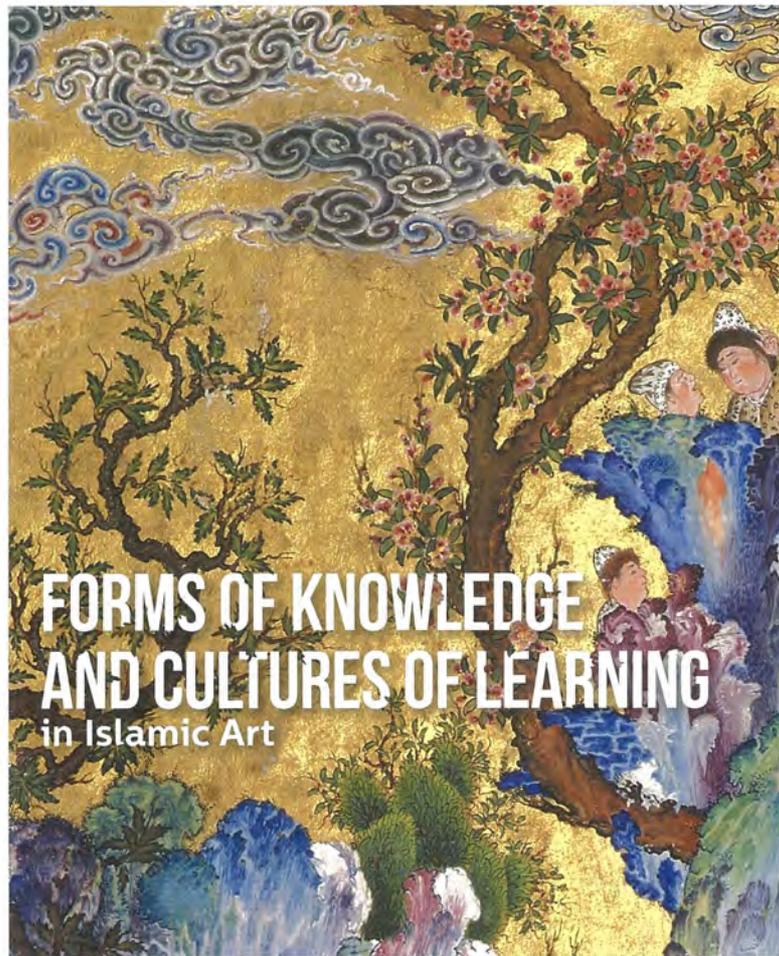


Aga Khan Museum
in Toronto

Conference on Islamic
Art



FORMS OF KNOWLEDGE AND CULTURES OF LEARNING in Islamic Art

HISTORIANS OF ISLAMIC ART ASSOCIATION
Fourth Biennial Symposium, October 16-18, 2014
Aga Khan Museum, Toronto, Canada

From the Head of IMES

By Tony Gorman



Welcome to our latest issue of the IMES Alumni Newsletter.

First of all, warmest congratulations to the most recent graduating students for your efforts. We hope you have enjoyed your time in Edinburgh and wish you the very best for the future.

You will find in this issue some of our regular features, staff news, coverage of our seminar series, a page from the History of IMES, Jonathan Featherstone's column 'A

Taste of Arabic' (returning after a short break), a report from the Alwaleed Centre, and contributions and letters from alumni. We also provide coverage of various events and conferences held over the last few months and give notice of some of those to come this year.

I would like to thank Farshid Kazemi for his work on this issue and to those others that have made contributions to it. Special thanks also to Fayaz Alibhai for serving so capably as Assistant Editor over the last two issues and to Andrew Marsham for stepping in as Acting Editor in the last issue.

Once again we hope you will enjoy this newsletter and we welcome any contributions to the next issue due out in the summer. Feel free to connect with and get involved with IMES in other ways, whether through our Twitter account, attendance at any of our events, or just letting us know how you are getting on in your post-IMES life. For any correspondence or requests to be put on our mailing list please email imesalumni@ed.ac.uk.

Issue no. 4**Editor and Head of IMES**

Dr Tony Gorman

Assistant Editor and Designer

Farshid Kazemi

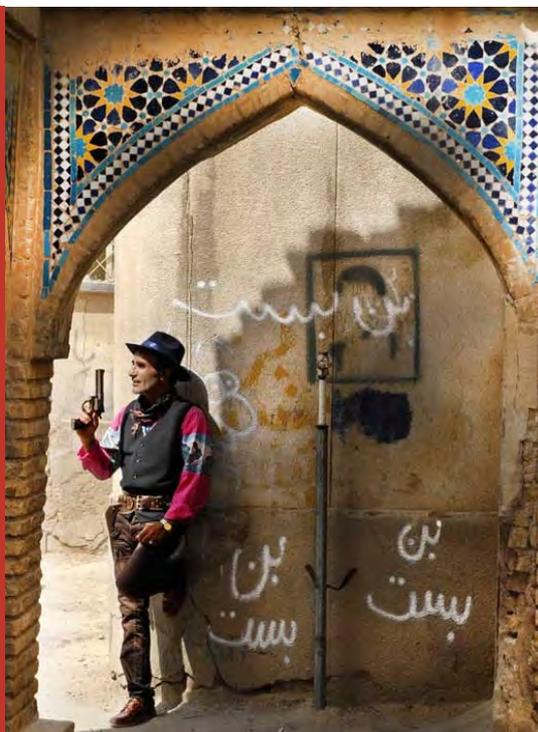
With thanks to

Fayaz Alibahi, Linda Grieve, and all our contributors.

The IMES Alumni Newsletter welcomes submissions, including news, comments, updates and articles. Submissions may be edited for space and clarity. Please email imesalumni@ed.ac.uk

The views expressed in the newsletter are the authors' own and do not necessarily reflect that of IMES.

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19 George Square,
University of Edinburgh,
EH8 9LD

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One of the films that will be screened in The Iranian Film Festival. *My Name is Negahban Jamali and I Make Westerns*. Directed by Kamran Heidari, Iran, 2012.

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1

Congratulations! Latest crop of IMES graduates

(with thanks to Linda Grieve)

The following were awarded their postgraduate degrees at the graduations in November 2014. We wish them all the very best for the future.

IMES MSc Programme

Hany Bezem
Imogen Block
Mahkrukh Hasan
Philippa Frédérique Raphet Meeng
Stephanie Wiseman
Sandra Abushaaban (Postgraduate Diploma)

Arab World Studies MSc Programme

Charlie Clark
Hamish Kinnear
Kevin Moore
Melanie Quintero
Steven Robinson
Jingyi Yang

Advanced Arabic MSc Programme

Han Dai
Isabel Lachenauer
Rebecca Wolfe (Distinction)

Middle Eastern Diasporas MSc Programme

Shirin Saber

1. An after graduation celebration with students and staff. Left to right: Jonathan Featherstone, Steven Robinson, Songul Mecit, Charlie Clark, Melanie Quintero, Zara Shad (IRMEWA), Philippah Raphet Meeng, Shirin Saber, Hamish Kinnear, Naom Dockray (IRMEWA), Sarah Irving, Andrew Newman, Andreas Gorke, Anthony Gorman.

Staff News



Left to Right: Still standing at the end of the first semester Jonathan Featherstone, Andrew Marsham, Andrew Newman, Anthony Gorman, Ebtihal Mahadeen.



Richard Todd probably advising Marilyn Booth on life in the Gulf at her farewell.



Left: Johnathan Featherstone and Nacim Pak-Shiraz look into the camera. Right: Hught Goddard looks into the future (?) at Marilyn Booth's farewell.

News

Richard Todd's long awaited monograph, *The Sufi Doctrine of Man, Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī's Metaphysical Anthropology*, appeared over the summer (as indeed did Richard himself, returning from 12 months at the American University of Sharjah). Published by Brill with a distinctive Tyrian purple cover, it is part of the Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science, Texts and Studies series. Other recent IMES publications include **Marilyn Booth** and **Tony Gorman's** co-edited collection, *The Long 1890s in Egypt* (see over).

In August **Jonathan Featherstone** delivered a paper on 'Diglossia and its effect on the teaching of reading in a communicative way' at a two-day workshop at Cornell University on the Integrated Approach to the teaching of Arabic. Organised by Dr. Munther Younes of Cornell and attended by more than 30 teachers from North America and Europe, the occasion was an opportunity for Edinburgh and Cornell to deepen an already fruitful working relationship aimed at modernising the way Arabic is taught in higher education.

Congratulations to our Arabic Teaching Fellow **Farah Aboubakr** on her PhD graduation at the University of Manchester last month. Mabruk, ya Duktur Farah!

The indefatigable **Carole Hillenbrand**, Professor Emerita of Islamic History, continues to maintain an active profile in IMES despite her formal retirement, now more than 6 years ago. Carole will be playing a significant role in the events organised to mark the 50th anniversary of Montgomery Watt's inaugural lecture (see p. 15)

Comings and Goings

Andrew Marsham and **Thomas Pierret** will be on research leave during the second semester of 2014/15 while **Tony Gorman** has long since returned from research leave in August and **Andreas Goerke** resumes a full presence in IMES for the second semester after being on leave for the first.

