

CMS

NEWS

THE CENTER FOR
MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

فن
والثقافة
والدراسات
المتوسطة
والشرقية

الفنون
والثقافة
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2020-21

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2020–21 HIGHLIGHTS

DEAR MEMBERS OF HARVARD'S CMES FAMILY: I write this letter on a sunny summer morning reflecting on CMES's events over the past two semesters. As you will see in this abundantly rich and beautifully collated and edited newsletter, this past academic year has been bustling with wonderful people and activity.

In reflecting back on the past year, I take first this opportunity to thank my extraordinary administrative staff: Lauren Montague, Karen Daly, Liz Flanagan, Eric Edstam, and Jesse Howell, who, under trying times, performed their duties with cheer, devotion, and efficiency. Because of Lauren and the staff, our Center carried on in keeping CMES the exceptional place that it is, even under these challenging circumstances.

Also, at this time, please join me in bidding sad farewell to three outstanding members of our language faculty: Nevenka Korica-Sullivan, Senior Preceptor in Arabic, came to Harvard ten years ago after many years of teaching at the American University in Cairo. She also served as the national director of the CASA (Center for Arabic Study Abroad) program during its five-year tenure here at CMES. Nevenka, a published scholar in the field of TAFL (Teaching Arabic as a Foreign language), was instrumental in designing a new curriculum for upper-level Arabic, as well as teaching the Arabic program's colloquial Egyptian Arabic. She plans to relocate between Cairo and Dubai. Nour Barmada-Abida served as Preceptor in Arabic for the past nine years. She came to Harvard after teaching Arabic at the Foreign Service Institute in Tunis, Tunisia. Nour was primarily responsible for teaching and supervising intermediate Arabic, and for several years she taught the Arabic program's colloquial Levantine Arabic. Nour was, in addition, the principal instructor for CMES's Tunisia summer program in advanced readings in Arabic social sciences and humanities. Sheida Dayani, Preceptor in Persian, taught all levels of modern Persian over the past six years. Having recently earned her PhD in Persian literature from NYU, with an emphasis on theatre and film, Sheida, herself a published poet, designed and executed her language courses to include all aspects of Persian history and culture. She was instrumental in bringing Iranian artists, musicians, and writers to campus, both at NELC and CMES. Sheida recently won a three-year postdoctoral fellowship at Princeton.

In May of this year, CMES hosted a Zoom ceremony for our graduating cohort of AM students and were honored by Philip Khoury, eminent alumnus of CMES and currently Ford International Professor of History and Associate Provost at MIT.

Over the past year we continued to run many of our major events. As part of our Director's Lecture Series, we hosted historians Eve Troutt Powell, M'hamed Oualdi, and Emily O'Dell, who delivered lectures that focused on historical and political aspects of slavery through the Middle East, from the Indian Ocean to the western Mediterranean. In addition, we continued co-sponsoring along with the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs the Middle East Seminar, celebrating this year its forty-fifth anniversary. Our New Books Series hosted our own Assistant Professor of History Rosie Bsheer, who spoke on her recently published book, *Archive Wars: The Politics of History in Saudi Arabia*. In addition, former CMES visiting fellow San Charles Haddad presented on his recently published *The File: Origins of the Munich Massacres*, which is the culmination of extensive research on the intersections between sports and politics. Our Arabian Peninsula Studies Series was highlighted by a lecture and poetry reading, presented by former CMES Shawwaf Visiting Professor Moneera al-Ghadeer and acclaimed Saudi poet Fowziyah Abukhalid.

Across the sea, our office in Tunisia continued to operate under the amazing management of Sihem Lamine. Over the year, we launched a Tunisian digital humanities project with three Harvard graduate students to archive literary journals from early-twentieth-century Tunisia. We continued our Tunisia Newsreel, Notes from the Ground, a series launched in spring 2020, which invites Tunisian experts to explain and analyze current events on contemporary political, social, and cultural issues taking place in Tunisia.

Such intellectual creativity and academic accomplishment in this time of pandemic are testament to the combined talents, efforts, and commitment of our CMES community. It has been a difficult and challenging academic year, and you have graciously risen to the occasion.

—WILLIAM GRANARA, CMES DIRECTOR

NEWS AND NOTES

CMES EXTENDS COMMITMENT TO TUNISIA OFFICE FOR SIX YEARS

The Center for Middle Eastern Studies announced in January 2021 that it will continue to provide a wide range of research opportunities and programming through its Tunisia Office for a further six years, supported by a \$2 million gift from Harvard alumnus Hazem Ben-Gacem '92. The office, which opened its doors in Tunis in January 2017 with the support of an initial gift from Ben-Gacem, provides students and scholars

with a bridge to renowned Tunisian archival facilities, serves as an incubator for analysis of the evolving social, cultural, legal, and political movements in the region, and offers an intellectual hub for scholars of, and from, Tunisia, the Maghreb, the Mediterranean, and the wider Middle East region.

The Tunisia Office offers a platform for Harvard University students and faculty to learn about and engage with Tunisia

and the broader Middle East and to further their scholarly work on the Middle East and North Africa region, the Arabic language, and the many civilizations that have crossed North Africa for centuries. Since its founding, the office has hosted approximately 100 Harvard University students and faculty.

“Broadening the contexts in which teaching, learning, and research happen



Students on CMES's inaugural Wintersession study excursion to Tunisia, January 2016

at Harvard is a crucial element of the University's engagement around the world. I am confident that, building on the strong foundation it has put in place over the last few years, the Tunisia Office of CMES will continue to provide valuable resources for Harvard students and scholars and to furnish exciting opportunities for collaboration with local partners that will shape important work across fields and disciplines," said Harvard Vice Provost of International Affairs Mark Elliott. "We are truly grateful for the very generous support of Hazem Ben-Gacem, which makes all this possible for the Harvard community."

Programs available at the Tunisia Office include Harvard Tunisia Scholarships for Harvard graduate and undergraduate research, funding for Harvard faculty sabbatical research, an Arabic language summer program for Harvard graduate and undergraduate students, a three-week Wintersession course for Harvard students, and an array of topical workshops, conferences, and lectures.

Recent special initiatives at the Tunisia Office include Rediscovering Tunisia's Interwar Literary Milieu, a digital humanities project in collaboration with the National Documentation Center, the National Archives of Tunisia, and the National Library of Tunisia; and *#After Lockdown: Very Short Stories about Enduring a Global Pandemic*, an animated film that premiered as part of Worldwide Week at Harvard 2020 and presents personal narratives collected by the Tunisia Office and the Center for Hellenic Studies in Greece during the summer of 2020. □



William Granara, Margot Gill, and Hazem Ben-Gacem at the official opening of the CMES Tunisia Office



William Granara speaks at the last in-person event at the Tunisia Office before the March 2020 lockdown

THE THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS

Sources and Transformations in Literature, Art, and Science

When *The Thousand and One Nights: Sources and Transformations in Literature, Art, and Science*, a volume of essays edited by CMES Director William Granara and Ibrahim Akel, of the Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales (INALCO), was published in fall 2020, it was the culmination of an international multi-year project conceived over dinner in Paris almost a decade ago.

“I met over dinner with Aboubakar Chraïbi, a Professor of Arabic Literature at INALCO and one of the world’s leading scholars of the *Arabian Nights*,” Granara recalls. “He was coming to the end of a years-long project to collect copies of all existing Arabic manuscripts of the *Arabian Nights*, and as a final stage of this project, he wanted to do a conference.” Chraïbi initially didn’t want to hold a conference in Europe, where over the years he had already convened several conferences on the *Arabian Nights*, but given the political climate at the time, holding such a conference somewhere in the Arab world wasn’t a practical choice. So Chraïbi and Granara discussed the idea of a conference in the United States.

“Harvard University and CMES have somewhat of a history with the *Arabian Nights*,” Granara says. Muhsin Mahdi, James Richard Jewett Professor of Arabic in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations from 1969 until his retirement in 1996, produced the first critical edition of *The Thousand and One Nights*, based on what is considered to be the earliest

extensive manuscript of the *Nights*, from fourteenth- or fifteenth-century Syria, now known as the Galland Manuscript. Mahdi, who served for a time as CMES Director, “was one of the most important figures of *Arabian Nights* scholarship,” says Granara. And Wolfhart Heinrichs, who succeeded Mahdi as James Richard Jewett Professor of Arabic, convened a conference on the *Arabian Nights* in Mahdi’s honor.

Soon after the meeting in Paris, Chraïbi came to Cambridge, where he and Granara met with Sandra Naddaff, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Comparative Literature and also a scholar of the *Arabian Nights*, “and we mapped out a way of going forward with the conference,” which they decided would include an initial session in Paris and a final session at Harvard.

The session in Paris coincided with the exhibition *Les Mille et Une Nuits*, at the Institut du Monde Arabe, for which Chraïbi served as an advisor. “It was an absolutely brilliant display of all kinds of visual arts related to the *Arabian Nights*,” Granara says, not only manuscripts and covers, but also imagery from plays, operas, films, as well as painting, music, photography, all the way to advertising and the internet. And during the session at Harvard, the Harvard Film Archives screened the 1965 Wojciech Has film *Saragossa Manuscript*, which shares the Russian doll or tale-within-a-tale structure of the *Arabian Nights*.

In designing the conference, Granara says, “We wanted to do something different, something that hadn’t been done before. We

didn’t want to revisit the idea of narratology, of storytelling. We didn’t want to do literary criticism, or to look again at the *Nights* in terms of its role in Arabic literature. Of course we do have some literary perspectives – my own article discusses the *Arabian Nights* and certain strands of Arabic poetic movements – but we didn’t want this to be a literature project per se. And we wanted to hear from scholars who were not necessarily the known figures at the center of *Arabian Nights* studies, but rather younger scholars or those working on the periphery. We were interested in how the *Nights* might be thought of and read against the broader humanities and social sciences.”

Eyüp Özveren, for instance, who taught for more than twenty-five years in the Economics Department of the Middle East Technical University in Ankara, did an economic reading of one of the stories. “We especially wanted to include a Turkish scholar,” Granara says, because some of the earliest manuscripts of the *Arabian Nights* were written in Turkish and not only in Arabic and Persian, as once had been thought.

Rasoul Aliakbari, of the University of Alberta, discussed the introduction and use of the *Arabian Nights* in antebellum American print culture and its relationship to the formation of American national subjectivity.

In her contribution, “Healing by Exempla: Political Therapy in the *Nights*’ Hypertext,” Dominique Jullien, of the University of California, Santa Barbara, examined two cases in which the “connection between moral, political, and therapeutic stakes of the stories is especially explicit.”

A number of the contributions deal with themes and elements of *The Thousand and One Nights* as represented in film and theater. Adam Mestyan, a historian at Duke University, talked about four musical plays derived from *Nights* tales that not only entertained late-nineteenth-century Ottoman Arab audiences but also reflected key political ideas of the period.

Maria Paino, of the University of Catania, Italy, discussed three examples of reception of the *Nights* in twentieth-century Italian culture, including in the work of the writer and film director Pier Paolo Pasolini. Daniela Potenza, also of the University of Catania, whose work focuses on Arabic theater, popular culture, and intertextuality, discussed the relationship between the *Nights* and several works of Egyptian playwright Alfred Faraḡ. And Ilaria Vitali, of the University of Macerata, Italy, discussed a series of short films by the French writer, designer, and director Michel Ocelot.

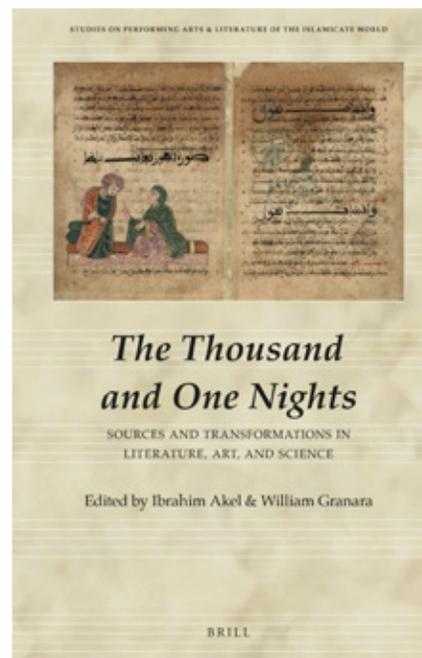
Two then Harvard PhD students participated in the conference and contributed to the subsequent volume. In his examination of the early publishing history of Antoine Galland's edition of the *Nights*, Arafat Abdur Razzaque, at the time a PhD candidate in History and Middle Eastern Studies and now teaching at the University of Toronto, focused on "the book as an object of negotiation between the author/translator and the editor/publisher."

And in his presentation, "Jacqueline Kahanoff on the Margins of *A Thousand and One Nights*," Daniel Behar, then a PhD candidate in the Department of Comparative Literature and now a research associate and lecturer at Dartmouth,

drew on his personal history as well as his research interests. "The inspiration to view the *Thousand and One Nights* through the lens of cosmopolitan colonial Cairo came through an Arabic copy of the book I inherited from my maternal grandfather, a Jewish–Egyptian Mizrahi activist in Israel and a lifelong Egyptian nationalist," Behar says. "Kahanoff's essay occurred to me as a possible bridge between my biography and my research interests. The essay straddles questions of Hebrew and Arabic literatures, Judaism and Islam, Zionism and Arab nationalism, politics of culture and equality of women. Framing Kahanoff as a modern Shahrazad helped me see the great staying power of the *Nights* as a cultural paradigm that constantly reshapes itself in history and transgresses borders."

"All in all we ended up with a lot of wonderful, very interesting material, from a variety of perspectives," says Granara. "And it was always in the back of our minds that if the conference sessions went well, we'd try to get a volume published." The majority of participants submitted their papers for publication, and after discussions with a number of publishers, Brill offered to produce the volume as part of their series *Performing Arts and Literature of the Islamicate World*.

Unfortunately, around this time, co-convenor Chraïbi fell ill, and while he wrote the French-language preface to the volume, he was unable to continue as Granara's co-editor, a role that Chraïbi's former student Ibrahim Akel stepped into. Further complicating the process, the conference had been designed such that papers could be presented in English, French, or Arabic,



but Brill decided that it would be impractical to include articles in Arabic. So not only did the English and French submissions need to be edited, several papers had to be translated from the Arabic. "We had to do a serious editing job," Granara says, "so it took a while." Slowly but surely, however, the editorial and production work progressed, and in fall 2020 the volume was finished.

