

# IMES Alumni Newsletter

University of Edinburgh  
Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies

www.imes.ed.ac.uk  
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## GRADUATION 2013

### Dear IMES Alumni!

This is the first of what we plan to be a continuing series of IMES Alumni Newsletters which we will be sending out to you twice a year. We see it as a way of keeping you informed about what is happening in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at Edinburgh after you leave here and as a way in which you can keep in touch with us. In each issue we will be featuring news on events, personalities and other items of interest but we also would very much to hear from you: how you have fared since your graduation, your work, your travels, your thoughts and ongoing interests and activities.

So if you are a recent graduate, or perhaps one from the distant past, a former undergraduate or postgraduate student, we would be happy to receive anything from you - articles, artwork, stories, memories and questions - that we can feature in our next edition. Do drop us a line!

We lead this first issue with our most freshly minted Alumni – the class of 2013 – here pictured in George Square after graduation.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Tony Gorman, *IMES (Head)*



## IMES Award Winners

IMES awards two prizes each year for distinguished undergraduate performance. The Irene Crawford Prize for best final year student was awarded to Tessa Grafen (Arabic and Persian) (*below right*). The Carole Hillenbrand Prize for best dissertation this year was shared between Clementine Bogg-Hargroves ('To what extent has the relationship between Israel and the Orthodox establishment affected Israeli society?') and Mikko Lehtikoinen ('Human Rights, Cultural Relativism, and Islam; How Western are Human rights and does it matter?'). Well done all!



## Dr Who?

### Graduating PhDs

Antonia Fraser Fujinaga:

'Life and Limb: Irreversible hadd penalties in Iranian criminal courts and opportunities to avoid them'

Janet Starkey:

'Examining Editions of The Natural History of Aleppo: Revitalizing Eighteenth-Century Texts'



Antonia Fraser Fujinaga and her supervisor, Dr Andrew Newman

### Graduating students of IMES in 2013

#### **MA (Hons) Arabic**

Clementine Bogg-Hargroves, Olivia Dobbs, Maia Entwistle, Kevin Gray, Mikko Lehtikoinen, Chelsea Milsom, Lloyd Randle

#### **MA (Hons) Arabic and Economics**

Matej Belin

#### **MA (Hons) Arabic and French**

Fay Moody

#### **MA (Hons) Arabic and History of Art**

Suzanne Compagnon

#### **MA (Hons) Arabic and Persian**

Tessa Grafen, Anna Samulski

#### **MA (Hons) Arabic and Politics**

Stephanie Leach, Bilal Mueqat, Thomas Patey, Paulina Sliwiska

#### **MA (Hons) Arabic and Social Anthropology**

Telche Hanley-Moyle

#### **MA (Hons) Arabic and Spanish**

Amanda Green, Ashleigh Humphries, Katherine Smeaton-Russell

#### **MA (Hons) Economics and Islamic Studies**

Aiysha Sarwar

#### **MA (Hons) Middle Eastern Studies**

Rachel May, Natasha Turak

## Thoughts on Cairo

ANIA GABOUNE

*MSc International Relations of the Middle East with Arabic*

I am still not sure how to summarise adequately my experiences these past couple of weeks in Cairo and now in Amman. I began the summer studying at ILI in Cairo as part of the study abroad portion of my Masters alongside eleven others in my Arabic program at IMES. We have now come to be known as the 'Egyptian Refugees' following our swift and sudden evacuation from Cairo, after several months, to Amman. I feel like I had barely adjusted to the Egyptian lifestyle (all the *zahma* and the *dawsha*) when I had to leave.

In retrospect, of course, the lead up to the June 30<sup>th</sup> demonstrations was telling of the events to come. By that I mean that everyone I managed to speak with for longer than five minutes was extremely forthcoming in their political views, which were demonstrative of the tensions in place. People spoke of uncertainty and instability, coupled with disappointment in the current state of Egypt. Some vehemently blamed former Mubarak-era ministers and associates (*felool\**) for refusing to step down. Others pointed to the Muslim Brotherhood's unwillingness to deviate from their ideological agenda. All expressed a strong dissatisfaction and disdain for what the political sphere, and government institutions, in Egypt had become. I believe that the majority of tensions were based on a perceived failure of the January 25<sup>th</sup> revolution to meet the demands of people. In other words, everyone identifying as part of January 25<sup>th</sup> had

individual goals - both specific and general - and felt that the toppling of Mubarak was not enough. Specific to my experience in Cairo at this time, I felt both incredibly lucky and worried. I felt honoured to have the chance, and ability, to discuss politics, society, and ideas of democratisation with as many people as were willing to exchange views with me. However, I felt increasingly worried about the rising tensions, displays of aggression against foreigners and women, and the Tamarrod ('Rebel') campaign's seemingly disorganised goals geared towards chaos.

As such, when June 30<sup>th</sup> was approaching many people were calling for extreme measures to have their demands met. I remember one taxi driver enthusiastically described to me how he wanted Morsi's beard cut off and how exactly he wanted him to die. Another friend reassured me that Tamarrod were all criminals and did not have a substantial support base to enact any change. Overall, the resounding answer to 'What do you think will happen?' was '*Insha'allah* we will see.' Further, resentment and anger towards the government were peaking with the petrol 'crisis' and Morsi's unwillingness to engage with the opposition prior to June 30<sup>th</sup>. Rumours were swirling around that the Muslim Brotherhood would react violently, and that Tamarrod's sole aim was to create violence and chaos. I felt extremely uncomfortable that everyone was calling for as little violence as possible. Why must there be violence?