Richard Todd has returned from a year as Visiting Professor at the American University of Sharjah while **Marilyn Booth** has now taken up her position as Senior Humanities Research Fellow at New York University Abu Dhabi.

Farida el-Keiy took up a post teaching Arabic at Cambridge University in September. We wish Alwaleed Postdoctoral Fellow **Yuka Kadoi**, recently completing her three years at the Centre, the very best for the future. During her time here Yuka contributed to teaching in IMES and was involved in organising a number of memorable events.

IMES Publications

Edited by
Marilyn Booth and
Anthony Gorman



THE LONG 1890s IN EGYPT

Colonial Quiescence,
Subterranean Resistance

Marilyn Booth and Anthony Gorman

(Eds.) *The Long 1890s in Egypt: Colonial Quiescence, Subterranean Resistance.*

Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2014.

The Sufi Doctrine of Man

SADR AL-DĪN AL-QUNAWĪ'S
METAPHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY



BY
RICHARD TODD

BRILL

Richard Todd. *The Sufi Doctrine of Man, Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī's Metaphysical Anthropology.* Leiden: Brill, 2014.

Henry Bell and Sarah Irving (Eds.)

A Bird IS. Not A Stone: An anthology of contemporary Palestinian poetry. Glasgow: Freight Books, 2014.

'The tragic story of Palestine continues to stain this new century with its tales of apartheid and injustice. It is no surprise that great art is born out of its suffering and also no surprise that most people in the outer world do not get to hear of it. Therefore this exquisite book of poems must be all the more welcomed – by all those who love art, who would denounce oppression, and who want to read the songs of those living behind the wall.'

Emma Thompson, Oscar-winning actor

A BIRD IS NOT A STONE

An anthology of contemporary
Palestinian poetry

Edited by
Henry Bell &
Sarah Irving
Foreword by
Emma Thompson &
Megan Williams-Kay



Congratulations to all the authors on the publication of their respective volumes.

A Taste of Arabic

An interesting ending

By Jonathan Featherstone



An interesting ending in Arabic

A small number of Arabic nouns which end in **وت** -uut demonstrates Arabic's clear connection with other sister Semitic languages, such as Syriac, Aramaic and Hebrew.

Example:

brute force	<i>jabaruut</i>	جبروت
The Kingdom of Heaven	<i>malakuut as-samawaat</i>	ملكوت السماوات
theology	<i>al-lahuut</i>	اللاهوت
the priesthood	<i>al-kahmuut</i>	الكهنوت
shop	<i>Hanuut</i>	حانوت
spider	<i>ankabut</i>	عنكبوت

First note that the first four examples denote abstract concepts rather than specific items.

The most commonly used ending for abstract concepts in modern Arabic is the feminine ending: **ية** -iyya, such as the term **اليهودية** al-yahudiyya for Judaism, or **المسيحية** al-masiiHiyya for Christianity. Modern Hebrew however uses the ending: **ות** -uut (in Hebrew script **ות**) for concepts instead, examples being **יהדות** yahduut for Judaism is **נצרות** natsruut for Christianity. It is interesting that in both Arabic and Hebrew, these words are feminine in gender.

In the first example the Arabic **جبروت** jabaruut (brute force) is used in modern Hebrew to denote masculinity **גבריות** gavriiut

The Arabic term **ملكوت** malakuut for kingdom is often used in the collocation **ملكوت السماوات** malakuut as-samaawaat as shown above. This has a theological meaning, namely the Kingdom of Heaven, and occurs many times in the Arabic translation of the New Testament, and may well originate from the Classical Hebrew word for kingdom **מלכות** malkhut. It is important however to remember that the normal secular word for kingdom in modern Hebrew is **ממלכה** mamlakha which in Arabic is virtually identical as in **مملكة** mamlaka.

In the fifth example **حانوت** Hanuut, a noun in Arabic to mean small shop which in the Moroccan dialect of today is used to mean a corner shop rather than **دكان** dukkaan which is used for a larger shop.

חנות Hanuut in modern Hebrew is the generic term for shop but Hebrew also uses its cognate for the Arabic **دكان** dukkaan (Hebrew: **דוכן** dukhan) to convey a stall or kiosk. Again it is interesting to note that both **حانوت** Hanuut * in Arabic and **חנות** Hanuut in Hebrew are feminine in gender.

The final example of Arabic nouns ending in **ות** -uut is **عنكبوت** 'ankabuut which means spider. This is perhaps most well-known of this group due to the name of the 29th suura of the Qur'an **سورة العنكبوت** suurat al 'ankabuut but it is the most puzzling because although the Hebrew word for spider is cognate, as are most creatures, **עכביש** 'akhaviish does not end in **ות** -uut as one would expect. This may be due to the fact that it has often been assumed that the Arabic word for spider derives from the Aramaic 'akkabit. Regardless of whether this is the case, it appears to be the odd one out in the group

*Classical Arabic dictionaries cite **حانوت** Hanuut as being both feminine and masculine but in the Moroccan dialect it is always feminine.

History of IMES (part 3)

Visiting IMES in the 1990s

By al-Mu'arrikkh

DATE	NAME	ADDRESS
27 Feb 2000	Chris Macdon	Dunfermline, Fife, UK
7 March 2000	Paul Howard Long	Department of International Relations, 100, Houghton St, London WC2 2AE
21 May 2000	Salwa Sami Salhi	Department of Arabic & Middle Eastern Studies, University of Leeds
5 May 2000	Chris Heller	Dept of Middle Eastern Studies, University of Manchester
24 Oct. 2000	Tony Allan	SOAS, London, Thornaby St. London WC1H 0XG
21 Oct 2000	Neil Kennedy	Dept - Medical Hist, University of Malawi
21. Nov. 2000	Ran Andron	CMES, University of Durham
2. Nov. 2000	Kieran Beck	CMES, University of Durham
28 Nov 2000	R.J.A. Wilson	CMES, University of Durham
5 Dec 2000	David Warner	Dept Religious Studies, Lancaster University, Lancaster
17 Dec 2000	Rajendra Hirani	Dept of IR, University of St Andrews
30 Jan 2001	Amruth Chitambar	CMES, University of Durham
6 Feb. 2001	Jorgen Nielsen	CSIC, University of Birmingham
5 Feb 2001	R.E. Enany	University of Exeter

In June 1991 IMES inaugurated a Visitors Book for guests that came to the department. Maintained through the 1990s and into the next decade its pages serve as an interesting record of the personal and professional traffic that flowed through the department during this time. Those whose names appear testify to the very broad geographical reach and the different

constituencies that have an interest in the area of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies.

The most familiar group are the academics, from Scotland, Britain and beyond. The second name on the list, June 1991, is Robert B. Serjeant (1915-1993), a former student at the University of Edinburgh but by this time resident at St Andrews and at the end of a long and distinguished career that had culminated in the Adams Chair at Cambridge. The subsequent donation of his library to the University after his death two years later has enshrined his name.

Notable local scholars still happily with us included Catherine Cobham (St Andrews) and Lloyd Ridgeon (Glasgow). From other British universities, academic visitors came most notably from Exeter (Rob Gleave, Adrian Gully, Nadjie Al-Ali, Salwa Ismail and Nelida Fuccaro), from Durham (James Dickens, Paul Starkey) and Wales (James Piscatori); from Cambridge (Tarif Khalidi, Amira Bennison, Charles Melville) and Oxford (Eugene Rogan), and from SOAS (Tony Allan, Richard Tapper). The late Fred Halliday from LSE was a regular visitor; other guests have included Farhad Daftary (Institute of Ismaili Studies), Rosemary Hollis (Royal Institute of International Affairs) and Jorgen Nielsen (Birmingham), and from further afield distinguished scholars as Mohammed Arkoun (Sorbonne) and Joseph Massad (Columbia).

Universities and other educational institutions in the Middle East are also well-represented. Gabriel Baramki from Bir Zeit University, a large delegation from Jeddah Teachers College and M. Khalid Masud, Islamic Research Institute in Islamabad. Guests have also come from Tajikistan, India, Indonesia, Japan, Canada and Australia. The number of Malaysian visitors indicates the close relationship that Edinburgh enjoyed with students from that country especially during the period when the late Prof Bill Robb was active in IMES.

As well as academics, there has been a regular stream of writers and translators, journalists and education officers visiting IMES. Among these have been the Egyptian wife and husband team of Nawal al-Sa'dawi and Sharif Hatata, Moroccan author Leila Abouzeid, translator Tony Calderbank, and Margaret Ling (Zed Books) as well as officers of the British Council.

Last but not least, diplomatic representatives have also been regular IMES guests. This has particularly been the case from the Arab world. In what must have been an Arab League diplomatic offensive ambassadors from the UAE, Algeria, Sudan, and Yemen arrived at IMES en masse in September 1995. Afif Safieh, first from the PLO and now a long time Palestinian diplomat, has come to Edinburgh on a number of occasions. Ron Prozor, then Press Counsellor of the Israeli Embassy in London, now Israeli representative to the UN, has also visited the department. A Turkish delegation, three strong, were IMES guests in March 1995.

At its most recent Research Seminar in late November IMES relaunched the Visitors Book. Guests will now be asked to sign it (along with any expense claims) by way of reviving the tradition of marking their visit to IMES and Edinburgh.