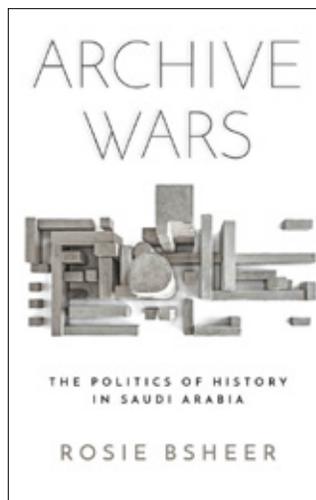
As with many achievements and milestones of the past year, Covid-19 prevented a proper in-person celebration of the book's release. But with luck, and careful attention to campus health protocols, 2022 may see the first onsite CMES book launch since the debut of Granara's *Narrating Muslim Sicily* packed room 102 back in February 2020. □

NEWS AND NOTES

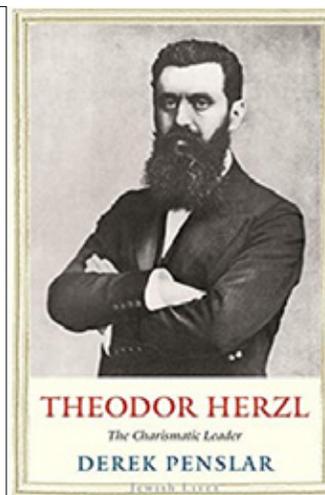
FACULTY NEWS

CMES Research Associate **Don Babai** gave a talk on the industrial policy of Saudi Arabia at a Gulf Research Center webinar, May 2020. **Yael Berda**, Visiting Lecturer, Department of Sociology, published “Voting as a Vehicle for Self-Determination in Palestine and Israel,” *Texas Law Review* 100, March 2021, with Itamar Mann; and “Sleeping in Emergency: The Political Economy of Palestinian Labor during the Covid Closure,” *Israeli Sociology* (Hebrew) 21.2, April 2021, with Omri Greenberg. She wrote the op-eds “Annexation or Not, It’s Time All Palestinians Under Israeli Control Had the Right to Vote,” *Newsweek*, May 2020, with Itamar Mann; and “The Cancellation of Parliament’s Vote and the Collapse of the Separation of Powers” (Hebrew), *Haaretz*, October 2020. **Rosie Bsheer**, Assistant Professor of History, was named a Walter Channing Cabot Fellow (2020–21) in recognition of her achievements and scholarly eminence in her field. She was appointed as a Weatherhead Center Distinguished Research Faculty Associate for fall 2021 and received the Dean’s Competitive Fund for Promising Scholarship (2021–22). Her book, *Archive Wars: The Politics of History in Saudi Arabia*, was

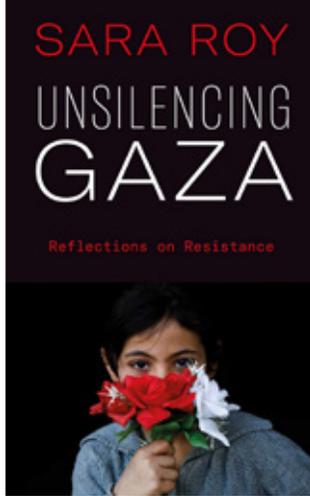
published in October 2020 by Stanford University Press. She also published “The Limits of Belonging in Saudi Arabia,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, November 2020. **Melani Cammett**, Clarence Dillon Professor of International Affairs, Department of Government, published, with Aytuğ Şaşmaz, “Navigating Welfare Regimes in Divided Societies: Diversity and the Quality of Service Delivery in Lebanon,” *Governance*, February 2021. **Muhammad Habib**, Preceptor in Arabic, received a Certificate in Teaching Excellence for fall 2020. CMES Research Associate **Lenore G. Martin** gave the talks “Turkey and China: A Blooming Relationship?” for the panel China and the World, Northeastern Political Science Association, November 2020; “Turkish Foreign Policy: How Do We Explain It?” for the panel Turkish Foreign Policy: Ideologies, Identities and Principles, International Studies Association, April 2021; and “Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East: A Three-Dimensional Analysis,” for the panel Turkish Foreign Policy in Its Neighborhood, Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy, May 2021. **Derek Penslar**, William Lee Frost Professor of Jewish



History, published “Theodor Herzl, Race, and Empire,” in *Making History Jewish: The Dialectics of Jewish History in Eastern Europe and the Middle East*, ed. Pawel Maciejeko and Scott Ury (Brill), and “Towards a Field of Israel/Palestine Studies,” in *Between the “Jewish Question” and the “Arab Question”: Contemporary Entanglements and Juxtapositions*, ed. Bashir Bashir and Leila Farsekh (Columbia University Press). His biography of Theodor Herzl won the 2020 Canadian Jewish Literary Award in the history category. He gave talks or took part in book launches at American University, Birkbeck College, London, the Center for Jewish History, Columbia University, Dalhousie University,



the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, New York University, and UCLA. He continued writing his book “Zionism: An Emotional State” and broke ground on a new book project, a global history of the 1948 Palestine War. He served as CMES Director of Graduate Studies for the PhD track in 2020–21. In fall 2020, **Intisar Rabb**, Professor of Law and Director, Program in Islamic Law, HLS, co-taught, with William Alford, the Comparative Law Workshop, with a focus on Islamic law and Chinese law. She was featured in episode 4 of the podcast *The Universal Title: Muhammad Ali’s Spiritual Journey from Christianity to Islam*, April 2021. She gave the 43rd Annual Donald A. Giannella Memo-



rial Lecture, “Interpreting Islamic Law,” McCullen Center for Law, Religion, and Public Policy, Villanova University, October 2020, and the History Workshop, Islamic Legal Canons as Memes, spring 2021. She wrote the foreword to the Symposium on Brunei’s New Islamic Criminal Code, in the Forum section of the inaugural issue of the *Journal of Islamic Law*, for which she serves as editor-in-chief (2020). She edited, with Mariam Sheibani, the Roundtable on Islamic Legal History and Historiography (2020–21) on the *Islamic Law Blog*, featuring twenty-one leading and emerging scholars of Islamic law and history on the latest trends in the field, for which she wrote the introduc-

tion, “Methods and Meaning in Islamic Law,” and the articles “Islamic Legal Canons as Memes” and “Simplicity, Creativity, Lucidity as ‘Method’ in the Study of Islamic History: An Interview with Michael Cook.” With the Program in Islamic Law she was awarded a \$234,000 grant from the John F. Templeton Foundation to build data science tools for accessing and assessing Islamic law in historical and modern contexts as a part of Courts&Canons, a platform that uses digital tools to uncover the theological foundations of Islamic law and to examine evolving Islamic values. And she represented and won a case for former police officer Cariol Horne, who was wrongfully terminated for intervening to save the life of a Black man caught in a chokehold by a fellow police officer using excessive force, in *City of Buffalo et al. v. Cariol Horne*. In summer 2021, CMES Research Associate **Sara Roy** will publish *Unsilencing Gaza: Reflections on Resistance* (Pluto Press), a compilation of her selected work from 2007 to the present, with several new articles. Together with *Failing Peace: Gaza and the Palestinian–Israeli Conflict* (Pluto Press, 2007), the two books cover thirty-five years of Roy’s research.

VISITING RESEARCHER NEWS

Visiting Fellow **Mary Elston** gave the talk “Heritage (turāth) in Modern Egypt: From Muḥammad ‘Abduh to Ali Gomaa” at the Humanities Research Institute, University of California, fall 2020. She gave the talk “Becoming Turāth: The History of Tradition in Modern Egypt” at the University of Oslo’s Centre for Islamic and Middle East Studies, spring 2021. She presented papers at the 2020 annual conferences for the Middle East Studies Association and the American Academy of Religion. She recorded an interview with the Alwaleed Bin Talal Islamic Studies podcast about her dissertation, “Reviving Turāth: Islamic Education in Modern Egypt.” Visiting Scholar **Renk Özdemir** received the TUBITAK 2219 International Postdoctoral Research Fellowship from the Scientific and Technical Research Council of Turkey. Visiting Scholar **Ayşe Betül Tekin** presented the paper “Division of Existents in Post-Classical Islamic Thought” at the Second Annual Islamic Philosophy Conference, American Society of Islamic Philosophy and Theology, Harvard University, December 2020. In May 2021 she gave

the CMES talk “Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Theological Translations.” And this June she presented the paper “Shams al-Dīn al-Isfahānī’s Presentation of Classifications of Existents” at After Avicenna: Online Conference on Post-Avicennian Islamic Philosophy and Theology, University of Jyväskylä. She published a book review in *Nazariyat* (November 2020) and a book chapter in Turkish in March 2021.

STUDENT NEWS

PHD STUDENTS

History and Middle Eastern Studies PhD candidate **Caroline Kahlenberg** published the article “Peddlers and the Policing of National Indifference in Palestine, 1920–1948,” in *History Workshop Journal*, 2020. In the latest program in the New Books Network’s Middle East Studies Series, History and Middle Eastern Studies PhD candidate **Deren Ertas** spoke with CMES alumna Ayfer Karakaya-Stump (PhD ’08), Associate Professor of History at the College of William and Mary, about Karakaya-Stump’s recently published monograph, *The Kizilbash-Alevi in Ottoman Anatolia: Sufism, Politics, and Community*.

FIELDWORK FROM AFAR

In spring 2020, Keye Tersmette, PhD candidate in Anthropology and Middle Eastern Studies, was less than 100 days into what was to be a year of dissertation fieldwork in Oman when Covid-19 hit. Here is his account of research disrupted.

Mere minutes after I purchased my ticket from him, the man behind the desk received a phone call. Soon he was smiling, and began snapping his fingers to draw the attention of his colleagues. The explanation followed the moment the line was disconnected: starting tomorrow, all bus routes would be suspended. While the bus drivers and office staff were celebrating their unexpected fortnight off, I can only imagine I must have felt relieved. I was taking the last bus from an Omani border town to the capital, just as it was announced that land borders everywhere were closed to everyone except nationals returning home. Social events and gatherings at community clubs were being canceled, and the swimming pool had closed its doors. The cafés and restaurants I'd been frequenting for the past three months were only serving their patrons outside, and preferred it if you could make it snappy. Faced with the prospect of conducting my dissertation fieldwork from a tiny apartment, I conferred with my advisors and changed my plans. And so, on day 99 of what was to be a full year, as Oman headed for lockdown, I was heading home to the Netherlands.

My decision to call it quits there and then was fraught with regret. For three

months, I'd been working hard to become a part of the border town, building relationships with countless individuals, participating in rituals of celebration and mourning, joining volunteer groups cleaning up the streets, reading stories to groups of children at the local bookshop, planting seeds in arid plains, visiting friends at the central market, the vegetable market, the municipal market, and teaching English to high school students preparing for entrance exams. All that and more came to an abrupt end when I set foot on the plane. Was I throwing away all that time and effort by checking out? It's bizarre to think that, as I'm writing this, I would

have finished my fieldwork last week had the situation been normal. Instead, I was going to have to think of different ways to continue my fieldwork from afar.

It took me some time to figure out just how I'd do that. In our first department Zoom meeting, with other students whose fieldwork had been disrupted, our professors encouraged us to take time off, to be intentionally unproductive. Looking at my field diary, I see now that it only took me four days to stop writing daily field notes. I briefly tried writing about what I read in the newspapers and on Twitter, but the snippets of life weren't as captivating. I tried keeping in touch with my friends, but I suspect I am not the only one who struggled to be enthusiastic about



Agricultural land in Omani town near the UAE border

repetitive WhatsApp exchanges, especially when I knew what it was like to be chatting face-to-face. Chance encounters and spontaneous discussions were replaced with message notifications and scripted conversations. I simply could not replicate the serendipity that breathes life into fieldwork over a distance of 7,000 kilometers.

Nor could I appreciate – as, at least in one sense, I still cannot today – how the world had changed overnight. To me, each day brought little new, little that excited. I was not intent on transforming my research on citizenship in borderlands into observations about the acute vicissitudes wrought by the pandemic. Naively, I had wanted to put my research in stasis, and ignore how the two might intersect. As I devised grant proposals for continuing fieldwork from afar, my focus remained squarely on what my research had always been, not on what it had perforce become; as I promised to read the newspapers, scour the internet, browse social media, delve in the archives, and revisit old field notes, I promised only to replace my methods, not my muse.

That is, until one of my professors wrote to the same group of students over the summer, inviting us to participate in an ethnographic writing exercise. She asked us to produce an analysis of a “thing” central to our work, share it with the group, and read and



Recently revived waterway in the Omani town

review each other's submissions. While reading my field notes in search of said "thing," I realized I had spent a lot of time around one of the town's recently revived waterways. I had no idea how I might connect the canal to my stated research interests, but it was one "thing" on which I had abundant ethnographic material. Had I written the analysis in pen, I'd have made a lame joke about how the ink flowed like the water in the canal. For the first time since my return home, I had actively engaged with the material I'd been collecting, and found that, even in the notes that said little explicitly about what it meant to be a citizen, there were threads generative of insights into Omani political life in the borderlands. Since that exercise, I have allowed my mind and eyes to wander beyond the confines of my immediate theoretical concerns, and have carefully begun noting what else strikes me about Oman at this remove.

At the start of this new year, as countries around the world, including Oman, begin with vaccinations, I dare not yet hope that I'll soon return to the border town and complete my fieldwork in situ. With my eye on a self-imposed date for graduation, I am considering writing the dissertation with the material I have collected thus far, and drawing more on a number of preliminary research trips made over the last few years. I keep in mind that a good dissertation is a done dissertation. For now, I look forward to teaching this semester, discovering the online classroom, and exploring new texts with students eager to learn about the world beyond the lockdown. ▣

Q&A WITH NANA-KORANTEMA KORANTENG

Nana-Korantema Koranteng is a 2021 graduate of the CMES AM Program in Middle Eastern Studies.

Why did you choose CMES?

