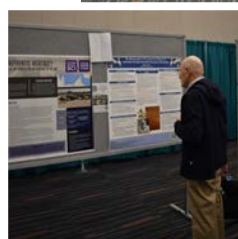


# Issues in Middle East Studies

Biannual Newsletter of the Middle East Studies Association

# IMES

Fall 2023 Vol. 45, Issue 2



**MESA 2023**  
Montréal, Québec, Canada  
November 2-5, 2023



MESA 2023 featured over 350 panels, roundtables, special sessions, and workshops.



A reminder to renew your 2024 MESA membership

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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 nearly 2,800

and now serves as an umbrella organization for over 50 institutional members and about 40 affiliated organizations. The association is a constituent society of the American Council of Learned Societies, the National Council of Area Studies Associations, and a member of the National Humanities Alliance.

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

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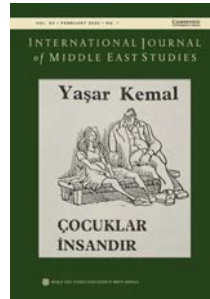
*Issues in Middle East Studies* is the biannual newsletter (spring, fall) of the Middle East Studies Association of North America, Inc. and is a benefit of membership. Hard copies are available to members upon request; postage will be collected for those residing outside the United States.

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Login to your myMESA account, select the MESA Publications button to access PDF versions of *IMES* and links to searchable issues of *IJMES* and *RoMES*.

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#### 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

#### Tentative Upcoming Deadlines:

April 10, 2024 for Spring 2024 issue

November 15, 2024 for Fall 2024 issue



# From the President

Eve Troutt Powell | University of Pennsylvania

Adapted from Presidential Address delivered on November 3, 2023



The Hamas attacks of October 7th have taken my university, and all of us, to a new level of horror, anger, and sorrow. The murders of Israeli civilians, the taking of hostages, the stunning effectiveness of Hamas' preparation, surprised a country that for months now had been protesting the mafia-like anti-democratic brutality of Netanyahu's government. These attacks surprised a country that chanted for democracy for Jews, but who said far too little about how democracy looks from refugee camps in Gaza, or from Jenin, or Umm al-Fahim, or the Palestinian diaspora. In this room, we all know someone who has been personally affected by this tragic violence.

But it was not the university president or board of trustees or wealthy donors — it was the Arab students, the Muslim community, the Palestinian members of our school, who knew 20th and 21st century history well enough to brace for an Israeli onslaught, then slaughter, of the people of Gaza.

Of course, it came, as reliably as prophets preach revenge in the Old Testament, and it has now continued for over 3 weeks. Yes, 1,400 Israelis have been killed, and these civilians many of them children, bear no blame. And now over 8,000 Palestinians have been bombed, shot like fish in a barrel, with human rights agencies saying that this number includes so many children it outweighs the number of children killed all year in other countries around the world (I don't know if this number includes children killed in the civil war in Sudan, or in Artsakh, or in Syria — my brain simply shuts down at the idea of thousands of children being killed).

At my university, we are turning inward. Colleagues are afraid to be honest with each other. It is so hard to speak when fearing that our administration may not find the moral strength to fund or otherwise support our expertise, and our love, for the Middle East. I do not come from the region, but going back and forth, living there when I can for over 40 years, making sure my sons know how to get around Cairo as well as they do Philadelphia, gave me love — taught me how to be an adult, how to think against what I had been taught for so long, how to explore the world from so many angles. None of that seems to be considered important now, at my home university.



Or in my home country of the United States. It has gotten harder to avoid the McCarthyism that is quickly being staged. It looks like CNN and the *New York*

*Times*, to name but a few, have gone along with Bibi Netanyahu's statements that to call for a ceasefire is antisemitic or to raise questions about the slaughter of Gazans is antisemitic.



This is why I am so grateful for MESA. The Middle East Studies Association has for many years (truly, many years — I attended my first meeting in Boston in 1986!) been my intellectual home; a place where I could learn, a group of colleagues with whom to talk, an intellectual association where argument was prized.

MESA has demonstrated and continues to demonstrate an ongoing commitment to Palestinian issues, to the Palestinians' lives and history. Even when others tried to erase them from the region under the slogan of peace without the Palestinians, even when Netanyahu recently said at the UN that the Palestinians cannot veto the Abraham Accords (with the implied threat

that if the Palestinians don't want to join us they will be out of history), MESA stuck to its commitment within the framework of the membership's endorsement of BDS.

These recent developments hopefully will put the Palestinian cause back at the table. I hope any new settlement will understand that Palestinians must be at the center of a new order, which again reflects MESA's persistent efforts. This is my hope.

This persistence should also keep us focused on areas in our region that have literally been brought to the ground by imperialism and the greed of capitalist development. Sudan would not be in its current and horrible position if it was not for the neo-imperialism of countries in the Gulf, and the negligent economic policies of Great Britain and the United States. This we must mourn as well.

I had planned my presidential address to be about Egypt, where the government of Abd al-Fatah al-Sisi has literally ripped thousands of tombs out of the earth, crushing the histories of generations of Egyptians as the government destroys the City of the Dead for highways to a new capital that may itself be dead on arrival.

I was going to speak about growing older, as a historian, when the cities I love are waning and their archives become unreachable, closed off, or rendered too political to enter. I was going to share how vulnerable it feels to grow older in a place, only to see the history of that place destroyed.



But the moment is not right for that. As scholars, this new war demands that we, together as MESA members, bear witness in any and every way we can, to the Israeli attempt to destroy not just a place but a people.

We must remind universities why they exist — to teach, to argue, to disagree and yet, to reveal as much knowledge as is humanly possible.

Thank you.

# Secretariat News

## From the Executive Director

**Jeffrey D. Reger | Executive Director**



As 2023 concludes, I am so grateful for MESA. By MESA, I mean all of its valances. MESA is a metonym for our annual meeting, but MESA is also its members, its Board of Directors, its many service committees, and the staff of the Secretariat — in particular, the stalwart Sara Palmer.

Regional and world events continue to challenge us collectively and individually. We began the year with the incredibly destructive earthquakes in Syria and Turkey. The people of Khartoum and Sudan have continued to endure civil war. Since October 7, MESA has engaged with the direct and indirect consequences of the Gaza war. We have responded to the call of our members to advocate robustly for the academic freedom and rights of all of our colleagues and counterparts. MESA's Board of Directors and Committee on Academic Freedom have

been extraordinarily active since the Annual Meeting concluded.

Earlier this year, we also welcomed two new staff members to the Secretariat, after Sophia Angeletti decided to pursue graduate studies at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies, and Kat Teghizadeh ultimately decided not to return to work after giving birth to her third child in two years. We wish them both the very best.

### **Calliandra Hermanson**

In February, we welcomed Calliandra Hermanson full time as MESA's Programs Associate after she had covered for Kat Teghizadeh's maternity leave over the winter. Hermanson has been a familiar face for over a decade, particularly at the MESA Annual Meeting Help Desk. Hermanson graduated from the University of Arizona with a dual bachelor's degree in anthropology and studio art. She holds an MFA in studio art from the University of New Mexico, where she was also an adjunct professor of art practices. Hermanson has been essential to the planning and organization of the Annual Meeting, from the Book Exhibit to the Awards, as well as staffing the Committee on Academic Freedom.



### **Emily TahaBurt**

In July, Emily TahaBurt joined us as MESA's Meetings Assistant, just in time for the run up to the especially complicated Montréal meeting. TahaBurt comes to MESA from her previous role as a public librarian in Anne Arundel County, Maryland. She is a graduate of Macalester College in Minnesota with a degree in international studies and a focus on Arabic. TahaBurt is also a heritage speaker of Egyptian Arabic and has spent extensive time in a variety of countries in the Arab world. She has been deftly handling MESA's web postings and social media, and was a great help in corralling the crush of last-minute participation changes at the Annual Meeting.



Next year, we look forward to hosting our first virtual meeting since the emergency pivots of 2020 and 2021, after meeting back in person for two years now. We plan to have a total of 10 time slots across the five weekdays of November 11-15, accommodating the West Coast to the SWANA region in terms of time zones. We will again be offering registration discounts for those who need it, but we deeply appreciate all of our members who are able to register at the regular rate to subsidize the participation of fellow MESA members.

We will also be holding one day of in-person events on Saturday November 16, for those who can readily join us here in Washington DC (while still minimizing carbon emissions and other travel costs as much as possible). We are also open to the idea of parallel satellite gatherings, if local MESA community members would like to convene at the same time.

We have heard from many MESA members who are passionate about the meeting format — both those who are only interested in meeting virtually, and those who only want to meet in person. I will just add here that this “one virtual meeting in three format” (so two meetings in person, then one meeting online) is becoming increasingly popular among our peer academic associations. Our common objective is that this compromise can serve as many of our members in turn as possible, and we will continue to measure the impact and evaluate on the basis of participation in the meeting events.

Thank you all sincerely for your continued membership in our association.



## REMINDER WHEN RENEWING YOUR 2024 MEMBERSHIP

### Provide key demographic information for statistical and planning purposes

To understand and best serve our membership, MESA's Board of Directors and relevant board-constituted committees would like to have the most up-to-date demographic data. We have options for professional positions and titles, nonbinary gender options, as well as self-identification by ethnicity.

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

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

Thank you for allowing us to capture a current picture of the state of the field (membership by discipline, area of focus, and so forth), which requires up-to-date data in myMESA. Simply provide any changes to your contact information, research interests, and other details when logged into myMESA.

### Select the delivery options for *IJMES* and *IMES*

Please be reminded to select the delivery method — digital only or digital and print — for both the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* and *Issues in Middle East Studies*. The default selection is digital. If you have already renewed, you can view your delivery method in myMESA under “My Membership” (in the Membership tab).



# Membership Updates

## Members Meeting held November 4, 2023 in Montréal, Canada

Both of the following nonbinding motions were passed unanimously to represent the opinion of the members present at the 2023 Members Meeting held November 4, 2023, in Montréal, Québec, Canada.

### SENSE OF THE MEETING RESOLUTION

#### **Resolution in Support of the Palestinian People**

Whereas, The Palestinian people in Gaza have been subjected to widescale and indiscriminate bombardment and assault for the past 29 days;

Whereas Israeli government leaders have expressed genocidal intent in Gaza and have engaged in direct and public incitement to commit genocide;

Whereas, as of November 4, 2023, over 10,000 Palestinians have been killed (including nearly 4,000 children) and over 25,000 have been injured by Israeli attacks;

Whereas the Israeli bombardment of Gaza has destroyed over 185 educational facilities, including dozens of UNRWA schools, the three major universities in Gaza: the Islamic University, Al-Azhar University, and Al-Aqsa University;

Whereas more than 80 university faculty and staff and 2,000 university students have been killed by the bombardment;

The sense of this meeting is that MESA:

1. Stands in solidarity with Palestinian university students, faculty, and staff;
2. Should issue a strong statement condemning the ongoing assault on, and siege of, Gaza and demanding an immediate ceasefire.
3. Should demand an end to the ongoing violence by the Israeli military and settlers against Palestinians living in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and inside the Green Line.
4. Should appeal through direct correspondence to the governments of the US and Canada, who are directly complicit in the current war crimes against the Palestinian people, to cease their support for the Israeli military campaign; call for an immediate ceasefire; and end the 17-year blockade against, and siege of, Gaza;
5. Should issue a letter to presidents of universities, research centers, and other academic institutions across North America calling on university administrations to provide explicit support and protection for Palestinian students, faculty, and staff, as well as their allies, against harassment, anti-Palestinian racism, Islamophobia, demonization, and silencing in line with the principles of academic freedom.

### SENSE OF THE MEETING RESOLUTION

#### **Resolution to Support Scholars, Students, and Staff Facing Intimidation and Harassment for Solidarity with Palestine**

Whereas the Palestinian people in Gaza are currently suffering under a campaign of genocide perpetrated by the Israeli state.

Whereas a group of Graduate students and Early Career Scholars, have sought to institutionalize their commitment to the liberation of Palestine as scholars and activists.