Finally, on June 30<sup>th</sup> itself we were given the day off school, with preliminary pro-Morsi protests on the Friday and Saturday occurring relatively calmly. My roommates and I, fully loaded up on non-perishable groceries and chocolate, sat

watching Al-Jazeera Masr Mubashr while reading tweets all day. There was a sense of elation following reports that upwards of fifteen million people came out to demonstrate and express their political views peacefully, the largest demonstrations in history. However, Morsi's speech later that evening seemed completely disconnected from the demonstrations that day. He seemed unwilling, or oblivious, to the systemic tensions and resentments that had brought millions of people out to Tahrir and many other locations throughout the country. He also failed to take responsibility, and instead venerated the opposition for their unwillingness to cooperate. My roommates and I looked at each other, 'Now what?' What followed was both the most boring, and yet event-filled, days I have yet experienced. Tamarrod issued its ultimatum to the regime, the military also threw its weight behind the protestors and street battles erupted. Meanwhile we made sure to come home at 3pm at the latest and stayed up until 4am waiting to see how the night would turn out. Every day we found ourselves increasing our threshold of when we felt too unsafe to stay in Egypt - would we leave after a certain death toll was reported that night? Would we leave if violence came to our neighbourhood? It was surreal going to school, and returning to quiet Mohandiseen while seeing images of Cairo University in flames and hearing of violent assaults in Tahrir. Ultimately, I still do not know the extent to which we were 'safe' nor at what point we stopped being in full safety and security. I kept reassuring family members that Cairo was a large city and that I would just wait and see what the next day would bring before leaving. I kept placing my faith in the Canadian



**Zara Shad (left, MSc IRMEwA), Melanie Quintero (MSc Arab World Studies) and Ania Gaboune (MSc IRMEwA) somewhere in Egypt.**

Embassy (which immediately shut down after June 30th and has been silent since), as well as in common sense to gauge when would be an appropriate time to leave. I kept hearing that I was lucky to be in a once in a lifetime opportunity to see politics happen in the field, but realistically I was living under glorified house arrest as we waited on developments. It was extremely fulfilling to watch but frustrating not to be able to participate, especially as a woman. Finally, when the University gave us swift evacuation notices, which were carried out extremely efficiently, I felt mixed feelings. Yes, I recognised it was no longer safe but it was the most intellectually rewarding experience I have had both for Arabic and Middle Eastern politics. I did not want to leave the Cairo I had grown to love but did not want to continue experiencing Cairo from inside the confines of my apartment. All in all, it was the best decision to leave. Here's to a new adventure in Jordan!



## NO BLAME

Poem by ABDALLAH  
EISA

MSc Islamic and  
Middle Eastern Studies

كلما يمم قدس العقل يزداد بتيه  
ورنا ياساً إلى اللجة مما يعتريه  
فلإن أرج اليقين الحق دعني لا تلمني  
لا تلمني هد أركاني شوق للسكون  
ساءل القلب الجمادات: ألا كيف يكون؟  
لم تجبه الصم إلا ما إلى الصمت الركون  
أترى الموت وقلبي مثل طير ووكون  
فلإن أرج اليقين الحق دعني لا تلمني  
لا تلمني فالظما يزداد بي في كل حين  
سُقِيَتِ رُوحِي و لكن ليس تسقى من معين  
ما غناء بأنينٍ ما وصال بحنين  
ما صلاة بخشوع وتقى من غير دين  
فلإن أرج اليقين الحق دعني لا تلمني  
لا تلمني و مُم الخلاق في دنيا الخيال  
خط فردوساً وسلكاً ودعا القلب: تعال  
ويد تمتد خلف الخطو ممحاة الوصال  
عالق بين صبا ربح وهبات الشمال  
فلإن أرج اليقين الحق دعني لا تلمني  
خَلَقْتُ أَرْشِيَّةَ تحمل آمال التمني  
كل ما أرجوه نجم لا أرى منه تدني  
أقبض العقل بكفي خوف أن يرغب عني  
فلك يجري وإني في ثوائي وأغني  
لا تلمني إن يكن قد ساء ظني لا تلمني

لا تلمني إن يكن قد ساء ظني لا تلمني  
إن تسربت بيأس مزع الأركان مني  
وأنا لا أبصر الدهر سوى ظهر المجن  
وبذلت الروح أشلاء فقوبلت بمن  
فلإن أرج اليقين الحق دعني لا تلمني  
لا تلمني حينما يصرخ قلبي أن يغاثا  
فإذا بالصوت مرتداً وملجوماً لهاثا  
وكواني كشهاب وقضى ألا بعاثا  
هكذا يجلدني الدهر بلاء فاجتثاثا  
فلإن أرج اليقين الحق دعني لا تلمني  
لا تلمني أيها الساقى إذا ناديت هيا  
اسقني كأس جنون وحجاي املاه غيا  
أضياء في عماء أم عم يوسط ضيا  
قل بأيّ حجب الدهر يكشفن عليا  
فلإن أرج اليقين الحق دعني لا تلمني  
لا تلمني وأنا الحيران في دنيا السفية  
إنما العاقل فيها كني في بنيه

