



Highlights

2016

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To my dear friends and colleagues, it is a great pleasure to introduce the first newsletter of the Middle East Center of Florida State University, highlighting the achievements of our outstanding students and faculty.

This newsletter illustrates how our program

of teaching, scholarship, and service is thriving and growing. Our students are winning national scholarships. Our faculty, with diverse interests across many departments, shape national and international understanding of a turbulent, fascinating region.

We have a strong outreach program run by dedicated students. You will read about the three postdoctoral associates and several new faculty who have recently joined the program.

Assisting me and the Center activities as advisor and Assistant Direc-

tor is Dr. Zafer Lababidi (PhD 2016, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee), who began in fall 2016 in the department of Modern Languages.

We have a wide range of activities planned for this academic year, such as our Middle East Film Festival and speaker series, one generously endowed by Mrs. Jeanette Chapman.

I sincerely hope to see you taking advantage of these and other opportunities to learn more about the ancient and modern civilizations of the Middle East.

MES Welcomes Dr. Zafer Lababidi



Dr. Zafer Lababidi joined the Modern Languages department this fall as a teaching professor in Arabic. Dr. Lababidi holds a Ph.D. in Linguistics from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

He specializes in Arabic phonetics/phonology and teaching Arabic as a second language. His research focuses on speech perception and production, spoken word recognition, second language acquisition, and technology applications for language classrooms. He also has interests in Middle Eastern politics, Arabic Literature, and the cultures and civilizations of the Middle East.

Welcome to Tallahassee, Dr. Lababidi!

founder's profile: an interview with Dr. Peter Garretson

By Garrett Riggs



Dr. Peter Garretson likes to shine the spotlight on others. When we sat down to have coffee and talk about his role in getting the Middle Eastern Studies Program at Florida State University started, he was quick to give credit to the faculty members and students who helped the program grow from a few classes in Arabic and Middle Eastern history and culture into a full-fledged academic program, with the Middle East Center as a resource for FSU and the larger community.

His blue eyes light up behind the wire frames of his glasses as he lists the professors who were there in the early days of the program or who have added to it over the years—people like Dr. Zeina Schlenoff (Modern Languages), Dr. Will Hanley (History), and Drs. David Levenson and Adam Gaiser (Religion). Schlenoff's name comes up several times during our conversation as Garretson praises her skill in the classroom and devotion to the Middle Eastern Studies Program and center.

Garretson credits Schlenoff with having the vision and drive to get the program started. He says his own role early on was to assist with the infrastructure and talking with administration about the need for the program.

"The person who really started it was Zeina," he says. "She asked for help and I had the administrative background that we needed to get the program off the ground."

The BA program in Middle Eastern Studies started in 2002 and is now an interdisciplinary program that focuses on the languages and cultures of the Middle East. With courses offered in History, Religion, Classics, Art History, and other departments, students can work with an advisor to create a course of study that is tailored to their specific interests.

The Middle East Center has an outreach program with lectures, symposiums, and cultural events such as the annual Middle East film festival. The MEC also has a K-8 grade program that teaches Middle East culture to after-school programs in the area. The mission of the MES and MEC is to promote knowledge of all regions of the Middle East and to facilitate research, teaching and career advising to students in the major.

From the beginning, Garretson and Schlenoff knew they wanted to have language proficiency as a significant part of the program.

"Arabic is core to the program," Garretson says; currently, there are courses in Arabic that range from beginning to intermediate and media Arabic. Students in the program also have the option to study Hebrew for the language requirement. Garretson says he would love to see other Middle Eastern languages added to

the program.

Garretson is also quick to point out that students are the heart of the program and he credits them for much of the program's success. He says the rigor of the program draws an exceptional group of students. Students in the program have received Critical Language, Boren, and Gilman scholarships. Others have been recipients of Fulbright and Truman scholarships. Graduates of the program have found work with government agencies, in non-governmental organizations, and gone on to graduate programs at a number of prestigious institutions, such as Georgetown University, American University, Princeton University, Harvard University, Columbia University, and the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London.