Whereas the Palestine Solidarity Committee for Junior Scholars (PSCJS) was established at the Middle East Studies Association (MESA) 2023 Annual Conference in Montréal, Canada.

Whereas the overwhelming administrative response of US and Canadian institutions has been complicit with the Israeli genocidal campaign.

Whereas the Biden and Trudeau Administrations have begun to equate Palestine solidarity movements with antisemitism resulting in the repression of Palestine solidarity movements and great fear and anxiety amongst students, faculty, and staff.

The sense of the meeting is:

Call upon MESA to use its resources to work towards:

- a. The immediate reinstatement of all academic faculty, scholars, staff, or students fired or suspended for their support of Palestine.
- b. The dismissal of all cases/hearings/disciplinary procedures for all academic faculty, scholars, staff, or students facing repercussions for Palestine solidarity.
- c. The affirmation of its commitment to protecting all its members, especially undergraduate and graduate students, untenured faculty, and precarious workers, from attacks, smear campaigns, dismissals, and death threats for Palestine solidarity.
- d. The full implementation of BDS at MESA, which has yet to be enacted since the resolution passed in 2022.

Calls upon MESA to send letters to all university presidents to protect its students, faculty, and staff who stand in solidarity with Palestine.

# 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.

### ACLS Statement on SCOTUS Ruling on Affirmative Action

**July 5, 2023**—Last week, the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) ruled race-conscious admissions programs at colleges and universities to be unlawful, thus rejecting widely accepted practices meant to encourage diversity that have been part of US higher education for more than fifty years.

The American Council of Learned Societies stands firm in our belief in the value of diversity at all levels of higher education. The active participation of diverse people in the scholarly enterprise is the best way to combat historic and systemic inequities. It is the best way to ensure that scholars represent the world's rich diversity of communities and cultures. It is the best way—the proven way—to address past erasures in scholarship. Diverse scholarly perspectives advance our collective efforts as a society to understand our past and present and to make informed decisions about our future.

As an organization whose membership includes a Research University Consortium of 44 of our country's most highly selective institutions of higher education, we want to call attention to the impact of this decision on the production and circulation of knowledge in colleges and universities. If undergraduate communities are less diverse, graduate schools and the future professoriate will also be less diverse. As the range of future scholars and teachers narrows, so will our scholarly perspective, and students—and all of us who benefit from learning—will suffer.

ACLS remains committed to continuing to support and celebrate scholars, administrators, scholarship, and institutions that contribute to a more just and equitable academy now and for generations to come.

Our commitment includes fellowship and grant programs strategically designed to support diversity and equity in the academy. This includes programs targeted to historically underfunded institutions such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities, as well as fellowships for scholars who have traditionally had less access to external research support and scholarly resources, including first-generation scholars and those from marginalized communities. We will continue

our work in making these opportunities accessible to scholars working across the expanding landscape of humanistic fields of study in and beyond the academy.

In partnership with academic societies, scholars, administrators, supporters, and peer organizations, we seek better ways to recruit and retain a diverse community of scholars across all fields of study and to serve a more diverse professoriate. We will continue our collective effort to ignite and advance systemic change within the academy. We look forward to collaborating with all these groups in exploring additional methods to sustain diversity related to socioeconomic class as well as race and gender.

We believe this work is essential to fulfilling our mission to support the creation and circulation of knowledge for the public good. We encourage all our member institutions to join us.

The following ACLS member societies and institutions have affirmed their support for this statement:

African Studies Association  
American Academy of Religion  
American Association for Italian Studies  
American Folklore Society  
American Historical Association  
American Philosophical Association  
American Political Science Association  
American Society for Environmental History  
American Society for Theatre Research  
Association for Asian Studies  
Association for Jewish Studies  
Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies  
Association for the Study of African American Life and History  
Association of University Presses  
College Art Association  
Dance Studies Association  
German Studies Association  
International Center of Medieval Art  
Medieval Academy of America  
Middle East Studies Association  
National Communication Association  
National Council on Public History  
National Women's Studies Association  
North American Conference on British Studies  
Oral History Association  
Organization of American Historians  
Rhetoric Society of America  
Shakespeare Association of America

Society for Cinema and Media Studies  
Society for Ethnomusicology  
Society for Social Studies of Science  
Society of Architectural Historians  
Society of Biblical Literature



### Joint letter from BRISMES, SeSaMO and MESA to Israeli authorities regarding Khaled El Qaisi

September 28, 2023

Dear Defense Minister Yoav Gallant and Ambassador Alon Bar,

We write on behalf of the Italian Society for Middle East Studies (SeSaMO), the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES) and the Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA) to express our concern for the Italian-Palestinian student Khaled El Qaisi.

SeSaMO is a leading Italian organisation devoted to the study of the Middle East and North Africa, while BRISMES was founded in 1973 to encourage and promote the study of the Middle East and is the leading European association in this field, with a global membership of academics and students and others who deal professionally with the Middle East. MESA was founded in 1966 to promote scholarship and teaching on the Middle East and North Africa, and has nearly 2,800 members worldwide. All three associations are committed to ensuring academic freedom and freedom of expression, both within the region and in connection with the study of the region in Europe, North America and elsewhere.

As associations that are vested in Middle East scholarship and education, we are deeply concerned for the well-being of Khaled El Qaisi who was arrested on August 31, 2023, by the Israeli border police at the Allenby bridge while he, his wife and son were on their way from the West Bank to Amman to return to Italy. El Qaisi was handcuffed in front of his four-year-old child and he is currently detained in an Israeli prison without charge. El Qaisi studies Oriental Languages and Civilisations at La Sapienza University in Rome, is a professional translator, and is among the founders of the Palestinian Documentation Centre in Rome.



On 21 September, his detention was further extended for another 11 days without charges. From what we understand, El Qaisi is interrogated on a daily basis without a lawyer, while the allegations against him are not clear.

SeSaMO, BRISMES and MESA call upon you to ensure the immediate protection of Khaled El Qaisi's basic human rights, including the presumption of innocence and the right to due process, thus echoing the demands made by national and international associations, including the UN Special Rapporteur for the Palestinian Territories and Amnesty International Italy. Moreover, as Amnesty International Italy has noted, 'Khaled's case is unfortunately not an isolated case. Israel detains 5,000 Palestinians in flagrant violation of international law and due process, more than 1,200 without charge or trial'.

SeSaMO, BRISMES and MESA call on you to intervene to ensure the immediate release of Khaled El Qaisi.

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Rosita Di Peri and Maria Chiara Rioli  
On behalf of the Board and the Committee on Academic Freedom of SeSaMO

Neve Gordon  
Professor of Human Rights Law  
On behalf of the BRISMES Committee on Academic Freedom

Eve Troutt Powell  
Professor of History,  
University of Pennsylvania  
President of MESA



## MESA Board Statement on Palestine and Israel

**October 16, 2023**—The Board of Directors of the Middle East Studies Association of North America is acutely concerned with and heartbroken by the loss of Israeli and Palestinian lives over the last week. There can be no justification for the targeting of civilians. Many of our members have been directly affected and we join them in grieving. We also join all those who are committed to a political solution that offers safety, dignity, and equal rights for Palestinians and Israelis.

As of this writing, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) reports that the Hamas attack of October 7, 2023 and its aftermath has killed 1,300 Israelis and injured another

3,621, with a further estimated 155 or more Israeli (both soldiers and civilians) and some foreign nationals taken hostage by Hamas. Past precedent has shown that besieging the Gaza Strip and indiscriminately bombarding its population and infrastructure kills, maims, and displaces Palestinians, exacerbating the structural violence of Israeli rule and does little to increase the safety of Israelis. The Israeli government's response to the Hamas attack has included uninterrupted bombardment of the Gaza Strip, the prevention of humanitarian aid flow and, most recently, orders that 1.1 million people should evacuate their homes, towns and cities in northern Gaza or face certain death in a ground invasion. The sealing off of the Gaza Strip coupled with the devastation of Gazan infrastructure makes movement in the territory almost impossible and out of the territory unimaginable. The majority of Gazans are themselves refugees from 1948; they are now contemplating a second forcible removal from their homes, in what risks becoming a campaign of ethnic cleansing.

When UNOCHA last released an estimate of the Palestinian casualties on October 15, the bombardment of Gaza had already resulted in 2,670 Palestinians killed, 9,600 more injured, and the displacement of at least 600,000 Palestinians. Israeli bombardment has struck at least 185 educational facilities, including 20 United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) schools and 165 Palestinian Authority schools, one of which was destroyed. The Islamic University of Gaza was attacked by Israeli airstrikes. The cumulative effect of the bombardment has resulted in massive and ongoing death, displacement, and destruction, imperiling—among many other things—even the possibility of access to education for generations of Gazan children and students into the indefinite future.

MESA's Board of Directors has previously addressed the broader context, emphasizing how the decades-long Israeli military and government attacks on Palestinian students, teachers, and educational facilities are part of a broader political, administrative, and legal system of racial discrimination and domination—regularly enforced through violence—that has defined the Israeli government's treatment of the Palestinian people. MESA's Board of Directors and its Committee on Academic Freedom have also repeatedly affirmed the need to protect academic freedom in the study, analysis, and debate about what happens in Israel/Palestine.

At a time when our members have much to offer through their expertise to understanding these developments and to providing analyses that might contribute to slowing or stopping the escalation of violence, we are deeply disturbed by the chilling of speech and academic freedom on campuses across North America.

Events have contexts and histories, and many of our members view it as their professional role to contextualize and historicize the present situation. For our members in North America, describing, analyzing, and commenting on developments in Israel/Palestine, their causes, and their consequences is in many cases being discouraged or silenced, whether on university campuses, in their communities, or in the media. There has been a swift and dramatic narrowing of permissible speech on Israel/Palestine that strikes at the heart of academic freedom. Many campus leaders at U.S. and Canadian universities have released statements a majority of which exclusively address violence against Israelis, while many among their faculty, staff, students have sought to challenge such statements and present alternative viewpoints. In several troubling instances, these efforts have been met with threats to and vilification of faculty and staff. Individual students and student organizations that have issued statements critical of Israeli policies or expressing solidarity with Palestinians have found themselves subject to harassment, intimidation, and threats to their job prospects and personal safety. Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim students have been increasingly targeted for views, expressed or imputed, and even for their mere identities. Some university presidents have even shut down campuses to prevent pro-Palestinian protests or vigils. Outside groups and organizations are also directly pressuring university presidents to release one-sided statements on the conflict and suppress speech on campuses.

Universities and colleges in North America have the responsibility and capacity to ensure that faculty, staff, and students are free from violence, intimidation, and censorship as they express their views on campuses and for the broader public. Many such institutions have failed in doing so. MESA opposes any discrimination based on identity or political views, including anti-Arab or anti-Muslim racism and anti-Semitism. We call on university leaders and administrations to adhere to these principles and to affirmatively assert and protect the right to academic freedom and freedom of speech on their campuses.

We reaffirm that there can be no compromise of the right and ability of students, faculty, and staff at universities across North America (and elsewhere) to express their viewpoints free of harassment, intimidation, and threats to their livelihoods and safety. We also believe that there is no military solution, and we remain steadfast in our view that the only path forward on the ground is one premised on the equal rights of Palestinians and Israelis to live in dignity and safety.