## Interview with Dr Thomas Pierret

EMESE LORENCSICS

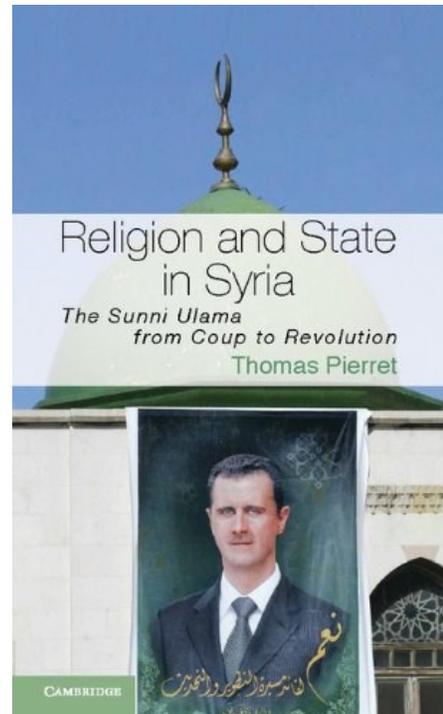
*MSc Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies*

*Dr Thomas Pierret, who was appointed as Lecturer in Contemporary Islam in IMES 2011, has recently published his new book about Syria and the Syrian ulama. We asked him about the writing and research process, how the Middle East caught his attention and what difficulties he had faced during his fieldwork in Syria.*

### **Why did you choose the Middle East, especially Syria, as your research area?**

There was no concrete turning point in my life when I decided to work on the Middle East. I have been interested in that region since I was around four or five years old, although none of my family had a special interest in this area. At first, the mystery of the Middle East caught my attention, that was a typical Orientalist fascination; the story of Aladdin, and also some Bedouins I saw on the television. Early on I was also faced with more serious and tragic side of the region; I was five or so when I started to try to make sense or at least I remembered news reports and images from the radio and TV about the war in Lebanon.

My interest in Syria was also related to mystery. I was not really interested in the country until I was twenty, when I joined a friend of mine on his backpacker trip to Jordan. I had some knowledge about Jordan, Lebanon, the Palestine-Israel conflict, but Syria was a black hole, especially in the 90s, when it was a very closed country. I learnt a bit about Syria in Jordan, and I decided



*Thomas Pierret, Religion and state in Syria: the Sunni Ulama from coup to revolution, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012*

to visit that country the following year. From then on I decided to focus on Syria in my research. From that point of view, I found the country all the more interesting as there was not much available literature about its politics and society.

### **What made you write this book? How does your book differ from recent/other discussions about the role of Islam in Syria?**

I think that the main difference is the kind of bottom-up approach, which to a certain extent is reminiscent of the way anthropologists work. If you look at the literature about Syria, especially about its politics, it is very top-down, focused on the regime and the president, and the reason for this is that the regime produces this discourse about itself. It seems like Syria is the personal

property of Assad, and this discourse was adopted by many scholars, knowingly or not.

In this book, I look at a certain part of the society, namely at the religious elite, its history, its internal divides and its relation with the state, but from their point of view. Because looking at something from the state's point of view is a bit problematic; the state always pretends to have more power on people than it really has. They point at the laws and rules and pretend that everyone abides by them, but in Syria, law is only a tiny part of the reality. Much happens in an informal fashion, there is a massive, routinised violation of law in Syria by citizens in accordance with some people within the regime.

**What was the hardest part of writing your book? Did you face any difficulties during your fieldwork?**

The fieldwork was not easy at all, because Syria is a police state, so it is not really welcoming for social researchers. Even at that time (2005 to 2008), you had to be very cautious when doing research in that country. My research topic was especially sensitive since everything that is related to Sunni Islam is seen as a problem, as a major threat by the Baathist regime. Even if the Sunni scholars do not speak against the regime, their mere existence was seen as a problem.

My fieldwork was very long, and sometimes very discouraging, since many people were quite reluctant and it took a long time to discover something interesting. It was not a kind of fieldwork where it is possible to have a schedule and make twenty interviews in two weeks. One day I accidentally discovered a mosque and found something very interesting happening

there which nobody told me about. Even the most helpful people were very selective in the kind of issues they would address with me. It was a long-term and very slow process; I spent two years in Syria.



I did not receive any official licence to do my research, even though I applied for one, so I had to go back to Belgium twice a year in order to apply for a new visa. Because of this, I was afraid that I would be expelled. In the summer of 2010, after I finished my thesis, I went back to Syria to do a follow-up visit, and that was even worse than when I was on the fieldwork, since the atmosphere was very tense and there was a kind of crackdown on the religious circles, so it was even more difficult to do research there. Therefore I decided I would stop doing research on Syria; but a few months later, the uprising started.

**What are your current projects?**

I am working on the current developments in Syria. My focus is broader than it used to be before 2011: at that time the ulama were more or less the only people speaking for Islam, there was not too much else, no relevant Islamic movements; today, on the contrary, there is a large number of new religious forces, new scholars and preachers, Islamist movements (political and military). At this stage, I am trying to make sense of all of that.

## Close Your Eyes and Look at Me – film screening at IMES

**Dr MOURAD DIOURI**

*eLearning Instructor*

On 13 February, IMES postgraduate students attended a screening of 'Close Your Eyes and Look at Me', a short documentary which explores the meaning of the 'hijab' for a young Muslim woman (Shabana Diouri).