Persian Studies Updates Conferences and Events

By Dr Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones and Dr Nacim Pak-Shiraz

The Visual World of Persianate Culture

A Conference hosted at the University of Edinburgh, 24-26th October 2014

This international conference, timed to coincide with the launch of the new Edinburgh Masters in Persian Civilization (from September 2015) and the anniversary exhibition of Rashid al-Din's World History in Edinburgh (1 August - 31 October 2014). The conference was jointly organised by Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies (IMES), the Alwaleed Centre for the Study of Islam in the Contemporary World and the School of History, Classics and Archaeology, University of Edinburgh.

The theme of this conference, and the principle which directed the choice of papers, was one of breadth and inclusivity. The organisers, Dr Yuka Kadoi, Dr Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones, and Dr Nacim Pak-Shiraz, wanted to bring together scholars from different disciplines to discuss the visual in Persianate cultures without simply confining the conference to art-history related topics. The conference aim was to explore the rich diversity of visual worlds through which Persianate culture might be approached. Moreover, the organisers wanted the conference to include materials drawn on the long cultural heritage of Iran, from the pre-Islamic period to the contemporary world. The definition "Persianate" culture therefore encountered various historical periods, ranging from pre-Islamic cultures (Elamite, Achaemenid, Parthian and Sasanian), medieval /early modern Islamic cultures, to Iran's modern visual cultures (including film and on-line media).



Downpour directed by Bahram Beizai, one of the films analyzed by Dr Nacim Pak-Shiraz in her presentation at the conference.

The conference ran very successfully over a period of three days. The first day was held at the University of Edinburgh's Main Library which also hosted a unique exhibition showcasing one of its most treasured manuscripts: the 'Jami' al-Tawarikh' or 'World History' of Rashid al-Din sponsored by the Alwaleed Centre. The day was concluded with a unique event at the National Gallery of Scotland featuring lectures by the world's two leading experts on the manuscript: Professor Sheila Blair (Boston College) and Professor Robert Hillenbrand (University of Edinburgh). Days two and three of the conference were held at the Old College.

Twenty-four papers were presented by a diverse set of academics ranging from PhD candidates to established scholars. The organisers were delighted to welcome an audience of scholars, students, and the general public. Social events, bookstalls, and the central locale of the conference in the Old College at Edinburgh University helped to create a very friendly, creative, and constructive atmosphere. A small body of student helpers were on hand to assist. Stephanie Wiseman's contribution to the smooth-running of the whole event must be particularly noted.

The conference organisers are deeply grateful to the support of Iran Heritage without whose generous support this conference could not have happened. A selection of the papers will be published in the Iranian Studies Journal in January 2015.

For further details of the programme and abstracts please visit:

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/literatures-languages-cultures/islamic-middle-eastern/news-events/visual-world-persian-culture>



The last day with all the scholars and presenters at "The Visual World of Persianate Culture" Conference held at the University of Edinburgh in October, 2014.



The Desert Fish, directed by Mohammad Ghorbankarimi, Iran/Canada, 2013.

IRANIAN FILM SEASON

The 2015 Iranian Film Season is curated by Dr Nacim Pak-Shiraz and sponsored by The Sutton Gallery, Arts & Business Scotland, and Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies of University of Edinburgh and the Filmhouse Cinema. The season will include 8 feature films, and each night, starting from Sunday 8th Feb 15, including a number of UK/Scottish Premiers. The Filmhouse Cinema is the venue for all screenings. Please contact the cinema directly to book your tickets.

Venue: Filmhouse Cinema, 88 Lothian Road, Edinburgh EH3 9BZ
T: +(44) 131 228 2688, **W:** www.filmhousecinema.com

The Desert Fish (Incl. Director Q&A and Reception)

Date: Sunday 8th Feb 2015

Time: 18:10

Mohammad Ghorbankarimi • 2013 • Iran/Canada • 84mins • Farsi with English subtitles

Ahmad is a young boy who wants to unravel the mystery of his dead mother who still comes to him in dreams. He undertakes an incredible journey to find out where he came from and the secrets his father never told him.

The screening of this film will be followed by a Q&A with the director Mohammad Ghorbankarimi, arts director / custom and set designer Nassim Azadi, and Editor Maryam Ghorbankarimi. There will be a drinks reception and live music by Edinburgh Youth Gaitherin (EYG), at the bar of the Traverse Theatre, opposite Filmhouse, to mark the opening of the Film Season.

Taboor

Date: Monday 9th Feb 2015

Time: 20:45

Vahid Vakilifar • 2012 • Iran • 84mins • Farsi with English subtitles

A man seeks to protect his hypersensitive body from a daily rise in temperature caused by pervasive electromagnetic waves. He concocts an aluminium jumpsuit which he wears under abundant layers of clothing. Despite his fragile health, every evening he rides his motorbike to keep appointments with his customers. His mission: to destroy cockroach nests. After each mission the man plunges into the dark heart of the city, crisscrossing the far flung streets of a megapolis in which time has stood still and from which the tumult of the day has disappeared.

Downpour

Date: Tuesday 10th Feb 2015

Time: 17:45

Bahram Beizai • 1972 • Iran • 128mins • Farsi with English subtitles

A well educated and humble teacher arrives in a new city and at a new job in the pre-revolutionary Iran. He falls in love with a hardworking underprivileged young woman that nurses her very old mother and raises her young brother. In an environment where commitments and social problems often stand in the way between people and their dreams.

A Few Kilos of Dates for a Funeral

Date: Wednesday 11th Feb 2015

Time: 20:45

Saman Salur • 2006 • Iran • 85mins • Farsi with English subtitles

Sadry and Yadi work at a petrol station

removed from the main traffic routes since the building of a ring road. It is winter and heavy snow lies on the ground. Sadry, a former performing strongman who accidentally lost an eye, is behaving strangely. He takes off from time to time and seems obsessed with the weather. Yadi is in love with a girl from a nearby town and sends her passionate letters via the local postman. Sadry and Yadi occasionally receive a visit from Orooj, the neighbourhood undertaker, their only contact with the exterior.

"A Few Kilos of Dates for a Funeral" is a story of ordinary people with all their qualities and defects.....but it is above all a story of love.

The Prince

Date: Thursday 12th Feb 2015

Time: 18:10

Mahmoud Behraznia • 2014 • Iran/Germany • 92mins • Farsi/German with English subtitles

It's 1997 and Afghanistan is controlled by the Taliban. Seventeen-year-old Jalil Nazari finds refuge in Iran, where he ekes out an existence doing odd jobs. One day luck comes his way and he lands the starring role in an Iranian feature film. The film, 'Djomeh', directed by Hassan Yektapanah is selected for the 2000 Cannes Film Festival where it wins the 'Golden Camera' award, thus hurtling Jali towards unexpected horizons...

Kami's Party

Date: Friday 13th Feb 2015

Time: 18:10

Ali Ahmadzadeh • 2013 • Iran • 80mins • Farsi with English subtitles

Negin is spending a few days on holiday with her boyfriend Omid and her sister Nazanin in a villa on the banks of the Caspian Sea. Not having had news of Omid for several hours Negin decides to go with her friend Farnaz to a party being held by Kami, a common friend. The two young women drive off to Lavassan, a small district on the outskirts of Tehran, where the party is taking place. Negin doesn't realize, however, that a surprise awaits her in the trunk of the car.

Parviz

Date: Saturday 14th Feb 2015

Time: 18:10

Majid Barzegar • 2012 • Iran • 105mins • Farsi with English subtitles

Despite his 50 years Parviz still lives off his father and the two men don't get on very well. Things come to a head when the father tells his son he has decided to remarry. Parviz has no other choice but surrender his place to his step-mother and leave home. Parviz finds it difficult to get used to this new solitary life far from his neighborhood and the people he knows. He thus concocts a novel way of fighting back against the injustice done to him.

My Name Is Negahdar Jamali and I Make Westerns

Date: Sunday 15th Feb 2015

Time: 18:00

Kamran Heidari • 2012 • Iran • 65mins • Farsi with English subtitles

"My name is John Ford and I make Westerns" this is how John Ford introduced himself at the American Film Directors' Association gathering. Negahdar Jamali, an Iranian from Shiraz introduced himself the same way when I first met him without knowing John Ford that well. He introduced himself with self-confidence and without any weakness in his statement; not in the Monument Valley or in the Grand Canyon but in Shiraz and the deserts surrounding the city. He has been making Western films continuously for the past 35 years under hard conditions, and this film is about the struggle with his family, friends, society... to make what he likes the most in his life "Western Movies".



Parviz, directed by Majid Barzegar, Iran, 2012.

The Shaykhi School and its importance to Islamic Studies

By Farshid Kazemi, Ph.D. Candidate in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies



1

The Shaykhi movement within Shi'i Islam, often called the Shaykhi school (a term coined by Henry Corbin) or Shaykhism (*Shaykhiyya*), has not received, with notable exceptions, the scholarly attention that it widely deserves.