## MESA Board Letter to Biden Administration on Ceasefire in Gaza

21 November 2023

President Joseph R. Biden  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

We write on behalf of the Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA) to call on your administration to support an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire by all parties in the occupied Gaza Strip and Israel to prevent further loss of civilian lives, to protect necessary and critical civilian infrastructure, and to ensure unimpeded access to life-saving assistance for the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip amidst the unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe to which they have been subjected. We acknowledge and support efforts by your administration to work with the Qatari government and others towards securing the release of the civilian hostages being held in Gaza. At the same time, we affirm that the hostages themselves are imperiled by the ongoing bombardment and ground incursion, and that the collective punishment of Palestinians to secure their release is not acceptable. We view efforts to secure a “humanitarian pause” or temporary ceasefire as wholly inadequate given the scale of the death, devastation and destruction in the Gaza Strip, and unacceptable due to the implication that attacks on Palestinian civilians will resume following the expiry of such short-term measures. We also call on your administration to demand the immediate and unconditional lifting of the siege imposed on the Gaza Strip by Israel, including the restoration of water, electricity, and communication services, immediate assistance to repair damaged civilian power, water, and sanitation infrastructure, and importation of fuel. In addition, we ask that you put pressure on the Israeli government to desist from the surveillance and targeting for harassment of its Palestinian citizens and to prevent soldiers and settlers from attacking, killing and displacing Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Finally, we call on your administration to halt weapons transfers and financial support for Israel’s assault on Gaza, which may make the U.S. complicit in the commission of war crimes, crimes against humanity and the failure to prevent genocide, as some in your own administration have noted through internal dissent memos and resignations.

MESA is a non-profit academic membership association, founded in 1966 and headquartered in Washington DC, that fosters the study

of the Middle East, promotes high standards of scholarship and teaching, and encourages public understanding of the region and its peoples through programs, publications, and services that enhance education, further intellectual exchange, recognize professional distinction, and defend academic freedom in accordance with its status as a 501(c)(3) scientific, educational, literary and charitable organization. The preeminent organization in the field, MESA publishes the flagship *International Journal of Middle East Studies* and has nearly 2,800 members worldwide, the vast majority of whom reside in the United States.

We previously issued a statement on 16 October 2023 expressing our concern and anguish over the loss of Israeli and Palestinian lives on 7 October 2023 and since. Therein we also reaffirmed our commitment to the equal rights of Palestinians and Israelis to live in dignity and safety. Since that time, the death, destruction, and displacement wrought by relentless Israeli siege and bombardment of, as well as ground incursion into, the Gaza Strip has shocked scholars and analysts who study the region the world over. As of this writing, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) reports that the Israeli bombardment campaign and ground incursion has killed over 13,000 Palestinians. UNOCHA has documented that 6,000 others are missing and may be trapped or dead under the rubble awaiting rescue or recovery. Reports indicate that more children have been killed by the Israeli attack on Gaza than children killed this year in all of the world’s most active conflict zones combined. Further, at least 104 United Nations staff members in the Gaza Strip have also been killed. Over 27,000 Palestinians are injured, many of them with catastrophic injuries that go untreated as the health sector in the Gaza Strip has collapsed under Israeli bombardment. The siege imposed by Israel deprives hospitals of access to clean water and medicine, let alone electricity or fuel to power life-saving equipment such as incubators and ventilators. The absence of basic medicines, disinfectants, and anesthesia has meant that the small proportion of Palestinians able to access medical services are subjected to unimaginably painful procedures and then lack access to the basic antiseptic materials needed to keep their wounds clean.

The collective punishment inflicted by Israel on all Palestinians in the Gaza Strip is given clearest expression by Israel’s declared siege of the territory, which has cut the entire population off from food, water, fuel, medicine, electricity, and adequate sanitation, as well as periodically blocking all communications in the territory. The hunger and thirst now ubiquitous in Gaza represent a direct threat to the survival of the entire besieged

population of over 2.3 million civilians. International medical agencies and the World Health Organization warn that the collapse of sanitation and the lack of access to potable water produce a very real risk of the spread of infectious diseases. Indeed, recent rain in the Gaza Strip has given rise to further fears of waterborne diseases and bacterial infection as of this writing. The trickle of humanitarian aid permitted to enter the Gaza Strip through the Rafah Crossing with Egypt is not sufficient to meet more than the needs of a tiny proportion of the population—reportedly as little as 4% of the daily need for food and clean water was being met. Such humanitarian aid has rightly been deemed inadequate by international organizations and humanitarian agencies. Even this aid has more recently been ground to a halt by the total absence of fuel and the ongoing blackouts on communications, making it impossible to transfer or coordinate the delivery of humanitarian goods.

More than 1.7 million Palestinian civilians have been forcibly displaced and this internally displaced population in the Gaza Strip has continued to be subjected to bombardment in the areas of south and central Gaza to which they were directed to move by Israeli military officials. Most recently, Israel has now issued new orders for the evacuation of the city of Khan Younis — itself the site of heavy bombardment in recent days, despite earlier Israeli orders directing Palestinians forcibly displaced from north of Wadi Gaza to that area. Gaza City, the largest Palestinian city in the world, has been reduced to rubble and its population subject to forced dislocation. Now the next largest city in the Gaza Strip — the population of Khan Younis included 400,000 residents prior to the arrival of tens of thousands of internally displaced Palestinians from the north — is also at risk of being depopulated. The ongoing Israeli bombardment and ground incursion of the Gaza Strip is concentrating the surviving population from among the over 2.3 million Palestinian residents of the territory into an ever-smaller proportion of their land, cut off from the very barest essentials for subsistence. In this context, Israel’s announcement of brief, sporadic “humanitarian pauses” to allow additional civilians to flee areas of heavy bombardment has been described by one United Nations official as “cynical and cruel.” The resolution passed by the United Nations Security Council on 16 November 2023, calling for further “humanitarian pauses,” cannot protect or sustain a population subjected to these conditions. In the words of the head of the World Health Organization, Israeli actions ensure that “nowhere and no one is safe” in the Gaza Strip.

Alongside the immediate death, destruction, deprivation and dislocation imposed on the entire population of the Gaza Strip, the

catastrophic damage to civilian infrastructure in the territory may imperil the ability of Palestinians therein to access basic necessities even after a ceasefire for as much as a generation. The destruction of residential infrastructure and the health sector — most recently exemplified by the encirclement, siege, raid and military occupation of the largest hospital in the Gaza Strip — has rendered nearly half of the territory of the Gaza Strip unlivable. Another clear example of the ongoing toll wrought by the Israeli military onslaught is the destruction of the educational sector in Gaza. UNOCHA reports that 300 school buildings in Gaza have been damaged by bombardment, representing more than 50% of all schools in Gaza. The 625,000 school-age children in Gaza have no access to education, no prospect for the resumption of this school year and no clear path for future access to schooling. The higher education sector in Gaza has also been decimated with the 88,000 university students in the territory left with little chance of ever completing their studies. Israeli bombardment has all but destroyed three of the largest universities in the Gaza Strip: the Islamic University of Gaza, Al-Azhar University, and the North Gaza branch of Al-Quds Open University have all sustained massive damage, including the complete destruction of numerous higher education buildings. The Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research estimates that more than four hundred university faculty and students have been killed. As we warned in our statement of 16 October, the cumulative effect of Israel's attack on Gaza imperils, among much else, "even the possibility of access to education for generations of Gazan children and students into the indefinite future."

Beyond the Israeli bombardment and ground incursion against Gaza, the Israeli government has also enabled a massive escalation in settler and soldier violence against Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. UNOCHA already reported that the first nine months of 2023 had witnessed a substantial increase in settler violence against Palestinians, the forcible displacement of more than 1,100 Palestinians and the depopulation of villages in the West Bank, enabled by the indifference or complicity of the Israeli military. Since 7 October, the pattern of settler and soldier violence has further escalated, resulting in the deaths of over 200 Palestinians, in the West Bank. With international attention diverted to Gaza, settlers supported by Israeli soldiers have succeeded in depopulating fifteen Palestinian communities in the West Bank, while Israeli authorities have conducted mass arbitrary arrests of Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, subjecting those detained to severe mistreatment. Similar reports of abusive detention conditions have also emerged for Palestinian

citizens of Israel arrested for their social media posts as part of an accelerating campaign of surveillance and harassment by Israeli officials within Israel's internationally recognized borders. You have said in a recent opinion piece that you have been "emphatic with Israel's leaders that extremist violence against Palestinians in the West Bank must stop," that those responsible must be held accountable and that your administration might issue visa bans against those who attack civilians in the West Bank. While we welcome these commitments, they do not go far enough, notably failing to acknowledge how the Israeli government facilitates soldier and settler attacks against Palestinian civilians, seemingly using violence as an informal tool to seize ever more Palestinian territory.

Our membership is comprised of the leading scholars, analysts, researchers, and experts on the Middle East in the humanities and social sciences based in North America (and beyond). There is a growing consensus among human rights organizations, international law experts and, indeed, many of the scholars in our membership, that the Israeli attacks on and siege of Gaza constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity and that, taken together with statements by Israeli officials, may amount to acts of genocide. Similarly, settler and soldier violence targeting Palestinians in the West Bank contribute further to a pattern of widespread and systematic human rights violations that may amount to crimes against humanity. Finally, the campaign of government surveillance and public harassment of Palestinian citizens of Israel compounds the record of persecution of Palestinians in all areas under Israeli government control.

As a scholarly community we join the many other organizations, groups, and communities across the United States and globally—including many civil servants working in your administration—in calling on your government to demand an immediate and permanent ceasefire and the immediate and unconditional lifting of the siege on the Gaza Strip to bring to an end this carnage. We demand that you support United Nations Security Council action in the service of such a permanent ceasefire. We further call on your administration to demand that Israel desist from and prevent the pattern of human rights abuses against Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. We also join those who have called for your administration to halt all further financial assistance and especially weapons transfers to Israel in light of Israel's violations of international humanitarian law, the indiscriminate bombardment of Gaza, and the applicable U.S. laws governing conventional arms transfers. Polls have shown that a majority of voters in the United States support calls for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and

reject your administration's policy of unconditional support for Israel.

In closing we reiterate our call on your administration to act immediately to secure a permanent and unconditional ceasefire and lifting of the siege on the Gaza Strip to protect the lives of millions of Palestinians today and to salvage any hope of a peaceful future in which the equal rights of Palestinians and Israelis to live in dignity and safety may be realized.

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Aslı Ü. Bâli  
MESA President  
Professor of Law, Yale Law School

CC:

The Honorable Antony Blinken  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Mr. Jake Sullivan  
National Security Advisor  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Washington, DC 20500





## 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](mailto: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](https://mesana.org)).*

### Academic Freedom and Campus Climate: Resources and Reporting

MESA has created a new [Campus Climate resource page](#) for our members, in response to academic freedom-related developments on campuses across North America and beyond.

In addition, MESA has established the email address [campusclimate@mesana.org](mailto:campusclimate@mesana.org) for members to send statements by university presidents, faculty, student groups, news reports about events or developments on campus, as well as anonymized summaries of individual experiences. These materials will help MESA and its Committee on Academic Freedom better respond to the ongoing threats to free speech and academic freedom as well as serve as an archive of this terribly difficult time.

Please continue to use the regular CAF email address ([caf@mesana.org](mailto:caf@mesana.org)) if requesting a possible intervention, or for questions requiring a response. The new [campusclimate@mesana.org](mailto:campusclimate@mesana.org) is monitored, but intended only to receive and to archive relevant materials.

**31 July 2023 (US)**—Letter to Biden administration officials raising concerns about Israel's accession to the US Visa Waiver Program.

**Response received** September 12, 2023 from Biden administration officials.

**16 August 2023 (Iran)**—Letter to Iranian authorities protesting punitive measures against Iranian women students.

**17 August 2023 (Bahrain)**—Letter concerning denial of urgent medical care to Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja.

**24 August 2023 (US)**—Letter calling on Princeton University to defend the academic freedom of Professor Satyel Larson.

**2 October 2023 (Palestine/Israel)**—Letter to Israeli authorities calling for the immediate release from detention of Khaled El-Qaisi, a Palestinian-Italian student.

**16 October 2023 (Palestine/Israel)**—Letter to Israel government authorities to protest the arrests of 8 students at Birzeit University on 24 September 2023.

**17 October 2023 (US)**—Letter to NYU Law School Dean protesting actions taken against Ryna Workman.

**19 October 2023 (US)**—Letter to the President of Columbia University defending Professor Joseph Massad.

**8 November 2023 (US)**—Letter calling on the University of Pennsylvania to defend its faculty.

**9 November 2023 (Palestine/Israel)**—Letter to Hebrew University in defense of Prof. Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian.