Helping students succeed was one of the highlights of his career, Garretson says. His first teaching position was at the University of Khartoum. He also taught at Brooklyn College and Swarthmore College before coming to Florida State University in 1981. At each of these institutions, Garretson worked hard to help students find and develop their strengths.

Garretson says he often has students come to him and say they are afraid they can't meet the high expectations people have for them.

"They'll say, 'I'm just not that good,'" Garretson says. He leans forward and says, "I tell them, 'You are that good!'" He lightly raps the table for emphasis.

He has provided mentoring for students from undergraduates to those whose doctoral committees he has chaired. Garretson keeps up with his former students and highlights their achievements, whether they

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about the program

The Middle Eastern Studies program at Florida State University is an interdisciplinary program administered by the Middle East Center, with courses offered from participating departments. These departments include Anthropology, Classics, Economics, English, History, International Relations, Modern Languages, Music, Political Science, Religion, Theater, and Urban and Regional Planning.

The Bachelor of Arts in Middle Eastern Studies responds directly to a national as well as regional demand for resources and information to educate students, professionals, and the surrounding community about this important region of the world. The BA is designed for liberal arts students who wish to learn more about the Middle East; students who wish to pursue graduate work

in this field; and students who seek employment in or relating to the Middle East.

Founded in 2006, the Middle East Center strives to provide an academic environment for students from a multitude of disciplines to develop a deeper understanding of the Middle East. Its mission is to bridge a variety of disciplines on campus in order to provide a rich academic environment for students who are seeking a greater understanding of the Middle East. In addition to

the B.A. in Middle Eastern Studies, the Center also administers minors in Middle Eastern Studies, Arabic, and Hebrew.

The Center has a very active outreach program fostering an interest in the Modern Middle East at the K-8 and Community College levels. Furthermore, its yearly film festival and lecture series provide educational opportunities for students and community members who are interested in the Middle East.

The Middle East Center at Florida State University is deeply committed to tolerance and civility.

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Postdoctoral appointees bring vigor, fresh ideas to Middle Eastern Studies



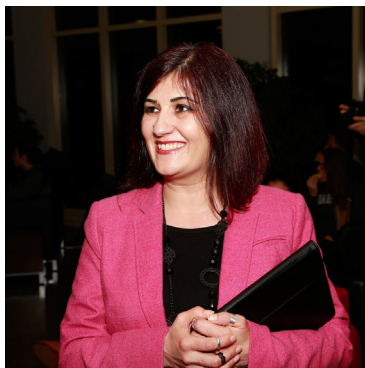
Allyson Gonzalez

By Garrett Riggs

Two postdoctoral scholars have brought new ideas and energy to the Middle Eastern Studies Program this year. Defne Bilir and Allyson González are doing research and teaching for the Modern Languages and Religion departments, respectively. Their appointments continue through the 2016-17 school year, so students still have time to join one of their upcoming classes.

Defne Bilir teaches Arab Cinema and Culture and helped organize the Arab Women Film Festival and the K-8 community outreach program. A native of Turkey, Bilir is interested in the impact of Turkish culture on the Middle East and in Western representations of the Middle East. She has presented papers on the influence of Turkish soap operas on Palestinian viewers. Bilir's current projects include research on the artistic and journalistic perspectives of David Douglas Duncan and the editorial coverage of Life Magazine on the Middle East and South Asia. She is also working on a research project that focuses on representations of female body and space in Arab cinema.

Bilir has received several grants while at FSU, including a Grant for Engaged Learning, the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program Research Materials Grant, the Robert B. Bradley Library Research



Defne Bilir

Grant, and the Faculty Research Library Materials Grant.

