angeletti at sophia@mesana.org to submit your film for consideration.

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>.

Volunteer Panel Chairs

Volunteers are invited to chair non-preorganized panels at the MESA 2022 annual meeting. A listing of available panels will be posted by July 1. MESA only assigns chairs 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.



fax 520-207-3166

email sara@mesana.org

post MESA, 3542 N. Geronimo Ave., Tucson AZ 85705 (USA)

Complete and return form to the MESA Secretariat by no later than **November 8, 2022*** for pre-registration rates or register through myMESA and pay on-line.

* Session participants must register by **May 18, 2022**

Name _____

Affiliation _____

Email (req) _____

Membership Dues

Individuals should complete a profile in their myMESA account

Student member
Retired member
Fellow or Associate member

Amounts shown are in US\$

- \$ 65
- \$ 85
- \$ 75 (income less than \$30,000)
- \$100 (income \$30,001 - \$40,000)
- \$125 (income \$40,001 - \$50,000)
- \$150 (income \$50,001 - \$60,000)
- \$175 (income \$60,001 - \$70,000)
- \$200 (income \$70,001 - \$80,000)
- \$225 (income \$80,001 - \$90,000)
- \$250 (income \$90,001 - \$100,000)
- \$275 (income \$100,001 - \$125,000)
- \$300 (income \$125,001 - \$150,000)
- \$350 (income greater than \$150,001)

Registration Category

Student/retired MESA member \$ 85
Full/associate MESA member \$175
Student, non-MESA member \$150
All other non-MESA members \$300

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 September 1, 2022.
All others: Requests for refunds must be received by November 8, 2022.
Send refund inquires to sara@mesana.org

Submissions: Process and Statistics

The annual meeting program chair, selected by MESA's Board of Directors, 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. The purpose of the program committee is to read and evaluate submissions, place high-rated ones on the program, and to assemble papers into cohesive panels.

Acceptance/Rejection Rates, Recent Meetings

Submission Type	2019 (New Orleans)		2020 (Washington, DC)		2021 (Montreal)		2022 (Denver)	
	Proposed	Accepted Rejected	Proposed	Accepted Rejected	Proposed	Accepted Rejected	Proposed	Accepted* Rejected
Individual Papers	616	361 (59%) 255 (41%)	657	540 (82%) 117 (18%)	622	434 (70%) 188 (30%)	441	363 (82%) 78 (18%)
Pre-organized Panels	245	191 (78%) 54 (22%)	216	210 (97%) 6 (3%)	197	171 (87%) 26 (13%)	114	112 (98%) 2 (2%)
Roundtables	41	26 (63%) 15 (37%)	52	49 (94%) 3 (6%)	59	52 (88%) 7 (12%)	30	30 (100%)

*Does not include MESA 2021 deferred submissions of 25 panels, 5 roundtables, 1 special session, 61 individual papers

Disciplinary Breakdown of Papers

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

	2019 (New Orleans)		2020 (Washington, DC)		2021 (Montreal)		2022 (Denver)	
History	479	42.09	486	34.69	366	31.99	319	31.93
Pol Sci/Int'l Affrs	195	17.14	252	17.99	187	16.45	183	18.30
Anthropology	110	9.67	153	10.92	113	9.88	84	8.40
Literature	98	8.61	131	9.35	119	10.40	120	12.00
Sociology	65	5.71	92	6.57	70	6.12	56	5.60
Religious Stds/Theo	42	3.69	43	3.07	42	3.67	36	3.60
Media Arts	34	2.99	38	2.71	39	3.41	45	4.50
Language/Linguistics	14	1.23	37	2.64	21	1.84	20	2.00
Art/Art History	28	2.46	36	2.57	40	3.50	23	2.30
Law	13	1.14	18	1.28	21	1.84	8	0.80
Geography	12	1.05	18	1.28	17	1.49	4	0.40
Archit/Urban Plng	9	0.79	15	1.07	18	1.57	14	1.40
Education	6	0.53	14	1.00	6	0.52	16	1.60
Philosophy	4	0.35	12	0.86	19	1.66	9	0.90
Economics	10	0.88	9	0.64	7	0.61	8	0.80
Business/ Public Admin	0	0.00	8	0.57	1	0.09	0	0.00
Archaeology	6	0.53	4	0.29	1	0.09	3	0.30
Medicine/Health	3	0.26	3	0.21	4	0.35	4	0.40
Journalism	1	0.09	3	0.21	2	0.17	1	0.10
Library Science	0	0.00	3	0.21	0	0.00	1	0.10
Psychology	3	0.26	2	0.14	0	0.00	0	0.00
Communication	6	0.53	0	0.00	9	0.79	7	0.70
Unknown*	14	1.23	24	1.71	42	3.67	38	3.80
	1152	101.23**	1401	99.98**	1144	100.11**	999	99.93**

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

**due to rounding, figure is not 100%

CALL FOR PAPERS

Deadline is June 1, 2022

Middle East Studies Association Undergraduate Research Workshop

Thursday, December 1, 2022

1:00-5:00 pm

The Committee on Undergraduate Middle East Studies (CUMES) is sponsoring an undergraduate research workshop to be held in conjunction with the MESA Annual Meeting on Thursday, December 1 from 1:00-5:00 pm. 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 be valuable for students planning graduate work in Middle East Studies.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION INFORMATION AND DEADLINES

The paper proposal deadline is June 1, 2022. Applicants will be notified by July 1. Proposals should include

1. A scholarly abstract of 200-300 words identifying a strong, focused thesis statement, significance, and a discussion of methods and sources/evidence.
2. 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.

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. To provide personalized attention and mentorship, the workshop is limited to 16 student participants.

REGISTRATION FEES

The fee for the workshop for 2022 is \$50 and it will provide *full access* to the MESA conference December 1-4. 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. Victoria Hightower** (Victoria.hightower@ung.edu).

Publication News

New Directions in Middle East Studies

Orit Bashkin | University of Chicago



In this issue we present two pieces by Carmen M. K. Gitre and Ziad Fahmy on their fascinating new works, as a way of reflecting on new directions in Egyptian cultural history. The Egyptian Revolution of 2011, with its unique and exciting artistic production, reminded many in the field that politics are not always the business of upper and middle class men, their perception of the nation, and the authoritative texts they produced. Scholars used these insights to look back at Egypt's past in creative fashions. Joining an impressive field of Egyptian cultural history, where scholars probed middle class modernity and print capitalism—and taking seriously the call from historians like Eve Troutt Powell, Khaled Fahmy, and Beth Baron to turn our gaze from elites to questions relating to race, gender, and everyday experiences—historians, social scientists, and literary scholars presented us with explorations of cinematic, artistic, and literary production. Working today under very difficult conditions, where research is not always possible, these scholars took inspiration from such disciplines as subaltern studies, history of emotions, and sensory history, and called our attention to translation practices, illiterate and literate performers, and the performative aspects of gender and politics themselves.

These studies suggest new ways to consider the relationships between technologies and culture. Andrew Simon's new book, *Media of the Masses: Cassette Culture in Modern Egypt*, for example, looks at the cassette tape as a mode of understanding Egypt's history during 1970s and 1980s. Moving from homes to shops, and from singers to listeners, the book demonstrates how the cassette, an artifact that became immensely popular in the Middle East in these years, undid state power and the division between public and private.

This new body of work incorporates important gendered dimensions. Nefertiti Takla's studies on sexuality and criminality evaluate legal history and race through Egypt's most infamous female serial killers. Hannah Elsis's research on incarceration similarly reminds us that cultures, especially gendered ones, are produced in spaces and by people the state does not want us to see, and that it is our duty, as historians, to see these people, and reconstruct their creations, politics, and experiences.

Like Elsis, scholars of Egyptian culture take us to new spaces; these include not only spaces outside of Cairo and Alexandria, but also new spaces within cities, such as factories, brothels, popular clubs, and cafés. Thus, in a recent *IJMES* roundtable "Decentering Egyptian Historiography: Provincializing Geographies, Methodologies, and Sources," Lucia Carminati and Mohamed Gamal-Eldin, joined by historians Peter Gran, Matthew H. Ellis, Zeinab Abul-Magd, Beth Baron, and Hanan Hammad reflected on such spaces, from Upper Egypt to hospital rooms. In this realm, the NYU Library of Arabic literature provided educators with Muhammad al-Tunisi (d. 1274/1857), in *Darfur: An Account of the Sultanate and Its People* (translated by the brilliant Humphrey Davies). This book is a valuable addition to those who teach the cultural history of modern Sudan, and of Egypt, with its attention to food, hunting, animals, magic, and dance, and the ways in which Egyptians understood, and did not understand, Sudanese culture.

These works have also changed how we look at Egyptian literature, canonicity, and especially translation. Samah Selim's *Popular Fiction, Translation and the Nahda in Egypt* radically altered our view of the Arab cultural renaissance (the Nahda) through her discussions of the adaptations of popular European fiction into Arabic. The book undoes linear readings of the "development" of Egyptian prose fiction, by shedding light on unauthorized translations, their imaginative producers, the avid Egyptian audiences that read them, and the remarkable things these translations tell us about the variability and inventiveness of Egyptian Arabic literature. Dina Heshmat suggests in *Egypt 1919: The Revolution in Literature and Film* that this anticolonial moment could not be understood outside its literary and cinematic products and representations, and the politics of memory that suppressed the revolutionary marginal voices. Finally, Benjamin Koerber's *Conspiracy in Modern Egyptian Literature* showed that the boundaries between what is considered vulgar and popular and what is considered authoritative and canonical are far less rigid than we think.

The focus on culture exposes different aspects of resistance – to nationalism, colonialism, and capitalism. It reflects on state policies, economic production, and power struggles, but from entirely different perspectives. And the homage these historians and literary scholars pay to this wide range of cultural producers, and their ability to challenge oppression and state controlled and elitist visions, also offers us some hope.

SEEKING SUGGESTIONS of Books

ACLS Humanities E-Book Collection

We invite your suggestions for titles to be added on MESA's behalf to the ACLS Humanities E-Book collection. Titles should be published between c. 1990 and 2017. They should be academic titles from university presses, non-university academic publishers, and trade presses. We seek publications that are of continuing importance for teaching and research, and which are of enduring value to the field of study. To submit your suggestion, please complete the form [here](#).

Acting Egyptian: Theater, Identity, and Political Culture in Cairo, 1869-1930

Carmen M. K. Gitre | Virginia Tech

In 1919, as Egyptians flooded the streets to demand an end to British occupation, the popular Egyptian actress and singer Munira al-Mahdiyya (1885-1965) started to open her shows in a new way. Before the curtain rose, she stepped out in front and sang:

...she keeps the laws of decency and 'afaf (description of a woman of virtue and integrity)

She suppresses her emotion

For the sake of her nation and honor.