**13 November 2023 (US)**—Letter protesting the banning of the Brandeis University SJP chapter.

**13 November 2023 (US)**—Letter to Syracuse University leaders protesting their failure to defend faculty under attack.

**15 November 2023 (US)**—Letter to Columbia University protesting the arbitrary suspension of its SJP and JVP chapters.

**20 November 2023 (US)**—Letter to George Washington University about the suspension of the university's chapter of Students for Justice in Palestine.

**Response received** November 21 from Vice Provost Colette Coleman.

**20 November 2023 (Palestine/Israel)**—Letter to protest termination of employment of Dr. Uri Horesh.

**21 November 2023 (Palestine/Israel)**—Letter demanding an end to Israel's military assault on Gaza's educational sector.

**22 November 2023 (Palestine/Israel)**—Letter protesting intensification of arrests of students at Bir Zeit University.

**28 November 2023 (Palestine/Israel)**—Letter regarding intensified targeting of Palestinian students in Israeli universities.

**1 December 2023 (US)**—Letter to the University of Pennsylvania protesting its decision to ban the screening of the documentary Israelism.

**6 December 2023 (US)**—Letter to the University of California, Irvine, protesting disciplinary proceedings against a UCI graduate student.

**7 December 2023 (US)**—Letter of concern regarding House Resolution 894's equation of anti-Zionism with antisemitism.

**8 December 2023 (US)**—Letter to the president of the University of Arizona expressing concern about the College of Education's treatment of two faculty members.

**8 December 2023 (US)**—Letter to the chancellor of CUNY and the interim president of Hunter College regarding their failure to defend free speech and academic freedom.

**11 December 2023 (US)**—Letter to the University of Texas, Austin, concerning the arbitrary dismissal of two teaching assistants.



**Laurie Brand (CAF Chair)**  
University of Southern California [brand@usc.edu](mailto:brand@usc.edu)

**Aslı Bâli (MESA President)**  
Yale Law School [asli.bali@yale.edu](mailto:asli.bali@yale.edu)

#### MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA (CAF-MENA)

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#### NORTH AMERICA (CAF-NA)

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**Mira Sucharov**  
Carleton University [mira.sucharov@carleton.ca](mailto:mira.sucharov@carleton.ca)

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

Or follow CAF on Twitter **@CAF4MESA**

## New Members

MESA welcomes 573 new members (230 full, 295 students, 48 associates) for 2023.

## MESA's Institutional Members

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

Aga Khan University, Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations

American University in Cairo

American University of Kuwait

Arab Center Washington DC

Arab Council for the Social Sciences

Boston College, Program in Islamic Civilizations and Societies

Bridgewater State University, Center for Middle East Studies

Brown University, Center for Middle East Studies

California State University, Sacramento, Iranian and Middle Eastern Studies Center

Cornell University, Department of Near Eastern Studies

Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC)

CUNY Graduate Center, Middle East and Middle Eastern American Center

Dartmouth College, Asian and Middle Eastern Studies Program

Foundation for Iranian Studies (FIS)

George Washington University, Institute for Middle East Studies

Georgetown University, Center for Contemporary Arab Studies

Georgetown University, Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies

Georgetown University, Prince Alaweed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding

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

Northwestern University, Program of Middle East and North African Studies

Ohio State University, Department of Near Eastern and South Asian Languages and Cultures

Ohio State University, Middle East Studies Center

Pennsylvania State University, Department of History

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, Los Angeles, Center for Near Eastern Studies

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

University of Chicago, Center for Middle Eastern Studies

University of Houston, Arab-American Educational Foundation Center for Arab Studies

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Center for South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies

University of Maryland, Roshan Institute for Persian Studies

University of Massachusetts at Amherst

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 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 Virginia, Department of Middle Eastern and South Asian Languages and Cultures

University of Washington, Middle East Center

University of Wisconsin-Madison, Middle East Studies Program

Vanderbilt University

Washington University in St. Louis

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](mailto:secretariat@mesana.org). Institutional membership annual dues are \$1100.



## Contributions

For the period May 17, 2023 - December 7, 2023, a total of **\$8,354** in contributions was received for MESA funds. We acknowledge with great thanks the following:

### MESA General

Linda Brown  
McGuire Gibson#  
Suraiya Faroghi ▷  
J. Samina Malik  
Alan Mikhail\*  
Donald M. Reid#

### Travel Grant Fund

Asli Bali\*  
Hannah Barker  
William Beeman  
Arbella Bet-Shlimon  
Stacy Fahrenthold#  
Ella Fratanuaono\*  
Carolyn Goffman  
Natasha Iskander ►  
Suad Joseph ▷  
Kimberly Katz\*  
Arang Keshavarzian  
Janet Kestenberg Amighi#  
Ann M. Lesch ▷

Lisa Lim\*  
Elias G. Saba\*  
Adam A. Sabra\*  
Chris Silver  
Emma Snowden  
James Tallon  
Eve Troutt Powell#  
Brian Ulrich  
Karine Walther#  
Madeline C. Zilfi\*

### Mentoring Award

Nancy E. Gallagher ►

### Jere L Bacharach Service Award

William Ochsenwald\*  
Jennifer Pruitt  
Dale F. & Christine Eickelman ▷

### Fatema Mernissi Book Award

Nancy E. Gallagher ▷

### MESA Solidarity Fund

Linda Brown

### Global Academy

Nancy E. Gallagher ►

### Academic Freedom

Linda Brown

### Child Care Contribution

Levi Thompson\*

### 2023 Applicants Earthquake Solidarity Fund

Linda Brown

\* at least \$100

# at least \$250

▷ at least \$500

► at least \$1000

## New Board Members



**Anthony Alessandrini** Kingsborough Community College, CUNY

**Lara Deeb** Scripps College

**Alden Young** University of California, Los Angeles

**Abrar Alshammari** Princeton University (Student Member)

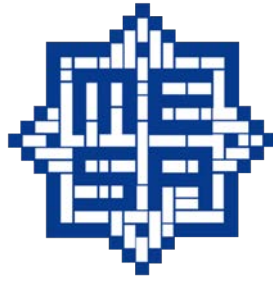
## MESA Elections

MESA election participation is on par with or better than comparable scholarly societies, yet our level of turnout means that an individual's vote has substantial importance. Your vote in our elections very much matters! Thank you for helping set the direction of your association by casting your vote.

### Board of Directors Election Statistics, 2013-2023\*

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total Membership at Election	2667	2802	2634	2230	2675	2621	2611	2324	2703
Eligible Members (F & S)	2570	2735	2584	2172	2604	2550	2538	2256	2609
Valid ballots	469	795	427	565	504	550	513	698	574
% of voting membership	18.25	29.07	16.52	26.00	19.35	21.57	20.21	30.94	22.0

\* President-elect is elected in even-numbered years. Students are elected for two-year terms in odd-numbered years.



# MESA 2024

November 11-16, 2024

Held virtually

## CALL FOR PAPERS

Detailed Call for Papers instructions, including the review criteria used by the program committee, will be posted on MESA's website. All prospective participants are encouraged to familiarize themselves with what is expected of submissions. Proposals must conform to the guidelines listed in the Call for Papers instructions.

### **Submission deadline is February 15, 2024**

Proposal submissions begin January 10, 2024 and must be completed by **Thursday, February 15, 2024 at 11:59 AM EST /UTC-4.**

### **Requirements to Participate**

- **Only current MESA members for 2024 may submit.** Renew your membership today and save time later!
- All submissions must be made through myMESA, MESA's electronic submission system.
- Meeting registration is required by May 15, *after* the program committee decisions are released.

## CALLS FOR PARTICIPATION

Session organizers looking to find others to join them in a preorganized session may place an open call for participation on MESA's website. Complete the form located on the [calls for participation page](#).

Questions about the submission process may be directed to the MESA Staff at [meeting@mesana.org](mailto:meeting@mesana.org).



# 2023 Awards Winners & Recipients

## 2023 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.



### Judith E. Tucker, Georgetown University

This year's mentoring award is given to Judith E. Tucker in recognition of her extraordinary contributions to the training and development of others in Middle East studies.

Dr. Tucker is well known to most Middle East studies scholars for her research, as a giant in the field, whose career has included six books, dozens of articles and book chapters, and service as editor of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* and as MESA President.

But what many Middle East studies scholars do not know is that Dr. Tucker is also an exceptional mentor. Over the course of 40 years of teaching at Georgetown University, she has taught and mentored hundreds of undergraduate, M.A., and Ph.D. students, as well as many

junior colleagues from around the country and the globe.

Throughout the letters of support and the testimonials at last year's roundtable in her honor at MESA 2022 in Denver, a number of aspects of Dr. Tucker's mentoring stand out.

The first is her steadfast support of female students in the early stages of their academic journeys. Testimonials mention what a powerful role model she was in the 1980s, 1990s, and even 2000s, when the number of prominent female historians of the Middle East was still few. She gave others hope that they, too, could one day succeed. Related as well is her unflagging support of Arab and Muslim women. Dr. Tucker not only wrote about Muslim women and subaltern women in the Middle East, she mentored and endeavored to support individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds to find their paths through academia.

Second, she was not the kind of pioneer you can admire from afar, but whom you did not actually want to meet. Dr. Tucker hosted her students at her house for end-of-semester dinners, and annually cut a rug at the MESA Dance Party. In addition to her many accomplishments, she modeled that there is much more to life than climbing the academic ladder, such as her principled activism. She has maintained two extraordinary features in someone so accomplished: humility and love for the life of the mind. This capacity to remain a student, to remain excited about in and invested in learning, is the mark of the best kind of teacher and mentor.

This leads to a third theme, her teaching style. Tucker taught her students how to read: closely, critically, capaciously. She taught her students what feminism is, in thought and practice. She taught her students how to craft excellence by embracing humility. Time and again, her intellectual work and her engagement with her students' work inspired them to ask difficult questions and embrace new ways of thinking, knowing, and teaching. It was from her that many of her students first understood in practice that historical research means how to listen to the sources: When things in the archive aren't going the way you expect, perhaps it's your questions that need to be rethought.

*continued*



Fourth was her institution building, by mentoring, supporting, and encouraging others. This is true both for MESA as well as for Washington DC-area universities. MESA, IJMES, the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies at Georgetown, the *Arab Studies Journal*, and many other projects would not be the same without her, due to her quiet mentoring of the many individuals shaping and sustaining these initiatives.

Fifth was her unique vision and sense of care for the individual person. Dr. Tucker constantly spotted talent, even in the rough. She pulled students from other fields, from other countries, from other careers. She never sought out or sought to make copies of herself. She saw potential, she encouraged it, and she shaped it — no matter the person or their passion.

Sixth is her style of mentorship, in its subtlety. Again and again, she left students the space to unfold independently, while quietly supporting them behind the scenes. Dr. Tucker has touched the lives of many young scholars who had potential they were not aware of, and ambitions that they did not know how to fulfill. More than that, as a teacher, she is patient and kind. As a mentor, she is wise and candid. As a dissertation advisor, she was both hands off — trusting students to do what they needed to — and hands on, in that she unfailingly had their backs — often, behind their backs. Most of the time, her support was completely invisible to her students — they only learned about it much later, usually through other people. And she not only offered that quiet, constant form of intellectual care to her students, but also to other junior scholars and students from other universities, her peers, and senior colleagues of decades — as well as extending her support to displaced scholars in exile who had never met her, simply because they were in need.

Seventh and finally is the enduring nature of her mentorship. Many years later, Dr. Tucker continues to mentor, often indirectly. She taught her students how to lead, and how to stand one's ground in the face of intimidation. She remains for her students a model of how to navigate an often brutal and petty academy with compassion, quiet strength, steely resolve, and the gracious professionalism that she embodies.

It is an honor to recognize Judith Tucker — a truly outstanding scholar, teacher, and mentor — who has throughout her career encouraged the very finest of Middle East studies scholarship by mentoring generations of scholars.