After a brief introduction by the narrator, the six-minute film was played and a lively discussion and Q&A followed. Questions were complex, inquisitive and challenging. Issues raised concerned the wearing of the hijab, the lack of its specific mention in the Qur'an and the prominence of sexual harassment in countries where the majority of women adopt the hijab in daily life.

Shabana's insight and depth of personal knowledge of her subject allowed a fruitful dialogue and greater understanding of the hijab

from the female perspective dispelling certain assumptions and stereotypes. She introduced the cultural, political and spiritual aspects of what could be regarded simply as a 'piece of cloth'.

The speaker ended the session with the thought-provoking conclusion that the hijab should not be used as a means to prevent dialogue – it is a personal choice, which should not be used to undervalue or underestimated.



Dr Mourad Diouri and Shabana Diouri



## MSc in Persian Civilisation at IMES

**DR NACIM PAK-SHIRAZ**

*Lecturer in Persian and Film Studies*

The IMES Department proudly presents that as part of the strategic plan for expanding Iranian Studies, the University of Edinburgh has approved a new taught postgraduate programme in Persian Civilisation, which will be launched in September 2014. The **MSc in Persian Civilisation** is an interdisciplinary programme that builds on a number of fields of study, including Classics, Ancient History, Middle Eastern Studies and Islamic Studies.



**Dr Azin Haghighi (IHF Teaching Fellow in Persian) in action.**

It will thus introduce students to the sweep and complexity of Persian history and culture from the pre-Islamic period, when the Achaemenid dynasty ruled the largest land empire up to that time, to the post-Revolutionary era when Iran established itself as a theocratic Islamic Republic.

Throughout history, the Persians have exerted a remarkable hold over world civilisation and this programme will allow students to explore the political, cultural, religious, and social make-up of this strategically vital area of the Middle East.

Another unique feature of this programme is that, unlike other Persian/Iranian studies programmes, which focus on the history and politics or literatures and languages of the region, the MSc in Persian Civilisation will go beyond these approaches to introduce students to the arts and culture of Iran, from the architecture and iconography of the ancient and medieval periods to the performing arts and film of contemporary Iran.

The taught MSc in Persian Civilisation is distinctive in its breadth and diversity, drawing on the extensive expertise across two Schools of the University in Iranian historical and cultural studies from the period c. 800 BCE to the present day. The programme involves scholars with complementary interests in Middle Eastern and Mediterranean civilization within the School of History, Classics and Archaeology and the School of Literatures, Languages and Culture. It provides a wide-ranging academic training and learning experience, one unique in the field of Persian studies, particularly for those wishing to combine research at postgraduate level with specialist methodological, theoretical, literary, and historiographical training.

## Persian Civilisation Seminar Series

**DR NACIM PAK-SHIRAZ**

*Lecturer in Persian and Film Studies*

During the second semester of 2012/13 IMES organised the *Persian Civilization Seminar Series – Iran through the Ages: Ancient, Medieval and Modern*. Over 10 weeks, renowned scholars in Persian Studies and related disciplines came to Edinburgh to present their research on a range of topics spanning from Achaemenid kingship, Sassanian material culture to medieval paintings, Qajar dress and Iranian comedies. Through their talks, these speakers provided a glimpse into the vast depth, breadth and diversity of Iranian history and culture.

*Our Monday evening seminars will resume in September. They are normally held in room G2 at 5:30pm during the semester and the programme will be advertised on our website.*



Persian dancer by an unknown artist from the Qajar period (Art Museum of Georgia).

## History of the IMES Department

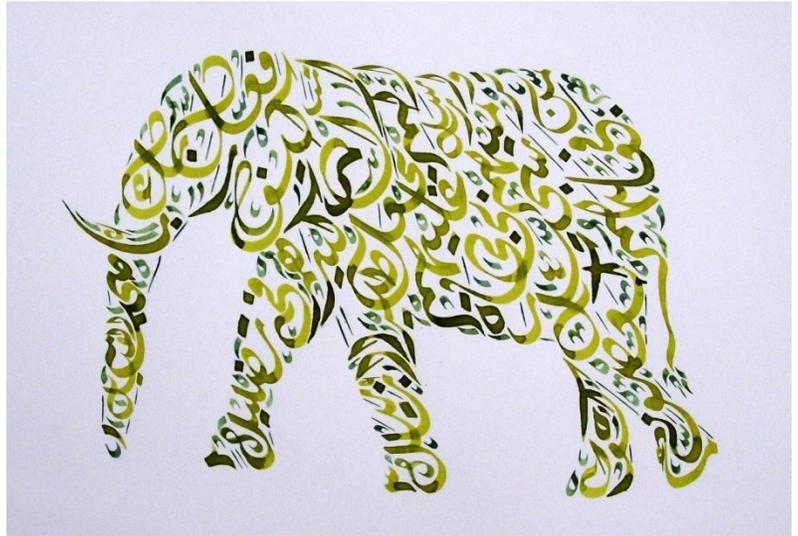
Arabic was first taught at the University of Edinburgh over 250 years ago but the Department of Arabic was only formally established in 1912. In 1980 it amalgamated with the Departments of Turkish and Persian (which had been set up in 1950 and 1951 respectively) to form Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies which was bolstered in 1983 with the inaugural appointment of the Iraq Chair in 1983. Since that time IMES has greatly expanded in the numbers of students and in the range of degrees it offers, from the three students graduating with Arabic degrees in 1981 to the high water mark of 40 graduating undergraduate students in 2009. At the moment IMES offers eighteen different undergraduate degrees, as well as an increasing number of taught MSc degrees: Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies, Middle Eastern Diasporas, and the two year Arab World Studies. In September a new MSc degree in Advanced Arabic will be launched, and in 2014 an MSc Persian Civilisations will.