I selected CMES because I felt like it was the program that provided me with the most flexibility. Having gone to a liberal arts college for my undergraduate degree, I really value space to explore and move beyond my academic concentration. The interdisciplinary nature of CMES as well as the various cross-registration opportunities through other Harvard Schools as well as Tufts and MIT was very important to me. I truly feel like I have been able to design an academic plan that fits my needs and unique goals.

What do you like best about studying at Harvard?

One of the best parts of studying at Harvard is the amazing faculty. While at Harvard I have had the opportunity to meet and interact with leading scholars in a variety of fields! My economics course was taught by a former head of the Council of Economic Advisors and I was able to learn about nonviolent resistance from one of the foremost scholars of civil resistance. By far one of the most special experiences for me was when during my first semester I took a seminar on diasporic Muslim fiction with Professor Leila Ahmed. Throughout my undergraduate studies I had read much of Professor Ahmed's work in my courses as I pursued my interest in women in Islamic traditions.

I can still remember emailing my old academic advisor after our first class in awe of Professor Ahmed's intellect and down-to-earth nature. At Harvard, you truly are amongst the top innovators and scholars of the world.

What do you like best about living in Cambridge?

I moved to Cambridge from Dubai, United Arab Emirates, excited to have a change in scenery and weather – it didn't disappoint. My favorite part of living in Cambridge is the fact that you can walk everywhere! Whether you need to get groceries or just want to grab a drink with friends, you can find several options in nearly every direction. I've never lived in a city that didn't require a car, so this is something that I will truly miss.

What travel/research opportunities have you pursued during your time at Harvard?

Throughout the first year of my degree I participated in the various offerings of Harvard Divinity School's Religion, Conflict, and Peace initiative (RCPI). Last January, I participated in a J-Term course in Israel and Palestine focused on narratives of displacement and belonging. Over the course of two and a half weeks we visited with various community leaders and stakeholders as we listened to their stories and tried to better understand how typologies of violence manifest themselves within Israel and Palestine. During the spring term I then completed a



special course in preparation for a summer internship that I was set to complete in Haifa, Israel. Although travel restrictions prevented me from traveling, with the

support of RCPI I was able to conduct a remote internship with a Palestinian feminist organization called Kayan. While this experience was quite different from

what I had imagined, my internship was a valuable learning opportunity and allowed me to support important work related to gender justice and equality. □

CROSSROADS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN: TURKEY AND TUNISIA

Deni Hoxha is a 2021 AB/AM graduate from Adams House, earning his undergraduate degree in economics and a concurrent AM degree in Middle Eastern studies. As a speaker in the “Destination: World – Student Tales from Beyond the Comfort Zone” event in October 2020, part of Worldwide Week at Harvard, Deni gave a PechaKucha-style PowerPoint presentation about his experiences on CMES Wintersession trips to Turkey (2018) and Tunisia (2019). Here is his talk, edited for print.

Growing up in Albania, I was surrounded by various remnants of the Ottoman Empire, from public spaces, architecture, and cultural influences. Albania was ruled by the Ottoman Empire for five centuries, until its independence in 1912. I was always curious about my country’s past and throughout college I tried to find out more by taking Middle Eastern history courses. When I found out about the Center for Middle Eastern Studies winter trip in Turkey, I immediately thought to sign up and visit the capital of the empire, Istanbul.

The winter trip in Turkey was three weeks and it focused on the “political, religious, economic, and cultural impact” of Turkish cities throughout history. During the three weeks, we visited museums, monuments, palaces, churches, mosques, organizations, and more. The trip was divided across four different cities: Istanbul, Edirne, Çanakkale, and Bursa. Moreover, visits were accompanied by readings and discussions, which proved to be fruitful and insightful given the diversity of our group.

One of the first sites visited on the trip was the Hagia Sophia. Built in the sixth century, it was the cathedral of the Byzantine Empire and had become a mosque in 1453 after Mehmed the Conqueror’s conquest of Constantinople. Then in 1934, it became a museum. As our tour guide explained, renovations brought back Orthodox mosaics which were plastered while the museum was a mosque. Seeing the Islamic calligraphy next to Orthodox mosaics and icons was a remarkable and spiritual sight. It was symbolic of a pluralism between Islam and Christianity that I had not seen before. Equally as spiritual was the whirling

dervish performance at the Mevlevi Lodge Museum of Istanbul. A Sufi Islamic ritual, whirling is a form of *dhikr*, or remembrance to God. The performance was mesmerizing and at the same time deeply mystical.

Moreover, the Gallipoli War Museum left an impression on me because of the historical significance of the event. I had learned in history courses that the Gallipoli campaign was one of the most important events of World War I, but to visit the site, the monuments, and the museum nearby was a surreal experience that demonstrated the devastating consequences of war. Although military history was previously not one of my interests, the museum’s





Orthodox mosaic in the Hagia Sophia



Hagia Sophia



Whirling dervish performance at Mevlevi Lodge Museum



Çanakkale Martyrs' Memorial, Gallipoli

exhibits as well as its artifacts made this a memorable experience.

Other places which were just as important and impressive on the trip were the Hrant Dink Foundation, Kora Church, Princess Islands, Edirne Mosque, and the Topkapi Palace.

Following my sophomore winter in Turkey, I spent my junior winter in Tunisia. Founded in 2017, CMES Tunisia is an overseas branch of CMES and offers several academic and research opportunities for Harvard students, including the J-Term Study Excursion. Similar to the winter term in Turkey, this trip offers a discovery of Tunisian history, literature, and culture. Although primarily intended for graduate students, undergraduate upperclassmen can also apply. I chose to apply given my interest in Arab and European encounters

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after having studied postcolonial and orientalist theory on a Harvard Summer School program in Aix-en-Provence, France, led by CMES Director William Granara. Moreover, as an economics concentrator, the economic history of Tunisia in the Ottoman Empire as well as its assimilation of French institutions and their impact on economic growth piqued my interest.

Previously familiar with Tunisia's Ottoman and French history, during the trip I discovered Tunisia's ancient past as a Carthaginian and Roman province through our visits to archaeological sites across the country. Three historic and impressive sights were Dougga, Bulla Regia, and the El Jem Amphitheatre. Bulla Regia, a Roman archaeological site adorned by mosaics which impressively were still intact, struck me for its underground theatre and the architecture of Roman houses. Dougga, considered by UNESCO as the best-preserved Roman town in North Africa, offered a fascinating glimpse of life in antiquity. After Dougga, we also visited El Jem – the second largest Roman amphitheatre after the Colosseum. It was interesting to hear how the usage of the amphitheatre had changed under the administration of the Romans and the Ottomans. The experience became even more unique when we visited the amphitheatre's gladiatorial underground complex, which revealed the scale and grandeur of Roman architecture.

The excursion in Tunisia differed from the one in Turkey in that the Harvard base in the country facilitated additional opportunities for students.





Al-Zaytuna Mosque, Tunis



Virgil Mosaic, Bardo National Museum, Tunis



Deni Hoxha in Istanbul

The CMES Tunisia Office was not only an excellent resource for our trips to different sites, but it also served as a center of exchange and research in the evenings. Throughout the excursion, we attended lectures and networking events where we met with Tunisian journalists, activists, photographers, historians, and scholars. These events enhanced my general understanding of Tunisia while also enriching my curiosity for topics like Ottoman and post-Ottoman Tunisia. The Center was also incredibly resourceful in facilitating visits to institutions like the National Archives of Tunisia and the National Library of Tunisia. Evidently, the presence of the Center and its convenience has influenced my research interests and future possibilities.

As I reflect on these two excursions, they have been some of my most transformative experiences at Harvard. They have challenged my understanding of the countries and shaped me into the student and emerging scholar that I am today. I hope to further explore the Ottoman and post-Ottoman past of Albania, while also drawing unique connections between Albania, Turkey, and Tunisia. After having been to Tunisia and Turkey twice, I can say that one can never visit these countries too many times.

I want to thank the Center for Middle Eastern Studies in Cambridge and in Tunis for allowing me to participate in these programs and for supporting my journey at Harvard. Special thanks go to Professor William Granara, Dr. Jesse Howell, Sihem Lamine, Carol Ann Young, Akif Yerlioğlu, and Laura Thompson. ▣

Q&A WITH MOUHANAD AL RIFAY

Mouhanad Al Rifay, a 2021 CMES AM graduate, is a Syrian-American award-winning documentary filmmaker, humanitarian, and human rights activist. At CMES he focused on journalism and nonfiction narrative writing and developed further expertise in Middle East-focused critical political and cultural commentary. After graduating from the University of Maryland, College Park, in 2014 with a BA in psychology, international development, and conflict management, Al Rifay managed various USAID-funded programs at leading international development organizations in Washington, DC. He also co-founded the Syrian-American Network for Aid and Development, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the education of Syrian children. In 2018, Al Rifay released his first short documentary, “Tomorrow’s Children” (tomorrowchildrenfilm.com), which exposes the suffering of six Syrian refugee children forced into child labor. The film won the Impact Award at the 2018 San Francisco International Festival of Short Films. Al Rifay also helped produce a weekly Arabic-language political program that interviewed US policymakers and published many articles in leading publications including the Huffington Post and Lebanese Daily Star. He has been involved in the Syrian democracy movement since before the 2011 uprising, disseminating information about human rights violations to Western media, and was featured in media outlets including the Washington Post, Lawfare, NPR, AJ+, Al Jazeera Arabic, and the Harvard Gazette. Al Rifay was a political asylee and received US citizenship in 2015.

Why did you choose CMES?

In my search for the best graduate program that fit my needs and interests, I found that CMES affords me the opportunity to customize my graduate education experience to best fit my goals combining rigorous academic study, research, language, literature, and history with Middle East-focused policy, journalism, and cultural affairs. The program allowed me to focus on areas that best suit my professional interests and enrich my intellectual curiosity seamlessly. During my time here, CMES provided me with the space, support, and guidance to explore and bridge areas of study that, on the surface, may seem disconnected or unrelated, yet are deeply intertwined and fully present in Middle East culture, politics, and global influence. And what solidified my decision to choose CMES is my sister’s amazing experience here before me. My sister, Oula Alrifai, for sure, influenced my decision-making process, and for her guidance I am forever grateful.

What are your research interests?

I am interested in memory preservation and the documentation of history through the lives and struggles of ordinary people. Given my family’s background, I am particularly interested in the study of the urban educated elite and their dynamic relationship with the state in twentieth-century Syria and the Levant region. It is an extremely rich period of Levant history that was marked by the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the French and British colonial mandates, the start of the Arab-

Israeli conflict, the rise of nationalism and pan-Arabism that gave way to the rise of modern young democratic states and later authoritarian-nationalist-military-socialist regimes and security states that unfortunately continue to violently suppress the democratic aspirations in the region, and foster an everlasting environment of conflict and upheaval. This amazing period is rarely discussed, understood, and researched. To understand the current complex dynamics in Syria and the region at large, it is essential to understand the grievances caused by competing external and internal forces and their lasting impact on the national consciousness of the Middle Eastern people. Thus, I believe closely studying the twentieth century is not only essential but should in fact be required for any student of the Middle East.

What have you liked best about living in Cambridge?

I loved living in Cambridge, albeit my time was cut short when the Covid-19 pandemic reached our shores. I lived in a graduate residence on campus and had the unique opportunity of experiencing campus life fully. One of my favorite activities was taking long night walks around Harvard Yard. For most of my walks I was alone, immersing myself in the quietness of the Harvard campus in the late hours of night interrupted only by groups of students engaging in snowball fights or laughter. At times I had a friend or two, who lived in the graduate residence as well, go on walks with me. And I truly enjoyed spending hours at the libraries, reading and writing. Oftentimes I was the last one sitting in the



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Loker Reading Room at Widener Library rushing to submit an assignment mere minutes before its midnight deadline with a library staff member shutting the lights off. On Friday nights, I loved going to Queen's Head, the iconic Harvard student-operated bar on campus hidden in Memorial Hall, or attending open-bar receptions at the Harvard Art Museum. And my favorite coffee spot was the free espresso bar on campus, which is apparently an open secret. I plan on keeping it a secret! Choosing to live on campus was intentional for me – I wanted to engage with the broader community outside my program or School at Harvard. I am fortunate that my Harvard friends come from across the entire University, including the staff. During meals, I looked forward to speaking with the staff at my dining hall. Despite our short time physically together, living on campus afforded me the time and opportunities to build lifelong relationships and lasting memories that I'll cherish forever.

What travel/research opportunities have you pursued during your time at Harvard?

In January 2020 I traveled to Tunisia with my colleagues from CMES and other students from across the University. It was an amazing experience. We had the opportunity to visit different parts of Tunisia, learn about the local history and culture, and experience firsthand the Tunisian people's work towards a more democratic society and government. I particularly enjoyed learning about the colonial and postcolonial history of Tunisia and its lasting impact on the country and

region, and I loved building memories with locals whom I wouldn't have had the opportunity to meet otherwise. In the summer of 2020, I had planned to live in Istanbul, Turkey, for a few months, attending an intensive and immersive Turkish language program at Boğaziçi University. However, I had to cancel my plans due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, I used my time wisely and instead took online nonfiction narrative writing courses at Stanford University and the University of Chicago, during which I was able to expand my writing skills, further develop my narrative style that is different from academic writing, and understand the elements that go into paragraph, chapter, and book structuring. I enjoy writing and editing, in both English and Arabic languages, and I hope to pursue it further in the near future.

How has the Covid-19 pandemic affected your classroom work and your ability to conduct research?

Undoubtedly the Covid-19 pandemic drastically disrupted the world as we have come to know it. Yet it also unearthed the true possibilities of remote learning and working, something that my generation has come to value in the years prior to the pandemic. It goes without saying that the disruption was extremely painful and difficult at times, however the people at Harvard worked tirelessly to ensure our success, nonetheless. Personally, prior to the pandemic I enjoyed checking out books from the library (at times even picking up fifteen books or more on rainy nights), and I loved writing final papers

alongside my colleagues on campus. Yet, as we all moved into quarantine many of the Harvard Library resources were made available digitally. The Library staff made sure to accommodate my requests with much kindness and big smiles. For sure, having access to millions of volumes and texts at any moment is priceless, but the ease in which we transitioned to virtual learning was astonishing. Going forward, I believe it is essential to invest more in digital resources, democratize digital book lending, and ensure the digitization of rare items and collections to ease access globally regardless of a pandemic or not.