By this point, Mahdiyya had been singing for over ten years, and her recordings with Gramophone and numerous record companies helped to make her one of the most sought-after singers of her time. Ethnomusicologist Frederick Lagrange observes that in the early-twentieth century the popularity of women like Mahdiyya and her contemporaries allowed them to begin challenging the dishonor associated with female public performance. Diminishing the stigma was uneven and never fully realized. But Mahdiyya's song gave me pause. As a woman involved in what was considered a morally dubious profession, Mahdiyya sang lyrics that deliberately and overtly linked public performance to decency, honor, and national duty.

The period I cover in my book, *Acting Egyptian*, was one of intense social and political disruption in Egypt. In a 40-year period, it would go from being an Ottoman province to a British protectorate (1882-1922) to an independent nation-state (1922). Anti-British protests peaked in 1919 as Egyptians flooded the streets to demand their independence. Spanning this period, *Acting Egyptian* opens with the urban renewal of Cairo and inauguration of the Khedivial Opera House in 1869. It closes with Egyptian demands for independence from Britain and the growth of women's cabarets in the 1920s.

In an era of political upheaval, the rhetoric surrounding the revolution of 1919 provided a language for women—and others—to link their increased public presence to the well-being of the nation. But it was not just women. In late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Egypt, a range of men, women, working classes and elites used theater and performance to reckon with what it meant to be modern and Egyptian.

My book joins a host of others, including Ziad Fahmy's *Ordinary Egyptians*, Samah Selim's *Popular Fiction and the Nahda in Egypt*, Hoda Yousef's *Composing Egypt*, Matthew Ellis's *Desert Borderland*, and Shana Minkin's *Imperial Bodies*, that creatively decenter what has been

considered any definitive narrative of Egypt's national story, a history recorded and populated by the folks who became Egypt's political and cultural leaders in Cairo after 1919. Foremost among them, an emerging class of urban, male professionals with secular educations and nationalist leanings, often referred to as effendis, fashioned themselves as Egypt's anti-colonial leaders. Contrary to their self-representation, they were quite a diverse group in terms of religion, ethnicity, and ideology, but over time they forged a narrative of consensus on issues of modernity, authenticity, nationalism. The ideals they championed emphasized self-comportment, respectability, discipline, companionate marriage, education, and other concerns. In essence, the overarching message was that to be an effendi was to be a modern Egyptian, and vice versa, and theater was an ideal means and space through which to cultivate their own identities and disseminate ideals to others.

But Egyptian society was anything but a single and harmonious social class. Reading Margaret Litvin's book *Hamlet's Arab Journey* awakened me to the unexpected ways serious attention to theatrical performance makes visible more intricate and multifaceted stories. More recent books by Sonali Pahwa (*Theaters of Citizenship*) and Raphael Cormack (*Midnight in Cairo*) continue to multiply these perspectives in critical ways. Play scripts, playbills, advertisements, song lyrics, published theater reviews, and private memoirs offer rich and variable perspectives on the limits and possibilities of modern identity, highlighting populist grievances and contestation "from below." These sources, cultural forms often but not always outside the purview of the state, reveal the complexities and contradictions of how power and class are constructed. They also illuminate some of the contingent forces of history—things like individual motives and apparent coincidences—that often disappear from historical narratives.

Rather than tacitly accepting what would become persistent, hegemonic, effendi ideals, performers and their audiences generated pluralistic notions of nation and identity. On the one hand, they demonstrated that efforts to forge a unified national identity could not erase identities shaped by class, gender, and other categories of belonging. On the other, by representing and critiquing effendi cultural norms, performers helped to consolidate them.

My current book project, tentatively titled *Humor in Interwar Egypt*, centers on humor in art and performance in Cairo's interwar period. It has become clear to me that though ostensibly benign, humor plays complex and fascinating roles in telling layered stories. I am exploring the ways that humor functions as a form of sanctioned, if undervalued, truth-telling in the face of rigorous social change.

Street Sounds: Listening to Everyday Life in Modern Egypt

Ziad Fahmy | Cornell University

The idea for *Street Sounds* came to me in 2012, when I was a Faculty Fellow at Cornell's Society for the Humanities. The focal theme at the Society that year, "Sound: Culture, Theory, Practice, Politics," introduced me to sound studies and to scholars who approached that field from a variety of disciplines, including, anthropology, comparative literature, ethnomusicology, and science and technology studies. My readings, weekly seminars, and almost daily discussions with the other Fellows from various academic disciplines was instrumental in forging my ideas about historical sounds and soundscapes. I was already familiar with the pioneering work of anthropologist Charles Hirschkind who examined the soundscapes of cassette tape sermons in contemporary Cairo, but as a historian, I needed to learn how to uncover the significance of the soundscapes of the past from archival texts. Methodologically, the writings of historians of the senses like Alain Corbain, Jonathan Sterne, and Mark Smith sharpened my archival instincts and influenced my own theorizing on both the history of sound and sensory history. By the end of my fellowship, I was more consciously aware of the value "listening to the archives," which motivated my researching and writing of *Street Sounds*.

Street Sounds acknowledges the obvious fact that that we live in a multisensory world and of course so did the people of the past. So, the broadest claim the book makes is that writing a history that accounts for our multisensory environment can only enrich and nuance our understanding of everyday life. Working towards this end, *Street Sounds* historically examines the changing soundscapes of twentieth century Egypt, while assessing the sonic impact of modernity on the Egyptian streets. Although *Street Sounds* is obviously a sound-studies project, it is also a socio-cultural history of everyday people that actively and purposely uses a sensory approach as an important methodological tool for examining historical street life. As the book reveals, a sensory approach to the sources uncovers a great deal more about what happened at the ground level. So, in a way, it functions as a micro-historical tool that gets us closer to the streets. It highlights the mundane sounds of streetlife, while "listening" to the voices of ordinary people as they struggle with state authorities for ownership of the streets. The book, in part, explores the modern transformation of the Egyptian streets and the sonic implications of that change. For example, I exam-

ine the sonic impact of electric lighting, loud speakers, car horns, automobile traffic, tramways, and the inevitable anti-noise laws enacted by the state. I show how these changes impacted daily life by dramatically changing how the streets functioned, felt, and sounded. And even more importantly, the book also details how everyday people reacted to those changes and how they used, shaped, reshaped and appropriated these technological manifestations of modernity for their own use.

Street Sounds also reveals a socio-political dimension of noise by demonstrating how the growing middle classes used sound and a sensory vocabulary to distinguish themselves from the Egyptian masses. As, the cacophony of everyday modern life grew louder, the Egyptian press featured editorials calling for regulating not only traffic and radio noise, but also the voices of street vendors, the music of wedding processions, and even the traditional wails sounded out at funerals. These classist sensory discourses which pervaded the press, inevitably led to tensions between the state and ordinary people over control of the streets and other public spaces and lead to the passing of a variety of laws that attempted to silence the streets.

I am now writing a book on the history of Egyptian radio, titled: *Broadcasting Identity: Radio and the Making of Modern Egypt, 1925-1952*. In *Broadcasting Identity*, I pioneer an in-depth study of Egyptian radio, starting from its early days in the mid-1920s. Temporally and thematically this new book is a continuation of my first book, *Ordinary Egyptians* (2011). The media landscape I described in *Ordinary Egyptians*, began to change after the 1934 introduction of Egyptian State Radio [ESR]. The very act of monopolizing the Egyptian airwaves and forcibly closing all other competing private radio stations had a significant cultural impact. *Broadcasting Identity* will especially examine ESR's impact on programing content and on the listening public. In the second half of the book, each of the chapters will closely examine the major broadcasting content of Egyptian Radio, including children's and educational programing, music content, Quranic recitation and religious programing, news and political programing, and lastly, drama and comedic shows. As I have done in previous publications, I will investigate radio broadcasting within the context of the entire media landscape from the entertainment press to the music and movie industries. Only by examining the entire media-system can a comprehensive picture of the impact of radio on Egyptian national culture be fully understood.

Publication News

From the Desk of the *IJMES* Editor

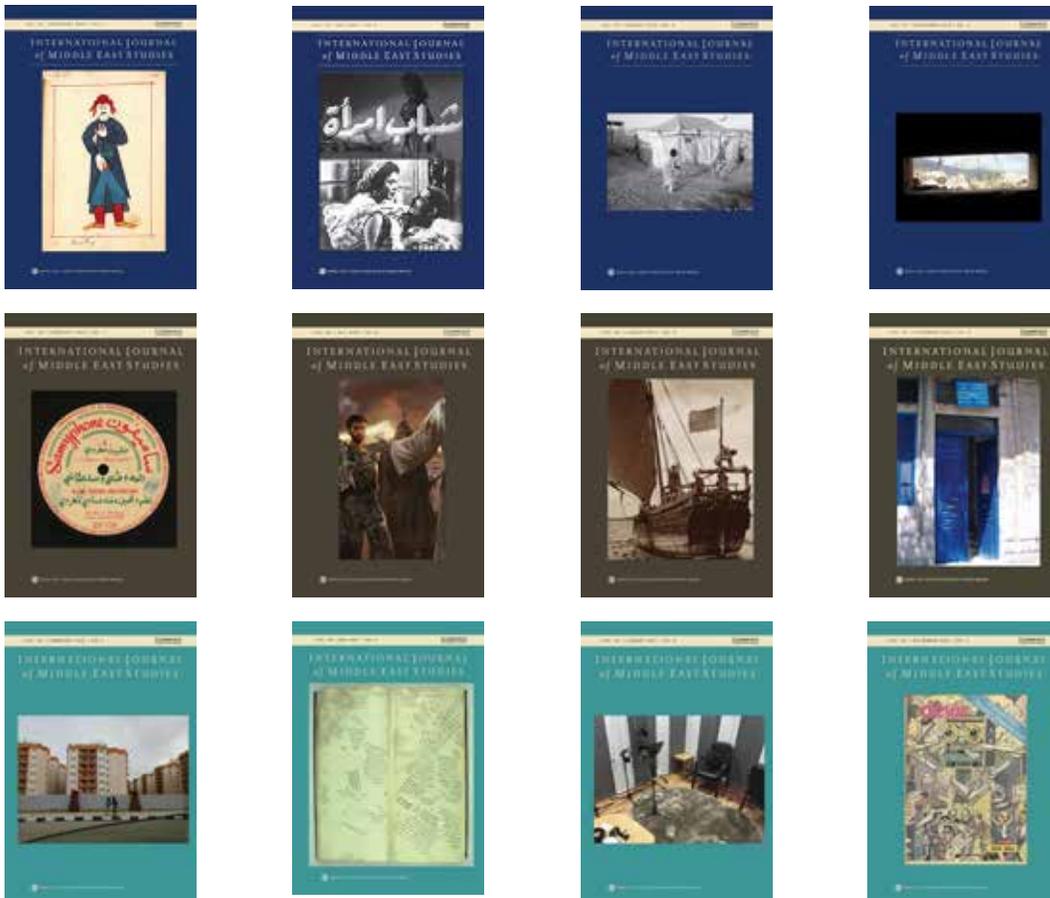
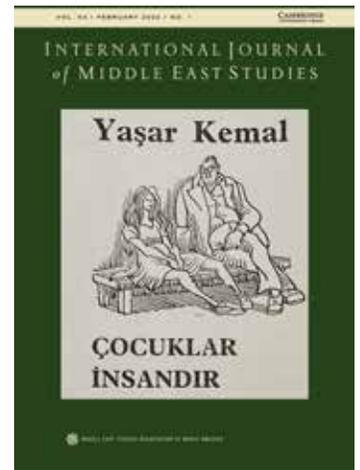
Joel Gordon | *IJMES* Editor | University of Arkansas

As I write, confirmation of MESA papers and panels are being conveyed. I anticipate recommencing greetings and embraces and especially a deep look into the health of our field (not just our members) in December. As Covid either passes or becomes normative, we remember that our region remains plagued by other, longstanding concerns that often define where we can go, who we can meet, what we are able to read or collect, and in some cases what we dare write. We try to remain sensitive to this as we evaluate submissions and (often) press authors to probe further. A forthcoming roundtable convened of scholars affiliated with the MESA Global Academy will address thorny questions related to the positionality of ‘native’ scholars seeking to push boundaries of acceptable inquiry both at ‘home’ and from the presumed safety of ‘abroad.’