*al-Mu'arrikh*

**ALUMNI PROFILES**

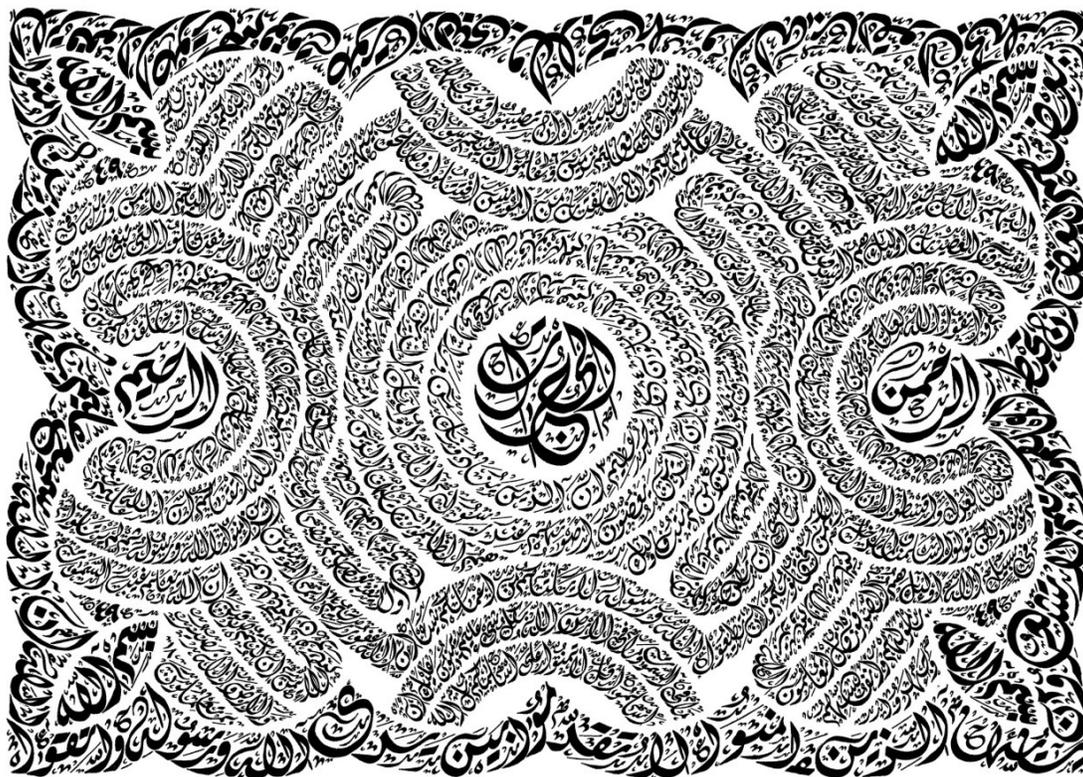
One of the purposes of the IMES Alumni Newsletter is to introduce the works of the IMES Alumni. In this issue, we introduce Everitte Barbee, who works as a calligrapher in Lebanon.

During his semester abroad in Damascus in 2009, Everitte learned to write the Ruq'a, Diwani and Diwani Jali scripts from a local calligrapher, Adnan Farid. After graduating from Edinburgh (2011) he moved to Beirut, Lebanon in September 2011 to continue



improving his language and calligraphy skills. He currently works on canvas, paper and skin. All of his work is comprised entirely of Arabic text, using it in a unique way to illustrate complex images & ideas. He has participated in three group exhibitions (Maktoob: Contemporary Calligraphy Exhibition in Maasser Beit Eddine, Beirut; Bloom: Contemporary Art Fair at Artheum in Karantina, Beirut; and Beirut Art Book Fair at Artheum in Karantina) and a solo exhibition in Lebanon, as well as exhibited work in the Mustapha Basha Museum, Algiers for the Algerian International Festival of Arabic Calligraphy. He is currently planning a solo exhibition of work on paper in Bahrain.

*Sura al-Fil*(top), *Sura al-Hujurat* (bottom)



## STAFF MATTERS

During 2013-2014 Richard Todd will be on leave from IMES taking up a visiting assistant professorship at the American University of Sharjah where he will be delivering courses in classical Arabic literature and Islamic intellectual history.

Nacim Pak-Shiraz will be taking sabbatical leave during the first semester of 2013-2014. Nacim aims to use this period to study the emergence of religious epics within Iranian cinema with a special focus on the 'Qur'anic epic'.

Marilyn Booth returns to IMES in September after a one year leave. During her time away Marilyn has written much of a book manuscript entitled 'Classes of Ladies of Cloistered Spaces: Writing Women's History through Biography in 1890s Egypt'. She also gave talks in St Andrews, Princeton, Charlottesville, Denver, London, and Belfast. In addition, Marilyn ran an intensive translation training programme in Doha and carried out archival and special collections research in Cairo and Göttingen.

In the IMES Office Rhona Hajcman (Cullen) was seconded to the Admissions office in December last year; Paulo Nunes de Moura, previously of Moray House School of Education, has been appointed to her post.