Have there been any positive aspects of the remote learning model that Harvard has implemented?

Yes, definitely! Moving from traditional in-person learning to remote, overnight, as the Covid-19 pandemic reached our Harvard community in March 2020, was not easy. Nonetheless, despite glitches along the way, it was painless from a student's point of view. Within weeks the University made Zoom accounts available for all students, provided training, and listened to concerns and suggestions. In my second remote semester, fall 2020, a strong foundation had already been established and courses accommodated modern-day virtual learning. For example, "Confronting Climate Change," one of the foundational courses I took with Daniel Schrag [Sturgis Hooper Professor of Geology and Professor of Environmental Science and Engineering], provided modules in video format followed by short quizzes, completely based on Canvas. And so, instead of relying on heavy

readings per usual, the course team created content that met our new virtual learning environment. And so, students benefited from high quality audiovisual education in addition to our regular weekly Zoom class meetings. Another exciting opportunity was the large number of guest speakers who attended our different courses, who in normal circumstances might have declined such invitations due to travel or busy schedules. For example, I had the good fortune of meeting journalists Nicholas Kristof from the *New York Times* and Katie Couric; both joined one of my classes at the Harvard Kennedy School taught by Nancy Gibbs [Lombard Director of the Shorenstein Center and Visiting Edward R. Murrow Professor of the Practice of Press, Politics, and Public Policy, HKS].

What extracurricular activities have you pursued at Harvard?

Coming to Harvard, in spite of my prior full-time work experience, I knew that engaging with the professional environment at Harvard is essential to my long-term career goals beyond the classroom. And so, in my first semester I joined the Middle East Initiative (MEI) at the Harvard Kennedy School as an intern, and continued my internship throughout my entire time at Harvard. At MEI I have been able to connect with the professional side of the institution and experience firsthand the behind-the-scenes of the academic-professional environment that students don't usually engage directly with in the classroom. Also, in an effort to sharpen my editorial and journalistic skills, I joined the *Journal of*

Middle Eastern Politics and Policy at the Kennedy School as Senior Staff Writer, where I regularly collaborated with fellow students on writing, editing, and publishing Middle East-focused political and cultural commentary and helped design the Spring 2021 print edition of the journal. In 2020 I joined the Harvard Votes Challenge, a nonpartisan initiative that encourages students and others in the Harvard community, through one-on-one communication, to take a more active role in our democracy and help increase student voter turnout. And lastly, I was honored to be elected by my colleagues at CMES to represent them at the Graduate Student Council as their Program Representative – a true honor of a lifetime. Of course, the opportunities are truly endless. When I lived on campus, I had the pleasure to attend many talks, screenings, exhibits, concerts, and happy hours where I met many of the absolutely wonderful people from all walks of life who make Harvard the rich and undeniably unique place that it is.

What are your plans after finishing your degree?

I have worked full-time prior to coming to Harvard for years and had run my own small nonprofit organization since 2011. Naturally I plan to seek full-time employment after graduating. However, given the state of the Covid-19 pandemic and the economic crisis we're in, I am not sure how easily I will be able to find a job that I enjoy and feel fulfilled by. At the same time, I believe that this pandemic has forced my generation to rethink everything about the nature of work,

career goals, and economic and emotional fulfillment. And so, I think it is essential to work in areas that we personally find not only economically satisfying, but also emotionally, intellectually, and politically fulfilling. For me, given my experience in the corporate and nonprofit sectors in addition to my independent work as a filmmaker and writer, going forward I will seek opportunities that don't only meet my economic expectations but also fulfill my physical and emotional growth and development. And so, I will most likely seek to build a career that combines my Middle East-focused regional and global expertise with my passion for audiovisual media, human communication, nonfiction writing, and storytelling, and my urgent sense of duty towards my two countries, the United States and Syria, and the globe.

What advice would you offer a prospective CMES AM student?

I encourage prospective students to visit CMES, if possible, and engage with the faculty and staff at the Center prior to applying. The CMES family is kind, unique, and welcoming. Do not be intimidated by the Harvard brand; the beautiful people that make CMES are here to support you. And they are extremely excited to meet you and learn from you. I had the good fortune to meet with the Director and some faculty and staff at CMES prior to the submission of my application, and in spite of their stature and influence they all welcomed and encouraged me every step of the way, starting with the application process and until my last day here at CMES, and beyond. CMES is my second family. ☐

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CONGRATULATIONS 2020–21 GRADUATES!

AM PROGRAM

- **Abdullah Almutabagani**
- **Mouhanad Al Rifay**—*Thesis:* “Scattered Images: The Perpetual Destabilization of Family in Pursuit of Political Dominance (Palestine 1948–Syria 1980).” *Advisor:* William Granara. CMES Thesis Prize
- **Margaret (Maggie) Dene**
- **Jacob Ellis**
- **Deni Hoxha** (AB/AM)
- **Nana-Korantema Koranteng**
- **Elizabeth (Liz) Masten**
- **John Paul (Jack) Murphy**—

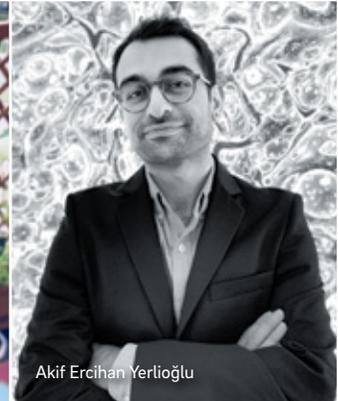
Thesis: s“Earthquakes and Epidemics: The Impact of Natural Disasters on the ‘Abbāsīd Revolution.’” *Advisor:* Roy Mottahedeh. CMES Thesis Prize

JOINT PHD PROGRAMS

- **Meredyth Lynn Winter** (History of Art and Architecture and MES)—*Dissertation:* “Silks Withdrawn: A Re-Contextualization of the Medieval Fragments from Rayy.” *Advisors:* Gülru Necipoğlu, David Roxburgh.



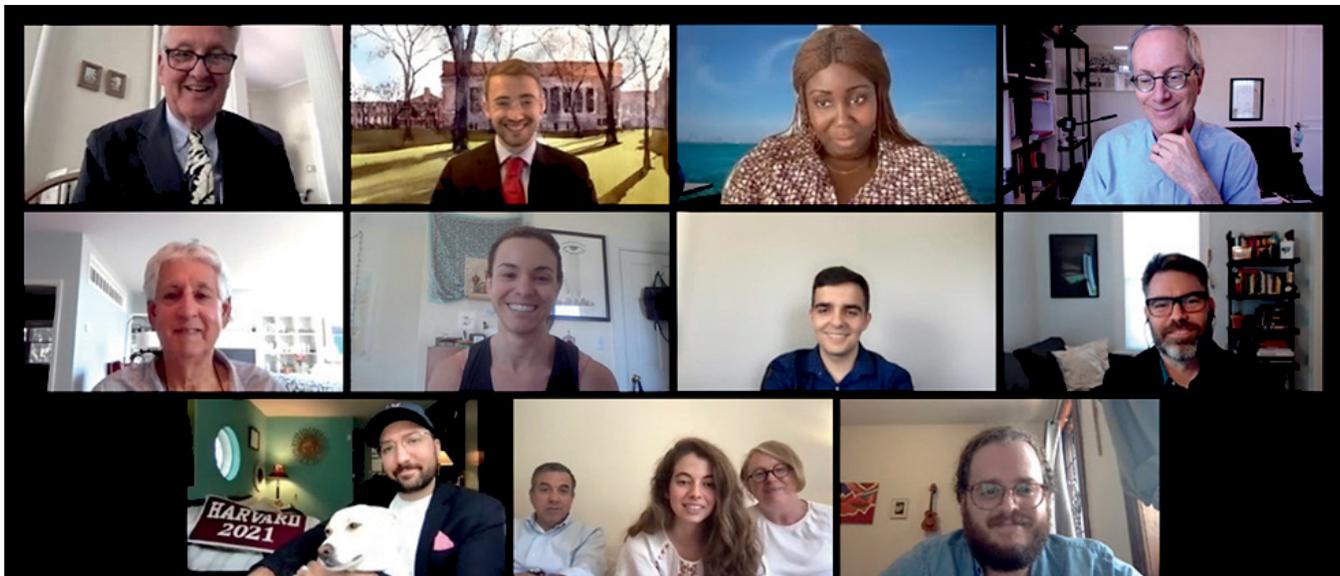
Meredyth Lynn Winter



Akif Ercihan Yerlioğlu

- Committee:* Finbarr Barry Flood, Renata Holod
- **Akif Ercihan Yerlioğlu** (History and MES)—*Dissertation:* “Paracelsus Goes

East: Ottoman ‘New Medicine’ and Its Afterlife.” *Advisor:* Cemal Kafadar. *Committee:* Ann Blair, Khaled Fahmy, Roy Mottahedeh, Katherine Park



William Granara, Derek Penslar, guest speaker Philip Khoury, and Jesse Howell with 2021 CMES AM graduates

HOW MY EXPERIENCES AT THE CMES INFLUENCED MY CAREER

On May 25, CMES's virtual commencement celebration included an address by CMES alumnus Philip S. Khoury (PhD '80), Ford International Professor of History and Associate Provost at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

I am honored to be able to speak to the 2021 graduates of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies. Please accept my heartiest congratulations on your achievement. It's no small matter to earn a Harvard graduate degree, and especially given what you've had to face these past fifteen months.

I owe a large chunk of my learning and my career to what the Center provided me during my years there, which spanned the decade of the 1970s.

I'm going to hew closely to what Professor William Granara, the CMES Director, asked me to talk about: how my experiences as a Harvard graduate student influenced my professional life – as a historian, professor, and academic administrator, and my work in international education. As I understand it, few of you are likely to go on to a university teaching career in the near future so I recognize what I will say may not connect to your future career paths. Still, my charge is to tell you about how my career evolved. What we all have in common is that we are products of the CMES, and that's our bond.

I've led a fairly stable life, full of continuities. From the age of three I have been in an academic institution without interruption, and the last forty years at MIT. Even my own scholarship emphasizes stability

and continuity, and if I have contributed anything to Middle East scholarship it is to remind ourselves that in times of dramatic unrest and upheaval it is stability and continuity that need explanation.

I arrived at the CMES fifty years ago. How did I get there? Well, I thought I was headed to law school until I spent my junior year at the American University of

Beirut, where I began to immerse myself in the study of the Middle East, and that experience pushed me toward Middle Eastern studies.

But I'd be remiss if I didn't add that growing up during the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War made me look less kindly at some other major professions. I concluded that the academy



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was somehow a more noble place to be. And doubtless my decision to focus on the Arab world derived from a desire to better understand my own identity as an Arab American. I was a creature of the 1960s, and in some ways I still am.

I chose to come to Harvard because the CMES offered me years of guaranteed funding and because Albert Hourani was coming to teach at Harvard my first year.

I entered straight away from college into the joint History and Middle Eastern Studies PhD program. It took me nine years to get my degree. By the time the Center told me that there was no more funding, that I had to wrap it up and find a job, my dissertation was 1,200 pages long. The good life rudely came to an end, and I had no job lined up. For the first time in my life, I faced the possibility of instability.

But then the Center came to my rescue, and not for the first time either. The same Center director who told me there was no more funding and to get a job ended up giving me a one-year postdoc to allow me to work on my first book project. In return, I helped to write the renewal proposal for the Center's core FLAS Grant to the US government that had supported me and many others.

During my decade at the Center, it gave me Albert Hourani, who became my mentor and dissertation supervisor; it supported my entire graduate school education; and it helped position me to find a good teaching post. The Center gave me an unbeatable trifecta.

Albert Hourani proved to be a sensational teacher and ended up supervising a healthy number of Harvard

doctoral students in Middle East history from that time onwards. In his introductory modern Middle East history course, he attracted all sorts of undergraduates and graduate students. One was Benazir Bhutto, then a junior, who would eventually become Pakistan's Prime Minister before her assassination. We sat next to each other and became friendly.

Hourani's graduate seminar was the ultimate treat. He opened it up with four lectures, in which he provided an auto-critique of his *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, then a decade old, and the most outstanding intellectual history of its kind. None of us had ever seen such a performance, so frank and so penetrating. He showed us how he would revise his book based on the best new scholarship that appeared in the decade since he published *Arabic Thought*. He explained that his greatest oversight had been not to properly root *Arabic Thought* in the Ottoman context in which it had actually emerged. Hourani's auto-critique inspired me years later to write an auto-critique of my first book, which got a few colleagues to ask why I had bothered to publish that book in the first place.

A later Hourani book, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, was the first history of the Middle East ever to make the *New York Times* Best Seller list. It was based on the lectures he wrote for the Harvard Middle East history course I took with him.

I also signed up for Center Director Muhsin Mahdi's Islamic Philosophy course, which mainly attracted graduate students interested in Straussian political theory and especially in how to read between the lines of medieval texts. Medieval philosophers

had to write in ways that concealed the truths they wished to get across to the few special people they were trying to reach, because if those truths were ever discovered by the state authorities, their authors would have been punished and perhaps eliminated. These philosophers, who were of course religiously trained, were the ones who were free-will advocates and opposed to predestination; they believed that religious ideas were for the masses and philosophical ones only for a small elite. Strauss's methodology was most visibly embedded in his book *Persecution and the Art of Writing*. Mahdi had been a leading disciple of Leo Strauss's at Chicago.

I couldn't believe my eyes when on the first day of class nearly every student brought with them a tape recorder which they placed on Professor Mahdi's teaching desk to capture his every word, and they did this throughout the semester. It looked like Professor Mahdi had created a cult of personality. But, what I came away with from his class was proficiency in the art of close reading, which has carried me through my career. It proved especially helpful when I became a dean at MIT, because it enabled me to interpret the writings of some of my younger postmodernist colleagues in English and comparative literature whose tenure cases I had to present to MIT's senior leadership for approval. Postmodern scholarship was not something scientists and engineers easily understood or warmed to.

The CMES I arrived at in 1971 was in an old, converted Sheraton Hotel, and we shared it with other regional studies centers. There was a dimly lit lunchroom

where an elderly woman prepared hot meals at reasonable prices, and that lunchroom and the warren of offices up and down the floors reminded me of the descriptions of OSS headquarters in Washington during World War II or the Cambridge Circus in London, the fictional headquarters of MI6, made famous by John Le Carré.