## MESA thanks the following review committees

### 2023 MESA Book Awards Committee

Orit Bashkin, Chair (University of Chicago)  
Fahad Bishara (University of Virginia)  
Leor Halevi (Vanderbilt University)  
Nazanin Shahrokni (Simon Fraser University)  
Nadia Yaqub (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

### 2023 Roger Owen Book Award Committee

Fredrick Meiton, Chair (University of New Hampshire)  
Gwenn Okruhlik (Independent Scholar)  
Emrah Yildiz (Northwestern University)

### 2023 Graduate Student Paper Prize Committee

Mohammad Tabaar, Chair (Texas A&M)  
Nayrouz Abu Hatoum (Concordia University)  
Leila Tayeb (Northwestern University in Qatar)  
Secil Yilmaz (University of Pennsylvania)

### 2023 Malcolm H. Kerr Dissertation Award Committee in the Humanities

Nada Shabout, Chair (University of North Texas)  
Yasmine Khayyat (Rutgers University)  
Justin Stearns (NYU Abu Dhabi)  
Hale Yilmaz (Southern Illinois University Carbondale)

### 2023 Malcolm H. Kerr Dissertation Award Committee in the Social Sciences

Lior Sternfeld (Penn State)  
Sammy Badran (American University of Sharjah)  
Choon Hwee Koh (UCLA)  
Maya Mikdashi (Rutgers University)

### 2023 Undergraduate Education Award Committee

Nadejda Marinova, Chair (Wayne State University)  
Sa'ed Atshan (Swarthmore College)  
Susanna Ferguson (Smith College)

## 2023 Jere L. Bacharach Service Award

The MESA Service Award was established in 1996 and was first awarded at MESA's 1997 annual meeting. In 2004 the award was named for Jere L. Bacharach in honor of his extraordinary service to MESA, many of her sister societies, and the field overall. The award recognizes the contributions of individuals through their outstanding service to MESA or the profession.



### Anne H. Betteridge, University of Arizona

This year's MESA Jere L. Bacharach award is given to Anne Betteridge, in recognition of her exceptional service to the field of Middle East studies.

Dr. Betteridge is professor of Middle Eastern Studies and director of the Center for Middle East Studies at the University of Arizona, as well as co-chair of the Council of Title VI National Resource Center Directors, vice-chair of the board of the Council of American Overseas Research Centers, and president of the American Institute of Iranian Studies. Dr. Betteridge has also served as a board member of the American Council of Learned Societies, the International Association for the Study of Persian-Speaking Societies, and the Society for Iranian Studies. For almost a dozen years, Dr. Betteridge served as executive director of the Middle East Studies Association.

In all of these roles, Dr. Betteridge has helped to build scholarly institutions in the field of Middle East studies, nurture students and junior colleagues, defend academic freedom, and campaign for support for the field — both on a national scale and in her long-time home of Arizona.

As executive director of MESA between 1990 and 2002, Dr. Betteridge turned a part-time operation into a fully professional organization. Dr. Betteridge was key to building MESA into an organization capable of serving a rapidly growing field of area studies. She oversaw a period of seismic changes, as the Cold War ended (with consequences for the funding of Area Studies), bookended by crises like the invasion of Kuwait and September 11 that increased media attention and demands upon MESA for information and expertise. MESA also had to accommodate shifts in technology, from an era of postal mail and telephones to faxes, emails, and the very first MESA website. She not only enabled the expansion and professionalization of the MESA staff to accommodate the changing and growing membership, she also served then-new committees like the Committee on Academic Freedom and the Albert Hourani Book Award with the structure and support needed to develop and eventually flourish.

As director of the Center for Middle East Studies at the University of Arizona since 2003, Dr. Betteridge has built up the university's offerings in Middle East studies significantly by writing six successful applications to the Department of Education's Title VI program, which have contributed to an expansion of the university's Middle East studies faculty, a full range of Middle East language programs, and an extensive record of programs for K-12 educators across the state of Arizona and beyond.

As co-chair of the Council of Title VI National Resource Center Directors since 2010, Dr. Betteridge has organized untold numbers of agenda-setting workshops, advocacy sessions at Congress, information-sharing meetings, conference calls, and other activities on behalf of the more than 100 international and area studies centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Title VI program, not just in Middle East studies but representing the study of all regions of the world. She has also worked closely with the Coalition for International Education in Washington, D.C., to engage with Congressional representatives and staff members to defend federal programs in international and area studies against political attacks and to advocate for increased federal investment in language and area studies training.

In addition, Dr. Betteridge has regularly convened a meeting of Middle East Title VI center directors during MESA's annual conference. The agenda includes briefings on issues that Middle East centers face, and updates on col-

laborative initiatives across campuses. Dr. Betteridge runs these meetings with the wisdom of one who has lived through numerous academic crises and can sense issues just beyond the horizon.

As president of the American Institute for Iranian Studies since 2019, Dr. Betteridge has worked to maintain scholarly exchanges between U.S.-based and Iran-based researchers during a time of very poor relations between the U.S. and Iranian governments, as well as supporting Persian language study and Iranian studies research among graduate students with ongoing grant funding from the Council on American Overseas Research Institutes. While this sort of unsung administrative service – on an individual level and on an institutional level – is not necessarily visible to the wider profession, it has been truly instrumental to supporting the advancement of the field of Middle East studies at large.

This award is therefore enthusiastically given to Dr. Betteridge in recognition of her long and devoted service to the field of Middle East studies.



## 2023 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.



### G. Carole Woodall, University of Colorado, Colorado Springs

The Undergraduate Award Committee is pleased to present the 2023 MESA Undergraduate Education Award to Professor Carole Woodall (University of Colorado, Colorado Springs). Professor Woodall has shown a multi-disciplinary focus in her teaching, and the breadth of pedagogical focus in her work is impressive.

She has developed history courses and teaching modules in subjects as wide-ranging as the Making of Modern Istanbul; The Late Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic; and Mass Consumption in the Middle East. Professor Woodall has taught courses on women, including Women and War; Women's Voices from the Margins, and Middle East Women in Film; and

classes on Islam and the West, and on Modern Turkey in the Age of Political Islam and Twitter.

The diversity of original teaching methods in Professor Woodall's classes ranges from reflection exercises with texts from writer Orhan Pamuk to collaborative podcasts.

Professor Woodall has also mentored numerous undergraduate and graduate students. The committee was impressed by the written testimonies of 33 of her former students who all spoke about the intellectual impact of Dr. Woodall's innovative teaching, and her extraordinary dedication as a mentor. According to an alumna, "During my time at UCCS [University of Colorado, Colorado Springs] I have had many great professors who support and nurture the intellect of their students. However, Dr. Woodall goes above and beyond for her students. She is a kind and compassionate soul who utilizes her role to encourage student engagement and student success." Another student of Professor Woodall pointed out that "Professor Woodall sets the standards for professionalism in the world of higher learning."

The MESA Undergraduate Award Committee appreciates the opportunity to unanimously award this recognition to Professor Woodall for her exceptional contributions to pedagogy and the teaching of the Middle East.



## 2023 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.



### Dr. Abduljalil al-Singace

MESA's Committee on Academic Freedom has selected Dr. Abduljalil Al-Singace as the recipient of MESA's Academic Freedom Award for 2023.

Dr. Abduljalil Al-Singace, a noted human rights activist, earned his Ph.D. from the University of Manchester's Institute of Technology in the United Kingdom. He served as a Professor of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Bahrain beginning in 1995. He has been a member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and the Bahrain Society for Engineers and a Board member of the Bahrain Academic Society.

Dr. Al-Singace was arrested on March 17, 2011 amidst the popular demonstrations at that time. The reason given for the arrest was his "reported involvement in peaceful protests and calls for democratic reform." He was subsequently tried before a military court and sentenced to life in prison on charges of attempting to overthrow the government. Thus, Dr. Al-Singace is a prisoner of conscience, a man jailed solely for the non-violent expression of his political beliefs. Amnesty International has designated him a political prisoner. CAF has written six letters in his defense over the past decade.

Dr. Al-Singace suffers from numerous health problems. He is partially paralyzed and suffers from poliomyelitis as well as heart, eye and sinus problems. He relies upon a cane and a wheelchair for mobility. He initially served his sentence in Jaw prison where he was repeatedly denied access to critical medical care because he would not wear prison clothing.

Credible reports have also indicated that Dr. Al-Singace has been held in a tiny cell, often in solitary confinement, and that he has been subjected to repeated verbal, physical and sexual assaults. In spite of the fact that he depends upon the support of a wheelchair, he has been forced to stand upright for prolonged periods. This maltreatment meets the international legal definition of torture.

His health has continued to deteriorate, yet he has been denied badly needed operations. He has also at times been denied family visits, or had their duration reduced to only a few hours per month.

He has undertaken several hunger strikes, the most recent of which he began in July 2021 to protest the degrading conditions of his imprisonment, the imposition of additional restrictions under the guise of the Coronavirus pandemic, and the prison authorities' confiscation of his book on Bahraini dialects of Arabic that he spent four years researching and writing by hand in jail. The state responded by transferring him to a Ministry of Interior medical facility to be given intravenous fluids. There he has been held in what amounts to solitary confinement, prohibited from going outside, being exposed to direct sunlight, or receiving the physiotherapy that he requires for his disability. He was still on the hunger strike as of the end of September 2023.

In selecting Dr. Singace for this award, we seek to highlight the broader conditions of political repression in Bahrain as well as add our voice to those of numerous human rights, scholarly and other organizations who have called upon the Bahraini government to release Dr. Al-Singace immediately and unconditionally, and in the meantime to ensure he is held in conditions that meet international standards, receives his medication without delay, and has access to adequate healthcare, in compliance with medical ethics. With this Academic Freedom Award for 2023, we recognize his unwavering courage and steadfastness in the face of more than a decade of repression and torture.

## 2023 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.

### Co-Winner

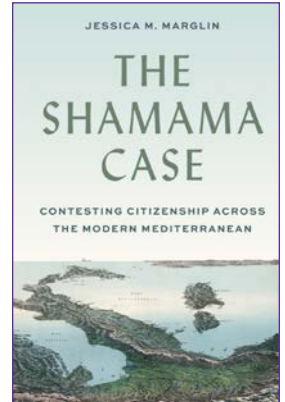
#### *The Shamama Case: Contesting Citizenship across the Modern Mediterranean*

Princeton University Press



#### **Jessica M. Marglin, University of Southern California**

Jessica Marglin's *The Shamama Case* is an outstanding microhistory. Grounding itself in a single case, it spins out an entire world, threading the needle through materials in Arabic, Hebrew, French, and Italian. And like the best microhistories, it takes on large questions; on trial are questions of belonging in a time of changing ideas of citizenship and nationality. Its sharp analysis and archival depth are only outmatched by its beautiful prose. It is a page-turner in every sense of the term: it teems with characters, plot twists, and tensions. It is truly a masterclass in the craft of writing history.



### Co-Winner

#### *Losing Istanbul: Arab-Ottoman Imperialists and the End of Empire*

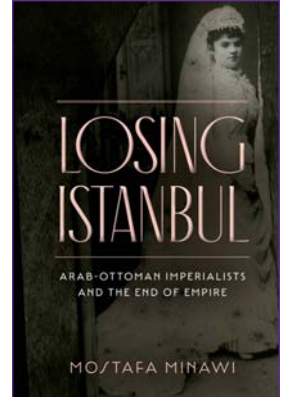
Stanford University Press



#### **Mostafa Minawi, Cornell University**

Mostafa Minawi's masterful work, *Losing Istanbul*, exemplifies the productive ways in which global microhistories can shed light on, and change, our conceptualizations of imperialism and imperial loyalties in the late Ottoman Empire. Focusing on the mesmerizing careers of Shafiq Azmzade (1861–1916) and his nephew Sadik (Sadiq) al-Mu'ayyad Azmzade (1858–1910), the networks they belonged to, and their professional careers as Ottoman imperialists, the book takes us to various places

and spaces in which the Azmzades were active, and explains how the Ottoman empire employed, neglected, and eventually betrayed, its most loyal Arab champions and advocates. Moreover, in the book's nuanced treatment of questions relating to race and color in Ottoman contexts, and how they intersected with other global conversations on race, *Losing Istanbul* carefully considers the multiple, and often conflicting, meanings of being an Arab and an Ottoman-Arab in an empire whose ideas of citizenship, belonging, and community were rapidly changing. This superbly researched study, then, boldly deconstructs historical narratives, unpacks the relationship between several imperial centers and their peripheries, and challenges commonly held periodizations. Thinking about the Ottoman Empire from a comparative perspective, he reminds us of the partial and incomplete implementation of imperial ideologies. Above all, however, Minawi presents us with a cautionary tale about the perils of ethnoracialization and ethnic nationalism, and their tragic consequences.