### A TASTE OF ARABIC

There are many Arabic nouns with more than one meaning but occasionally nouns have different plural forms depending on the meaning. Thus *amr* أمر means order, matter or issue. But the plural for order is *awamir* أوامر and for matter/issue it is *umur* أمور. Two other examples:

'*amil* عامل – means factor or worker, but plural '*awamil* عوامل (factors) and '*ummal* عمال (workers)

*hajib* حاجب – means eyebrow, or usher, but plural *hawajib* حواجب (eyebrows) and *hujjab* حُجَّاب (ushers)

## **BOOK REVIEW**

Stephen SHOEMAKER, *The death of a Prophet: the end of Muhammad's life and the beginnings of Islam*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012

**SU MALKIN**

*MSc Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies*

In this book, Shoemaker observes that the non-Muslim sources unanimously indicate the involvement of the Prophet Muhammad in the military campaign in Palestine. Such an indication means that the year of his death would be 634, the time of Islamic conquest of Palestine, which contradicts the traditionally assumed year of death, 632, according to Muslim sources. The contradictory traditions regarding the death of Muhammad, Shoemaker argues, reflect the ideological transformation of Islam from a non-sectarian monotheist community closely linked with the eschatological faith to 'an imperial faith whose confessional identity was grounded in Arab identity and a distinctively Islamic holy land in the Hijaz (199)'. Shoemaker seeks to determine if Muhammad's participation in the invasion of Palestine might correspond with the beliefs of the earliest Believers.

In the first chapter of the book, Shoemaker examines the non-Muslim sources, comprising ten Christian and Jewish chronicles and an alleged letter from the Caliph 'Umar II to Byzantine emperor Leo III. Among these sources, four date back to the seventh century, earlier than the earliest extant Muslim tradition, Ibn Ishaq's *Sira*. Shoemaker evaluates the reliability of these sources by the criteria proposed by Robert Hoyland (3), ie. the source of the

information, its character and its subject. Nevertheless, to what extent Hoyland's criteria are valid is not known. Assuming that they are valid, it seems that Shoemaker sometimes gives the sources more credit than they deserve and overly emphasizes their testimony of Muhammad's presence in the conquest, while some of them are not free from doubt. *Chronological Charts* by Jacob of Edessa is one example, where Shoemaker tries to interpret the raids in 'the Arabs began to make raids in the land of Palestine (37)' as the initial phase of the Islamic conquest. However, based on the text and the chronology, such a statement is unconvincing.

When addressing the chronicle of Theophilus, Shoemaker's is over-confident about the contents of *Chronicle 1234* and *Chronicle of Siirt*, as he concludes that 'Theophilus has perhaps here also combined two separate traditions about Muhammad's relation to the Near Easter conquest: one reporting his direct involvement, as indicated in the first section, and a second that remembered Muhammad as remaining behind, sending forth his followers instead to assault the Roman and Persian empires (51)'. Based on his critical approach to the Muslim sources in the following chapter, it appears that his evaluation of the lost work of Theophilus is uncritical and partial.

Shoemaker adopts a sceptical attitude to the Muslim sources on the death of Muhammad. He first identifies the main sources and then points out the inherent problems of them, including forgery, chronology, and reliability of *isnad*. Shoemaker reviews the previous studies on *isnad*, discussing the views of Goldziher, Schacht, Cook

and Crone, and criticizing the *isnad*-critical approach of Motzki. His skepticism towards the credibility of Muslim traditions and dismissal of any possible historical factuality within them lead him to misunderstand the recent studies made by Görke and Schoeler, charging that their 'claims that 'Urwa may be identified as the author of a significant corpus of *sira* are not especially persuasive (88)'. Nonetheless, their research only implies that the *isnads* date back to 'Urwa as the common source, never claiming him as the author, as they have responded to Shoemaker's charge in a recent article.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to this, Shoemaker seems too enthusiastic about excluding the Muslim traditions from the domain of truth, when asserting 'Ibn Ishaq's hagiography of Muhammad presents a mythical portrait of Muhammad that is quite removed from the actual events of the early seventh century, whatever they may have been (99)'. Yet, whether there is a historical kernel within Ibn Ishaq's narratives cannot be known.

In the second half, Shoemaker argues that Muhammad's biography, revised by the Muslim sources, presents a vision different from the original indicated by the exterior sources. Based on the contentions of Fred Donner, he suggests that Muhammad might have initiated his preaching with a strong eschatological notion, expecting the Hour to happen in the imminent future, possibly within his lifetime. The messianic movement of Muhammad was accepted by other monotheist groups, especially Jews, who are depicted as troublemakers

denying the prophecy of Muhammad in the later Muslim traditions, and this could be testified by *The Secrets of Rabbi Shim'on b. Yohai*, which identifies Muhammad as the fulfillment of Jewish messianic hopes (28). With the death of Muhammad and delaying of the Hour, the first followers had to reinvent the primitive doctrines and reinterpret the past to justify their present needs. Against this background, Shoemaker explains Muhammad's presence in the invasion of Palestine as the earlier view of Muslims, who would see his leadership in the military campaign as a symbol of the eschatological religious movement focusing on Jerusalem and the Holy Land. Such a view was abrogated when the doctrinal focus was reoriented from Jerusalem to Hijaz, especially Mecca and Medina, where Muhammad died according to the revised Muslim viewpoint.