In the two years leading up to my coming to Harvard, the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences had cut its admissions by 50 percent. The academic job market in the humanities had begun to turn south after two decades of rapid expansion. In 1975 it reached its low point for the coming quarter century. Still, Harvard PhDs in practically all history fields did better in the job market than those at other universities. When I joined the MIT History Department in 1981, it was packed with Harvard PhDs. When Stanford made me an offer the next year, I noticed that some Stanford historians only wanted to talk about where they had sat in Widener.

I spent inordinate amounts of time in Widener's main reading room. The reading room crowd included faculty who liked to write their treatises longhand; scruffy graduate student types like myself, who clustered in cliques; and a sprinkling of well-to-do, perfectly tanned undergraduates who only appeared toward the end of reading period hastily trying to prepare for their January finals, having spent their long Christmas break and much of their reading period skiing in the Alps or in Aspen or swimming on St. John.

After Widener closed at 9:45 pm, we either went home or repaired to one

or another bar in the Square. Thursday evenings at Casablanca were especially popular because that's when droves of au pairs from Boston and its wealthy suburbs descended on the Square, on their one night off. Others of us who were less cosmopolitan could be found at Charlie's Kitchen or at the Plough and Stars down toward Central Square, which was rumored to be a watering hole for exiled IRA members.

The Square was full of cheap breakfast, lunch, and dining joints. Then there were the bookstores of every type, including one on Arrow Street that was exclusively for Middle East and Africa books. The cafes – from the Algiers to Pamplona – were sublime. And there seemed to be nearly as many ice cream parlors as there were bookstores and coffee houses.

Harvard Square in my time seemed to be at the center of the earth, without equal. It was the age of protest, from Vietnam to Watergate, and it was the Age of Aquarius, all wrapped up into one dense space exuding the elitism of Harvard and the countercultural movements of the day. The placemats at The Wursthause said it all: "Welcome to Harvard Square: Crossroads of Civilization."

I arrived in Damascus in the fall of 1975 just as the Lebanon civil war had escalated and hordes of Lebanese were fleeing across the border to the Syrian capital. My travel between Beirut and Damascus was highly risky, and fortunately a Palestinian historian friend arranged for me to travel back and forth every few weeks in cars carrying PLO leaders of the far left who

vouched for me at one or another armed militia checkpoint.

I was in Damascus to continue my dissertation research on a Fulbright and specifically in the Syrian Historical Archives, which had recently opened up to foreign scholars. After my arrival, I was shocked to learn that the US ambassador had denied me my Fulbright. He had the final say and asserted I was a security risk because of the interviews I needed to conduct with interwar leaders. This seemed ridiculous; but it was Syria, and it was the US ambassador.

I didn't know what to do because I was nearly broke and living in a run-down hotel near the old Ottoman train station, sharing an unheated room with a Syrian Air Force lieutenant who trusted me no more than I trusted him. The difference was that he slept with a pistol under his pillow.

Not wanting to give up and return home, I decided to send a telegram to the Center about my plight. Weeks went by and I heard nothing back. I was at my wit's end and ready to pack it in, to give it all up. Then one day the US Embassy notified me there was an envelope for me. It contained \$500 in cash, approximately \$2,500 in today's dollars; life suddenly became a lot rosier. The Center had heard my pleas and bailed me out. It saved me and my career. Even the ambassador came around, and at long last I got to access my Fulbright funding.

I spent three years conducting dissertation research, mainly in Damascus, Beirut, Paris, London, and Oxford. When I returned to the Center in 1977, the facilities had been nicely modernized, and I was given an office in which I spent the

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next three years writing what became an excruciatingly long dissertation.

But I didn't just write. I also started to attend the Weatherhead's Middle East Seminar focused on contemporary politics. Soon I and other students began to wonder what had happened to the CMES's lecture series. We wanted a lecture series that was more than a sophisticated current events series, something that brought attention to the latest historical and anthropological scholarship. So, I asked the associate director and he replied, "Khoury, if you want to revive the Center's lecture series be my guest. Here are some funds, go do it." A classmate who felt much as I did and I launched a new version of a series that had once existed. We were in charge of its organization and had some say over who was invited to speak, and our speakers came from far and wide. It allowed Center students and others to meet some of the leading Middle East scholars of the day.

Almost the first thing I did when I arrived at MIT was to approach our Center for International Studies about establishing a Middle East lecture series there. The director liked the idea and gave me some funds to get one launched. But he warned me that at MIT it was my obligation to show proof of concept and that meant I had to find the long-term funding to sustain the series after my seed funds ran out. I did so but just in the nick of time. Thirty-five years later my Emile Bustani Middle East Seminar continues.

If you have an idea for how to enhance the learning culture in your institution, you should ask someone higher up the food chain if they can help you; and, if your case

is a good one, it's amazing how often they come through for you. I learned this lesson at the CMES and I brought it with me to MIT.

Only in my last year at the Center, did I get to teach. I got involved with other Center students in helping to organize an Introduction to the Middle East course in the new Harvard Core Curriculum under Foreign Cultures. Enrollments were large, and lining up the various professors who taught in it got us to meet faculty across Middle East studies, many of whom we hadn't known before. The course also provided us with teaching fellowships, and in this way I got my first experience of teaching undergraduates. Teaching may have come late in the day for me, but the experience sure helped me eliminate any doubts about whether I would enjoy teaching. I loved it.

I haven't stayed as close as I would have liked to the Center in the forty years since I left it. If I've made one contribution, other than the little check I send the Center annually, it's been the joint supervision of some of the Center's history PhD candidates. Because there had been no permanent senior historian of the modern Middle East at Harvard for decades – Roger Owen didn't take up his post until 1993 – a number of doctoral candidates from the Center's program asked me to become one of their dissertation supervisors: David Lesch, Eugene Rogan, Jim Gelvin, Moshe Gershovich, and Nakeema Barbero, who all finished in the 1990s. After earning their PhDs, several would spend two to three years at MIT teaching Middle East history

as my replacement after I became dean. They used their MIT positions to secure excellent positions elsewhere and all were tenured. And I'm happy to report that even today a CMES graduate is teaching at MIT in my place.

I owed my MIT job to the Iranian Revolution. Timing is everything. Suddenly, universities that did not have Middle East and Islamic historians started to search for them, and I got lucky.

But I quickly became disappointed that student enrollments in my MIT courses were small. It turned out that most undergraduates chose their humanities and social science courses not so much by interest but rather by what fit their crowded engineering and science schedules. I wanted an audience.

To find one, I had to come back to Harvard, and in my case to the Harvard Extension School. I proposed to teach a year-long Middle East history course one evening a week for the entire academic year. The Harvard dean liked the idea, and I got my audience. It was large enough to permit me to hire a Center doctoral student to be the grader. Harvard Extension proved to be the most rewarding undergraduate teaching I've ever experienced. I moonlighted there for eight years running, until I became dean at MIT.

Having small enrollments at MIT did buy me extra time to concentrate on my scholarship, which got me through tenure. While teaching certainly matters at MIT, one's scholarship counts more. It does at Harvard too. For years now, liberal arts colleges also require strong scholarship

to earn tenure. I applaud this because I really believe one's scholarship informs one's teaching and actually makes us better teachers.

Soon after achieving tenure my academic life unexpectedly took a turn in another direction. I was appointed associate dean to oversee the implementation for a newly reformed humanities, arts, and social sciences curriculum.

I'll never forget how a famous MIT professor congratulated me on my appointment: he said, "You know what they say about associate deans: mice training to be rats."

Well, he proved correct. Three years later I became a rat. I became the dean. I did consult a number of colleagues before agreeing to become dean. The most thoughtful advice came from Albert Hourani. He told me to accept the position but also warned me, saying, "You shouldn't fool yourself into thinking you'll be able to produce scholarship in the way you have." He said, "Every time you find a few extra hours to turn to your writing, you will inevitably become distracted by unfinished administrative work." How right he was.

But becoming dean offered a silver lining of sorts. While my scholarship began to slow down, I quickly became exposed to scholarship in a range of disciplines I knew little if anything about. That was because I was now responsible for presenting the promotion and tenure cases of my faculty to MIT's senior leadership council on which I served. I got to read the work of some of the best young economists, linguists, philosophers, musicologists, political scientists, anthropologists, and

literary critics anywhere. I got an entire education that dizzied me. To become their champions, I actually had to steep myself in their scholarship. And I had to be able to explain their scholarship to my colleagues in MIT's senior leadership.

So, I got a remarkable new education I would have never acquired otherwise. It wasn't the same as producing my own scholarship, but it opened my eyes to whole new worlds of scholarship and the methodologies underlying them.

I have devoted the last fifteen years of my career to international education and research. MIT's new president asked me in 2006 to fill a new position: to oversee MIT's vast array of international activities, which, she rightly observed, were uncoordinated and increasingly chaotic. Our extremely entrepreneurial faculty, especially in engineering and in the management school, were like a bunch of cowboys galloping all around the world rustling up collaborations as if they were cattle. MIT had no really good decision-making methodology for choosing its engagements abroad. Why some countries and not others? Why some research areas and not others? We had no strategy; rather our faculty appeared to be grasping at every opportunity to collaborate that came their way, and there were countless such opportunities.

And while this was going on, other faculty were raising all sorts of criticisms about MIT's behavior abroad. Some expressed strong concern that MIT was in bed with governments that were authoritarian and abusive and especially in the ways they treated women and

minorities. Others argued that we were recklessly entering into collaborations that were more about raising big funding and less about pushing forward the frontiers of knowledge.

The president asked me to develop an international strategy, but not a foreign policy. At the same time, she wanted me to rein in our faculty cowboys and empire builders, without stifling their entrepreneurial energies, a difficult request if there ever was one. Basically, she wanted me to become sheriff for MIT International.

Some faculty cowboys didn't welcome the appointment of a sheriff and immediately challenged me to gunfights; fortunately, some others agreed to put on deputy sheriff badges and join me in these showdowns.

In the six years I served as associate provost for international activities, MIT began to emerge with a strategic plan and some centralization of authority, at least over the very large-scale projects we were undertaking. However, helping countries to build their research capacities doesn't often lead to rapid breakthroughs in scientific research. But it certainly does help to increase the flow of funding from abroad, which grew tremendously over the decade.

One of the benefits of my position was that I got quite deeply engaged in countries I had not spent time in before, especially China and India but also Singapore, where MIT had its largest international collaborations. There I served for a dozen years on that country's Academic Research Council, responsible for allocating hundreds of millions of dollars to Singapore's research centers of excellence. A new arena had opened up to me, in what

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has been the most dynamic region of the world in the past four decades.

But what about the Middle East? Well, timing is everything, and just as I took on my new international post, MIT began to get involved in a number of large-scale undertakings in the Arab world – specifically in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi, and Qatar, places I had studied when I was at the Center and taught about at MIT. And although most of these projects focused on topics which I knew little about, such as natural resources and the environment, clean water and energy, and the computer translation of languages, my Center education provided me with the cultural background and insights to move fairly comfortably in negotiating with Arab government funding agencies. The Center had given me another leg up in my career.

The second Middle East opportunity that came to me at this time occurred independently of MIT. And it really brought me full circle in my career. I was invited to get involved with two Middle Eastern universities that aspired to be research oriented and to promote the academic standards found at America's top universities like Harvard and Berkeley. I joined the Boards of AUB and Koç University in Istanbul. AUB is the oldest modern secular university in the Middle East, founded in 1866, while Koç is barely thirty years old. Both are outliers in the Middle East in two ways: they are private universities and they are committed to promoting high-end research and the values of a liberal education in the arts and sciences. AUB, Koç, and a very few others run against the grain in the Middle

East, which is far below the curve in its investment in scientific research and even further below it in promoting liberal values in education.

Since 2009, I have chaired AUB's Board of Trustees, which in terms of my time and effort is almost like a second job. I'm able to apply what I've learned at MIT and at the CMES to my work there: and that involves helping to develop quality control standards and long-term strategies for advancing education and research in a very divided region of the world, one you all know quite intimately.

I'd suggest that my involvement with AUB and with Koç has something to do with the ways the Center prepared me for the future. It prepared me to join the faculty of a leading research university as a Middle East specialist and eventually to become an academic administrator. As I near the end of my career, I have so much to be grateful to the Center for, and I can't say that enough.

For you who will graduate with master's degrees but have decided not to go on to further academic work on the Middle East, whatever career you pursue I hope it will have some relationship to the Middle East region you have studied – whether in law or business or government or at NGOs – and I also hope you will find opportunities to spend time there. You have invested the time and effort to learn about the Middle East and so why not try to keep up your interest in the region.

For you who may still be thinking about an academic career, whether in a university or college or independent research

institute, library, or museum, I hope you find the right institution in which to pursue your career. And should you be called on to serve your institution in a leadership role one day, I hope you will do so only after you have had ample time to let your teaching and scholarship or curatorial work mature to a level that you find satisfying. I would add that you who pursue teaching careers will be asked to teach in a blended manner, delivering in-class and online instruction. And I think you will also witness a growing trend in the direction of collaborative research that will modify the single-investigator model found in the humanities. This trend is already occurring in a number of the social science fields.

Above all, thank you for holding up high the flags of the humanities, arts, and social sciences. These areas of learning are facing big challenges and real hardships, and they have been for a long while: diminished student interest; limited employment opportunities; and reduced general funding for teaching and research. I'm not telling you anything you don't already know and face.

However higher education and research evolve during your careers, they will look quite different from what I've encountered during mine. For someone who has opted for stability wherever I can find it, I'm not sure I would be able to adjust to the many changes that are happening and are still to happen. Oh, to be young again!

I wish each of you great success in your career and in your life, and I thank you for giving me the chance to speak with you today just in advance of your official graduation from a great center at a great university. Congratulations! ▣

ALUMNI NEWS

AM ALUMNI

Oula Alrifai works at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy as a Senior Fellow; September 2021 will mark her second anniversary there. Her work focuses on Iran's interference in Syria. In March 2021 she published a major study, "In the Service of Ideology: Iran's Religious and Socioeconomic Activities in Syria," and a number of other policy articles, available at the Washington Institute's website (www.washingtoninstitute.org/experts/oula-alfai). She is exploring the idea of applying for a PhD sometime soon.