## Hourani Honorable Mention

### *Pinelandia: An Anthropology and Field Poetics of War and Empire*

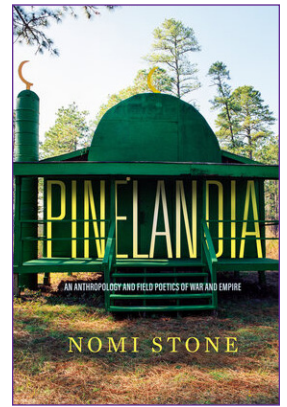
University of California Press



#### **Nomi Stone, University of Texas, Dallas**

Nomi Stone's *Pinelandia: An Anthropology and Field Poetics of War and Empire* is a poetic ethnography in which Middle East villages appear as figments of the cultural imagination of the U.S. military during the Global War on Terror. Its fieldwork was conducted not in Iraq but, surprisingly, in forests of North Carolina, where the army set up simulacra of Iraq. This was a strange, neo-Orientalist theater, where American soldiers and Iraqi interpreters engaged in consequential pre-deployment exercises that remained, until

this publication, virtually unknown. Bold, original, and evocative, *Pinelandia* makes a tremendous contribution to our understanding of power dynamics behind the othering of Arabs and Muslims in the aftermath of 9/11.



## 2023 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

### *Transnational Palestine: Migration and the Right of Return before 1948*

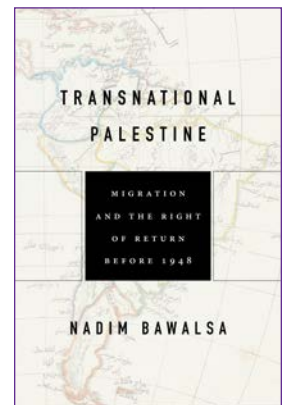
Stanford University Press



#### **Nadim Bawalsa, Institute for Palestine Studies**

Very few books exemplify the transregional shift in global and Middle Eastern history as compellingly and as brilliantly as Nadim Bawalsa has done in his groundbreaking, *Transnational Palestine: Migration and the Right of Return before 1948*. By decentering Palestinian history, through the story of Palestinian migrants to Latin America, the book shows that terms that we have commonly identified with the post Nakba era, especially Return and Diaspora, have their own history, and that this

history is crucially important to our understanding of struggles for citizenship in the interwar period, and well beyond. The book meticulously reconstructs, and pays homage to, the lives of these Palestinian migrants, and the legal and cultural battles they were embroiled in to maintain their connections to Palestine. Presenting us with the often-silenced histories of Arab communities and public spheres in Latin America, the book shows that the boundaries between the national and the transnational are not as rigid as we often assume. Bawalsa also demonstrates that loyalties to a space and a place are not limited to specific boundaries, or to the decision-making of the British mandate in Palestine, and that national consciousness and sense of belonging can emerge in global frameworks. Bawalsa thinks creatively and compassionately about movements of migrants between continents, homelands, and legal frameworks, and in doing so, he too, spectacularly and impressively, moves between archives in several continents and languages that capture the migrants' hopes and struggles.





## Keddie Honorable Mention

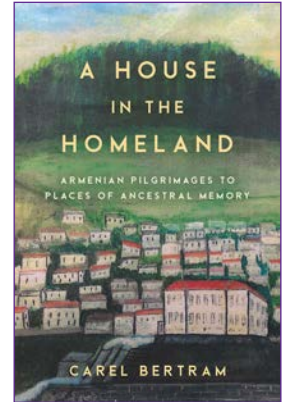
### *A House in the Homeland: Armenian Pilgrimages to Places of Ancestral Memory*

Stanford University Press



#### **Carel Bertram, San Francisco State University**

Carel Bertram's *A House in the Homeland* takes its readers on a journey with Armenians in the diaspora back to their ancestral homes in Anatolia, from which they were displaced in the upheavals of World War One. It tells a story of loss and reconnection, of the emotional weight of the past and of home itself, and of intergenerational trauma and mourning. It is thoughtful and sophisticated, but is above all else a beautiful, emotionally charged narrative that pulls at its readers' heartstrings. It is a model ethnography that bears the imprint of many years of dedicated research.



## Keddie Honorable Mention

### *This Flame Within: Iranian Revolutionaries in the United States*

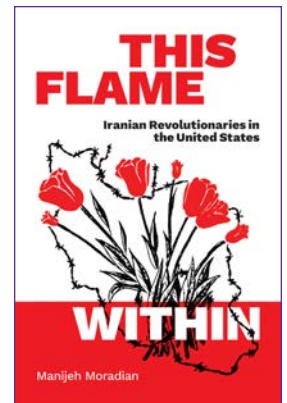
Duke University Press



#### **Manjeh Moradian, Barnard College**

*This Flame Within* is a skillfully written and analytically sophisticated reconstruction of the history of the 1979 revolution, as shaped and lived by the Iranian diaspora in the United States. Combining archival research with in-depth interviews with members of the Iranian Students Association, a leftist and politically radical organization opposing both domestic authoritarianism and US imperialism, Moradian brings to the fore what she aptly calls “revolutionary affects.”

Moradian's analysis offers a transnational feminist reframing of revolutionary pasts, and provides insights into the possibility of infusing Iranian diasporic politics today with a praxis of antiracist and anticolonial solidarity. Her examination of experiences and affects spanning multiple, interwoven sites and histories, challenges bounded and parochial notions of revolutions and opens new, and exciting paths for the study of revolutions and transnational phenomena.



## 2023 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

### *Sextarianism: Sovereignty, Secularism and the State in Lebanon*

Stanford University Press

#### **Maya Mikdashi, Rutgers University**

*Sextarianism: Sovereignty, Secularism and the State in Lebanon* uses a detailed study of Lebanon—a state best known for its absence from the lives of its citizens—to theorize the centrality of sex and sexuality and sect to law, secularism, and state power in general. In well-written prose, Mikdashi forcefully and convincingly demonstrates how sex and sect are mutually constitutive in bureaucracy, law, and ideology. The book is also remarkable for its innovative and effective use of a range of sources, including court archives, bureaucratic records and ethnography and a judiciously self-reflexive analysis, as well as for the breadth of the practices and conditions it explores, including religious conversion, knowledge production, social movements, and state violence.





## Mernissi Honorable Mention

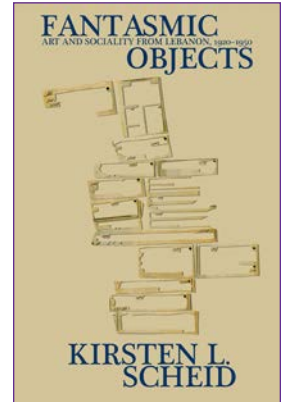
### *Fantasmic Objects: Art and Sociality from Lebanon, 1920-1950*

Indiana University Press



#### **Kirsten L. Scheid, American University of Beirut**

A deeply nuanced and personally engaged study of Lebanon's art scene under French occupation, Kirsten L. Scheid's *Fantasmic Objects: Art and Sociality from Lebanon, 1920-1950*, analyzes nudes as well as representations of patriotic femininity and masculine modernity. It is a groundbreaking contribution to our understanding of the roles that artistic creativity, aesthetic encounters and sensorial experiences played in articulating both gender and politics, especially civic subjectivity and national identity, in a wide range of local settings—from art lessons in the colonial mandate to postcolonial exhibitions.



## 2023 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.

### Co-winner

#### *Does Skill Make Us Human? Migrant Workers in 21st-Century Qatar and Beyond*

Princeton University Press



#### **Natasha Iskander, New York University**

Natasha Iskander offers a wide-ranging and rigorous interrogation of the idea of skill. Through extensive research in both host and home countries and in superb writing, Iskander sketches a transnational ecology of labor, in which the concept of skill emerges as always already political. Rather than passing as a straightforward measure of ability, experience, education, or training, skill is revealed as a technology for organizing labor that structures social and political possibilities. A major achievement.



### Co-winner

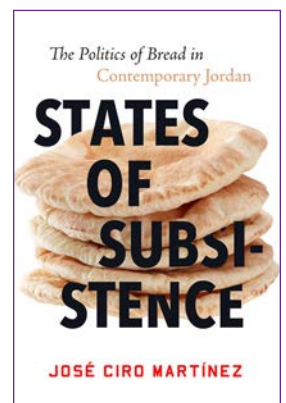
#### *States of Subsistence: The Politics of Bread in Contemporary Jordan*

Stanford University Press



#### **José Ciro Martínez, University of York**

Taking khubz arabi as “both an ethnographic object and analytic vantage point,” José Ciro Martínez chronicles how the state effect is produced and performed in and through the bakery. From the middle-out vantage point of this ubiquitous neighborhood staple, Martínez uncovers the important and underappreciated ways in which state-managed bread making defines both the state and the society it governs. Martínez’ creative, rigorous, and superbly written book allows us to think about the relationship between state and society in new ways with application far beyond the case of Jordan and its bakeries.



## 2023 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 the field. Awards are given in two categories: Social Sciences and Humanities.

### Social Sciences Winner

*Armenian Schools in Contemporary Turkey: Governmentality, Community, Resilience*

**Hulya Delihuseyinoglu, Bogazici University, Ataturk Institute for Modern Turkish History**



*Armenian Schools in Contemporary Turkey: Governmentality, Community, Resilience* provides a creative and innovative perspective to the study of minorities in the MENA region, and specifically in the Turkish context. The dissertation examines Armenian schools in the current Turkish Republic. The committee noted the thorough research and the methodological tools with which it analyzes historical and current legal texts governing the Armenian schools in the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic. This research places the Armenian minority within local and global structures of power and memory, develops the unique Armenian Turkish identity, and contributes significantly to the understanding of global diasporas. The dissertation was completed at Bogazici University at the Ataturk Institute for Modern Turkish History under the supervision of Umut Turem.

### Social Sciences Honorable Mention

*Sha'bi Music and Struggles over "the Popular": Class, Space and Emotion in Contemporary Cairo*

**Sophie Frankford, University of Oxford, School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography**



Sophie Frankford's dissertation *Sha'bi Music and Struggles over "the Popular": Class, Space and Emotion in Contemporary Cairo*, analyzes the social, cultural, and political connections of Sha'bi music as a popular genre, yet underappreciated. In her dissertation, Dr. Frankford examines the emotional response of the audience, the role of the practitioners, the vital discourse around it, and the reader gets insights into the urban classes in Cairo. The research and combination of ethnographic methodologies together with class and discourse analysis created a fascinating account. The dissertation was completed at the University of Oxford in the School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography under the co-supervision of Walter Armbrust and Zuzanna Olszewska.

## 2024 Kerr Dissertation Awards Competition

**Submission Deadline: July 1, 2024**

For students completing their dissertations between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024, nominations should be from the author's sponsor or advisor. Winners in each category—Humanities and Social Sciences—receive \$1000.

Information on the [dissertation awards](#) is posted on MESA's website under the Awards tab. Questions may be directed to [secretariat@mesana.org](mailto:secretariat@mesana.org).