This is perhaps to be expected, since within Islamic studies, the *modus operandi* of the discipline is operative under the sign of Sunnism, with Shi'ism (*tashayyu'*) (by Shi'ism I intend the three main branches, Twelvers, Isma'ilis and Zaydis) only receiving more attention after the 1979 Iranian Revolution. But Sunni Islam has become normative 'Islam' in Islamic studies due to a whole complex of reasons: among them the Orientalist heritage which first studied Islam chiefly in its Sunni form; the fact that Sunnis represent the majority of Muslims around the world, and still others for

politico-economic reasons which have shaped Islamic studies along Sunni lines. This is one of the critical problematics of Islamic studies and its disciplinary blind spot, in which the study of Shi'ism was marginalized early on, and which gives the false impression of 'Islam' as a static and monolithic phenomenon. Therefore, it is to be expected that Shaykhism, which has been marginalized even within Shi'i studies, has not received the scholarly attention that it rightly merits.

But, why study Shaykhism? The study of the Shaykhiyya, and its eponymous leader Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā'ī (d.1241/1826), may be said to be of importance to Islamic studies for three interrelated reasons: First, Shaykhism is perhaps one of the last pre-modern philosophical movements that engaged critically and creatively with the vast reservoir of intellectual discourses in Islamic thought, such as Islamic theology (*kalam*), philosophy (*falsafā*), and mysticism (*tassawuf*), with a philosophical novelty equal to the figure of Mulla Sadra and the 'school of Isfahan'. Second, the Shaykhi movement has a critical relation to the socio-political milieu of 19th century Iran and the wider Middle East and Subcontinent; and finally, the importance of Shaykhi eschatological and messianic ideas, which have often been studied derivatively (for instance in light of the development of the later Babi and Baha'i religions), but have not been properly analyzed and studied on their own.

And in light of my own PhD project on Iranian Cinema, perhaps yet another reason, but certainly not the least, is that Shaykhi thought can prove a fertile theoretical terrain for cinema and film theory, along the lines of Laura U. Marks'1 recent deployment of the thought of Mulla Sadra and Continental philosophy in reading cinematic texts. Indeed, there has already been at least one attempt to stage a productive encounter between Shaykhi philosophy and cinema by Idris Hamid's reading of the Matrix films,2 and it may not be the last.

Farshid Kazemi has been commissioned to write a detailed annotated bibliography on the Shaykhiyya by Oxford University Press (forthcoming 2015) in their Islamic Studies section; and another one on the Babi Movement also due out this year, which he will co-author with Dr. Armin Eschraghi of Goethe University of Frankfurt.

1. See Laura U. Marks, "Life in the Manifold: Mulla Sadra, Deleuze, Whitehead," [translated into Portuguese], *Conexões*, University of Campinas, Sao Paulo. Forthcoming.

2. Idris Samawi Hamid, "The Cosmological Journey of Neo: An Islamic Matrix," in *More Matrix and Philosophy: Revolutions and Reloaded Decoded*, edited by William Irwin, 2005.

1. An image of Shaykh Ahmad al-Aḥsā'ī, the head of the Shaykhi School in Shi'i Islam.

Twelver Shi'ism

Interview with Dr Andrew Newman

By Farshid Kazemi, Ph.D. Candidate in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies



Would you consider your book to be a survey of Shi'ism?

The original idea of the book was that it would be a discussion of developments in Twelver Shi'ism from its earliest years through to and including Iran's Islamic revolution and that it would have a limit of some 100,000 words. There are other books that deal with the different branches of Shi'ism including Twelver Shi'ism but this one would be devoted solely to the Twelver faith.

As the project began to take shape, however, several 'problems' quickly became apparent. First, even if it were possible to cover such a time span given such a word limit, might the volume end up being a recycling of what had already been said about the faith in the existing secondary sources and, to the extent that this might be the case, would such an approach and such a result be valid or useful? The amount of English-language material alone - both primary source material in translation and secondary sources - on Twelver Shi'ism has expanded exponentially since the Iranian Revolution. I quickly came to the conclusion that even if such a summary of all this scholarship could be produced in 100 000 words it would not be very interesting as an academic undertaking.

At the same time, especially since the Iranian Revolution, most non-specialists, certainly a potentially important audience for such a volume, identify Shi'ism with Iran. Twelver Shi'ism became Iran's established religion only in the early 16th century AD, with the coming to power of the Safavid dynasty. The recent widespread western interest in Shi'ism is rather recent and given the connection of the faith with Iran's revolution Shi'ism came to be viewed by many as the new enemy of the West, especially as the Cold War wound down.

In fact, however, most Twelver Shi'a are Arabs or reside in the Subcontinent. So while it is true that most Iranians are Shi'i, it is not true that most Shi'a are Iranians. Non-specialists can easily be forgiven for being unaware of this fact as many academics still do not highlight or engage with this fact. Academics who write on Shi'ism in Iran or the Arab world, for example, only unevenly read each other's works let alone those of colleagues who write on Shi'ism in the Subcontinent. There are still academics who speak of, and write on, Shi'ism generally but in fact address only the Shi'i experience in Iran.

So what would you consider to be the second 'problem'?

The second problem has involved the discussion of the nature of Shi'ism. As an essentialist discourse that Edward Said, for example, might have queried, this is very topical these days. Many scholars in the field hold with some variant of the argument that real, or what is sometimes termed 'genuine', Twelver Shi'ism values the esoteric, the otherworldly and the spiritual. In the process, they often draw certain parallels with the esoteric nature of Sufi discourse.

This understanding of the faith has its genesis in the pre-Revolution works of such scholars as H. Corbin (d. 1978) and S. H. Nasr. It was associated with the view prominent among academics and policy makers from the 1950s through to the 1970s that under the impetus of 'modernization' Islam would go the way of religion in the West, that is that the Islamic world was becoming increasingly secularized. In the case of Iran in particular the Shah was often pictured as a great modernizer.

But, of course Islam did not 'go away'. To be sure, the 1979 revolution in Iran and the distinctly Shi'i form it quickly assumed is the only case in the region where a popular political revolution also assumed overt religious dimensions. Nevertheless, 'Islamist' discourse has been a reality since before the Iranian Revolution. After the Revolution the 'Shi'ism equals Sufism' thesis gained a new lease on life among western academics. This is because of its concrete political implications: if one argues that 'genuine' Shi'ism is esoteric, i.e. apolitical, then one can label the post-1979 Iranian experience - which most academics of the day missed - as 'political' and therefore not 'genuine' Shi'ism.

Such an essentialist dichotomisation works all the better when the views, and experiences, of non-Iranian Shi'i communities - who, again, constitute the majority of the faithful and many of whom do not agree with the principle of *vilayet-e faqih* on which the present Iranian political system is based - are overlooked. A different, more comprehensive, more inclusive - and less politicised - approach might be to explore the different configurations of factors that account for the particular courses of trends and events that can be discerned both between and within various communities of the faithful, both in Iran but of course elsewhere as well.

There are academics who study Shi'ism who ask such questions of the particular regions in which they are interested. In the main, however, they address the modern histories of these communities, when sources – written and otherwise – are relatively plentiful. What has been missing is a discussion of the pre-modern history of the faith along these lines.

This then relates to a third and even a fourth 'problem'. The third is that when academics have discussed the pre-modern course of the faith they have done so mainly with reference to the scholarly writings of but a handful of clerical elites. Such figures are well-known today – to both academics and the faithful – but the extent of their influence in their own times is not so clear.

Fourth, and finally, associated with this focus on these few written works is a teleological understanding of the developments in the faith's doctrines and practices over time. That is, present-day doctrines and practices are assumed to have developed in a linear fashion, inevitably and inexorably over the past to the present, meaning that these were generally understood and adhered to in the past as they are in the present.

In fact, in their investigations of modern Shi'i communities across the Shi'i world, academics have highlighted the existence of different views on issues of doctrine and practice between and even within these communities, both among and between both clerics and lay believers. If this is so, then why should it be assumed such differences did not exist between and within Shi'i communities in the past?

It remains to explore how to 'recover' these differences over the pre-modern period given that we have access in the main only to the written texts composed by the literate few scholarly elite.

These are the questions that prompted you to (re)evaluate Twelver Shi'i history?

Yes, these several 'problems' inform the approach to the book. Close examination of Twelver Shi'i history revealed many points when the very survival of the faith, let alone the evolution of key doctrines and practices into the distinctive forms in which they can be seen today, must have been appeared in doubt.