Sultan Althari ('20) is an advisor at the Saudi Ministry of Culture and columnist with *Al Arabiya* English, where he writes on a wide range of policy-relevant issues spanning energy, geopolitics, and regional socio-economic development. After his time at Harvard, Sultan feels fortunate to dedicate his skills and experience toward a deeper, more meaningful purpose: actively participating in the revitalization of the Saudi cultural sector and forging stronger ties with nations around the world through cultural diplomacy. In November 2020, **Cristina**

(Hughes) Blough ('13) was officially sworn in as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) with SCAN of Northern Virginia in Alexandria/Arlington. As a CASA volunteer, Cristina has been trained to advocate for children's best interests within the foster care system. Appointed to her first case in December 2020, she ensures the judge and court understand what the child needs and wants. In this capacity, she works with legal and child welfare professionals, educators, and service providers to ensure that judges have all the information they need to make the most well-informed decisions for each child. Her commitment as a CASA is that she will stay with each assigned case until it is closed and the child is in a safe, permanent home. **Byron Cannon** ('65) published *Symbolism and Folk Imagery in Early Egyptian Political Caricatures: The Wafd Election Campaign, 1920–1923* (University of Utah Press, 2019), a monograph surveying the provenance of rare campaign lithographs held in the University of Utah Special Collections Library. **Ben Cuddon** ('08) designed and began marketing the Chirpy Jug, based on the Iranian *parch-e bulbuli* (nightingale

jug), a water jug that sings like a bird when liquid is poured from it, which he came across while leading an archaeological tour around Iran a few years ago.

Mona Ali Khalil ('88) continues to advise governments and intergovernmental organizations through her independent consulting service, MAK Law International, including training UN member states elected to serve on the Security Council. She also promoted criminal accountability for genocide against the Darfuri, Rohingya, and Uighur peoples. She lectured regularly at the Vienna Diplomatic Academy and was invited to speak at the International Peace Institute, the Minsk Dialogue Forum, the UN University, and the Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens. She also published several works on the international response to the Corona crisis, the struggle for justice and racial equality, peace in the Middle East, and the UN's seventy-fifth anniversary. **Ayşe D. Lokmanoglu** ('12) will defend her dissertation on the performative rebel governance within media campaigns of non-state actors, including their use of monetary economics, from Georgia State University's Department of Communication.

In fall 2021 she will start a postdoctoral fellowship at Northwestern University's Center for Communication and Public Policy. Her research findings have been published in *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*. **David Mack** ('74) conducted webinars for audiences in Baltimore and Houston. Noteworthy among occasional articles for the Atlantic Council was unsolicited but badly needed advice for Middle East and North African governments about dealing with the Biden Administration. One key point, the United States no longer has a ruling family.

Jessica Marglin ('06) published *Al-qīḍā' al-muta'addīd: al-yahūd wal-muslimūn fī al-maghrib al-mu'āsir*, trans. Khalid Ben-Srhir (Rabat: Manshūrāt kulliyat al-ādāb wal-'ulūm al-insāniya, Jāmiyat Muḥammad al-ḥāmī, 2021), an Arabic translation of *Across Legal Lines: Jews and Muslims in Modern Morocco* (Yale University Press, 2016). She co-edited, with Matthias B. Lehmann, *Jews and the Mediterranean* (Indiana University Press, 2020). She published "Citizenship and Nationality in the French Colonial Maghrib," in *Routledge Handbook of Citizenship in the Middle East and North Africa*,

(continued on page 35)

LATE OTTOMANIA IN THE FINE ARTS LIBRARY'S BINNEY COLLECTION

Gavin Moulton, a 2020 Harvard College graduate in History of Art and Architecture and Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, studied Ottoman and Modern Turkish with Senior Preceptor Himmet Taskomur and Preceptor Meryem Demir and participated in CMES Wintersession trips to Turkey and Tunisia. During his final spring at Harvard, he began working at the Fine Arts Library, gathering metadata including artists' names, titles, and dates of works in the Edwin Binney 3rd Collection of Orientalist Prints, an important step before images from the collection can be digitized and usefully included in the HOLLIS Images database. "It was a rather heroic exploit on Gavin's part," said András Riedlmayer, the recently retired Aga Khan Bibliographer in Islamic Art and Architecture. "He had just started to work for the library when the Covid shutdown hit. On the last Friday when the library was still open and these prints were still accessible, he came in and took snapshots of the hundreds of Binney prints with his cellphone, taking notes and matching each snapshot with the accession number for each print. By the following Monday, the University was in lockdown, the libraries were closed, and Gavin had to leave campus along with all the other Harvard students. He ended up doing most of his work of researching and identifying the prints remotely from his parents' home in England." After graduation, Gavin wrote this article about the collection, which originally appeared in the Fine Arts Library blog (blogs.harvard.edu/finearts).

As a student assistant in the Fine Arts Library, I spent the spring semester diving into the prints of the library's recently acquired Edwin Binney 3rd Collection of Orientalist Prints. This collection is an unparalleled resource for the study of Western and Central European perceptions of the Ottoman Empire. It also offers an interesting look into the mind of American collector Edward Binney 3rd (Harvard PhD 1961). It appears that Binney had booksellers and antiquarians on the lookout for any material illustrating Turkish- or Ottoman-related subjects.

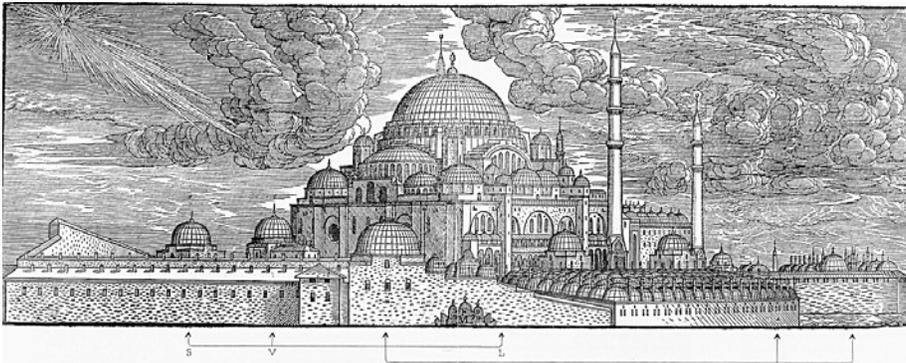
That has left the collection with a mélange of drawings, engravings, lithographs, aquatints, and even illustrated sheet music, dating from the fifteenth century to the early twentieth century, the work of artists active in Europe and the Middle East. The late Edwin Binney 3rd is better known for his collections of Ottoman and Mughal miniatures, now held by the Harvard Art Museums, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and the San Diego Museum of Art. But the substantial and surprising variety of European prints and ephemera makes this lesser-known collection, donated by his family to the Fine Arts Library, a wonderfully relevant source that traces the visual development of Orientalism.

Compared to painting or literature, prints have been relatively understudied in relation to Orientalist discourse, yet their wide circulation certainly had a profound impact on everyday perceptions of the Ottoman world. The *longue durée* covered by the Binney collection also provides

unique insight into the (often nefarious) practice of repurposing and relabeling prints decades or even centuries after their original creation. Not only does this make it difficult for student catalogers like me to correctly identify works, it has also been a challenge for scholars in the past. Many publications incorrectly identify figures in some recycled prints by the listed caption, without noting the original creator and subject of the image. Thus, these images need to be approached critically, as any label may be intentionally misleading.

Particular strengths of this collection include lithographed nineteenth-century sheet music, a variety of costume albums and prints, and travelogues illustrated by artists such as Nicolas de Nicolay (1517–1583), Melchior Lorck (1527–ca. 1590), and Claude DuBosc (1682–1745?). While the collection will be of most interest to those studying the development of Orientalist art, there is rich material for Ottomanists, scholars of French and German prints, and literary historians. The great variety of the material in the collection brings new awareness of how Ottoman identity was perceived, visually constructed, and projected in cities such as Paris, Berlin, Venice, London, and Madrid.

Aside from historical insight, many of the prints are of high artistic value, especially those by the famed Danish artist Melchior Lorck. The talented and inventive printer Melchior Lorck was no fan of the Ottoman Empire, where he was sent as part of an embassy from the Holy Roman Emperor. The time Lorck spent in Con-



stantinople (1555–1559) seems to have been mostly miserable, spent in intermittent detention by the Ottoman government, which must have contributed to his poor view of the state. Though at first glance, his prints may not seem overtly negative, they contain subversive imagery that paints the empire in a negative light. Take for example, his print of Constantinople’s rooftops. It

Top left: *Aga of the Janissaries*. Colored engraving by Jacques Charles Bar, 1789. The Edwin Binney 3rd Collection of Orientalist Prints, Fine Arts Library. **Top right:** *View over the rooftops of Constantinople*. Pen and ink drawing by Melchior Lorck, between 1555 and 1559. Statens museum for kunst, Copenhagen. **Bottom left:** *The Süleymaniye Mosque, Constantinople*. Print by Melchior Lorck, 1570. The Edwin Binney 3rd Collection of Orientalist Prints, Fine Arts Library. **Bottom right:** *Turkish noblewoman dressed for the house or Seraglio*. Colored print by Louis Daret, after a sketch by Nicolas de Nicolay, 1567. The Edwin Binney 3rd Collection of Orientalist Prints, Fine Arts Library.

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appears to be an almost photographic impression of a view (maybe from the room where he was staying), with terracotta roof tiles and the lead-covered dome of a nearby Islamic building. Closer inspection, however, shows a couple making love in a terraced overhang. Another print in this fashion is one showing the Süleymaniye Mosque complex. While ostensibly focused

on the architecture, it features apocalyptic imagery, with the moon (representing Islam) being eclipsed by a mass of clouds, as the bright shining sun (of Christianity) bursts forth. The most comprehensive book on Lorck's work, by Erik Fischer, often glosses over the political undertones of his prints that viewers will discover at first hand in the Binney collection.

It is fortunate that this resource is located in an art library, as that facilitates easy comparison with readily available reference tools and secondary materials. This is key, due to the complexity of the collection and the pitfalls of studying prints. The future digitization of this collection will make it a useful tool for all scholars and students of Ottoman history. ▣

Q&A WITH MEDHINI KUMAR

Medhini Kumar is a 2016 graduate of the CMES AM Program in Middle Eastern Studies. She currently works as Communications Manager for UNRWA USA, an American nonprofit that is committed to bettering the lives of Palestine refugees through advocacy efforts in the United States and fundraising for United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) programs in the Middle East.

What is the mission of UNRWA USA?

UNRWA USA aims to promote a life of dignity and human development for Palestine refugees by informing the American public about UNRWA's work and generating support for its programs in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank (including East Jerusalem), Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan. Ultimately, as an organization, we envision an America invested in the lives and dignity of Palestine refugees. Since we are based in the States, we do not directly implement programming, but rather support the Agency's work in the Middle East through education, advocacy, and fundraising in the United States.

What are your goals and responsibilities as Communications Manager?

My role within the organization is to use storytelling, video, reporting, social media, among other forms of visual and written communication to shift the narrative around Palestine refugees and generate American support for UNRWA. In my time at UNRWA USA, I have been surprised how little the broader American public knows about UNRWA. Consequently, my responsibility is to educate others on the Agency's active role in providing employment and humanitarian support for over 5 million Palestine refugees, the implications of the ongoing refugee crisis beyond the Middle East, and the importance of supporting its critical work.

The topics of Palestine, refugees, and funding for UN agencies are often politicized, especially here in the United States, making providing the most basic humanitarian services for at-risk populations incredibly difficult. The premise of my job is that by educating the public and amplifying refugee voices,

more Americans will understand and empathize with their current reality and the consequences of the ongoing *Nakba* ("catastrophe" in Arabic, referring to the original displacement in 1948), and their desire to take positive action would also shift. One aspect of UNRWA's work that I find especially fascinating and effective is that over 90 percent of UNRWA's staff are refugees, themselves. So not only does UNRWA provide the education, healthcare, and social services that a government would normally provide, but it also empowers refugees through employment, allowing them to serve their own communities.

Where did you work before coming to UNRWA USA? What did you do at these institutions, how did these experiences prepare you for your current position?

Prior to working at UNRWA USA, I worked in various humanitarian capacities with international NGOs in Palestine, Jordan, and Iraq. During the summer between my two years at Harvard, I was a legal researcher at BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights in Bethlehem. In addition to working on a

Medhini Kumar near Lake Tiberias



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report on forced displacement, I worked on the “Survey of Palestinian Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs),” which analyzed the Palestinian refugee question from a historical, demographic, and socio-economic lens, while also touching on issues of humanitarian assistance, protection concerns, and durable solutions. This project, of course, heavily referenced UNRWA and its work for Palestine refugees since 1948. In addition, I spent that summer living in Aida refugee camp, allowing me to more intimately witness what life is like in a camp and also hear firsthand accounts of multiple generations of displacement. It was during this internship when I truly started to appreciate the value of storytelling in preserving Palestinian history and narrative, the lifeline UNRWA plays for Palestine refugees, and how to better advocate for refugee rights.

The experience that summer not only reinforced my interest in working at an organization that served refugees, but made me want to further examine the efficacy of humanitarian agencies and their role in providing protection for displaced persons. It informed my decision to work at REACH Initiative, where I worked on field assessments, maps, and reports to inform data-based humanitarian response to the crisis in Syria, and then at International Rescue Committee (IRC) in Iraq to work on protection-related issues facing internally displaced persons following the removal of ISIS from Mosul. When I joined UNRWA USA, my field experience helped me have a more realistic and fuller picture of what the realities and limitations are on the ground and how to use that knowledge to

better support the work of field staff and beneficiaries.

Did you come to Harvard with a career path in mind? Did your time at CMES help clarify a career path for you?

I knew that I wanted to work on the issue of Palestine after graduation, though as a non-Palestinian, I felt it was not my place to approach it from a political or negotiations space. However, where I did see a place to create positive change was through the humanitarian and human rights spheres. Funnily enough, when applying for an AM at CMES, I believe, if memory serves, I included wanting work for UNRWA as part of my statement of purpose. So I find it quite serendipitous to find myself exactly where I wanted to be just a few years after graduating.