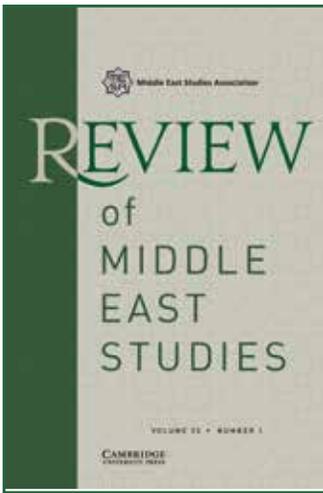
As always, we seek to embrace the best research across time, space, and disciplines. Please push our boundaries of inquiry. But as/when you do, remember to address a wide readership that may well be interested in your topic but that may not be familiar with your sources or methodology or the physical and geo-cultural borders you have chosen to cross. Of course, expect to be pushed!

Some of our readers (and authors) have commented, even complained that our font size and narrow margins hampered reading, whether in hard copy or online. We have tried to address that with this year’s edition – and hope you noticed and approved.

Wishing everyone a good, productive, safe (in all respects) summer and beyond.



International Journal of Middle East Studies, Volumes 51-53 covers



Publication News

From the Desk of the *RoMES* Editor

Heather Ferguson | *RoMES* Editor | Claremont McKenna College

Academic careers are not for the faint of heart. Sending off that grad app, walking into your first seminar, facing a PhD examination board, acquiring advisor signatures for the dissertation, job interviews, publishing contracts, submitting promotion dossiers, and the list of moments potentially full of terror goes on. Yet, there is one constant in the midst of these otherwise temporal markers of progression in the profession: designing syllabi and guiding classrooms full of students through topics they are often unfamiliar with or, worse, approach with preconceived assumptions that shape their encounters with assigned materials. True, over time we develop skills and habits that quiet our nerves as we walk into the classroom on the first day of class each semester and enable us to transform volatile “discussions” more dexterously into productive forums for analysis and reflection. Still, I always feel the steady thrum of nerves as perhaps a welcome component of teaching—a palpable reminder of the responsibility we bear as educators in national and global environments in which “misinformation” is now a buzz word.

Back to the syllabi. I am sure we all have our own methods for building and revising syllabi and embracing the responsibility we bear for scaffolding a semester long arc for a region, topic, or history. My first step is to crowd-source advice from far wiser colleagues, and then, if teaching anything related to modern MENA studies, to peruse the archived reports from the *Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP)*. I admittedly never teach anything that touches on Israel/Palestine without leading students first through Joel Beinin and Lisa Hajjar’s “Palestine, Israel and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A Primer” (2014). It’s a great way to start, not least for the framework the primer provides, but also because students can immediately engage with the politics inherent in labels (why “Arab-Israeli” and not “Palestinian-Israeli”?). But *MERIP* is more than just an expansive archive of materials we, as educators, can poach for our syllabi—the project is also a record of the field of MENA studies as it has evolved since its founding moment in 1971.

The upcoming issue of *RoMES* showcases this evolution in a Special Focus section titled “MERIP and the Politics of Knowledge Production in MENA Studies.” Organized by Waleed Hazbun (University of Alabama), contributors assess their own participation in the project and analyze key theoretical and methodological shifts that define not just the contents of MERIP but also the nature and scope of MENA studies. We are honored to publish extraordinary essays by Joel Beinin, Michael Fischbach, Waleed Hazbun, Paul Silverstein, Ted Swedenburg, and Judith Tucker as they revisit approaches to women and gender, cultural and material history, and MERIP’s enduring focus on the region’s political economy. This Special Focus section urgently impresses on us, as members of the Middle East Studies Association, the need to recognize and actively interrogate the politics of knowledge production in our field. Perhaps more pointedly, MERIP’s 50 years also models for us the importance of collaborative work dedicated to public-facing scholarly labor. When we walk into a classroom filled with students who grab their “news” from an increasingly limited array of streamed sources, my hope is that we remember MERIP’s commitment to “information” as a framework that scaffolds sustained engagement with a topic—something like a syllabus.

Interested in reading the latest from *RoMES*?

Access the latest issue from the [Publications link](#) on MESA’s website, or 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 Calista Boyd at romes@cmc.edu



Committee News

Committee on Academic Freedom

CAF comprises two sub-committees: MENA (Middle East and North Africa) and NA (North America). The mission of CAF is to address violations by protesting them at the highest government and diplomatic levels of the country where the violation occurs. If you learn of human rights or academic freedom violations please email the committee at caf@mesana.org.

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).

26 October 2021 (Saudi Arabia)—

Letter to Saudi authorities expressing concern about the reported dismissals of Yemeni scholars, physicians and other professionals from their positions at universities in the southern provinces of al-Baha, Asir, Jazan and Najran.

12 November 2021 (Egypt)—

Letter to Egyptian authorities calling for the release of Professor Ayman Mansour Nada, the chair of the Radio and Television Department at Cairo University's Faculty of Mass Communication.

22 December 2021 (Turkey)—

Letter to President Erdoğan regarding the continuing attacks on Boğaziçi University's students and faculty under the leadership of the new rector, Mehmet Naci İnci.

23 December 2021 (Israel)—

Letter to Israeli government protesting the ongoing and intensified attacks on Palestinian universities and civil society organizations. We highlight, in particular, the pre-dawn invasion of Birzeit University by Israeli soldiers on 14 December 2021 and the designation, on 22 October, of six Palestinian civil society organizations as "terrorist."

8 February 2022 (Israel)—

Letter to the Israeli government in protest of the latest invasion of Birzeit University, on 10 January 2022, and the assault and arrest of several Birzeit University students.

Response received February 28, 2022 from Israeli Ministry of Justice

10 February 2022 (Egypt)—Letter to Egyptian authorities expressing concern about the continued detention of Kholoud Said, a translator and the head of the Translation Unit of the publication department at Bibliotheca Alexandrina (BA), and free-lance translator Marwa Arafa, and calling for their immediate release.

14 February 2022 (USA)— Letter to Arizona legislators protesting provisions of HB 281.

28 February 2022 (USA)— Letter to the President of the University of Washington protesting the treatment of Professor Liora Halperin.

Response to the above letter received February 28, 2022 from Office of the President

9 March 2022 (Iran)—Letter to Iranian authorities protesting the reimprisonment of Prof. Fariba Adelkhah.

11 March 2022 (Iran)—Letter to Iranian authorities objecting to the recent dismissals of Iranian university professors.

5 April 2022 (Israel)—Letter to Israeli authorities protesting the Government's proposed policy regarding the selection of international scholars and students to teach and study in Palestinian universities, giving the Israeli military the unilateral power to select and exclude scholars and students and limiting their numbers significantly, while censoring

certain disciplines and foci of research. If implemented, the policy would undermine Palestinian universities' ability to recruit appropriate faculty and curtail Palestinians' academic freedom.

18 April 2022 (Canada)—Letter to the provost of McGill University protesting the threat to sanction the Students' Society of McGill University.

20 April 2022 (Egypt)—Letter to the Egyptian authorities calling for an independent investigation into the circumstances surrounding the arrest and subsequent death of economics researcher Ayman Hadhoud.

4 May 2022 (Egypt)—Fourth letter regarding the ongoing travel ban imposed on Waleed Salem

STAY INFORMED

If you would like notification when CAF releases a letter, join the CAF listserv by emailing CAF@mesana.org

Or follow CAF on Twitter [CAF4MESA](https://twitter.com/CAF4MESA)

Committee News

From the Graduate Student Board Member

Mariam Taher | Northwestern University



In my new position as student member on MESA's Board of Directors, I am eager for input from fellow students. I am a doctoral candidate in cultural anthropology at Northwestern University and as a fellow student, want to develop ways for students to connect with each as well as to communicate with me. Please write to me with your ideas and questions at students@mesana.org

I welcome your thoughts on any issues regarding graduate student relations with MESA, whether you have questions, concerns, or suggestions for strengthening the relationships of graduate student MESA members. I am more than happy to represent your concerns to the Board, and I will do my best to help solve your problem, or find someone who can.

Looking Ahead and MESA 2022

In previous years, we have organized sponsored skill-building workshops at MESA's annual meetings on topics like grant-writing and job hunting.

I would like your ideas and help in planning for the upcoming annual meeting in Denver this December. Do we want to sponsor another workshop and/or a roundtable based on a widely shared concern, or a current theme in MENA studies? Perhaps we can plan a social gathering for students since Denver offers some great options within walking distance of the hotel.

I welcome your ideas for student involvement outside of the annual meeting as well. I could especially use help with planning a virtual event. I am looking forward to hearing from you!

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Committee News

MESA's Global Academy

The MESA Global Academy supports displaced scholars from MENA currently located in North America. It harnesses the strengths of MESA's institutional and individual members to bolster the careers of researchers whose academic trajectory has been adversely affected by developments in their home countries.

MESA Global Academy: Concluding A Successful Pilot

The MESA Global Academy's three-year pilot concludes this fall, and the Global Academy is pleased to report that the program saw significant success. Since its launch in 2019, the Global Academy has facilitated over three dozen panels, research workshops, symposia, and other public programming, 18 publications, and five annual professional development workshops, as well as a mentoring program, for 27 displaced scholars from across the Arab world, Kurdistan, Iran, and Turkey. This programming encouraged collaboration and knowledge production among the scholars as well as between the scholars and their counterparts in North America. It also helped the scholars become more rooted in North American academia and to obtain more permanent employment.

The Global Academy is also pleased to note that its principal funder, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, has indicated that it will renew its grant if matching funds are secured. The Global Academy Committee has raised a portion of these matching funds and is optimistic that it will raise the remainder for the 2022-2023 academic year.