Shoemaker's work is not of much novelty. He is simply reproducing a selection of the previous arguments of Hoyland, Cook and Crone in the first half of the book and Donner in the second part. The original contribution is that he recognizes the unanimity of the exterior sources regarding Muhammad's engagement in the conquest, and endeavors to reveal a different perspective of the origin of Islam through the divergent sources. This approach seems promising, but Shoemaker fails to develop a sufficient link between the divergent views on the death of Muhammad and the background of the ideological and doctrinal transformations. He explains the reason why Muhammad must die in Medina before the conquest or without direct involvement as a consequence of the earliest biographical traditions of the Prophet developed in Medina. Therefore, the biographies are colored

<sup>1</sup> A. Görke, H. Motzki and G. Schoeler, 'First Century Sources for the Life of Muhammad,' *Der Islam* 89 (2012), 2-59.

by local partiality (258). However, this explanation is not convincing. That Muhammad died during the conquest does not contradict attempts to reinforce the position of Mecca or Medina in the first place, and second, as most of *Maghazi* confirms his role as a military leader, a Muhammad saga in the conquest of Holy Land sounds reasonable. If relocating Muhammad's death in Medina is a later attempt to secure the status of Hijaz in the Muslim community while his real death happened outside, there is no narrative tension within the Muslim traditions as it is found in the section about Abu Bakr's speech after Muhammad's death.

Another problem with Shoemaker's methodology is his arbitrary use of the Muslim sources. First, he strongly rejects any possible attempt to confirm their authenticity, but when a certain *hadith* favors his argument, it is endowed with reliability. The order of Muhammad recorded in a number of sources including Ibn Sa'd's *Tabaqat*, saying 'Nay, a booth like the booth of Moses: *thuman* and wood, because the affair [*al-amr*] will happen sooner than that" should be genuine because it "is extremely unlikely that believers in later generations would invent such a tradition and ascribe it to Muhammad, since it was so patently contradicted by the passing of time (176)', according to Shoemaker. Even though the Kister's observation, suggesting that this *hadith* accurately reflects the eschatological perspective, is persuasive, the sentence might still be understood in a rhetorical sense, by which Muslims are reminded of the transience of this life (*al-dunya*).

Likewise in his discussion of the report of the reaction of Muslims after Muhammad's death

(179-181), Shoemaker accepts the reliability of the part where 'Umar refused to believe Muhammad's death and insisted that he had just gone and hidden, and like Moses shall return after forty days, but he asserts that the words of Abu Bakr and his recitation of Quranic verse (3:144) are later interpolations in the revised traditions. After Abu Bakr soothed the crowd and recited the verse, according to Ibn Ishaq and al-Tabari, people did not already know the verse, and they learned it from Abu Bakr. Judging from the context, the verse seems to have been inserted later, as Shoemaker suggests. Nevertheless, 'Umar's reaction may not testify to the fact that most early Muslims expected the Hour within the lifetime of their Prophet, since this discourse could simply be used to dramatize the story. Without a criterion for evaluating the Muslim traditions, it seems that Shoemaker randomly manipulates these sources to support or refute an argument.

To argue that the verse (3:144) was interpolated later, Shoemaker resorts to Casanova's theory on the compilation of the Quran, suggesting that Quranic texts were fixed during the reign of 'Abd al-Malik, while the formation date of the Quran is still under debate. Even if Casanova's theory is seen as credible, Shoemaker does not show any consistent standard in deciding which verses were interpolated later and which were fixed earlier.

As a whole, Shoemaker's work is not without provocative arguments derived from the secondary literature, but it overstates the reliability of the exterior sources and lacks an impartial method to assess the traditional sources.

## **In Memoriam: Dr Ian Howard**

(21 March 1939 – 19 March 2013)

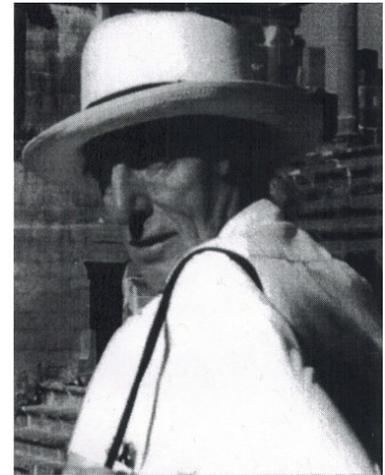
**PROF CAROLE HILLENBRAND**

*Professor Emerita of Islamic History*

Ian Howard obtained a degree in Classics at the University of Wales, a Masters degree in Arabic at SOAS and a PhD at the University of Cambridge. He worked in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Edinburgh for 28 years, from 1970 to 1998. First appointed as Lecturer in Arabic and Islamic Studies, he became a Senior Lecturer in the early 1980s. He resigned his post at Edinburgh in 1998 and subsequently taught until 2005 at the University of Bristol. He was an Honorary Fellow in the Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at Edinburgh for a while as well as a Senior Research Fellow at the Al-Mahdi Institute in Birmingham. He spent his remaining years in Newport in Wales. He was diagnosed with cancer in 2009 and died on 19 March this year.