CMES’s flexibility in designing a course load that fit each individual’s academic needs helped me tremendously in balancing classes that gave me the practical skills I needed along with the historical and political context of the region. I took a fantastic course cross-listed through the School of Public Health entitled International Humanitarian Response. It was highly utilitarian in its approach and culminated in a weekend-long simulation in rural Massachusetts where we were assigned roles and had to respond to a simulated humanitarian crisis. It was only later when working in Iraq when I realized how helpful this course was in preparing me to think on my feet and ask the right questions when responding to crisis. In addition to this class, I took several courses at Harvard Law School and at the Fletcher School of Law

and Diplomacy that reinforced my interests in human rights law and refugee protection.

What advice would you give to CMES students interested in nonprofit, foundation, or NGO work?

I think CMES’s greatest strength is its flexibility; students can dip into various departments and schools to curate their own individual curriculum. That said, when applying to jobs, you are competing with those who have a highly structured technical degree, whether that be an MPP or a law degree. Consequently, the onus is on the student to incorporate and build “hard skills” into his or her repertoire to compete with other master’s graduates. I found the best ways to do this were to take courses that focused on technical skills (for example, I took courses in econometrics, negotiations, and GIS) and to work either as a researcher for a professor on campus or intern at a nonprofit or NGO to pick up those practical skills that employers are looking for. I also highly encourage taking courses at other schools – it’s a great way not only to broaden your skill sets but also to build your professional network. Lastly, leverage your language skills and work abroad after graduating! It’s a fantastic way to gain experience and confidence. People assume all the jobs are in New York or DC, and while many are (including my current job), there are so many more opportunities available if you are willing to spend a few years outside the United States. It can be stressful and sometimes overwhelming, but you’ll meet fantastic people, get to see first-hand the impact that is possible, and be challenged in a way that’s not possible from a desk job in the United States. ▣

ed. Roel Meijer, Zahra Babar, and James Sater (Routledge, 2021); “Jewish Law across the Mediterranean: The Last Will and Testament of Nissim Shamama, 1873–1883,” in *Ha-historiah ha-arukhah shel yehudei artzot ha-islam be-yisrael* [The Long History of Jews of the Islamic World in Israel] (Ben Gurion University Press, 2021); and “Jews, Rights, and Belonging in Tunisia: Léon Elmilik, 1861–1881,” *L’Année du Maghreb* 23 (2020). **Kevin Moss** (‘16) is a foreign service officer covering human rights and religious freedoms in Istanbul. He was recently tenured as a career US diplomat. He was featured in the State Department’s blog as their capstone to Black History Month. **Nicholas Norberg** (‘19) is currently a Senior Counterterrorism Analyst at the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office, where he has worked to expand investigations and institutional expertise on far-right violent extremism and neo-Nazism. In 2020, he was awarded a Presidential Management Fellowship and accepted a position with the US Department of State working on counterterrorism issues. He looks forward to reconnecting with CMES alumni in the DC area. **Aamir A. Rehman** (‘99) is

teaching at Columbia Business School this summer. His course, Foundations of Private Equity, is in the Executive MBA curriculum and has an enrollment of nearly 100 students. His role at Columbia (Adjunct Associate Professor) complements his principal work as a private equity investor, advisor, and corporate board member. He also serves as Board Chair for the Mercer County Community College Foundation. He and his family reside in Princeton Junction, New Jersey. **Alex Shams** (‘13) is a PhD student in sociocultural anthropology at the University of Chicago and a freelance writer. For the last three years, he has been based in Tehran, conducting fieldwork research on the politics of sacred space in the contemporary Middle East. In spring 2021, he published an article in the *Middle Eastern Studies* journal based on archival research, “From Guests of the Imam to Unwanted Foreigners: The Politics of South Asian Pilgrimage to Iran in the Twentieth Century.” In September 2020, **Charles D. Smith** (‘60) published the tenth edition of *Palestine and Arab–Israeli Conflict* (Bedford/St. Martin’s). In November, his review of *Preventing Palestine: A Political History from Camp*

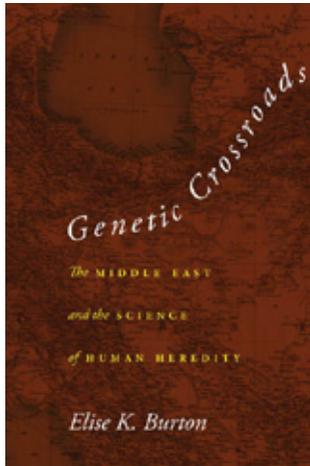
David to Oslo, by Seth Anziska, appeared in the journal *Diplomatic History*. **Ellen Stockert** (‘19) became the Arabian Peninsula research team manager at Tesla Government, where she previously researched political, military, and humanitarian issues in Iraq. In fall 2020, she facilitated the expansion of the Arabian Peninsula team’s research coverage to include Iran. **Becca Wadness** (‘18) became the Tunisia desk officer for the US Agency for International Development, where she coordinates US foreign assistance in Tunisia and works across the federal government on policy that promotes Tunisia’s economic development and democratic consolidation. **Andrew Watkins** (‘15) continues to work with the International Crisis Group. In the past year, he provided formal testimony to the European Union parliament and briefed US congressional staff, a number of ambassadors, and other senior officials in the United States, Afghan, and regional governments. He has been quoted in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and elsewhere, and has appeared on television and radio for the BBC, Al Jazeera, NPR, and

others. His commentary has been published by *Foreign Policy* and *World Politics Review*, along with a number of policy briefings and in-depth reports for Crisis Group. **Caroline Williams** (‘65) co-researched and co-authored the text for the website Alive in the “City of the Dead” in Cairo, a virtual experience of Cairo’s Northern Cemetery, including the video “A Walk in the Desert of the Mamluks.” In June she will give the virtual lecture “Cairo: Architecture and Artists” for the Institute of Classical Architecture and Art, Southern California chapter, featuring the architecture along Sharia Mu’izz, the heart of the Islamic City, as well as its discovery by nineteenth-century Western artists. **John Zavage** (‘13) transitioned to civilian life in February 2021 after 27 years of active service in the US Army. Now a resident of Oregon, John works remotely as an Instructor of Security Cooperation Management for the Defense Security Cooperation University.

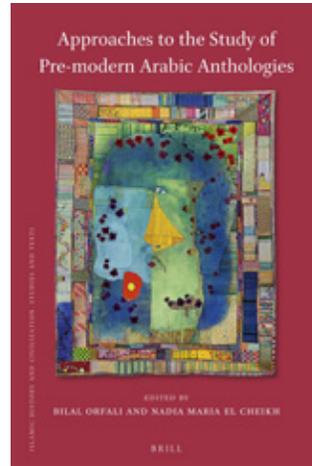
PHD ALUMNI

Elise K. Burton (‘17) published her first book, *Genetic Crossroads: The Middle East and the Science of Human Heredity* (Stanford University Press) in

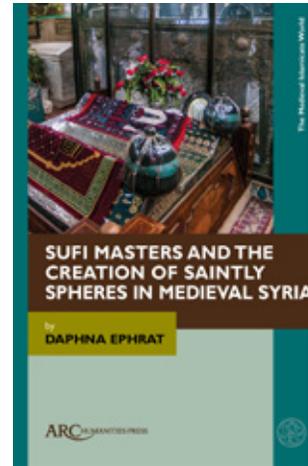
NEWS AND NOTES



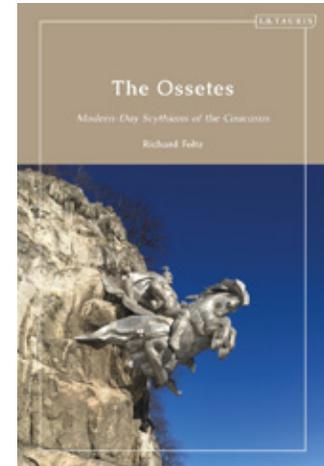
January 2021. **Nadia El Cheikh** ('92) co-edited, with Bilal Orfali, *Approaches to the Study of Pre-Modern Arabic Anthologies* (Brill, 2021). The Arabic translation of her book *Women, Islam, and Abbasid Identity* (Harvard University Press, 2015), *Al-Nisa' wa al-islam was a-hawiyya al-abbasiyya*, trans. Hani Ramadan (Dar al-Mashriq) was published in 2020. In March 2021, **Leyla Kayhan Elbirlik** ('13, AM '05) received the American Research Institute in Turkey's National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship. In fall 2021, she will be a senior fellow at Koç University's Research Center for Anatolian Civilization. She is working on a manuscript concerning the history of the Ottoman family in Istanbul be-



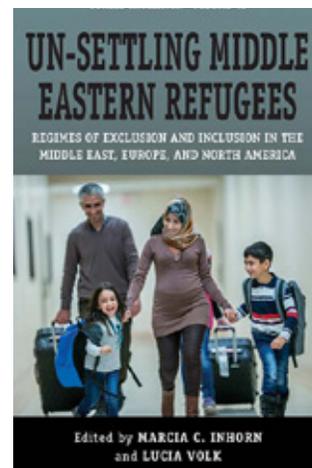
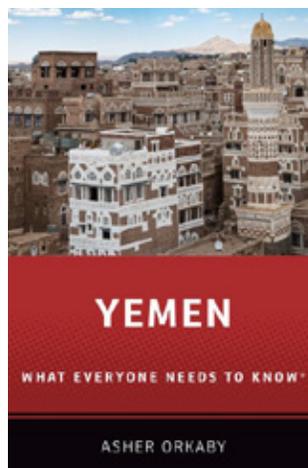
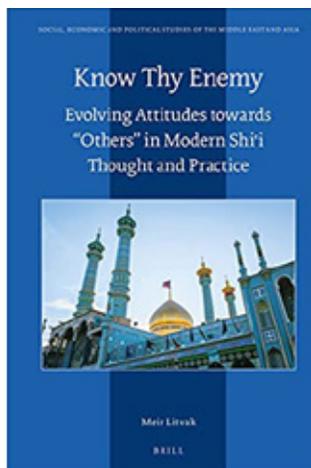
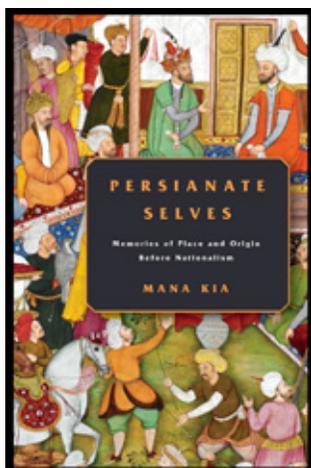
tween 1780 and 1900. She wrote the chapter "The Emotional Bond between Early Modern Ottoman Children and Parents: A Case Study of Sünbülzade's 'Ideal' Child (1700–1800)," in *Children and Childhood in the Ottoman Empire from the 15th to the 20th Century*, ed. Gülay Yılmaz and Fruma Zachs (forthcoming from Edinburgh University Press). **Daphna Ephrat** ('93) is Professor of Islamic and Near Eastern Studies at the Open University of Israel. She co-edited *Saintly Spheres and Islamic Landscapes: Emplacements of Spiritual Power across Time and Place* (Brill, 2020), and published the monograph *Sufi Masters and the Creation of Saintly Spheres in Medieval Syria* (Arc Humanities Press and Amsterdam Univer-



sity Press, 2021). **Richard Foltz** ('96) published *Les religions de la route de la Soie*, tr. Benoit Léger (Les Presses de l'Université Concordia), a French edition of his 1999 book *Religions of the Silk Road*, and *Tarikh-i Tajikan: Iranian-i sharqi*, tr. Abdul-Khaliq Lalzad (Afghan Institute of Strategic Studies) a Dari Persian edition of his 2019 book, *A History of the Tajiks: Iranians of the East*. A Turkish edition of his 2016 book, *Iran in World History, Dünya Tarihinde İran*, tr. Hüseyin Gökalp, is currently in production with İnkılap Kitabevi, and his latest book, *The Ossetes: Modern-Day Scythians of the Caucasus* (I.B. Tauris/Bloomsbury), is due to be published in 2021. Foltz published an article in Russian, "Vaso Abaev i iazykovi



razryv mezhdru rossiiskimi i zapadnymi iranisticheskimi traditsiami' (Vaso Abaev and the Language Barrier between Russian and Western Iranological Traditions), in *Kavkaz Forum* 3.10 (2020), and several entries on Ossetian history and culture in the *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. At the invitation of Ambassador Sam Brownback, **Zahra N. Jamal** ('08) addressed 300 leaders from fifty-plus nations on fostering religious pluralism and peace through early childhood education efforts at the US Department of State's Office of International Religious Freedom. She worked with the Department of Justice's Community Relations Service and the American Jewish Committee to counter religious hate crimes by creating the first-ever



National Virtual Protecting Places of Worship Fora for faith and community leaders. As a subject matter expert, Jamal also revised the DOJ's training curricula for law enforcement and civic leaders on understanding and engaging diverse American Muslims. With Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner and other local leaders, she addressed food insecurity during the pandemic at the World Food Program's Zero Hunger Day event, where Dragon76 and Street Art for Mankind unveiled their mural depicting the issue. Jamal also appeared in several public service announcements denouncing racism and celebrating pluralism that reached over 6 million people, and she released an Interfaith Encounters podcast episode

on Islamic views on migration. **Philip S. Khoury** ('80) received an honorary degree from Trinity College in May 2021. **Mana Kia** ('11) published *Persianate Selves: Memories of Place and Origin Before Nationalism* (Stanford University Press, 2020). Beginning in February 2021, **Chotirat Komaradat** ('20) is a counselor at the Royal Thai Embassy in Muscat, the Sultanate of Oman. **John Limbert** ('74) published, with Marc Grossman, the novel *Believers: Love and Death in Tehran* (Mazda Press, 2020). This historical and espionage novel, set in Washington and Iran in the 1980s and the present, follows the adventures of a fictional American diplomat who evades capture at the American Embassy in Tehran in 1979. **Meir**

Litvak ('91) published *Know Thy Enemy: Evolving Attitudes towards "Others" in Modern Shi'i Thought and Practice* (Brill, 2021). In the past year, **Asher Orkaby** ('14) was a fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Center. In January 2021, he published *Yemen: What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford University Press). After working at Istanbul Bilgi University for twelve years, **Ilay Romain Ors** ('06) relocated to Athens, where she is currently teaching at the American College of Greece. Ors is the recipient of the Independent Scholar fellowship awarded by the Independent Social Research Foundation and a Research Affiliate at the University of Oxford (2019–22). She is about to receive the paperback edition of her first

monograph on the Rum Polites, the Greeks of Istanbul, titled *Diaspora of the City* (Palgrave, 2018). Among her publications is a volume she edited on the 1964 expulsions of Rum Polites and a new book on migratory waves between Greece and Turkey, under contract with Berghahn Publishers. **Lucia Volk** ('74) co-guest-edited, with Marcia C. Inhorn, the special journal issue *Anthropology of the Middle East* 16.1: States of Displacement: Middle Eastern Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons, and Asylum Seekers in Global Context, 2021. She also co-edited with Inhorn *Un-Settling Middle Eastern Refugees: Regimes of Exclusion and Inclusion in the Middle East, Europe, and North America* (Berghahn Books, 2021).