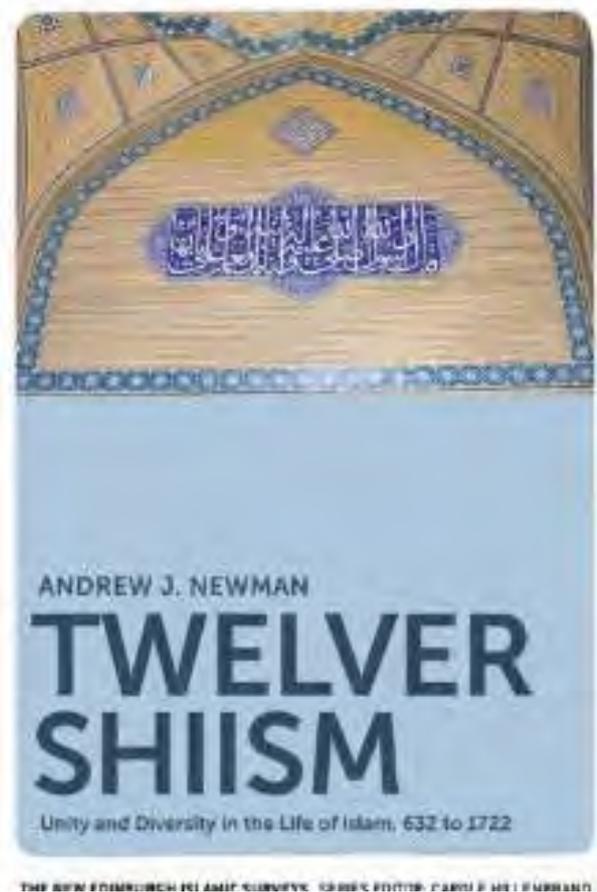
The volume attempts to recover evidence of disagreements among the faithful over the centuries. The key texts composed by the well-known scholars across Twelver history were read as products of contemporary discussions of, and differences of opinion on, matters of doctrine and practice within elites but also between elites and the lay faithful. The evidence in these works for such discussions, and different points of view, was highlighted.

At the same time, it does seem that copies of many of the works produced by these Twelver scholars, works well-known today, were in fact in relatively short supply in key periods of Twelver history. This was especially the case from the later 11th century to the mid-17th century AD, that is the later years of the Safavid period. The recovery of many key texts is noticeable from the mid-17th century. It is also true that a number of important texts, composed prior to the 11th century and over subsequent centuries, were lost.

The book highlights such issues as very basic and, indeed, existential challenges. Only in the later 17th century was the Twelver faith becoming firmly established and popularized in an Iran whose borders generally speaking approximate those of modern Iran. By then also many key non-Iranian centres of the faith were either well-established and active as such or well on their way to becoming so. Together with the fact that many academics accept 1722 as the end of the Safavid period in Iran, these latter findings suggested this date as a reasonable end for the book's coverage.

What projects are you working on currently?

I am currently working on a book on Ibn Babawayh (d. 991), compiler of the second of the four great collections of Twelver hadiths that were assembled before the coming of the Saljuks. A second is a volume on the Safavids as an empire.





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W.M.Watt: 50 years on

In October 2015 it will be fifty years since William Montgomery Watt (1909-2006) gave his inaugural address to mark his elevation to the first Chair of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Edinburgh. The appointment recognised both his personal contribution to the field but also the significance of the University of Edinburgh as a centre for scholarship in the discipline.

To mark the occasion, IMES and the Alwaleed Centre will be staging an event over two days on 23-24 October this year. The first part of the programme will be on the evening of Friday 23 October and will feature two giants in the field of Islamic Studies. Carole Hillenbrand OBE, Professor Emerita of Islamic History at Edinburgh and a longtime personal friend and colleague of Professor Watt, will begin proceedings with an address on 'Montgomery Watt, the Man and the Scholar'. She will be followed by Fred Donner, Professor of Near Eastern History at the University of Chicago, who will speak on the subject of 'The Study of Islam's Origins since W. Montgomery Watt's Publications'.

On the following day, 24 Oct, we will be holding a colloquium titled 'Representations of Muhammad' where a number of prominent international scholars invited for the occasion will present a series of papers on the theme of the image of the Prophet in historical context.

The occasion promises to be a most memorable one and you are all warmly invited to attend both the Friday and Saturday events. More details will appear in due course.

New Iraq Chair Sought

Following the departure of Marilyn Booth from Edinburgh last year, the University will be advertising for a new appointment to the Iraq Chair in Arabic and Islamic Studies new month. Funded by the agreement made between the Universities of Edinburgh and Baghdad at the time of Prof. Watt's retirement, the post provides an important focus for academic leadership in the field at Edinburgh and beyond.

1. Professor William Montgomery Watt.
2. One of the many contributions to Islamic Studies by W. Montgomery Watt.

The Book of Gaza

A City in Short Fiction

by **Sarah Irving**

Since mid-2013, IMES has been developing links with Comma Press, an independent, not-for-profit publisher of short stories, based in Manchester. This relationship has partly been deliberate and institutional, with Comma hosting three CASAW interns to build up its new imprint for Arabic short stories translated into English. And it has partly been personal and accidental, with IMES students involved with some of those publications under their own steam.

Comma already had a record of publishing Arabic short stories in translation, with *Madinah*, a 2008 anthology of work from across the Middle East, and two volumes by Hassan Blasim, an Iraqi writer whose collection *The Iraqi Christ* won the 2014 Independent Prize for Foreign Fiction. These have been the impetus behind a new imprint, dedicated specifically to stories translated from Arabic.

I had the privilege of being one of the translators for Comma's *Book of Gaza*, an anthology of Palestinian short stories curated by Atef Abu Seif and the new imprint's first release. That in itself was exciting, a huge affirmation of everything I'd learnt on IMES' two-year intensive Arabic MSc programme and of my own long-standing engagement with Palestinian issues.

The emotional impact of being involved was intensified when the book's publication date fell during Israel's summer 2014 attack on Gaza. Many of the writers responded to the stress and horror of weeks of bombardment by writing, and as translators I and others from the book were put in a unique position: of being able to show our commitment to the authors we'd worked with by scrambling to make their words, written under such immense pressure, available to the English-speaking world. The results appeared in the *Guardian*, *New York Times*, *New Statesman* and many other publications and, we hope, highlighted the experiences of the ordinary Palestinian people behind the headlines.

by **Christine Gilmore**

Interning as Comma Press's Arabic translation editor has given a much-needed professional sheen to my long-standing personal and academic interest in Middle Eastern fiction. It has allowed me to apply the language skills I acquired through my CASAW Masters programme, and subsequently in my PhD research, in a practical way, as well as giving me a thorough understanding of each step in the publishing process, from commissioning through to rights, editing, marketing and promotion. Without a dedicated Arabic editor on their team, as Ra Page and Jim Hinks, the Managing and Digital editors at Comma have emphasised, "the CASAW programme enabled Comma to establish a presence within Arabic literature while at the same time developing the editorial skills of talented translators". I was the third of three interns from IMES to intern with Comma Press during 2013-2014. Like Chelsea Milson and Lauren Pyott before me, I was given considerable responsibilities in assessing, summarising and editing the submissions that came in for *The Book of Gaza* and *Iraq Plus 100*, as well as promoting them at

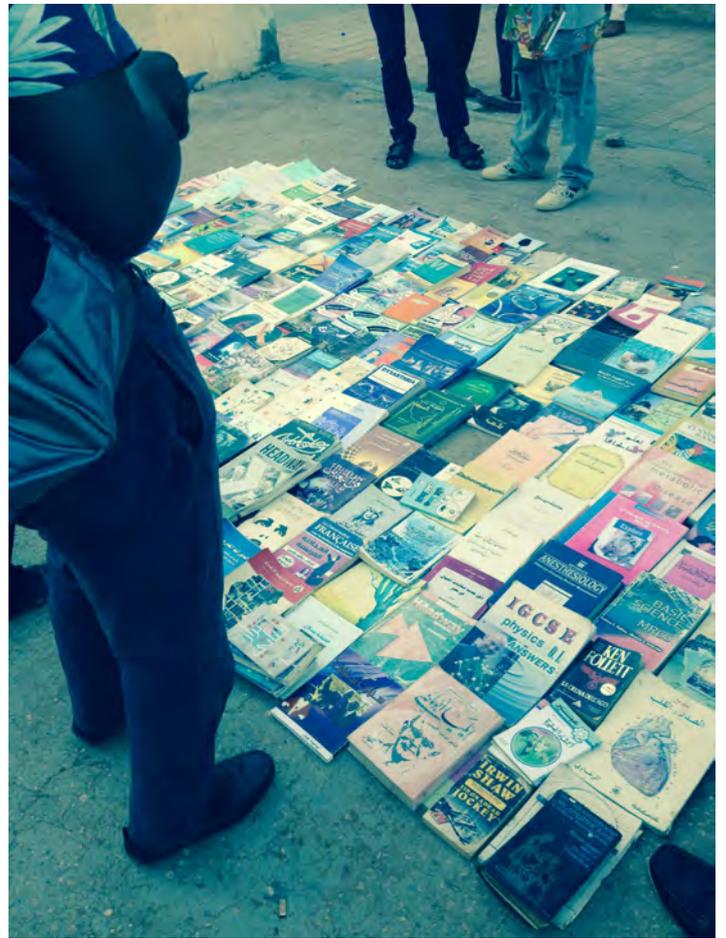
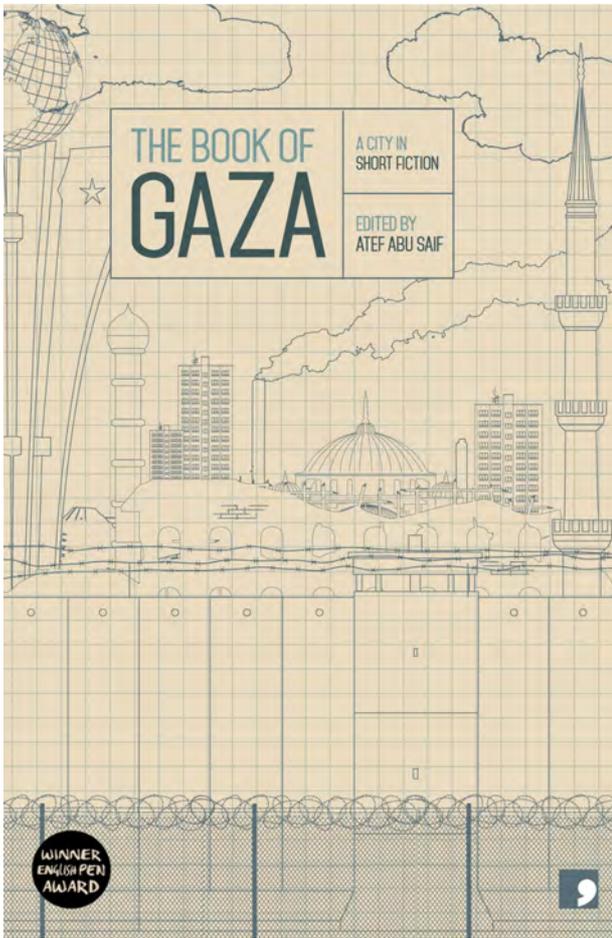
'The emotional impact of being involved [in the project] was intensified when the book's publication date fell during Israel's summer 2014 attack on Gaza.'