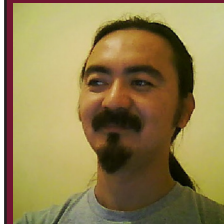
Bilir has a PhD in Humanities and she brings interdisciplinarity into her Arab Cinema classes, where students cap off the semester with a colloquium that requires them to investigate a film and the cultural, historical, and political contexts of the country which has produced the film. During this year's colloquium, students addressed issues of gender inequality, economics, and the after-effects of war.

Bilir wants her students to have a continuing appreciation for the people and the cultures of the Middle East. Popular culture is one way to create that bridge. She says her students often start the semester with limited knowledge of the Middle East and group projects help them understand the region and give them a deeper appreciation of the films they watch.

Bilir is thrilled when former students come up to her and say, "I'm still watching Arab cinema!"

Allyson González was a reporter for the Pulitzer Prize-winning Charlotte Sun newspaper before returning to graduate school. She has transferred her reporter's sense for a good story and investigative skills to scholarly research about the lives and legacy of Sephardim (the descendants of Iberian Jewry) in the early 20th century. Her recent publications include a Hebrew-to-English translation of Abraham S. Ya-

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a q&a with
Hadi Hosainy
postdoctoral
associate in the
department of
history

This fall, Hadi Hosainy joined the Middle Eastern Studies program from the University of Texas at Austin. Get to know Dr. Hosainy in the following interview (*edited for length*).

Q: What is your educational background? How did you find yourself wanting to study the history of the Middle East?

A: I studied International Relations and Conflict Resolution for my undergrad and master's degree in Turkey. Having lived in three countries of the Middle East, my primary goal in both programs was to understand and explain the current events in the three Muslim and yet very different societies that I was familiar with. At the end of my master's program, I realized that the roots of the many issues we face in the contemporary Middle East could be better analyzed with a historical perspective. That is how and why I decided to pursue a doctoral degree in history.

Q: What did your doctoral research focus on?

A: My doctoral research is about women's property rights in early modern Istanbul. It...focuses on how women owned and managed their property and how they transferred their property to the next generations ... Women did not only benefit from the existing Islamic legal norms that granted them certain property rights; they were also actively creating the law by setting precedent in the sharia courts.

Q: What is your favorite aspect of teaching about the Middle East at the college level?

A: I love to introduce students to different points of view about the lives and experiences of Middle Eastern societies. As a teacher, the most exciting experience for me is seeing them critically assess their opinions while learning about the rich history of the Middle Eastern societies.

Q: What courses will you teach at FSU?

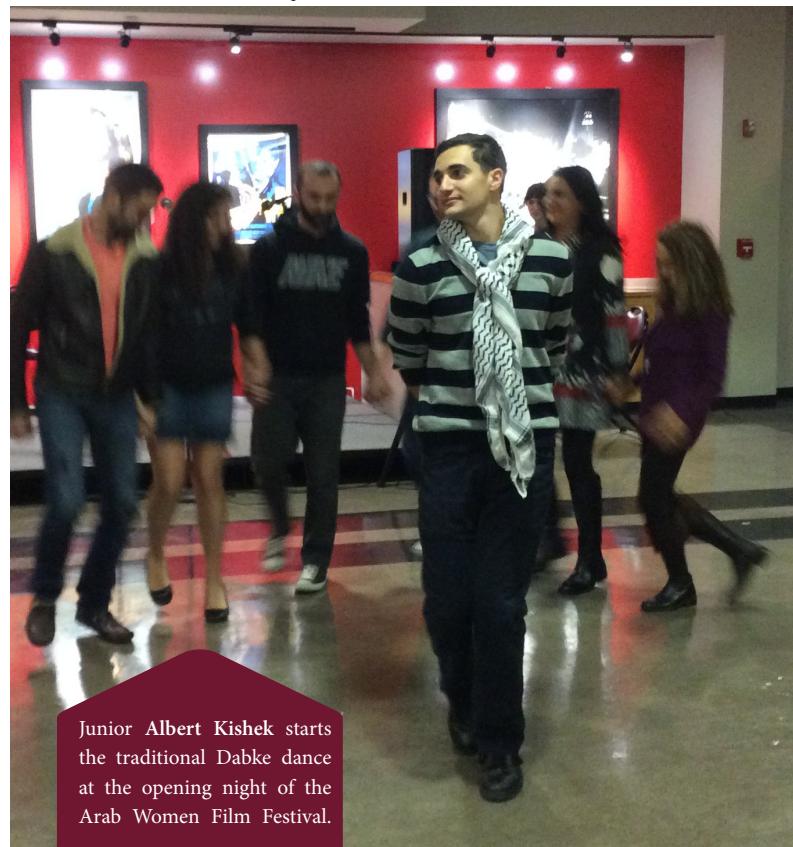
A: I will teach courses on the history of the Middle East, early modern Islamicate "gunpowder empires," as well as the history of early modern Mediterranean. I am also excited to offer courses on the history of Persia as well as gender in the Middle East.