Ian was a gifted specialist on Twelver Shi'ism; this was recognised both by the academic world and by the Twelver Shi'ite community in Britain, who greatly appreciated the work he did to explain their beliefs and practices to a wider audience. His translation of a key Arabic work on Twelver Shi'ism, the *Kitab al-Irshad (The Book of Guidance)* by al-Shaykh al-Mufid, remains a classic. He took part in the SUNY Al-Tabari Project, translating the part (Volume 19) which dealt with the caliphate of Yazid b. Mu'awiya, 60-64/680-683. He also regularly wrote articles on Twelver Shi'ism in the journal *Al-Serat* published by the Muhammadi Trust in London. Another

core research interest of Ian's was the early development of Islamic ritual, such as his seminal article on the development of the *adhan* and the *iqama* in the *Journal of Semitic Studies*.



Ian was a very popular, indeed charismatic, lecturer for undergraduates. Each year he taught the part of the first-year Islamic History course which dealt with the early conquests of Islam until the end of the Umayyad period. In particular, he gave moving and memorable accounts of the martyrdom of al-Husayn at Karbala; his teaching manner was dramatic and he rarely stood still in front of the lectern. Indeed, one student said to me that she felt that she had personally been 'on the back of the camel with 'A'isha' when Ian narrated in dramatic tones the story of the Battle of the Camel. Ian had a deep love of the Arab world and his many postgraduates, most of whom came from the Middle East, instinctively responded to this. It was indeed a key component of his professional life. This love of things Arab was also instantly apparent in his warm relations with eminent Middle Eastern visitors who came to the University of Edinburgh. As a new lecturer in the Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies in the 1980s I found Ian to be a colleague who cared passionately about the field of Islamic Studies and he swept others along with his

enthusiasm and his flood of creative ideas.

Ian was married twice, firstly to Louise whom he met while he was living in Lebanon in the late 1960s. They had two sons, Thomas and Richard.

## **In Memoriam:**

### **Professor William Roff**

(13 May 1929 – 3 May 2013)

#### **PROF CAROLE HILLENBRAND**

*Professor Emerita of Islamic History*

William (Bill) Roff was a true citizen of the world. Born in Glasgow, he went to school in Dundee and then spent six years in the Merchant Navy. In the 1950s he obtained a BA and an MA at Victoria College in Wellington, New Zealand, before studying for PhD at the Australian National University in Canberra. During the course of his doctoral studies, Bill visited Kelang, in the state of Selangor in Malaysia; this proved to be a pivotal moment for him. Thereafter he retained a special affection for that part of the Muslim world for the rest of his long career.

From 1965 he was active in the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur until he took up an appointment at Columbia University in New York in 1969, where he became a full professor in 1973.

Although South-East Asia always remained the first call on his academic loyalties, Bill was not a scholar with narrow interests. He also wrote on relations between South-East Asia and the Muslim world to the west, and especially

In 1998 he married Avril and he moved to be with her in their native Wales. Ian was a very staunch Catholic; he was given a Requiem Mass according to the Latin rite as he had requested.



**Professor Carole Hillenbrand and Professor William Roff**

maritime links with Oman and the Hadramawt. His articles reflect the wide range of his research – one particularly intriguing article is entitled ‘Whence cometh the Law? Dog saliva in Kelanton, 1937.’ He published several pieces on the *hajj*, focusing on theoretical approaches as well on its significance to South-East Asian Muslims. Amongst his many publications his book, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, has remained an outstanding achievement since it was first published by Yale University Press in 1967.

Bill retired from Columbia University in 1991 and returned to Scotland where he settled in Cellardyke, a beautiful small town in coastal Fife. As well as being a Professor Emeritus of Islamic and South-Asian History at Columbia, Bill became an Honorary Professorial Fellow in

Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Edinburgh in 1992. He enjoyed this role very much, giving most generously of his time to the large group of Malaysian PhD students in IMES, many of them attracted here by his reputation. He supervised their theses, allowing them to benefit from his deep specialist knowledge of their area of the Muslim world. He was also a kindly father figure for those students and their families. In total, he supervised twenty PhD students.

Bill married Sue in 1978. Outsiders could see how happy they were together and how devoted they were to their two daughters Sarah and Emily. In the last few years, Bill greatly enjoyed showing Emily some of the great capital cities of the Muslim world, including Cairo and Istanbul.

In the last few years, Bill's health deteriorated but he faced this decline with admirable fortitude

and dignity. Until this year Bill still came once or twice a month to Edinburgh, despite his increasing deafness and failing eyesight. He loved to have lunch at the Balmoral Hotel in Princes Street, having travelled from Fife on the train and climbed up the Waverley Steps to the hotel with the aid of a very long Alpine pole. On such occasions, he would enjoy talking with great gusto and penetrating insights about many aspects of the Muslim world.

Bill died on 3 May this year. It was a great privilege to have him as a colleague in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies here in the University of Edinburgh. He broadened the intellectual horizons of both academic staff and students alike and he gave in his 'retirement' a shining example of selfless voluntary service to our postgraduate students.

### **IMES ALUMNI NEWSLETTER DESIGN COMPETITION**

IMES is asking you to design a new logo for the masthead of the Alumni Newsletter! Any creative students and alumni are asked to submit their entries before 18 October. The best overall design will win a £50 book voucher.

For further information and for submission of entries, please contact us at [imesalumni@ed.ac.uk](mailto:imesalumni@ed.ac.uk).

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Should you have any feedback or would like to make a contribution to the IMES Alumni newsletter, please contact us at [imesalumni@ed.ac.uk](mailto:imesalumni@ed.ac.uk).