literature festivals around the country and drumming up interest on blogs and social media.

by **Raphael Cormack**

On the first Tuesday of every month in Atinay Square in Khartoum, booksellers come to sell new and second-hand wares. The initiative, called *Mafroosh*, was started 2 years ago by the Sudanese "Work Cultural Group" to promote access to books. This old square, which used to be home to a Greek café-bar of the same name (*Athenian*), is packed from 5-9pm with books laid out on the ground and prospective buyers. There is a scattering of English volumes, mostly old communist titles, but the majority are Arabic: history books, new and classic novels, poetry, short stories and translated works (Elif Shafak and Gabriel Garcia Marquez are especially popular). Despite the organisers' constant worries that the government might shut this cultural gathering down, its popularity is just one example of the interest in reading that thrives in Khartoum.

I have come here as part of a project with Comma Press and Max Shmookler, a scholar of Sudanese literature. Together we are editing a collection of short stories about the city of Khartoum. The book is intended to showcase both classic authors and new voices from a country that is often, unfairly, left off the literary map. Considered a periphery of the Arab World by many, Sudanese literature is often left out of the canon of Arabic literature, and perhaps because it is written in Arabic, which few people outside the Arab World read, it is also left out of other corpuses. We believe that, when it is published, this will be the only collection of Arabic short stories from Sudanese and South Sudanese writers available in English. With the help and co-operation of many on the Sudanese literary scene and with the support of Comma Press, the book has taken shape and we are in the process of applying for funding to pay for the translations. We hope that this book will give its 10 authors the chance to show how varied, inventive and high-quality Sudanese literature is.



Arabic Creative Writing through “The Very Hungry Caterpillar” Story Teaching Initiative

by Mourad Diouri

The tradition of rewriting the ‘The Very Hungry Caterpillar’ story by Eric Carl was initiated in 2011. This well-known and much loved children’s story was chosen since it featured much of the essential and basic vocabulary Arabic language students are expected to know after a semester of Intensive Arabic at IMES. The main vocabulary areas have been the days of the week (أيام الأسبوع), numerals (الأرقام), food and drink (الأكل والشرب), colours (الألوان), adjectives (أسماء الصفة), basic verbs (الأفعال) and time vocabulary (مفردات الوقت).



After several months of learning Arabic intensively, students were introduced to the original story in Arabic using a variety of kinaesthetic and hands-on activities. Once they got to grips with the details of the story, a language assignment was set in which students were encouraged to think creatively and write freely in Arabic and to work in groups to produce their own unique and creative version of "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" to showcase their newly acquired vocabulary and writing skills.

Students have produced wonderful and some hilariously funny stories over the past four years. Some class favourites have been:

- The Little Witch Named Seham (الساحرة الصغيرة سهام)
- The Very Hungry King of Scotland (ملك اسكتلندا الجائع جداً)
- The Very Determined Arabic Student (طالب اللغة العربية المصمم جداً)
- The Seal who Loves Magic (كلب البحر الذي يحب السحر)
- A Boy Without a Country (ولد بدون بلد)
- The Fat Princess (الأميرة السمينية)
- The Curious Pigeon (الحمامة الفضولية)
- The Sad Leopard (النمر الغني جداً)
- A Lonely Dog Called Pushkin (الكلب الوحيد بوشكين)
- The Grumpy Cat (القط الغضبان)
- The Orientalist Goat (الماعزة المستشرقة)
- The Sad Bike (الدراجة الحزينة جداً)
- The Fat Frog (الضفدع السمين جداً)
- The Very Thirsty Young Bear (الدب الصغير والعطشان جداً)
- The Very Sad Wolf (الذئب الحزين جداً)
- The Gay Camel (الجمال المثلي)
- The Greedy Bear (الدب الجشع)
- The Very Fat Wombat (الومبت السمينية جداً)
- The Vegetarian Leopard (الفهد النباتي)
- The Very Tired Engineer (المهندس التعبان جداً)
- The Very Thirsty Camel (الجمال العطشان جداً)



Celebrating the creative achievements of the past two years, with a homemade cake decorated as non other than, the Very Hungry Caterpillar.

mark the end of the term. This year, after showcasing all the stories, we also had a competition with prizes for the story most voted by the students themselves.

Since these stories are so well written and rich with vocabulary and creative ideas, we felt it is a shame to let them go to waste and so we are planning to collate the several years of accumulated stories into a collection that can be accessible, hopefully soon, across the University.

To share and celebrate these creative achievements, over the past two years a tea party of a homemade cake decorated as none other than the Very Hungry Caterpillar and Moroccan mint tea has been organised to

Highlighting New Research

IMES Autumn Semester Seminar Review



The IMES seminar series last semester provided another fascinating array of research work across the broad field of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies. The first seminar began with some drama when Dr Zohar Hadromi-Allouche (University of Aberdeen) was unable to present her paper at short notice. Fortunately IMES' Andrew Marsham stepped into the breach at short notice and provided a characteristically insightful discussion on the Umayyad rule. This theme was taken up two weeks later by Luke Treadwell (Oriental Institute, Oxford) who spoke on Umayyad kingship. Ultimately Dr Hadromi-Allouche was able to present her research (the intriguingly titled 'Iblis never bothered me anyway': Sunan al-Tirmidhi as Disney's next big thing?') and provide a thought-provoking comparative analysis of the Quran and folk tale discourse. Anthony Lappin (National University of Ireland) explored the Quran in the wider background of medieval Europe. Jon Hoover (University of Nottingham) gave an impressive account of Ibn Taymiyya's thought in its contemporary Mamluk context while Bashir Saadeh (Edinburgh University), again volunteering at short notice, presented an impressive paper on Islamic thought.

A number of the presentations dealt with more modern topics. Professor Robert Springborg, recently retired from the Postgraduate Naval Academy, gave a critical review of the militaries following the Arab Spring and offered informed commentary on US policy in the Middle East. Dr Roham Alvandi (LSE) drew on a detailed case study from his recent book to examine the US-Iranian relationship under the last Shah. Taking us away from the Middle Eastern heartland Prof. Masooda Bano (Oxford) offered a discussion on female Islamic education in Pakistan, Nigeria and Syria based on extensive fieldwork. Dr Enan Al-Wer from the University of Essex provided us with an all too rare linguistics paper that highlighted her work on communal dialects in Amman. Paying the traditional departmental price for returning from research leave Tony Gorman presented a paper on the early development of political imprisonment in the Middle East, part of his ongoing work on the history of the Middle Eastern prison. The semester ended with Professor Zahia al-Salhi from the University of Manchester who explored orientalist and occidental discourse in the Maghrebi context.

Attendances were good throughout the semester, the Q and A sessions were illuminating and those that stayed for the receptions enjoyed the traditional fare offered by the department. Do join us this semester for the series which will be framed around the theme of Palestine (see next page).

Palestine

IMES Spring Seminar Series

Join us this semester, for the IMES Research Seminar Series, which is framed around the theme 'Palestine'. It will be held on Mondays at 5:30pm during the teaching semester, usually in room G2, 19 George Square, followed by a reception. Our thanks to Sarah Irving, Saverio Leopardi, Abla Mahmoud, and Farah Aboubakr for their work in organizing this series.