Spring 2022 Global Academy events were wide-ranging, and included a conversation hosted by George Washington University's Institute for Middle East Studies with Halil Yenigun of San Jose State University and Marlene Laurelle of GWU on the deterioration of Turkey's democracy; a talk convened by Georgetown University's Department of Arabic and

Islamic Studies and the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies by Hamid Alawadhi of Point Park University on the state of translation studies in the Arabic language, moderated by Elliott Colla; a panel hosted by the MENA Studies Program and the Keyman Modern Turkish Studies Program at Northwestern University on "State Control in Turkey: Resistant Encounters in War and Peace," with Dilan Okcuoglu of American University and Umut Yildirim of UCLA, in conversation with Wendy Pearlman of Northwestern; a panel organized by UCLA on "Idioms of Resistance in the Middle East" with Katty Alhayek of Toronto Metropolitan University, Morad Elsana of American University, and Umut Yildirim of UCLA, in conversation with UCLA scholars Zeynep Korkman, Sherene Razack, and Susan Slyomovics and moderated by Asli Bali; and a talk at Harvard University's Center for Middle Eastern Studies by Dilan Okcuoglu of AU and Ahmad Mohammadpour of Troy University on the Kurds in Turkey and Iran, moderated by Sara Roy of Harvard.

Upcoming Global Academy events include a panel on Syrian displacement hosted by the University of Chicago's Center for Middle Eastern Studies with Katty Alhayek of Toronto Metropolitan University and Basileus Zeno of Amherst College, in conversation with Lisa Wedeen of the University of Chicago; a talk by Ali Riza Gungen of York University at Northwestern University on banking in Turkey and Brazil, moderated by Stephen Nelson and in conversation with Seyma Kabaoglu, both of Northwestern; and

a lecture on political Islam by Halil Yenigun of San Jose State convened by Ottoman & Turkish Studies at NYU, with Banu Bargu of UC Santa Cruz as discussant and Asli Igsiz of NYU as moderator. All events are being held online.

Global Academy scholars have also published frequently over the past months. Vanderbilt University's Issam Eido served as a guest blogger for Harvard's Islamic Law Blog, where he penned four posts on Hanafi criteria for using hadith in the "courts and canons" of early Islamic law. *Jadaliyya* conducted interviews with Ali Riza Gungen and Dilan Okcuoglu for the e-zine's "Scholars in Context" series about cutting-edge research in the field of Middle East studies, and Utku Balaban wrote for *Middle East Report* on Islamist industrialism in Turkey.

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.

Global Academy Committee

Aslı Bali (Chair)

UCLA

Beth Baron

CUNY

Aslı Iğsız

New York University

Greta Scharnweber

Institute of International Education

Judith Tucker

Georgetown University

Eve Troutt Powell (ex-officio)

University of Pennsylvania

Jeffrey Reger (ex-officio)

MESA Executive Director

Mimi Kirk

Program Manager

mimi@mesana.org

Committee News

Committee on Undergraduate Middle East Studies

CUMES is a forum within MESA for sharing best practices in teaching and learning. CUMES sponsors panels on pedagogy, curriculum development, technology in the classroom, international study and other aspects of teaching and learning at the MESA annual meeting.

Centering Students in Peer-led Discussion Boards

Kristi N. Barnwell | University of Illinois, Springfield



When I designed my first online class, I knew I wanted discussion boards to serve as a central part of the learning process. I heard from friends that their experiences with discussion boards were lackluster—students didn’t talk to one another; it seemed like many of them said the same thing over again; the only responses simple: “Great job!” or “I agree.” Considering all that, I’ve developed student-centered discussion boards that require meaningful interaction and place students in the lead of discussion throughout the semester.

Below, I provide an overview of the process I use for setting up student-centered and student-led discussion boards. I developed these for an upper division interdisciplinary class: Conflict in the Middle East. The course covers follows the Palestine-Israel conflicts, the Lebanese Civil War, the Iran-Iraq War, and the Oslo Accords. The class fulfills a University requirement, so students do not need to have completed any pre-requisites. It is a daunting class but they rise to the occasion—and the boards frequently lead to higher quality interactions than in-class discussions.

Establishing requirements

I’ve tinkered with some of the details of the discussion format over the eleven years I have taught this course, but the key to its success is very clear formal guidelines for discussion. In this iteration, students must post a minimum of three *substantive* posts to receive a (check-minus or check) and must post more than that to achieve a (check-plus). These must be two or more paragraphs in length, must cite relevant evidence, and at least one must be in response to other classmates’ posts. Students are not required to look beyond the assigned readings, but may, if it is relevant to the topic covered. We use a streamlined, in-text citation (Author, pg. #) so that students can focus on content without agonizing over the details of citation devices. They also learn how important it is to reference back to the sources and review the context of the quote or information cited.

Some weeks, students only have time for three posts. Other weeks students respond to discussion boards extensively, with twenty or more students generating over one hundred posts in a week’s discussion board. Sometimes, they’re just posts of support and linking:

Thank you for your post! I made a similar case in my response to [student] which may provide more insight into my perspective on this issue.

More often than not, students engage with one another about the finer details of a post and ask each other questions. In response to a lengthy post about the Balfour Declaration and its implications for the Palestine Mandate, a student wrote:

I agree with you that the Balfour Declaration would cause further division among the Jewish immigrants, indigenous Palestinians, and British administrators. Likely each group will understand the meaning of “national home” in a different way, especially since the term has no legal standing (Gelvin, 87). Likewise, the Declaration leaves the terms of Great Britain’s “best endeavors” open to interpretation.

This level of interaction is possible because students must post at least one substantive post in response to one of their classmates' posts. Again, I define substantive as evidence-based, reflecting on and building out from the idea posted, and a paragraph or more in length. To ensure posts appear throughout the week, students must post at least once by Friday night. This leaves them the weekend to revisit the boards and interact.

Modeling Discussion

Thoughtful academic discussion based on reflection and interaction is not a reflex or talent. It is a skill that students need to observe and practice to get better. And asking good questions is harder than it seems. For the first three weeks of discussion, I am careful to model good question framing and active facilitation. I check once every day or two to offer a new angle or reframe and redirect the question based on what students have posted. I also provide short videos before the first discussion to illustrate and reinforce the kinds of academic “discussion moves” that guide them toward constructive engagement.¹ For example, after week 1 discussion, I summarize several themes that developed from student posts and pick one post that illustrates the components of reflecting on previous discussion, using evidence well, or pivoting to a new idea effectively. I may also provide alternative ways to express agreement or disagreement; offer language that describes how it connects to or differs from someone else; or how it relates to some other idea from the text.

After three weeks, students take over as facilitators for the discussion boards and I rarely, if ever, interact with students in discussion again. The discussion becomes the students' learning space and they find ways to support and encourage one another on their own. They correct one another when someone has misconstrued the reading; they offer other viewpoints, draw analogies, and eventually explore “what if” questions in ways that are imaginative, provocative, and insightful.

Grading takes an hour per week!

With hundreds of posts a week, that seems like a lot to grade—but there are ways to grade efficiently. Grading is broken down into a simplified scale with a check/plus/minus system on the A/B/C scale. I print a table with student names, 5 boxes for posts, and a space for brief comments. For each post, I give a check/plus/minus based on the quality of the response; I annotate with a star when the response is in conversation with another student. At the end, I review the post grades and assign each student an overall grade for the week. This process takes about an hour.

I then provide both individualized and group-level feedback to keep students feeling engaged with you through the semester. In the LMS gradebook, there is usually a space for “quick comment” or submitting text feedback. I keep this short and focused on grading criteria: “You raise some great ideas, but there were only three posts this week”; or, “You are on the right track, but in several of your posts, you failed to cite page numbers.” This provides individual students with guidance for improving in the coming weeks without overwhelming them with details.

What to expect

- The first couple of weeks, you may get many questions about how to do this exactly right. The work in the first two or three weeks, however, pays off as they get into the rhythm of the course.
- You'll be amazed at the high quality, thoughtful responses the students start to develop. I find the quality of argumentation and the level of detail students provide is of exceptional quality as they delve deeper into the course material.
- Their confidence in their responses increases as the semester goes on. Students are frequently afraid of how much they don't know at the beginning of the semester. By the end, they are solving world problems!
- You'll start to feel unnecessary to the course! They do really run the show and I'm only there to pick up the slack if there are not enough facilitators one week or another. This is truly student-centered learning.

¹ There are many “discussion moves” resources available online in a wide variety of formats.

Board Updates

Recent Statements and Letters from MESA's Board of Directors

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 BY THE AFRICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION ON DISCRIMINATORY TREATMENT METED OUT TO AFRICANS, INCLUDING SCHOLARS AND STUDENTS, FLEEING THE WAR IN UKRAINE

March 7, 2022

The African Studies Association (ASA), founded in 1957, is the flagship membership organization devoted to enhancing the exchange of information about Africa in the United States.

The Association has received with dismay news that Africans, including scholars and students who had been living and studying in Ukraine, have been discriminated against as they try to flee the conflict. It is believed that Africans make up more than 20% of Ukraine's international students. Reports indicate that some Ukrainian authorities deliberately pushed Africans to the end of long lines and prevented them from boarding trains heading to neighboring countries. There are also reports that immigration officials in some neighboring countries have prevented refugees, especially Africans, from entering their respective countries. As a result of their actions, many Africans have been left out in freezing weather without shelter, drink, or food.

We join the call of the African Union and several African leaders to condemn this discriminatory, inhumane, and racist treatment of Africans fleeing Ukraine, which clearly violates international law. ASA calls on Ukrainian and authorities in neighboring countries to treat all those fleeing the conflict equally, with dignity, and without discrimination based on race or status.

We welcome the public acknowledgment by the Ukrainian Foreign Minister that African refugees seeking to flee the violence have faced racist, disparate treatment and the setting up of a hotline +380934185684 for all Africans and Asians who want to leave Ukraine. We hope they

will continue to take measures to end the mistreatment of all refugees. We urge the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian organizations to swiftly engage and ensure that every refugee receives equal treatment.

We commend efforts by several African governments, including Nigeria, Zambia and Ghana, to evacuate their nationals from Ukraine and call on other African nations with citizens in Ukraine to take the necessary steps to ensure that they are protected. The foremost responsibility of the state is to take the necessary steps to protect its nationals.

We express solidarity with the people of Ukraine, especially scholars and students who are suffering as a direct consequence of this terrible conflict and whose work has been adversely impacted by the ongoing conflict. We are deeply worried and concerned about the humanitarian situation in Ukraine.

We endorse the comments by Kenya's Ambassador to the UN, Martin Kimani and "reject irredentism and expansionism on any basis, including racial, ethnic, religious, or cultural factors... further strongly condemn the trend in the last few decades of powerful states, including members of this Security Council, breaching international law with little regard." As Ambassador Kimani aptly noted, "(W)e must complete our recovery from the embers of dead empires in a way that does not plunge us back into new forms of domination and oppression."