## Humanities Winner

### *Feeling Like a State: Anxiety and Optimism in the late-Ottoman Empire*

**Jamie Pelling, Princeton University, Near Eastern Studies**



What does it feel like to live in an empire that is ending? Drawing effectively on affect theory and specifically Laurent Berlant's concept of cruel optimism, Jamie Pelling's dissertation explores the anxiety and optimism of the last years of the Ottoman Empire in an exceptionally compelling fashion. With a creative use of eclectic sources and archives, and well-executed argument, Pelling delivers and connects theoretically sophisticated case studies of the Hijaz railway project, the Society for National Contribution to the Ottoman Navy, the Ottoman morality police, and the erotic journal *Bin Bir Buse* in early republican Istanbul. Pelling's critical analysis introduces new terrain and presents an original argument that productively opens new ways of approaching a topic

on which so much has already been written. The dissertation was completed at Princeton University in Near Eastern Studies under the co-supervision of Michael A. Reynolds and Julia Elyachar.

## Humanities Honorable Mention

### *Space, Ritual, and Religious Experience and the Ottoman hajj, c. 994/1586–1194/1780*

**Yahya Nurgat, University of Cambridge, History**



Yahya Nurgat's dissertation advances and nuances current scholarship on confessionalization in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire through a sophisticated investigation of one of Islam's most important and rituals, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca. Through pilgrims' accounts, Hajj guides and material culture, Nurgat explores the physical and affective aspects of the experience beyond the political and social status attained by those undertaking it. By pursuing the question of how to perform the pilgrimage properly, the dissertation shed light on scholarly anxieties regarding guiding an insufficiently knowledgeable public on the one hand, and on that public's experience of the pilgrimage on the other. Nurgat's original insights and use of art history and

material culture studies go beyond previous scholarly approaches and are new and productive contributions that will be influential beyond the dissertation subfield. The dissertation was completed at the University of Cambridge, Clare College in the Faculty of History under the supervision of Helen Pfeifer.

## Humanities Honorable Mention

### *Entertainment, Propriety, Transgression: The 'Unorthodox' Greeks of Istanbul in the Late Ottoman Empire*

**Sada Payır, University of Oxford, Asian and Middle Eastern Studies**



Sada Payır offers an original perspective to the social history of 19th century Ottoman Istanbul and the study of the Greek Orthodox community there, by focusing on themes such as entertainment and entertainers, prostitution, drinking, and carnival celebrations. Drawing on a rich variety of archival, literary, and audio-visual sources including Ottoman police records, French consular reports, Greek memoirs, songs, poetry, and postcards, and taking transgression as an analytical tool, Payır explores how anxieties about social, moral, and cultural transgressions affected the lives of musicians, entertainers, prostitutes, and carnival attendees of Istanbul's Greek

community, while also examining the Greek community's place within the broader Ottoman society. In a field that is still dominated by political histories, it is refreshing to find singers, dancers, drinkers, pimps, prostitutes and other ordinary or marginalized citizens at the center of analysis. Payır's pluralistic approach and original insights contribute to a rewriting of history within and beyond the Ottoman world. The dissertation was completed at the University of Oxford, Pembroke College in the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies under the supervision of Laurent Mignon.



## 2023 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

*Thinking with Kulthūm Nana: 'Aqā'id al- nisā' and Women's Knowledge in Islam*



**Du Fei, Cornell University, Department of History**

The Graduate Student Paper Prize Committee is pleased to announce “Thinking with Kulthūm Nana: ‘Aqā'id al- nisā' and Women's Knowledge in Islam,” as the winner of the 2023 award. In this impressive intertextual work, the author traces multiple versions of the Persian text from the Safavid era, Aqā'id al-nisā' (The Beliefs/Dogmatics of Women), also known as Kulthūm Nana, across centuries, examining the “tension embedded in the text between the idea of a feminine form of knowledge-making and its male representation.” The author skillfully guides the reader through the intricate details pertaining to the life of a manuscript, the intellectual tradition around it, and the historical change reshaping the implications with a carefully crafted historical narrative.

### Honorable Mention

*Conflict in Ruins: Counterinsurgent Urbanism and Its Discontents in Northern Kurdistan*



**Ronay Bakan, Johns Hopkins University, Department of Political Science**

The award committee's honorable mention goes to “Conflict in Ruins: Counterinsurgent Urbanism and Its Discontents in Northern Kurdistan.” Through an interdisciplinary approach that integrates historical studies with meticulous ethnographic analysis, the paper focuses on “heritage-making” to study the “sociality of war and counterinsurgency.” The author effectively blends the argument of the paper with theoretical debates encompassing a transnational framework and well-conducted research on Armenian history, Kurdish politics, and the ongoing warfare and conflict in Diyarbakir of Kurdistan in Turkey.

## 2024 Graduate Student Paper Prize Competition

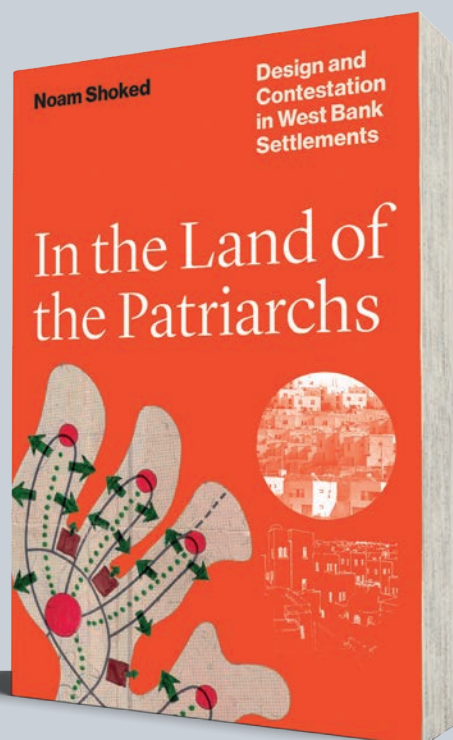
**Submission Deadline: August 15, 2024**

For graduate students whose research papers consider 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 to *RoMES*.

Information on the [graduate student paper prize](#) is posted on MESA's website under the Awards tab. Questions may be directed to [secretariat@mesana.org](mailto:secretariat@mesana.org).



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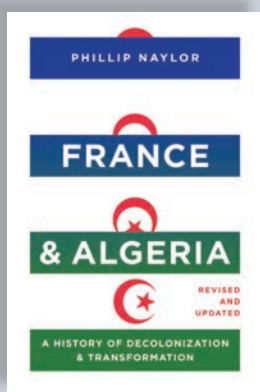
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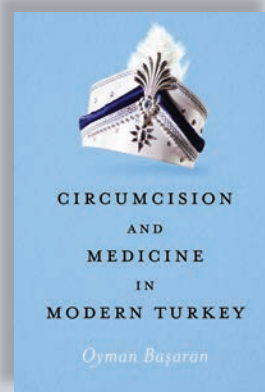
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## **We Are All Armenian** *Voices from the Diaspora*

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## **Circumcision and Medicine in Modern Turkey**

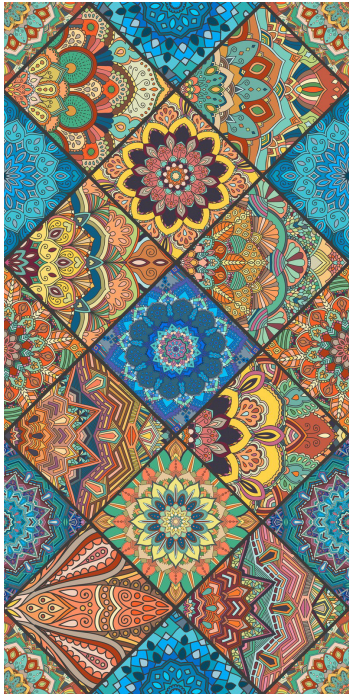
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## Meeting of Middle East Studies Journal Editors

The Publications Committee organized a meeting for editors of journals that publish on the Middle East at the MESA 2023 Annual Meeting. Nine editors of various journals attended the meeting to discuss the challenges they face, how they can offer guidance and mentorship to each other, and the best practices they follow to overcome bias and discrimination in academic publishing. This was a lively and productive discussion. It showed that there is a serious need for a common platform for editors to come together periodically, share expertise, and consult one another. The editors expressed their appreciation for the opportunity and hoped that the Publications Committee would organize similar meetings at future MESA annual meetings as well as online over the course of the year.



Attendees of the 2023 Editors Meeting held November 5, 2023 in Montréal, Canada

On behalf of the MESA Publications Committee, we thank the following attendees for their valuable comments and suggestions:

Adam R. Joyce, *Middle East Policy*

Alison Vacca, *al-Usur al-Wusta: The Journal of Middle East Medievalists*

Farshad Sonboldel, *MELA Notes*

Ginetta E.B. Candelario, *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism*

Heather Ferguson, *Review of Middle East Studies (ROMES)*

Katie Natanel, *Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP)*

Micah Hughes, *Journal of Muslim Philanthropy and Civil Society*

Mohammad T. Alhawary, *Al-'Arabiyya Journal*

Nermin Allam, American Political Science Association *MENA Politics Newsletter*

### Editors Listserv

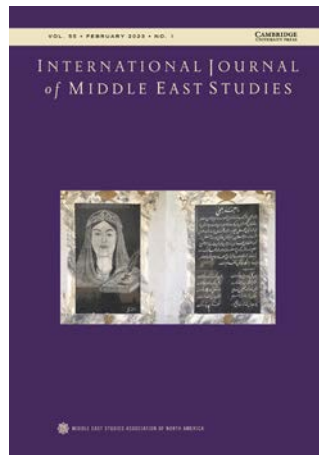
We are in the process of updating our editors list to create a listserv as a platform of communication. If you are an editor of a journal that publishes on the Middle East, please send Sara Palmer ([sara@mesana.org](mailto:sara@mesana.org)) or Senem Aslan ([saslan@bates.edu](mailto:saslan@bates.edu)) your contact information so that we include you on our list.

### Upcoming Spring 2024 Meeting

We are planning to organize another editors meeting online in the spring of 2024 and hope to create more opportunities to facilitate communication among editors.

# MESA Board Announces Search for Next *IJMES* Editor

The MESA Board of Directors invites applications and nominations for the next editor of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (IJMES) for a five-year term beginning July 1, 2025. Candidates should be internationally recognized Middle East scholars in either the humanities or the social sciences and be affiliated with an academic institution prepared to contribute space and support to an editorial office. Applications should include proposals for this institutional contribution, endorsed by the institution involved.



The preferred candidate is a senior scholar at the rank or equivalent of full professor, with significant editorial experience; with extensive contacts throughout the broader field of Middle East studies; and with the capacity to ensure institutional support.

The editor is responsible for ensuring the quality of IJMES as the leading English-language journal in the field. Editorial duties include establishing editorial policy in consultation with the MESA Board of Directors; working directly and primarily with Cambridge University Press (CUP), which publishes IJMES; managing the ScholarOne online system now used by the journal; administering the peer-review selection process; compiling the book review section in conjunction with book review editors; suggesting revisions for manuscripts; nominating book review editors and members of the editorial board for review and approval by MESA's Board of Directors and CUP; and overseeing

the editing and production of the four issues that make up an IJMES volume. Support from the institution with which the editor is affiliated could consist of office space and equipment for the editor and managing editor, support for a graduate student assistant (or financial support that will cover salary for an administrative assistant), postage and incidental expenses, and/or release time from teaching for the editor. CUP also provides some financial support for the editorial office including a salary for the managing editor. The editor and CUP will determine the way in which CUP's contribution is to be allocated.

The editor receives a modest annual stipend from CUP.

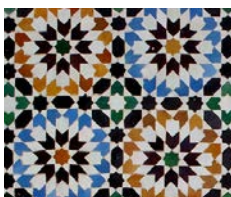
In addition, MESA provides for the editor's travel and two nights' lodging at the annual meeting. The editor prepares a written report presented at the fall board meeting and at the MESA Members Meeting, which are both held in conjunction with the annual meeting. They also serve as a member of MESA's Publications Committee.