The full programme and any updates may be downloaded here: <http://bit.ly/1cb1D69>

12 January PhD presentations	1) Tobias Andersson 2) Ula Zeir <i>University of Edinburgh</i>	1) Early Sunni historiography: Succession of caliphs in the Chronical of Khalifa b. Khayyat. 2) The Syrian Ismailis in the Age of Reform: 1831-1851
19 January	Tom Sperlinger <i>University of Bristol</i>	Romeo and Juliet in Palestine: Education and Experience in Palestine
26 January	Dr Jumana Bayeh <i>Macquarie University</i>	Palestine and the Figure of the Palestinian in Lebanese Diaspora Literature
2 February	Dr Glenn Bowman <i>University of Kent</i>	Walling and Encystation: an Israeli Logic of Ethnic Cleansing
9 February	Dr Karen Babayan <i>Independent Scholar</i>	Nostalgia, family myths and archetypes: issues of displacement and diaspora amongst American-Iranians
16 February	Dr Laudan Nooshin <i>City University of London</i>	Sites of Memory: Public Emotionality, Gender and Nationhood in the Music of Googoosh
23 February	Dr Farah Aboubakr <i>Universities of Edinburgh</i>	The Folktale as a Site of Framing Palestinian Identity and Memory
2 March	Dr Anna Bernard <i>Kings College London</i>	Documenting Palestine
9 March	Dr Chris Harker <i>University of Durham</i>	Debt and Ramallah: an urban geography
16 March	Dr Sarah Marsden <i>University of St Andrews</i>	Kahane Chai? Understanding the Legacy of Israel's Early Radical Right
24 March	Professor Carole Hillenbrand <i>University of Edinburgh</i>	The return of Jerusalem to Muslim rule: the Holy City in the time of Saladin and his family (1187-1250)



Sunset from Kadiköy, Istanbul. © Francesco Stermotich-Cappellari

International Congress of Turkish Culture in Istanbul

Sufism and Turkish Calligraphy

By Francesco Stermotich-Cappellari Ph.D. Candidate, IMES

On 13th and 14th October 2014 I had the pleasure to present a paper at the first international conference on Turkish culture at the Süleyman Şah University in Istanbul, a conference dedicated to Sufi culture and traditions. Co-partners behind the organization of the academic event have been the Department of Ottoman and Modern Turkish Studies of Indiana University (United States), Hacettepe University and Motif Vakfi foundation. Three keynote speeches inaugurated the conference. Prof. Abdurrahman Güzel from Başkent University introduced Sufism and its basic sources from the perspective of Turkish Sufis. Prof. İzzettin Doğan, chair of Cem Foundation, highlighted modern-day Alawism and Hayat Nur Arturan, chair of the International Mewlana Education and Culture Foundation focused her speech on some mystical, poetical and literary aspects of the works of Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Rūmī, better known as Mevlana in Turkey. Her passionate recitation of Mevlana's poems definitely enriched her suggestive presentation (continued on page 20).

The Ninety one papers have been presented on a plethora of topics connecting Sufism with different aspects of Turkish culture, as music, modern Turkish literature, Alawi-Bektashi Sufi traditions, philosophy, Dervish orders, religious literature, comparative studies, fine arts, social life, language, Turkestan, visual arts, folklore, religious figures, Sufi masters and saints, and a specific panel dedicated to Khoja Akhmet Yassawi. The predominant subject of the conference was literature, attested by five panels devoted to the influence of Sufism on poetry and Turkish literature. The majority of speakers and participants were from different parts of Turkey, but some other countries were represented as the United States, Albania, Switzerland, Iran, India, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Indonesia, United Kingdom, France, Kazakistan, and Iraq.

The article that I had the honour to present was a synthetic presentation of some of my findings and preliminary conclusions of my doctoral research. I explored the legacy and influence that Sufism left from the Ottoman period in the contemporary art of penmanship in Turkey. The roots of the Ottoman calligraphic tradition started with the Anatolian calligrapher of Sufi lineage Şeih Hamdullah (1429-1520). Subsequently, other calligraphic masters were also exponents of the mystical path in Islam, and the relevance of spirituality, even though not always necessarily linked to Sufism, is still detectable nowadays in the contemporary tradition. In my presentation I emphasized the technical, educational and spiritual training of a calligrapher according to the findings I gathered during my fieldwork. I did not limit my analysis to the formal aspects of the art, but I highlighted the existential dimension of a complex practice that connects together several aspects of being human, including the spiritual dimension.

A note of great cultural interest was the concert organized at the conclusion of the first day of the conference, a concert performed by several artists of different backgrounds stretching from rural Alewi music to urban Mevlevi singed and instrumental music. The concert ended with whirling dervishes performing the Mevlevi *sema* ceremony.

The next conference will be organized next year at the Indiana University and will be focused on teaching Turkish language at the university level. As affirmed during the keynote speech, it has been refreshing having had the opportunity to concentrate for two days on topics such as poetry, music, art and love in the magnificent setting of Istanbul.



The Sokollu Mehmed Paşa mosque, Istanbul, © Francesco Stermotich-Cappellari

Alwaleed Centre Events

Focusing on Islamic Art and Calligraphy

By Tom Lea

News from the Alwaleed Centre for the Study of Islam in the Contemporary World Rashid al-Din

In the last issue of this newsletter we previewed a unique exhibition curated by the Alwaleed Centre and the University of Edinburgh's Centre for Research Collections showcasing the library's most treasured manuscript: the Jami' al-Tawarikh ('World History') of Rashid al-Din. We are delighted to report that the exhibition was a runaway success, with 5000 people taking the opportunity to come and see this masterpiece of Islamic painting. Visitor feedback has been exceptionally positive with visitors from all over the world taking time to express their appreciation for the exhibition. The Alwaleed Centre's Postdoctoral Fellow Yuka Kadoi was responsible for curating the exhibition and we are extremely grateful to Yuka for her dedication to the project. [1]

We were keen to make the very most of the exhibition and we therefore organised a number of outreach activities focused on the Jami' al-Tawarikh. On 24th October, we welcomed pupils from three local secondary schools for a workshop led by Professor Sheila Blair (Boston College) exploring the importance of the manuscript as a window into the past. This was complemented by a special behind-the-scenes look at some Scottish manuscripts produced during the same period as Rashid al-Din's masterpiece. [2]

We also welcomed 170 people to the National Gallery of Scotland for a very special double-bill of talks delivered by the world's two leading experts on the Rashid al-Din manuscript: Professor Sheila Blair (Boston College) and Professor Robert Hillenbrand (University of Edinburgh). Our speakers discussed the history and artistry of the manuscript as well as exploring its depiction of important prophets like Moses, Samson and Abraham. [3] This event formed part of our Islamic Civilisation Public Lecture Series 2014. The other two lectures in the series saw Professor Charles Burnett of the Warburg Institute discussing "The Transfer of Science and Philosophy Across Religious Boundaries in the Middle Ages" at the Royal College of Surgeons and Venetia Porter (Curator of Middle Eastern Art at the British Museum) delivering an illuminating talk entitled "Telling Stories: Collecting Contemporary Middle Eastern Art at the British Museum" at the Edinburgh College of Art. All these events were filmed and can be watched online at: www.alwaleed.ed.ac.uk.

Summer Festivals

As ever, the Alwaleed Centre threw itself into Edinburgh's summer festival season by delivering a number of events at both the Edinburgh International Book Festival and the Edinburgh Just Festival. We were delighted to

welcome Justin Marozzi to the Book Festival to talk about his new book "Baghdad: City of Peace, City of Blood" to a sell-out audience. We also connected with the younger generation through a unique event with Book Festival artist in residence, James Mayhew, who entertained a large crowd of children and parents by painting the 1001 Arabian Nights accompanied by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's famous musical interpretation of the tales. This really was a highlight in our events calendar. [4] Our Just Festival events included a moving recital by Palestinian and Scottish poets Ayad Hiyatleh and Tessa Ransford from their work "Rug of a Thousand Colours: Poems inspired by the Five Pillars of Islam", a fascinating exploration of Islamic calligraphy in Turkey delivered by our very own PhD student Francesco Stermotich-Cappellari, and a timely discussion on Scottish attitudes to immigration with a contribution from the Colourful Heritage Project's Omar Shaikh.

A Growing Team

The autumn semester saw the Alwaleed Centre welcome two new academic colleagues to the team. Dr Khadijah Elshayyal began her three-year Postdoctoral Fellowship at the centre. Khadijah will focus her research on Muslims in Britain as well as teaching a course on the history of Muslim communities in Britain. Khadijah received her PhD from Royal Holloway, University of London, under the supervision of Professor Humayun Ansari. She has already made significant contributions to the centre's outreach programme through a public seminar entitled "Representing British Muslims in the noughties and beyond: Challenges, contentions and the future" and a contribution to an army study day hosted by the IMES department.

In September 2014 we were also delighted to welcome our newest PhD student, Mr Aurangzeb Haneef, who will be working on the Umayyad thinker Sufyan al-Thawri. Aurangzeb has an International MA in Peace, Conflict and Development Studies, taught jointly by universities in Spain and Austria, and a Master of Theological Studies from Harvard Divinity School, where he was involved in some of the activities of the Harvard Prince Alwaleed Islamic Studies Program. He has also taught Islamic Studies courses for a number of years at LUMS (the Lahore University of Management Sciences) in Pakistan, and he is now very welcome as he commences his PhD researches in Edinburgh.

You can follow the work of the Alwaleed Centre via the centre's website: www.alwaleed.ed.ac.uk, its Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/alwaleededinburgh> or its Twitter feed: @alwaleed_centre

For further details, please visit www.alwaleed.ed.ac.uk.



1. The exhibition of Rashid al-Din's "World History" by Dr Yuka Kadoi © Alwaleed Centre.



2. behind-the-scenes look at some Scottish manuscripts produced during the same period as Rashid al-Din's masterpiec © Alwaleed Centre.



3. Professor Sheila Blair (Boston College) at the National Gallery of Scotland © Alwaleed



James Mayhew painting the 1001 Arabian Nights © Alwaleed Centre.