The following organizations have signed onto this statement:

African Studies Association of Africa
American Anthropological Association
American Historical Association
American Society for Environmental History
American Studies Association
Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies
Association of Research Libraries
College Art Association of America
German Studies Association

Middle East Studies Association
Society for Ethnomusicology
Society of Architectural Historians
US Section for Scholars at Risk
Xavier University of Louisiana

STATEMENT ON BOMB THREATS AGAINST HBCUS

Approved by AHA Council, February 22, 2022

The approach of Black History Month this year ignited the simmering bigotry underlying much of American domestic terrorism, with bomb threats sent to at least 17 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) between January 30 and February 1. At last count the number had risen to at least 19 targeted institutions, with most of them recording multiple incidents. These crimes are part of a long history of attacks on institutions that serve the Black community—churches, schools, and civil rights organizations—as well as on the individual men, women, and children associated with these institutions. Violent intimidation directed toward Black Americans has a long and bloody history, and recent events suggest that these acts have spawned not only a hateful legacy, but also a current, ongoing threat to the physical safety and emotional well-being of all Black Americans. Whether or not such threats indicate the presence of explosives on campuses, they are intended to terrorize, intimidate, and harass students, faculty, and staff.

The institution of chattel bondage had as its foundation physical violence or the threat of it against enslaved women, men, and children. After the Civil War, whites (especially but not exclusively those in the South) sought to replace the legal system of slavery with a form of social and legal control that relied on terrorism directed toward Black voters, school children and teachers, political activists, and anyone whose success or even mere demeanor appeared to threaten the imperatives of white supremacy. White vigilantes burned churches and

schoolhouses in an effort to eliminate Black community centers and institutions of faith and formal education. Whites intended that lynching and the public burning and dismemberment of Black men and women and other horrific acts of violence should serve as a warning to all those who aspired to an education or sought to exercise their newly won rights as American citizens according to the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution. Well into the 20th century throughout the United States, white Americans rioted to protest Blacks' attempts to integrate whites-only neighborhoods and public spaces, and burned and shot at places where Black activists gathered.

Today, the domestic terrorists issuing bomb threats against HBCUs hide behind the cloak of anonymity to instill fear in everyone connected with these institutions. The threats disrupt classes, upend the rhythm of the semester, and wreak havoc with the routines of everyday college life. Directed at pillars of Black higher education, the threats strike at the heart not only of the aspirations of Black students and the work of Black faculty and staff, but also at the ideal of higher education itself. The AHA condemns this latest in a centuries-old series of assaults on Black Americans and on the educational institutions that are integral to a diverse, free, informed, and open society.

To date, the following organizations have signed onto this statement:

African American Intellectual History Society
 African Studies Association
 American Association of Geographers
 American Studies Association
 Association for Documentary Editing
 Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies
 Association for the Study of African American Life and History
 Association of College & Research Libraries
 Association of Research Libraries
 Association of University Presses
 American Academy of Religion
 American Anthropological Association
 American Philosophical Association
 American Society for Environmental History
 American Society for Theatre Research
 American Sociological Association
 Berkshire Conference of Women Historians
 College Art Association of America
 Dance Studies Association
 Forum on Early-Modern Empires and Global Interactions
 French Colonial Historical Society
 German Studies Association

Historical Society for Twentieth Century China
 Immigration and Ethnic History Society
 Middle East Studies Association
 National Council of Teachers of English
 National Council on Public History
 North American Conference on British Studies
 Organization of American Historians
 Rhetoric Society of America
 Sixteenth Century Society & Conference
 Society for Ethnomusicology
 Society for the Study of Early Modern Women and Gender
 Society of Architectural Historians
 Society of Biblical Literature
 Urban History Association
 Western History Association
 World History Association

URGENT APPEAL TO US PRESIDENT BIDEN, SECRETARY OF STATE BLINKEN AND SECRETARY OF HOMELAND SECURITY MAYORKAS, SEEKING IMMEDIATE ACTION TO ENABLE THE SAFE AND SPEEDY RELOCATION OF AFGHANISTAN'S STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS IN THE UNITED STATES

February 3, 2022

Dear President Biden, Secretary Blinken and Secretary Mayorkas,

As members of the United States higher education community, we urge you to take immediate action to enable the safe and speedy relocation of Afghanistan's students and scholars, many of whom represent the best and brightest of the country's young generation.

American universities, liberal arts colleges, and scholarly associations have mobilized to provide a number of fully-funded opportunities for these Afghans to pursue their education, research, and scholarship in the United States. Afghan students and scholars will be valuable contributors to our higher education sector in the U.S., bringing with them enormous intellectual resources and capacity for knowledge production and our institutions are eager to welcome them. The State Department has demonstrated great leadership working within the existing limits of visa law as part of its larger effort to attend to the displacement crisis that followed the Afghan government's collapse in August 2021. But these visa categories do not meet current needs.

Unfortunately, the existing admission pathways into the United States for students and scholars, namely F and J

nonimmigrant visas, are not available to many Afghans who face challenges overcoming the statutory bar to immigrant intent for such nonimmigrant visa categories. Specifically, many are not in a position to show proof of a residence abroad to which they intend to return. We urge that you create a dedicated visa category for Afghan scholars and students to be admitted to the United States. We also request that the intent-to-return and home residency requirements for existing visa categories be waived for the foreseeable future in the case of Afghan applicants. In addition to the Department of State adopting the most favorable interpretation of eligibility for J and F visas, we also request that the Department of Homeland Security expedite processing of humanitarian parole for Afghan scholars and students who can show full offers of study, research or work in the United States with a host university, college or association. These invitations demonstrate a time-sensitive national interest in hosting these individuals and further demonstrate that they are at no risk of becoming a public charge. If these specific suggestions are for any reason impractical it is imperative that you find other solutions to achieve the same objective.

We understand that the National Security Council is leading an interagency process to consider these and other options for these Afghan students and scholars to enroll in U.S. institutions. As the spring semester commences, we strongly encourage the White House to seize this moment and open a pathway for them to return to school and productive academic careers. Their achievements, many of them young women and members of minority groups, reflect their remarkable efforts and courage as well as the investment the American people made in Afghanistan's future. We must create space for them to continue their work and contribute to our public intellectual life in the process. Please help facilitate access to our colleges and universities for the many Afghan scholars and students who deserve our continued support and investment.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Middle East Studies Association
American Institute of Afghanistan Studies
Scholars at Risk

The following ACLS member organizations have cosigned this statement:

American Anthropological Association
American Historical Association
American Philosophical Association
American Political Science Association
American Society of Comparative Law
American Society of International Law
American Society of Overseas Research
American Society for Environmental History
American Society for Theatre Research
American Sociological Association
American Studies Association
Archaeological Institute of America
Association for Asian Studies
Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies
College Art Association
Dance Studies Association
German Studies Association
Law and Society Association
Medieval Academy of America Officers
Society of Architectural Historians
Society for Ethnomusicology
World History Association

The following universities, colleges, associations, centers, networks, and societies have also co-signed through their institutional leadership:

Esther D. Brimmer, Executive Director & CEO, NAFSA: Association of International Educators, DC
Executive Committee, The Central Eurasian Studies Society, Cambridge, MA
Isiah Crawford, President, University of Puget Sound, WA
Darla K. Deardorff, Executive Director, The Association for International Education Administrators
Deborah Dwork, Director, Center for the Study of the Holocaust, Genocide, and Crimes Against Humanity; The Graduate Center-CUNY, NY
Damian Fernandez, President, Eckerd College, FL
Becky Johnson, Interim President, Oregon State University, OR
Karin Karlekar Director, Free Expression at Risk Programs, PEN America, NY
Ellen Kennedy, Executive Director, World Without Genocide at Mitchell Hamline School of Law, Minnesota
Cynthia K. Larive, Chancellor, University of California, Santa Cruz, CA
Joanne Li, Chancellor, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Nebraska
Arien Mack, Director, New University in Exile Consortium, NY
Michelle Metro-Roland, President, West & Mid-Michigan Fulbright Association Chapter, Western Michigan University, Michigan
Kirk Peterson, President, Chowan University, NC
Rob Quinn, Founding Executive Director, Scholars at Risk Network
Julie Schmid, Executive Director, American Association of University Professors, DC
Kelly Shannon, Executive Director of the Peace,

Justice, & Human Rights Initiative at Florida Atlantic University, Florida
Jack Simony, Chairman, The Negotiation Institute, New York
Eric Spina, President, University of Dayton, Ohio
Gabriel Twose, Senior International Affairs Officer, American Psychological Association
John Ulrich, Provost and Senior VP for Academic Affairs, Mansfield University of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania
Council of American Overseas Research Centers
Brown University's Center for Middle East Studies
Gil Latz, Vice Provost for Global Strategies and International Affairs, Ohio State University, OH
The Association for Iranian Studies
Judith Pennywell, Director of the International Center, University of Michigan

The signatories in the attached appendix have also cosigned in their individual capacities. [not included here]

STATEMENT ON PALESTINIAN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

November 10, 2021

Academia for Equality

Announcement on the Israeli defense minister's designation of Palestinian civil society groups as terrorist organizations

Academia for Equality is an organization of about seven hundred members of the academic community, committed to promoting a just and democratic future. Academia for Equality expresses its unreserved support for the Palestinian human rights and civil society organizations targeted by the deplorable decision of Israeli Defense Minister, Benny Gantz, to declare them as terrorist organizations in order to ban their activities by decree.

Benny Gantz, as Chief of Staff of the Israeli Defense Forces, commanded operations in which Israeli military forces have killed hundreds of Palestinian civilians, among them five hundred children under the age of 15, during the campaign known as Defensive Edge. Now, as Defense Minister, he has declared 6 prominent human rights and civil society organizations as designated terrorist organizations. The work of human rights organizations targeted by Gantz's decree, such as Addameer and DCI-Palestine, is to defend the rights of detainees arrested by Israeli security forces and held for months without trial or due process, political activists persecuted for their beliefs or political organizing,

and to provide legal defense for children arrested in the small hours of the night. Other organizations targeted by Gantz's decree are the Women's Committees and Agricultural Committees – who struggle with the tasks of building Palestinian communities' social and economic infrastructure; and Al-Haq, which follows and monitors the occupation's atrocities, documents and disseminates information in Israel/Palestine and worldwide. Another targeted organization is the Bisan Research Center, dedicated to the development of an open, free and democratic Palestinian society, that has devoted decades of work to the improvement of devastated and impoverished communities by offering educational opportunities and capacities.

We at Academia for Equality, alongside our comrades from Scientists for Palestine, stood in solidarity with the Bisan Center and its director when he was persecuted and detained and when its offices were barraged by the Israeli military forces. We maintain our long-standing relations and connections with Addameer, particularly concerning the defense of Palestinian students, arrested because of their political and student activities. These six organizations constitute the civil spinal cord of the Palestinian society; a society trying to keep a proud posture of dignity and pride under the adverse condition of a brutal Israeli occupation.