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

All 2020–21 events were held virtually, unless stated otherwise.

SEPTEMBER 2020

Lebanon's Citizen–State Rupture Requires a Total National Remake. A talk with Rami Khouri, Senior Fellow, Middle East Initiative, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, HKS; Journalist-in-Residence, Adjunct Professor of Journalism, and Senior Public Policy Fellow, American University of Beirut; syndicated columnist, Agence Global Syndicate, USA. Co-sponsored with the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs.

Perspectives on Linguistic Security in the Arab World: The Quest for Literacy, Stability, and Dignity. A talk with Wafi Haj Majid, Chairman of Arabic and Literature Department, Global University, Beirut.

Turkey's Identity Politics Inside Out: From Foreign Policy to Pop Culture. A talk with Lisel Hintz, Assistant Professor of International Relations and European Studies, Johns Hopkins University, School of Advanced International Studies.

OCTOBER 2020

The Ascendant Field: Critical Engagements with Ottoman Arabic Literature. A two-day workshop co-sponsored with the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations and the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Islamic Studies Program, Harvard University, and organized by NELC PhD student Ozzy Gündüz.

If Women Build a Government: An Anti-Feminist Dream Narrative in Early Republican Turkey. A talk with Zeynep Tek, Research Assistant, Ankara Yildirim Beyazit University, Turkey.

Sustaining Democracy in Time of Pandemic: Tunisia's Challenges and Successes. A Q&A session with economist Hedi Larbi, Tunisia's former Minister of Economic Infrastructure, Regional Planning, and Sustainable Development; former Regional Director and Advisor to the Middle East and North Africa Vice President, World Bank; Associate, Middle East Initiative, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, HKS; and former



Kuwait Foundation Visiting Scholar. Introductory remarks by CMES Director William Granara. Discussant: Aytug Sasmaz, PhD candidate, Harvard University Department of Government; Pre-Doctoral Research Fellow, Middle East Initiative, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, HKS. An installment of Tunisia Newsreel, Notes from the Ground, presented by the Tunisia Office of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies.

#After Lockdown: Very Short Stories about Enduring a Global Pandemic. Premiere showing of a short film designed by Mr Sebs and co-produced by the CMES Tunisia Office and the Center

for Hellenic Studies in Greece, Harvard University. Part of the 24 Hours at Harvard event during Worldwide Week at Harvard 2020.

The Crash of Flight 3804: A Lost Spy, a Daughter's Quest, and the Deadly Politics of the Great Game for Oil. A book talk with Charlotte Dennett, former Middle East reporter, investigative journalist, and attorney; co-author of *Thy Will Be Done: The Conquest of the Amazon: Nelson Rockefeller and Evangelism in the Age of Oil*.

The Moral Triangle: Germans, Israelis, Palestinians. A book talk with Sa'ed Atshan, Assistant Professor of Peace and

#After Lockdown

Very Short Stories about Enduring a Global Pandemic

Premiering
October 7th, 8:30 - 9:30 EDT



Center for Hellenic
Studies in Greece
Harvard University



CENTER FOR
HELLENIC STUDIES
HARVARD UNIVERSITY



TUNISIA OFFICE
THE CENTER FOR
MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

CMES

THE CENTER FOR
MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

A short film designed by



MR SEBS

as part of 24 Hours of Harvard



Conflict Studies, Swarthmore College, and Visiting Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Visiting Scholar in Middle Eastern Studies, UC Berkeley; and Katharina Galor, Hirschfeld Visiting Assistant Professor at the Program in Judaic Studies, Brown University.

A Contemporary Sufi Tradition: The Case of the Late Ottoman Elite and Sufi Sheikh Ken'ân Rifâî. A talk with Arzu Eylül Yalçınkaya, Lecturer,

Institute for Sufi Studies, Üsküdar University, Istanbul.

Archive Wars: The Politics of History in Saudi Arabia.

A book talk with Rosie Bsheer, Assistant Professor of History, Harvard University, discussants Beshara Doumani, Brown University, Eve M. Troutt Powell, University of Pennsylvania, and Kirsten Weld, Harvard, and moderator Durba Mitra, Harvard. Co-sponsored with the Department of History.

Palestinian Refugees in International Law: A Tale of Fragmentation and Opportunities.

A talk with Francesca Albanese, human rights lawyer and Affiliate Scholar, Institute for the Study of International Migration, Georgetown University; and Lex Takkenberg, former Chief, Ethics Office, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, Amman, Jordan, and Legal Officer, Dutch Refugee

Council. Discussant: Susan Akram, Clinical Professor and Supervising Attorney, Boston University International Human Rights Clinical Program, Boston University School of Law. Co-sponsored with the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs.

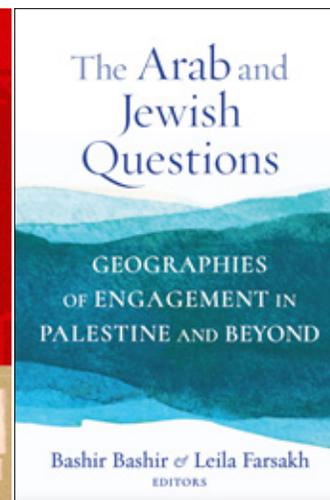
NOVEMBER 2020

The Wings of Desire or The Sky over Shatila: Precarity, Hope, and Gender among Palestinian Refugee Young

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS



Eve Troutt Powell



Men in Lebanon. A talk with Gustavo Barbosa, Associate Researcher, Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Universidade Federal Fluminense, Rio de Janeiro. Discussant: Steven C. Caton, Harvard.

How the US Turned Iraq into Iran's Client State: The Unintended Consequences of a Myopic Foreign Policy. A talk with Henry Munson, Professor of Anthropology Emeritus and Cooperating Professor, School of Policy and International Affairs, University of Maine, and author, *Islam and Revolution in the Middle East*.

The Failure of Religious Nationalism in Iran. A talk with Ali Banuazizi, Professor,

Department of Political Science, Director of the Program in Islamic Civilization and Societies, and Chair of the International Studies Academic Advisory Board, Boston College. Discussant: Roy Mottahedeh, Gurney Professor of History Emeritus, Harvard University. Co-sponsored with the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs.

Archipelago of the Maghreb: Conceptualizing Mediterranean Movement between Sicily and Tunisia in the Late 19th Century. A talk with Sarah DeMott, Middle East, Near East, and Judaica Library Liaison, Librarian for the Freshman Seminar, Harvard College Library.

Peace in the Era of Post-Truth: The Logic of Fragmenting Palestine. A talk with Amira Hass, journalist and correspondent for the Occupied Territories, *Haaretz*; Religion, Conflict, and Peace Initiative Fellow, Religious Literacy Project, HDS. Co-sponsored with the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs and the Religion, Conflict, and Peace Initiative.

FEBRUARY 2021
The United States and Palestine: Defining Requirements for Change. A talk with Ambassador Husam Zomlot, Head of the Palestinian Mission to the United Kingdom. Co-sponsored with the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs.

Foreign Donor Assistance and the Political Economy of Marginalization and Inclusion in Palestine, Iraq, and El Salvador. A talk with Manal A. Jamal, Professor of Political Science, James Madison University.

Posing Slaves for the Camera: Race and Memory in Sudan, 1882. A talk with Eve Troutt Powell, Christopher H. Browne Distinguished Professor of History, University of Pennsylvania

The File: Origins of the Munich Massacre. A book talk with author and consultant San Charles Haddad, founder of the Palestinian Rowing Federation and former consultant at the Palestine Olympic Committee.



Participants in the Archives, Revolution, and Historical Thinking roundtable

MARCH 2021

In Search of Other Maps of Egypt. A conversation with Nermin Elsherif, PhD candidate, Cultural Studies, Amsterdam School of Heritage, Memory, and Material Culture, University of Amsterdam, and Myriam Amri, PhD candidate, Anthropology and Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard. Session three of the series The Urban in North Africa,

presented by the Tunisia Office of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies.

Turkey’s Mission Impossible, War and Peace with the Kurds. A talk with Cengiz Çandar, Distinguished Visiting Scholar at the Stockholm University Institute for Turkish Studies and Senior Associate, Swedish Institute of International Affairs.

Co-sponsored with the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs.

Women and Ottoman Households in Colonial Tunisia (1880s–1920s). A talk with M’hamed Oualdi, Professor of Modern History of the Maghrib, Sciences Po, Paris, and Principal Investigator of the European Research Council project “SlaveVoices,” about

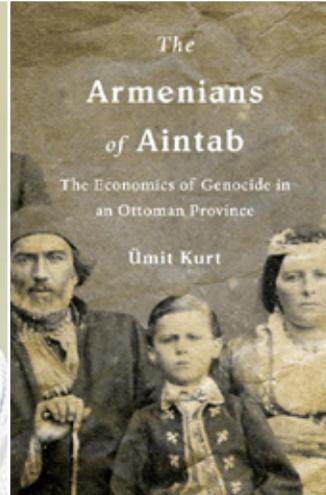
slave testimonies in nineteenth-century North Africa.

The Arab and Jewish Questions: Geographies of Engagement in Palestine and Beyond. A book talk with editors Bashir Bashir, Open University of Israel and Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, and Leila Farsakh, University of Massachusetts Boston; contributor Derek Penslar,

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS



Ümit Kurt

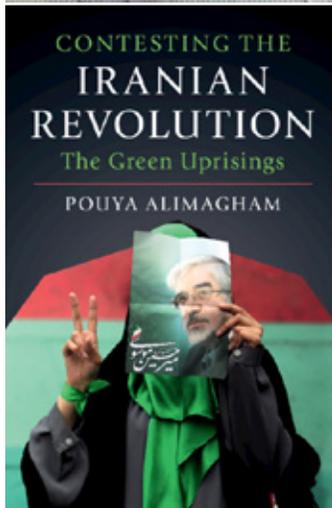


Eastern Studies, UC Santa Barbara, and others.

US National Security and the Impact of Covid-19 in the Middle East and Beyond: A Cascading Crisis. A talk with Brian Moore, former National Security Council Advisor, Office of the USAID Administrator. Co-sponsored with the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs.

APRIL 2021

The Armenians of Aintab: The Economics of Genocide in an Ottoman Province. A book talk with former CMES Visiting Researcher Ümit Kurt, Polonsky Fellow, Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, and Lecturer, Hebrew University of Jerusalem.



Pouya Alimgham

France and Britain: Their Colonial Footprint in the Middle East. A talk with Leila Fawaz, Issam M. Fares Professor of Lebanese and Eastern Mediterranean Studies, Fletcher School and Department of History, Tufts University. Co-sponsored with the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs.

Contesting the Iranian Revolution: The Green Uprisings. A book talk with

Harvard University; and Dirk Moses, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Archives, Revolution, and Historical Thinking. A roundtable addressing the

relationship between archives, historical thinking, and revolution, past and present. With Reem Bailony, Agnes Scott College; Rosie Bsheer, Harvard; Muriam Haleh Davis, UC Santa Cruz; Pascale

Ghazaleh, American University in Cairo; Sara Pursley, New York University; Nadya Sbaiti, American University of Beirut. Moderator: Sherene Seikaly, UC Santa Barbara. Co-sponsored with the Center for Middle



Pouya Alimagham, Lecturer, Department of History, MIT.

Yemen: A Long View on the Long War. A talk with Peter Salisbury, Senior Analyst, International Crisis Group. Co-sponsored with the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs.

Yesterday Is Not Gone: Memories of Slavery in Zanzibar and Oman in Memoirs, Fiction, and Film. A talk with Emily Jane O'Dell, Associate Professor, Sichuan University–Pittsburgh Institute, People's Republic of China.

Knowledge Production, Economic Policy, and the

Transformation of Higher Education in Turkey. A talk with Nazan Bedirhanoglu, Freedom Project Postdoctoral Fellow in Political Science, Wellesley College.

Rethinking the Relationship between Neoliberalism, Corporate Welfare, and Cronyism: Lessons from Turkey. A talk with Sumercan Bozkurt-Gungen, Visiting Faculty, School for International Studies, Simon Fraser University.

Translating the World: Contemporary Poetry from Saudi Arabia. A talk with Moneera al-Ghadeer, Senior Advisor, Ministry of Culture, Riyadh, followed by a reading

by Saudi poet Fowziyah A. Abukhalid.

Monuments, Memory, and Minorities: A Case Study of Turkey. A talk with Elizabeth Prodromou, Faculty Director, Initiative on Religion, Law, and Diplomacy, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University. Co-sponsored with the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs.

The European Court of Human Rights and Turkey's Kurdish Conflict. A talk with Dilek Kurban, Fellow and Lecturer, Hertie School of Governance, Berlin. Co-sponsored with the Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies.

Tunisian–Libyan Relations in the Time of Libya's Rebuilding and National Reconciliation. A talk with Khemaies Jhinaoui, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tunisia, and CMES Director William Granara. An installment of Tunisia Newsreel, Notes From the Ground, presented by the Tunisia Office of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies.

Muhadžiri/Muhacirler/The Migrants. A screening of a documentary film by Bakir Tanović, followed by a discussion with CMES Visiting Researcher Harun Buljina; Leyla Amzi-Erdoğdular, Assistant Professor of History, Rutgers University; and Jusuf Tanović, Bakir's son.