Inquiries should be addressed to Jeff Reger at 520-333-2577 x106 or [jeff@mesana.org](mailto:jeff@mesana.org).

Applications with letter(s) of institutional commitment should be sent to [secretariat@mesana.org](mailto:secretariat@mesana.org).

Application review will begin in June 2024, and continue until a new editor is identified.

## MESA Guidelines for Evaluating Digital Scholarship for the purpose of Hiring, Tenure & Promotion



MESA has prepared a set of guidelines to encourage fair and adequate evaluation of digital scholarship. These MESA guidelines point to best practices that are being widely adopted and is provided as a resource for members and to the field and is located on [MESA's Resources & Opportunities](#) page.





## Committee News

### MESA Global Academy

The MESA Global Academy supports displaced scholars from MENA. 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.

## Expanding Our Support

In the present moment, with the massive death and devastation experienced by the people of the Gaza Strip and beyond, including students and scholars, we are anguished to witness the terrible toll of displacement and destruction. The impact on higher education is just one aspect of this horrific violence. As a scholarly association, one way we have given concrete expression to our solidarity with communities affected by conflicts has been by working with displaced scholars as they resume their careers. We are painfully aware that today the need for solidarity is mounting exponentially. We are honored to continue our work as the MESA Global Academy, by welcoming our current cohort of scholars for the 2023-2024 academic year: 12 new scholars and 16 continuing scholars from Afghanistan, Iran, Palestine, Syria, Turkey, and Yemen comprise the group. While most Global Academy scholars continue to be currently located in North America, we have expanded our support to several academics displaced in Europe and within the MENA region itself – for instance, scholars displaced from Syria and Yemen who are now based in the UAE and Jordan, respectively.



MESA Global Academy Scholars Dr. Haroun Rahimi of the American University of Afghanistan and Dr. Bashir Mobasher of American University meet up at the MESA Annual Conference in Montréal in November 2023.

Highlights of the Fall 2023 semester include paper workshops and panels hosted by new university partners, including the Hunter College (CUNY) Department of Arabic Studies, which hosted Dr. Mohammed Almahfali of Malmö University, Sweden for an online talk on “Censorship and Its Implications on Modern Arabic Literature.” Professor Terri Ginsberg of the department moderated the event. The Department of Government at the University of Texas at Austin hosted Dr. Ramin Mansoori of the University of Pittsburgh, Dr. Bashir Mobasher of American University, and Dr. Shamshad Pasarlay of the University of Chicago for a paper workshop on Afghan governance and the rule of law. Dr. Jason Brownlee of UT Austin served as moderator and Dr. Eva Bellin of Brandeis University took the role as discussant. In addition, the University of Pennsylvania Department of History hosted an online panel on “Transnational Persian History and Literature: Early Modern Perspectives,” with Dr. Nasir Ahmad Arian of Penn State and Dr. Khalil Afzali of UCLA. Dr. Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet of the University of

Pennsylvania served as moderator. The Global Academy was also pleased to serve as a co-organizer of the Arab Studies Institute’s “Gaza in Context,” a series of virtual teach-ins and conversations on a host of issues introducing educators, researchers, and students to the history and present of Gaza.

The Global Academy was well-represented at the MESA Annual Meeting in Montreal. The program collaborated with the Arab Political Science Network to organize the roundtable, “Trends in Arab Politics.” Speakers were Dr. Razan Ghazzawi of Oregon State University, Dr. Marwa Shalaby of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Dr. Omar Sirri of SOAS University of London, and Dr. Basileus Zeno of York University. Dr. Samer Shehata of the University of Oklahoma served as chair. The Global Academy also held a panel in which scholars Dr. Mohammed Almahfali of Malmö University, Sweden and Dr. Semiha Topal of John Carroll University presented their research on “Human Rights, Gender, and Citizenship in the Middle East,” which was chaired by Dr. Laurie Brand of the University of Southern California. Finally, the Global Academy hosted a late-afternoon reception for its scholars, faculty mentors, donors, and friends, at which Global Academy Committee members were pleased to honor an attendee, the Syrian writer and political dissident Yassin Al-Haj Saleh.



MESA Global Academy scholars are again publishing in *Jadaliyya's* "Scholars in Context" series this year, in which they discuss the significance of their work, identify the audiences they seek to reach, and outline their future research trajectories. In September *Jadaliyya* also published a roundtable with contributions by Global Academy scholars on the US intervention in Afghanistan titled "Ignoring the Local in Afghanistan." In addition, a roundtable on displacement penned by Global Academy scholars and chaired by Dr. Ilana Feldman of George Washington University appears in the latest issue of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. An online roundtable based on the IJMES roundtable complemented the publication and was chaired by Dr. Miriam Lowi of The College of New Jersey.

The program offered six professional development workshops in the summer and fall: on navigating the North American academy, academic adjacent careers, teaching, conference presentations, and job applications. Dr. Suad Joseph of the University of California, Davis, also facilitated a workshop on grant writing. Spring 2024 workshops will focus on journal and book publishing.

As always, we thank our donors, supporters, and friends, who make the continuation of the MESA Global Academy possible!

To join our email list to be kept informed of events, publications, and other news, contact Program Manager Mimi Kirk at [mimi@mesana.org](mailto:mimi@mesana.org)



**MESA  
Global Academy**

#### Global Academy Committee

**Beth Baron (Chair)**  
CUNY

**Aslı Bali**  
Yale Law School

**Aslı İğsız**  
New York University

**Arzoo Osanloo**  
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**Jeffrey Reger** (ex-officio)  
MESA Executive Director

**Mimi Kirk**  
Program Manager  
[mimi@mesana.org](mailto:mimi@mesana.org)

[mesaglobalacademy.org](http://mesaglobalacademy.org)



TMR invites you to explore **The Markaz Review's** year-end double issue on **ENDINGS & BEGINNINGS**, and visit TMR Weekly every Monday for new stories. TMR will continue publishing stories for Gaza each Monday. Here are a few:

***The Palestine Laboratory and Gaza: An Excerpt*** Antony Loewenstein  
***Gaza vs. Mosul from a Medical and Humanitarian Standpoint*** Ahmed Twaij  
***Palestinian Artists & Anti-War Supporters of Gaza Cancelled*** Nada Ghosn  
***What's in a Ceasefire?*** Adrian Kreutz, Enzo Rossi, Lillian Robb  
***The Fiction of Palestine's Ghassan Zaqtan*** Cory Oldweiler  
***Beautiful October 7th Art Belies the Horrors of War*** Mark LeVine  
***Palestine's Pen against Israel's Swords of Injustice*** Mai Al-Nakib  
***October 7 and the First Days of the War*** Robin Yassin-Kassab  
***Palestine and the Unspeakable*** Lina Mounzer

**The Markaz Review** is a nonprofit literary/arts publication committed to freedom of expression.

# 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 at the MESA Annual Meeting on pedagogy, curriculum development, technology in the classroom, international study and other aspects of teaching and learning.

## Tenth Annual Undergraduate Research Workshop and Poster Session

CUMES was proud to host our tenth annual Undergraduate Research Workshop at the MESA Annual Meeting in Montreal. This year, our 19 participants hailed from the disciplines of linguistics, history, international affairs, literature, and anthropology. They represented public, private, large, and small universities. This year's cohort joined the ranks of the 119 students who have participated in the conference since its founding in 2014.

- **Rachel Beth Acker (North Carolina State University)** “Historicizing American Exceptionalism: US Interventionism in Iran 1940s-1980s”
- **Shermeen Al Quradaghi (University of Guelph)** “Striking a Balance of Prosperity in the Middle East”
- **Miriam Alrahl (Florida State University)** “A Case Study in the Lebanese-Colombian Mahjar: La Balada de María Abdala by Juan Gossain”
- **Laura Brawley (Tulane University)** “Reconstruction in the Midst of Rebellion: A Kurdish Case Study of Gender, Militancy, and Ideology in the MENA Region”
- **Kyle Campbell (Tulane University)** “The Gulf Paradox - Social Engineering and Migration in Kuwait and the UAE”
- **Naomi Carpenter (Smith College)** “Bodies in Song: Political Uses of the Egyptian National Anthem”
- **Lilian Georgiou (University of Illinois, Springfield)** “Resistance to Reform: The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Arab Orthodox Community”
- **Gideon Gordon (Boston University)** “The War of the Flags: The Outbreak of Iraqi Kurdistan’s Civil War, 1994–1998”
- **Elysse Howard (Wilfrid Laurier University)** “US and Middle Eastern Reconciliation: Conceptualizing an Ease in Tensions Between America And Islamic Nations From a Psychological Perspective”
- **Noora Jabir, (NYU, Abu Dhabi)** “Empirical Data or Authentic Heritage? Understanding the Role of Science in the Production of Heritage in the UAE”
- **Heather Jensen (University of Arizona)** “Palestine is a Verb: Cultural Production as Palestinian Nation-Making Outside of the Middle East”



Stella Metcalf, Smith College



Jayakumari Nair, University of Arkansas



Posters on display in the Book Exhibit



Some of the posters from the 19 undergraduate students who participated in the 2023 Workshop and Poster Session

- **Stella Metcalf (Smith College)** “‘Acceptable Human Knowledge’: Arabic Printing as a Technology of Catholic Power”
- **Jayakumari Nair (University of Arkansas)** “The Mudawana through Zanka Contact: The Real-Life Implications of the Exclusion of Unmarried Women and the Criminalization of Extramarital Affairs”
- **Olabisi Onikoyi (Sacramento State University)** “The Notion of Power in the Middle Eastern Region”
- **Elle Palmer (Whitman College)** “Forced Evictions and the (De) Construction of Home in Palestine-Israel”
- **Natalie Parsons (Macalester College)** “Negotiating Arabic: Diglossic Language and Intercultural Proficiency in American Education”
- **Anindita Pongshe (University of Guelph)** “Failure to Intervene: Analyzing the Role of the UNSC in Egypt During the Arab Spring”
- **Meena Sabeeh (University of Guelph)** “Impact of Social Media on Political Activism in the Middle East”
- **Arianna Werner (University of Southern California-Dornsife)** “Iranian Olympia: Bodybuilding, Class and Masculinity in Iran”



Rachel Beth Acker, NC State University



Gideon Gordon, Boston University

This workshop provides professional development, concrete feedback, and insight into academic conferencing. In Montreal, the workshop consisted of a small group presentation of their research with feedback, followed by a public exhibit of their research poster. The posters were then displayed in the book exhibit and students were on hand to talk about their work during coffee breaks. Additionally, there were two professional development sessions in which students could ask faculty anything about their professional lives, their journey, or their research. The dedication students had to research, to complexity, and to creativity was impressive.

We hope you will join CUMES in thanking these students for sharing their ideas and the students’ mentors for encouraging them to take this chance. We hope that in the coming years, we can expand the participants list further. This workshop nurtures the next generation of Middle East scholars and, if these participants are any indication, that future is very promising.





**Middle East Studies Association**

**1957 E Street NW Suite 512**

**Washington, DC 20052 (USA)**

AL AKHAWAYN UNIVERSITY IN IFRANE, MOROCCO (AUI) continues its Arabic and North African Studies (ARANAS) program in Summer 2024. This program will allow students to choose between one or two four-week intensive sessions and also, if they wish, a summer class in our regular Summer Session that will have a range of courses in North African Studies and even other academic areas that students would be welcome to take provided they meet the prerequisites. The intensive Arabic aspect will also include trips within Morocco and a range of community-based experiential learning opportunities. Students will live in the AUI dorms or homestays with other students or families committed to the program goals. Students may also choose to only enroll in the regular Summer Session without taking any intensive Arabic courses.

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## ARANAS Program in Summer 2024

Interested students see  
the ARANAS website  
[aui.ma/aranas](http://aui.ma/aranas)

**Complete the ARANAS 2024 Interest Form  
by April 1, 2024**

**The Full Application and Registration are  
due May 1, 2024**

### CONTACT US

Al Akhawayn University

ARANAS

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[aranas@aui.ma](mailto:aranas@aui.ma)

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