Academia for Equality stands unequivocally behind and alongside the Palestinian civil society organizations. We call on the Israeli academic community to step out of its indifference, to sound the alarm bells and express active rejection and objection to the persecution of civil, human rights and community organizations. We call on the international academic community and demand their speedy intervention and to exert its pressure to cancel and recede these abject bans and declarations.

The following organizations have endorsed this statement:

Middle East Studies Association of North America



MESA BOARD STATEMENT ON HACKING AND CYBER SURVEILLANCE AS DIGITAL VIOLENCE

October 12, 2021

The Board of Directors of the Middle East Studies Association of North America is deeply concerned about the growing incidence of hacking of scholars of the Middle East and North Africa by sources that appear to be associated with governments of the region. These operations, which include surveillance and intelligence gathering, theft of identifying information and of research, have taken two forms. In one form, several scholars of Iran in the United Kingdom and North America have been targeted by Iranian hackers posing as a known scholar who invites the targeted scholar to participate in an online conference or a collaborative research project. The ensuing correspondence allows the hacker to compromise the targeted scholar with a malicious attachment or a link to a website designed to steal passwords and other personal information. Armed thus, the hacker can infiltrate the targeted scholar's inbox, download their files and conduct phishing attacks on targeted scholars as well as their contacts. In the other form, several scholars have been hacked through their cell phones by Middle Eastern governments – most notably, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates – allegedly using the Israeli company NSO Group's Pegasus software. Targeting the phone number itself and circumventing contact between the hackers and their "victim," the "zero-click" malware infects both iPhones and Android devices, and allows operators to surreptitiously capture locations, messages, photos, and video recordings via covertly activated microphones and cameras.

Digital attacks facilitate other forms of violence in the physical world. In the case of scholars residing abroad, hacking not only scapegoats their network of collaboration, but also risks extending the reach of state power to physically harm their families, friends, and colleagues in their home country. Because of this, we consider cyber hacking, spying, and surveillance as digital violence – increasingly systematized to target scholars, alongside other professionals with a public reach, such as journalists.

The potential harm from cyber spying to the targeted scholar and those with whom they communicate is serious and far-reaching. We encourage all scholars of the MENA to guard against the threat of hacking to the extent possible. They should exercise caution when opening and responding to emails, store data and communications on multiple devices, and use encrypted communication whenever available.

We also call for the immediate cessation of such deeply invasive, state-directed cyber surveillance attacks against members of the academic community. They pose a grave threat to scholarly inquiry, engagement and exchange, and the right to privacy, as well as to personal security. Digital violence is inimical to academic freedom and basic rights.

New for Autumn 2022



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The *Journal of Late Antique, Islamic and Byzantine Studies* is a hotspot for new approaches and methodologies intended to transform our understanding of broader Late Antique and Medieval phenomena by looking beyond single linguistic traditions or political boundaries.

Editors

- Dr Petros Bouras-Vallianatos
- Dr Marie Legendre
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All at University of Edinburgh

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2021 Awards Ceremony

Some of the best in Middle East studies were honored at the 2021 Awards Ceremony held December 1, 2021 virtually. MESA's awards program began in 1982 by honoring the best dissertations in the field. Since then it has grown into a diverse program that includes:

MESA Academic Freedom Award
MESA Mentoring Award
Undergraduate Education Award (presented odd-number years)
Albert Hourani Book Award
Nikki Keddie Book Award
Fatema Mernissi Book Award
Roger Owen Book Award (presented odd-number years)
Malcolm H. Kerr Dissertation Award in the Humanities
Malcolm H. Kerr Dissertation Award in the Social Sciences
MESA Graduate Student Paper Prize

MESA thanks the following review committees

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2021 Graduate Student Paper Prize Committee

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Viviane Saglier (McGill University)

The chair of each committee is listed first.

2021 MESA Mentoring Award

The MESA Mentoring Award was established in 1995 and first given at MESA's 1996 annual meeting. The award recognizes exceptional contributions retired faculty have made to the education and training of others.

This year's mentoring award is given to two recipients.



Carter V. Findley, Ohio State University

Carter V. Findley is recognized for his extraordinary contributions to the training and support of others in Middle East studies.

During his 44-year career at Ohio State University, Dr. Findley produced an extensive body of scholarship that established his reputation as a leading authority of Ottoman and Turkish history. During that time, he also helped expand the university's course offerings in Islamic history and World History and was actively engaged in fund-raising in support of Ottoman and Turkish Studies at Ohio State University, including fellowships that support graduate students. Drawn by Dr. Findley's scholarship and advocacy of Ottoman and Turkish studies at Ohio State University, graduate students from across Turkey and the United States sought his mentorship as they embarked on their doctoral studies. His students have launched successful careers in and outside of academia. Many of Dr. Findley's former students contribute to Middle East Studies as professors and fellows across Turkey and the United States and recall his careful mentorship, noting Dr. Findley's tireless efforts to help them secure opportunities for funding and for positions. One former student highlighted Dr. Findley's continued mentorship and enthusiasm for her scholarship post-graduation, highlighting his "intellectual generosity," "unconditional support," and meticulous reading of her dissertation.

Another noted that his mentorship helped her "develop into a much more responsible and conscientious scholar" than she "probably would have become otherwise."

A third noted that it was his "sincere belief in my potential as a scholar" as a prospective doctoral student that brought him to study with Dr. Findley: "Enrolling at Ohio State University as a first-generation student of color from a low-income immigrant family, it was important for me to find a mentor who sincerely believed in my potential and would be invested in my long-term success. Like all excellent mentors, Dr. Findley helped me identify my strengths when all I could see were my weaknesses. Dr. Findley believed in my potential so much that he provided me with the space to develop my own identity as a scholar and to pursue my own research interests in Middle East environmental history, even though these interests did not align perfectly with his area of expertise."

Finally a fourth summarized Dr. Findley's ability to support and to bring out the very best in his students: "He consistently pushed me to create the best work I could produce while also teaching me the importance of being diligent and rigorous in my writing. As a graduate student, Prof. Findley was always there for me when I needed him, whether it was to read and give feedback on something I wrote or to write a letter of recommendation. From the first time I met him, he continued to believe in me, even at points when I had doubts about myself."

It is an honor to recognize Carter V. Findley — a scholar of Ottoman and Turkish history as well as an outstanding mentor.



Susan Gilson Miller, University of California, Davis

In recognition of her exceptional mentorship to others in the field of Middle East studies, Susan Gilson Miller is also a recipient of the 2021 Mentoring Award. During her more than three decades of teaching at Harvard, UC Davis, Brandeis and Wellesley, she mentored countless women and men, a significant number of whom went on to have successful academic careers in the fields of Middle East and North African studies. Dr. Miller's dedication to her students has always been exceptional and extended beyond the confines of the classroom.

One former student noted: "Susan is exceptional for her commitment to her students. But what makes her extraordinary as a mentor [...] is her humanity and empathy. [...] She cared about her students as people and human beings. She understood the pressures and challenges that we faced. She balanced advice about research and publishing with the realities of the job market and the tenure track. She was always open and honest, treating me as a peer. [...] I would not be the scholar I am today without Susan. But I learned how to be a mentor to my students from Susan. She has given herself consistently and unselfishly to her students—and subsequently, the field of Middle Eastern Studies—throughout her long and distinguished career. "

Another concluded: "I remain in awe not only of the vast body of knowledge she commands, but also, and perhaps especially, of her willingness and ability to transmit it to others."

A third former student noted: "When I think about what kind of mentor Dr. Miller has been to me [...] it is the combination of rigor and generosity that comes to mind. From the first time I met her until today, Dr. Miller has always been exceptionally unconditional in her willingness to help shape my growth as a scholar. [...] I also cannot recall a time when Dr. Miller gave me anything but her full attention and her honest opinion. She is the kind of mentor I can count on to hold me to the highest professional and scholarly standards, while also knowing that she would do anything in her power to further my success. [...] Dr. Miller is astounding as a mentor and a scholar in part because she is so very humble about this role. There is not a single ounce of self-interest in her mentoring relationships. [...] Dr. Miller does not mentor junior scholars because she wants to augment her reputation or put her stamp on the field; she does so because she is deeply passionate about the study of North African history, and because she understands the value of passing along the kind of wisdom and knowledge she has accrued to the next generation. [...] this is the selflessness I have seen her demonstrate to so many other young scholars at institutions all over the country."

A fourth similarly recalled how professional generous Dr. Miller was in taking on a novice, not only introducing her to circles of contacts in Morocco and France, but also teaching her how to write well like a historian: "And perhaps most important, she was always there to offer encouragement, concern, support, and kind words even when the challenges of getting through the PhD and tenure were most difficult."

It is an honor to recognize Susan Gilson Miller, who has constantly encouraged the finest of Middle East studies scholarship by training academics as colleagues at every stage of her career.

2021 Academic Freedom Award

The MESA Academic Freedom Award was established in 2001. It is presented on appropriate occasions in recognition of sustained contributions in support of academic freedom in the Middle East and North Africa, and/or in North America.

Boğaziçi University Faculty, Students, and Alumni

It is an honor to announce that MESA's Academic Freedom Award for 2021 goes to the faculty, students, and alumni of Bogaziçi University.

On January 1, 2021, Turkish President Erdogan appointed as the new rector of Bogaziçi University Dr. Melih Bulu, a former parliamentary candidate from the President's political party, the AKP and who was widely regarded as unqualified for the position. Immediately, protests began in campus as faculty members joined student resistance. Daily, they stood with their backs to the rectorate to protest Bulu's appointment as being both in contravention of long-standing norms of faculty governance and in violation of the academic and ethical standards expected of a candidate appointed to such an important post.

Bulu then implemented a series of policies intended to crush opposition to his appointment. He introduced the police onto the campus, using them to brutalize student protesters and literally to shackle the University gates to prevent students from entering. He also undemocratically appointed administrators of his own, undermined the power of the faculty senate, appointed an artificial intelligence professor to run the Institute of Social Sciences, shut down LGBTQI+ Student club, accused the club members of terrorism, and terminated the contract of a part-time faculty member who supported the students in this process. The government then also cut the financial aid to those students who participated in these peaceful protests.

In light of the continuing months of faculty and student resistance, Erdogan rescinded the nomination of Bulu, but again this decision was made outside the realms of faculty governance, as was the appointment of his replacement, Vice-Rector Naci Inci. Inci is no more acceptable to the university community than was Bulu. In fact, based on his performance as vice-rector, in a vote on potential rector candidates, Naci Inci received an overwhelming 95% no confidence from faculty members. Indeed, Inci's performance has shown that he is no different than Bulu in applying the government's plans to undermine Bogaziçi's academic freedom and institutional autonomy. Among his actions have been the arbitrary firing of a full-time faculty member based on false accusations, the blatant violation of university senate and executive procedures, refusing to appoint elected deans and institute chairs instead appointing ineligible outside faculty members to fill these positions, criminalizing protesting students, and fencing off parts of the campus for purported security reasons. In short, since his appointment as rector on August 21, 2021, Inci has demonstrated that he has no qualms about lowering academic and administrative standards to ensure politically motivated appointments, securitizing the campus through an extensive police presence and surveillance, and manipulating existing laws to his own advantage. Hence the resistance of the Bogaziçi community—in the form of lawsuits, efforts to expose unlawful or irregular practices to media along with peaceful protests—continues.