Holy Places in Islam 2

Network on Holy Places in Islam gaining momentum

By Andreas Görke

Following on from its launch in December 2013, the International Network for the Study of Holy Places in Islam (INSHPI) hosted its second conference from 2nd to 4th September 2014 in Edinburgh. While the inaugural conference had focused on the emergence of holy places in early Islam, the second conference centred on holy places in medieval Islam, their functions and typologies, and the narratives created to sanctify specific sites, territories or cities. It brought together scholars from the United States, the United Kingdom, Morocco, France, Germany, Israel and Australia who shared their views on various aspects of holy places throughout the Islamic world, including North Africa, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Yemen, Central Asia and Indonesia.

Among the main aspects discussed were the emergence of holy men and their connection to holy places, the growing importance of relics, the emergence of Islamic narratives to explain new holy places and the transformation of local pre-Islamic narratives into Islamic ones to legitimise existing sacred sites. Other papers discussed the distinction between popular and patron-based holy places, the concept of sacred quarters and a sacred topography, and the rhetorical and physical construction of holy cities.

Taken together, the papers showed that the holiness of a place in medieval Islamic times seems to have depended little on pre-existing notions of holiness, be it Islamic or pre-Islamic. Instead, both the location of and the sanctifying narratives for holy places appear to have been mainly informed by local needs and interests. The participants also discussed the further development of the website and the database of holy places, which can be accessed at: www.imes.ed.ac.uk/research/inshpi

The second conference on "Holy Places in Islam" will be followed by a third, and final conference in the series, in June 2015.

A third conference, including discussions of the use, transformation, and destruction of holy places in modern times is scheduled for June 2015.



The Aga Khan Museum in Toronto

Forms of Knowledge and Cultures of Learning in Islamic Art

By Yuki Kadoi, Alwaleed Post-Doctoral fellow 2012-2014

The Aga Khan Museum in Toronto (www.agakhanmuseum.org) is one of the newly established museums dedicated to the acquisition, preservation and interpretation of Muslim cultural heritage. Inaugurated on 18 September 2014, the museum represents an initiative of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture and houses a wide range of objects and paintings from the Greater Muslim world, including the private collections of His Highness Aga Khan and the late Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan.

The museum building, designed by Fumihiko Maki, sits within a four-part garden (*chahar bagh*) and shares its site with a new Ismaili Centre. While at first glance it appears to be an ordinary, office-like architectural complex, the interior of the museum building is stunningly bright and inviting: it features an open-roofed courtyard with intricate geometrical patterns (Fig. 1).

The permanent gallery, located on the first floor is spacious and uncrowded with display items. A wide range of objects from Islamic Spain to Islamic China are displayed chronologically and geographically, while some highlights from the collections, such as book paintings and a large carpet, occupy a major part of the gallery space (Fig. 2). Apart from the gallery, usual museum facilities, such as a shop, a restaurant, a café and classrooms, are all located on the same floor, together with the Bellerive Room, inspired by the “Salon Persian” in the late Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan’s residence in Geneva (Fig. 3). The temporary gallery, located on the second floor, is also spacious and sufficient to accommodate 1-2 decent thematic exhibitions.

At the time of my visit to Toronto in mid-October 2014, the Aga Khan Museum hosted the 4th biennial symposium of the historians of Islamic art (HIAA), “Forms of Knowledge and Cultures of Learning” (Fig. 4), that gathered more than 100 participants from all over the world. I was invited to take part in the first panel of the symposium, entitled “Collections and exhibitions between knowledge and imagination”. This panel was chaired by Professor Avinoam Shalem (Columbia University), another Edinburgh University alumnus, and we had a lively discussion on the core of Islamic art history in this ideal museum setting.

(all photographs © Yuka Kadoi)

Inside the Aga Khan Museum in Toronto, during the 4th biennial symposium of the historians of Islamic art.

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The deadlines for the PhD and MSc Taught awards are 16 Feb and 1 March respectively. There are also additional opportunities for funding through the SGSSS and the School of LLC (deadlines 26 Jan). See the links at

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IMES Tweeting

The IMES Twitter profile (@IMESuoe) was launched by Mourad Diouri just over two years ago. While it got off to a slow start, things have picked up speed recently under some energetic postgrad tutelage, with now even some staff embracing the arts of retweeting, hashtagging, and favouriting. (Needless to say, most students were already ahead of the game). We would welcome alumni to get involved as well. Do at least take a look (access through the IMES webpage) and see what's going on. Even better 'Follow' us and spread the word.

For any enquiries contact our Twitter Co-ordinator Sarah Irving, sarah.irving@ed.ac.uk

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Next research seminar on Monday, Peter Sperlinger, Romeo and Juliet in [#Palestine](#): [#education](#) & Experience in Palestine. See U there!



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Spotlight: Carrie Cuno

Carrie Cuno (MA in Arabic and History 2014). Three weeks ago I found myself with a press pass for the Middle East Studies Association annual meeting in Washington DC, a weekend filled with lectures, panel discussions and workshops for scholars of the Middle East. I was there, ostensibly, for work, but found myself instead sitting in on panels about female villains in Arab literature and themes of early twentieth-century Iranian films. It was pure abstract academia the likes of which I hadn't experienced since I finished my exams last May.

I hadn't realized how much I missed the excitement of researching some obscure topic that—let's be honest—is probably not relevant to anyone outside the academic world. It's part of the reason why, even after bursting into tears multiple times whilst writing my undergraduate dissertation, I decided to apply for graduate programs starting in fall 2015. The soul-searching requisite for writing a decent statement of purpose has led me to reflect upon my time in IMES.

A few months into my second year, I sat in my Arabic Oral class, only half-listening and with a blinding hangover. We went around the table talking about our annoyances, and I blithely said “al-a3raab mutazawijni.” I had meant to say that case endings annoy me, but thanks to my poor pronunciation it became “Arabs annoy me.” Luckily, Marwa and my classmates forgave me.

I am very proud of the fact that I never missed a deadline, but I also never started an essay more than 24 hours before the due date. This is despite the fact that, in my fourth year, I think I spent more time in the department than my flat. I have never understood Arabic numbers and I suspect I never will.

Clearly, I can't claim to have been the most hardworking or linguistically-talented student in class—granted, that's a testament to my incredibly talented cohort as much as a comment on my own abilities—but I still learned some invaluable skills that will follow me through my academic career and beyond. (For example, during my year abroad in Cairo, I learned how to smoke hookah out of a potato.) I thank IMES and its community not just for my personal academic growth, but also four years during which I was constantly challenged and pushed out of my comfort zone. I can't imagine a better undergraduate experience.

1. From the Class of 2014 left to right: Carrie Cuno, Alyssa Gregory, Sophie Spencer.

The Last Word

News and views from alumni

Notes from the field

Nussaibah Yunis (MSc AWS 2010) I finished my PhD at the University of Durham and completed a Research Fellowship at the Harvard Kennedy School. I am now a Senior Research Associate at the Project on Middle East Democracy in Washington DC. I am always looking for policy relevant research on the Middle East that I can bring to the attention of policy-makers here in Washington DC, so please feel free to get in touch with me!

nussaibah.younis@pomed.org

Fred McConnell I graduated in 2010, Arabic MA, and I'm very happy to share my latest career development for the newsletter. After Edinburgh, I spent six months in Kabul working as a multimedia producer for the Afghan skateboard charity, Skateistan. I then attended the Middlebury College Arabic summer school in California. That really helped get me from very rusty to near fluent in Arabic. I returned to the UK to work as a freelance journalist and filmmaker (including work for the Independent, Channel 4 and Vice), before successfully applying to become a digital journalism trainee at the Guardian. I've spent the 12-month traineeship in the newsroom and on the video team. As a result of my work this year <http://www.theguardian.com/profile/fred-mcconnell>, I was recently offered the position of video journalist with Guardian Australia. I start in Sydney next month.

Tessa Grafen I have recently graduated from Edinburgh with a first in Arabic and Persian and wanted to let you know I have found a job! I am now working for TPP which is a fast-growing and fast-paced clinical software company just outside Leeds as an Analyst. They are a market leader in their field and came first in the Sunday Times Best Small Companies to work for! I am really enjoying my new career and wanted to let fellow Edinburgh students know of the opportunity. TPP is full of bright and dedicated young people, and offers some great benefits. TPP is constantly recruiting Analysts with at least AAB at A-level and 2:1 in any discipline. No experience is necessary. The type of work I am involved with ranges from travelling abroad to analyse different health care systems to speaking to health professionals in the NHS. The main aim is to find out how we can improve our clinical software, SystemOne, and develop it for various markets. While the job role is advertised quite widely, it would be great if you'd let any students you think would be interested know about this.

Anyone interested should look on the TPP website and send their CV and covering letter to careers@tpp-uk.com. Can you please email this information to any suitable current and graduated students and also other staff to pass onto their students.

More information can be found at www.tpp-uk.com/careers.

Steve Gertz (MSc 2006) In the fall of 2014, began a PhD program at Georgetown University in Theological and Religious Studies, with a dual focus on Islam and Christianity.



Djerbahood, Mur al at Erriadh, Jerba, Tunisia
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