In 2021, CAF's MENA wing wrote four letters regarding these developments at Bogaziçi: the MESA Board also issued a statement in solidarity with the protests at Bogaziçi University.

In highlighting the courageous resistance of the students and faculty at Bogaziçi, it is our intent that this award send a strong message of solidarity and of support to them as they peacefully protest against the violations of academic norms and academic freedom. Bogaziçi is a privileged institution; its resistance has also been singular in Turkey's academic and political landscape.

The appointments of Melih Bulu and Naci Inci must be seen as part of a larger, concerted effort by the government to end any independence of one of the last educational institutions in Turkey with a reputation for academic excellence—after years of systematic targeting of other educational institutions, faculty and students in the country.

Therefore this award is also intended to serve as a statement of broader support and solidarity to all those in the educational sector across Turkey who have been targeted by the authoritarian policies of Erdogan and his government.



2021 Undergraduate Education Award

The MESA Undergraduate Education Award was established in 2012. The award recognizes outstanding scholarship on teaching or other material contributions to undergraduate education in Middle East studies. The inaugural award was given at the 2013 annual meeting in New Orleans.



Winner

Sarah Shields, Professor of History, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

The Middle East Studies Association Undergraduate Committee is pleased to award the 2021 MESA Undergraduate Education Award to Dr. Sarah Shields of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for her career-long dedication to teaching about the Middle East. Over several decades, Dr. Shields has employed innovative and interactive approaches to student-centered teaching about the region. Her robust teaching portfolio includes courses that introduce students to the Middle East from a variety of topical, theoretical, and regional perspectives. She has modeled the use of digital tools and platforms in promoting undergraduate student research about the Middle East. Her publications, weblogs, and presentations have specifically addressed issues, problems, and opportunities in undergraduate teaching about the Middle East. As a wide-ranging public educator, Dr. Shields has spoken to community college students, trained K-12 teachers, organized workshops on teaching about the Middle East, addressed community groups, and taught in international programs. Dr. Shields has demonstrated precisely what this award is meant to recognize: “outstanding scholarship on teaching or other material contributions to undergraduate education in Middle East Studies.



Honorable Mention

Hina Azam, Associate Professor of Islamic Studies, University of Texas at Austin

The Middle East Studies Association Undergraduate Committee awards an Honorable Mention for the 2021 MESA Undergraduate Education Award to Dr. Hina Azam of the University of Texas-Austin for her Gateway to the Middle East course. In this course, the students learn about the peoples of the Middle East and the region’s geography. Utilizing material at the intersection of culture and geography, the learning focuses on the region’s ancient civilizations, the rich diversity of ethnic and religious groups in the region, the varied languages of the area, as well as modern-day issues of politics and culture. Dr. Azam also teaches courses on Middle East Religions, which include multiple religious geography projects, a course on Engaging the Middle East, and has developed a graduate workshop on Muslim-Inclusive Pedagogy for college instructors. The committee awards this Honorable Mention to Dr. Azam in recognition of the unique subject matter of the course, the multiplicity of perspectives that it offers, which engage with issues from different disciplines, and the impact on student learning.

2021 Albert Hourani Book Award

The Albert Hourani Book Award was established in 1991 to recognize outstanding publishing in Middle East studies. The award was named for Albert Hourani to recognize his long and distinguished career as teacher and mentor. The Albert Hourani Book Award recognizes a work that exemplifies scholarly excellence as well as clarity of presentation, in the tradition of Albert Hourani.

Winner

Imperial Mecca: Ottoman Arabia and the Indian Ocean Hajj

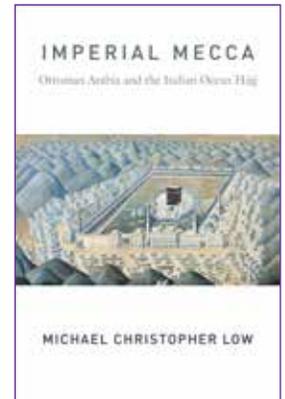
Columbia University Press



Michael Christopher Low, Iowa State University

Michael Christopher Low's study of late nineteenth-century Mecca is a fascinating account of the annual Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca amid the transformations wrought by Ottoman modernity and European colonial ambitions. Drawing on a wide range of archives in Europe, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia, Low delves into bureaucratic practices, surveillance, disease control, and global transportation in rich and engaging detail. The book manages to be both a local history of Mecca and a global history that foregrounds non-Western

institutions and actors. This is a page-turner that weaves together several fields of modern history, particularly practices of state formation and the interaction between Western and non-Western forms of empire.



Honorable Mention

Polymaths of Islam: Power and Networks of Knowledge in Central Asia

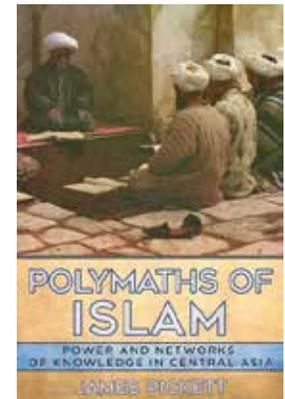
Cornell University Press



James Pickett, University of Pittsburgh

All intellectual histories of early Islam feature prominently Central Asian urban centers such as Bukhara. At some point, however, the region disappears from the overall narrative. Pickett's book is a remarkable study of Central Asian Islamic scholarship in the nineteenth century, after the region's entrance into Russia's sphere of influence but before the radical dislocations caused by Soviet rule. The book draws on Russian-language secondary scholarship and primary sources in various languages, including many obscure ones;

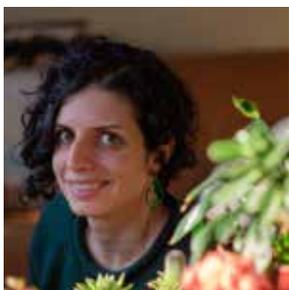
almost every page yields new revelations. Pickett elevates Central Asia of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to its rightful place as a significant part of the Persianate world of the time (besides Iran and India). But the book also serves as an epitaph to a lost world that was eradicated in the Soviet era.



Honorable Mention

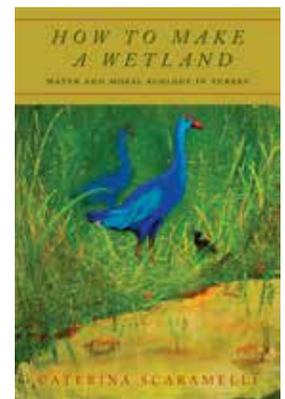
How to Make a Wetland: Water and Moral Ecology in Turkey

Stanford University Press



Caterina Scaramelli, Boston University

Through insightful analysis of the processes and effects of environmental transformations, this fascinating and original ethnography shows how the work of creating wetlands is central to moral ecological claims made by the author's diverse interlocutors (farmers, bureaucrats, scientists, activists, developers, etc.) in two delta regions of Turkey. Stylistically, the book is almost lyrical, as the ebbs and flows of water (and the stickiness of mud) are used as a metaphor for the larger project making this a most engaging read.



2021 Nikki Keddie Book Award

The Nikki Keddie Book Award was established in 2017 to recognize outstanding scholarly work in the area of religion, revolution, and/or society. The annual award was named for Nikki Keddie to recognize her long and distinguished career as a scholar and teacher.

Winner

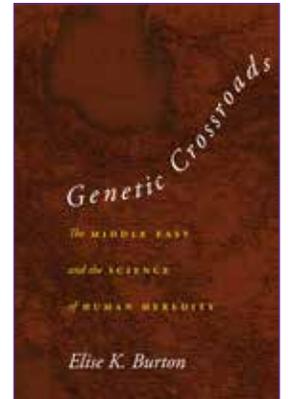
Genetic Crossroads: The Middle East and the Science of Human Heredity

Stanford University Press



Elise K. Burton, University of Toronto

Genetic Crossroads exposes how technical and scientific projects about human ethnicity underpinned nationalist ideologies across the twentieth century. Burton introduces a novel angle to established debates, showing how scientific researchers nourished racial mythologies, and how those mythologies drove the researchers themselves. She draws disparate literatures into a single intervention, extending isolated national stories through her integrative original research. The book is remarkable for its breadth of coverage in time, space, and language; every reader will find something that engages their area of curiosity or expertise.



Honorable Mention

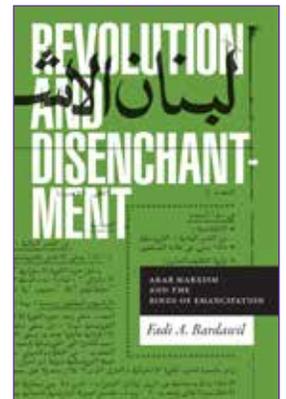
Revolution and Disenchantment: Arab Marxism and the Bonds of Emancipation

Duke University Press

Fadi A. Bardawil, Duke University



Bardawil uses lively close reading of a small run 1960s Lebanese leftist journal and interviews with activists and intellectuals to produce a novel model of social and political implication and retreat. His model, which can be tested in other contexts, is embedded in a fairly fierce argument about methodology in intellectual history. Bardawil engages meaningfully with some giants of the field in unexpected ways. This vivid book, stimulating in intellectual style and argumentation, is bound to produce debate and reaction. His book makes for exciting and energetic reading, recalling the scholarship of Nikki Keddie.



Honorable Mention

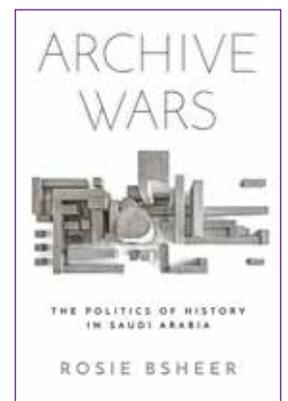
Archive Wars: The Politics of History in Saudi Arabia

Stanford University Press

Rosie Bsheer, Harvard University



This book substantially reworks existing knowledge of Saudi Arabia—the making of the state, the legitimization of its power, and the centrality of diverse history-making projects in these projects. Drawing on rich ethnographic and archival work, the author convincingly argues that the ruling regime has been engaged in a project of re-writing Saudi history since the 1990s. Central to these history-making projects has been the “archive wars” and efforts to centralize archival sources, as well as re-making the built environment through urban planning and development. Sophisticated and engaging and politically bold.



2021 Fatema Mernissi Book Award

The Fatema Mernissi Book Award was established in 2017 to recognize outstanding scholarship in studies of gender, sexuality, and women's lived experience. The annual award was named for Fatema Mernissi to recognize her long and distinguished career as a scholar and as a public intellectual.

Winner

Say What Your Longing Heart Desires: Women, Prayer, and Poetry in Iran

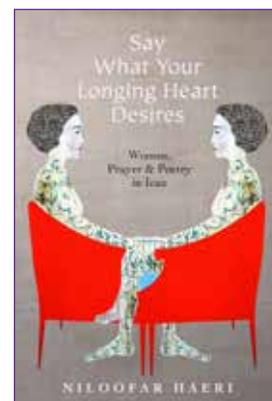
Stanford University Press



Niloofer Haeri, Johns Hopkins University

The title is taken from a well-known story in which Moses tells a shepherd not to worry about the “manners and rules” of religion but rather to “say what your longing heart desires.” Using beautiful, limpid prose, Haeri weaves together poetry, religion, and ethnography to show how a group of middle-class, educated Iranian women counter the state's version of Islam. They regularly revisit and reconsider Islamic theology by drawing on the vast body of mystic poetry that is so central to Iranian culture. In the process, Haeri blurs

lines thrown up between the secular and the religious in recent scholarship and invites us to consider the deeper, political, and public meaning of ritualistic religious practices.



Honorable Mention

The Colonizing Self: Or, Home and Homelessness in Israel/Palestine

Duke University Press



Hagar Kotef, SOAS, University of London

Kotef's brutally challenging intervention in the study of Israel/Palestine offers a gripping application of ideas from the intimate sphere—home, settlement, desire—to the problems of settler colonialism. She draws together startlingly eclectic source material, both in ethnography and in theory. The author's vivid personal voice universalizes certain dilemmas of the Israeli settler and demands that the non-Israeli reader account for his or her own positionality, dissolving a pretense of detached observation that readers might not

even know they hold. It is difficult to imagine anyone reading this book and being unchanged by the experience.



Honorable Mention

Politics of Rightful Killing: Civil Society, Gender, and Sexuality in Weblogistan

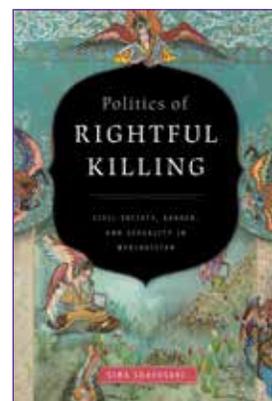
Duke University Press



Sima Shakhsari, University of Minnesota

In this innovative and exciting book, Shakhsari draws on online and offline ethnography to examine and complicate our understanding of Weblogistan, the term they use to refer both to the online world of Persian-language blogging and the “real” worlds the diaspora bloggers inhabit. Shakhsari shows both how Western powers often infiltrate Weblogistan to promote oppositional voices that push for “regime change”, and how the bloggers themselves often privilege specific ideas about gender and sexuality and about the relationship between

these forms of gender and sexuality and Iranian politics and activism. The book juxtaposes the Western celebration of anti-regime bloggers with the relentless and brutal sanctions imposed on the Iranian population that gives rise to the notion of “rightful killing.”



2021 Roger Owen Book Award

The biennial Roger Owen Book Award honors the best book in economics, economic history, or the political economy of the Middle East and North Africa in the modern period (roughly 1750 to the present). The prize recognizes works that demonstrate substantive understanding of the historical, social and political implications of economic factors, theoretical sophistication and interpretive elegance.

Winner

Cleft Capitalism: The Social Origins of Failed Market Making in Egypt

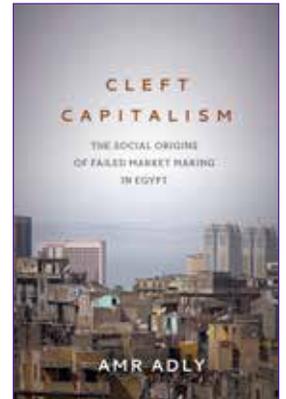
Stanford University Press



Amr Adly, American University in Cairo

In his book, Adly asks why market-based economic strategies have failed in Egypt. His novel argument diverges from dominant political economy accounts, which focus on corruption and crony capitalism or the lack of formal property rights and the rule of law. For Adly, the answer lies in the “missing middle” of small and medium enterprises, which have served an important role in capitalist development by scaling up to become important job creators in more successful developing economies, such as in South Korea. Adly

traces the roots of the problem to historically specific institutional arrangements that emerged earlier in the 20th century and during the period of state-led development under Nasser and were consolidated under Sadat and Mubarak’s tenures. Adly’s book is grounded on impressive qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis and makes important contributions to the study of failed development in Egypt, with comparative implications for other developing countries in and beyond the Middle East and North Africa.



Honorable Mention

Egypt’s Occupation: Colonial Economism and the Crises of Capitalism

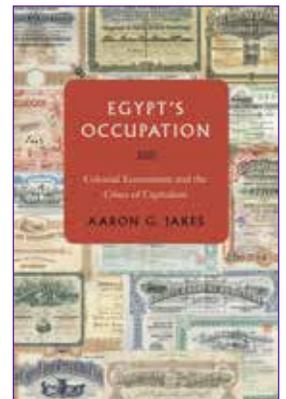
Stanford University Press



Aaron Jakes, The New School

Jakes’ powerful merging of economic and intellectual history advances the U.S.-dominated field of “histories of capitalism” and provides a detailed account of the impact of colonialism on economic underdevelopment through an authoritative study of the British occupation of Egypt. The book adds important new dimensions to this crowded field of scholarship by relying on novel Egyptian archival and press sources to approach the subject through the eyes of the Egyptian population. Jakes argues that the British aimed

to improve the fortunes of the ordinary peasant farmer in order to cement their control over Egypt. In a strategy he terms “economism,” Jakes traces how the British promoted light taxation and increased access to irrigation for cotton cultivation while expressly avoiding efforts to reform the country in the European model, a choice they justified on culturalist grounds. In the end, these policies worsened the fortunes of the fellahin and enhanced the position of large landholders, leaving Egypt in far worse shape than when they originally took over.



2021 Malcolm H. Kerr Dissertation Awards

The MESA Dissertation Awards were established in 1982 to recognize exceptional achievement in research and writing for/of dissertations in Middle East studies. In 1984 the award was named for Malcolm H. Kerr to honor his significant contributions to Middle East studies. Awards are given in two categories: Social Sciences and Humanities.

Humanities Winner

Conversion of the Landscape: Environment and Religious Politics in an Early Modern Ottoman Town

Ana Sekulić, Princeton University, Department of History

Supervised by Professor Molly Greene



Ana Sekulić's imaginative and sophisticated exploration of Muslim-Christian interactions in the early modern Ottoman Balkans takes readers from monasteries to mines to mountaintops, creating a fresh approach to scholarly storytelling and opening the environment to new forms of inquiry. The Balkan landscape, she argues, was no passive product of climate, geography or imperial tax regimes, but an active workshop of cultural and religious imaginaries between the human and non-human; here trees too must be recognized as historical actors. Theoretically and philologically rigorous, Ana Sekulić's beautifully written work represents a profound contribution to the histories of early modern cosmologies, conversion, and community formation.

Social Sciences Winner

Brokers of Order: How Money Moves in Wartime Syria

Gözde Güran, Princeton University, Department of Sociology

Supervised by Professor Viviana A. Zelizer



The winner for the Social Sciences category is Gözde Güran, whose highly original dissertation traces the complex hawala system of informal money transfer in light of the 2011 Syrian civil war and the ensuing refugee crisis. *Brokers of Order* is empirically rich, theoretically incisive, and beautifully written. Drawing on mixed methods research in both Turkey and Lebanon, Güran carefully delineates how various forms of trust ties - both those pre-existing the war and those formed in its wake - enable the ongoing exchange of money across borders. In doing so, this work provides a unique vantage point into how informal economic transactions are sustained in times of political upheaval, speaking to scholars of the Middle East and beyond.

Social Sciences Honorable Mention

The Making of a Migrant Working Class: Contesting Citizenship in Kuwait and the Persian Gulf, 1925-1975

Alex Boodrookas, New York University, Departments of History and Middle Eastern & Islamic Studies

Supervised by Professors Arang Keshavarzian and Zachary Lockman



The committee selected Alex Boodrookas' dissertation for Honorable Mention for its meticulous historical excavation, well-crafted and well-supported argument, and theoretical sophistication. Boodrookas' work complicates existing accounts of the top-down formation of citizenship in the Gulf, arguing that emerged through various social, political, and economics contestations in the mid-twentieth century. Boodrookas' carefully demonstrates how shifting patterns of labor migration and activism in the Gulf resulted both in the nationalization of oil in Kuwait but also the formation of exclusionary modes of citizenship. This work represents an invaluable addition not just to Gulf studies, but also to the literature on nationality and citizenship, labor migration and activism, and post-colonial state formation.

2021 Graduate Student Paper Prize

The MESA Graduate Student Paper Prize was established in 2004 and first given in 2005. The purpose of the award is to recognize the work of young scholars. The award is given to the paper that shows the best control of the subject matter and adept methodology, good use of sources and evidence, coherence and elegance of argument and good writing.

Winner

Re-thinking female javānmardī: Neẓāmī's Haft Paykar as a 'Mirror for Princesses'



Amanda Caterina Leong, University of California Merced, Interdisciplinary Humanities

An imaginative and original argument, this paper employs complex theoretical frameworks and rigorous research in a convincing exercise of genre and gender-bending in pre-modern Persianate. Through a playful textual analysis, this paper shows the potential for gender studies to expand our conception of and theoretical approach to pre-modern times.

Honorable Mention

Entertaining Audiences, Entertaining desires: Intersectarian Love and Queer performance in Popular Arabic Music



Tariq Adely, George Washington University, Department of Anthropology

An impressive feminist and queer framing of music, poetry, and popular culture, this beautifully written paper proposes a transnational study of Arabic music through intertextuality.

2022 MESA Awards Call for Nominations

See our full list of awards and procedures on our website: <https://mesana.org/awards>

Jere L. Bacharach Service Award June 1, 2022

This award honors extraordinary service to MESA or the field. The winner receives \$1000.

MESA Mentoring Award June 1, 2022

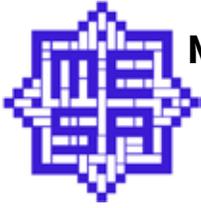
This award honors contributions of a retired individual as mentor/teacher.

Malcolm H. Kerr Dissertation Awards July 1, 2022

For students completing their dissertations between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022, nominations should be from the author's sponsor or advisor. Winners in each category - Humanities and Social Sciences - receive \$1000.

Graduate Student Paper Prize August 15, 2022

For graduate students whose research papers on any aspect of post 600 CE Middle East studies. The author of the winning paper receives \$250 and the paper will be submitted for publication in the *Review of Middle East Studies*. The winner receives \$250.



Middle East Studies Association

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Washington, DC 20052 (USA)



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- Developing study abroad/exchange partnerships
- Community engagement

Application for academic year 2023-2024 will close on June 1, 2022 at 5:00pm EDT

For questions, contact the S-I-R Team at: sir@iie.org

Note the competition deadline is earlier than prior rounds