Q: What was the most challenging aspect of writing your dissertation?

A: During the course of my doctoral research, I have been trying to understand the mindset of the Ottoman officials who created the archival documents. It took me years of working in the archives in order to be able to read between the lines and understand the logic and intricacies

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outreach and programming: a year in pictures



Junior Albert Kishek starts the traditional Dabke dance at the opening night of the Arab Women Film Festival.

TOP CENTER: Senior **Rafi Artin** looks on as students at the Magnolia School practice writing numbers in Arabic. TOP LEFT: Fulbright student **Sanoura Alkhofash** and rising senior **Dalia Dagher** pose with Magnolia School students. TOP RIGHT: Graduate student **Amanda Green** instructs students at the Magnolia School how to write the Arabic alphabet. BOTTOM LEFT: Rising senior **Egecan Fey** discusses Middle East culture with students during Culture Shock! at FAMU. BOTTOM RIGHT: **Said Chaaya**, postdoctoral fellow at the Centre national de la recherche scientifique, delivers his lecture on the first American missionaries in the Middle East on March 2, 2016.



ABOVE: Arabic professors **Zeina Schlenoff** and **Reema Barakat** and Arabic Outreach Program director **Defne Bilir** (center, left to right) pose with student volunteers during Arabic Coffee Hour at the Center for Global Engagement. BELOW: **Dr. Zeina Schlenoff** pictured with **Mrs. Jeannette B. Chapman**, who endowed the Middle East Lecture Series.



Paul Salem, vice president of the Middle East Institute, delivers the inaugural **Jeanette B. Chapman** lecture on Feb. 16, 2016.





Arabic division recognizes outstanding students

In April 2016, the Arabic program awarded four students certificates for excelling in their Arabic coursework. Hear from these students about their favorite aspects of Arabic, the difficulties involved in language learning, and their aspirations with their Arabic studies.



Sophomore

"I enjoy learning about the culture of the Middle East and other Arabic speaking areas through the language and its dialects. I also enjoy conversing with both native speakers and beginning speakers and learning more about the language from those conversations."

After graduation, Michael hopes to teach social studies at the high school level.

Michael Herzog

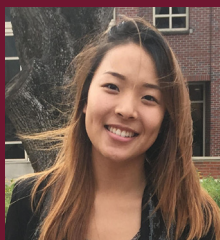
Graduating senior

"The difficulty with studying such a different language was sometimes discouraging, but once I got the hang of it, the challenge stimulated my love of languages and my desire to know more."

After graduation, Michael plans to travel abroad while teaching English.



Michael Fernandez



Sophomore

"What I enjoy most about learning Arabic is the cultural exchange. I love learning about different cultures, and being able to speak and understand new languages only makes it even better."

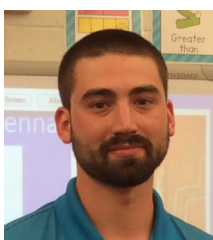
After graduation, Jessica plans to attend law school and continue her Arabic language studies.

Jessica Liu

Junior

"I love the logic of the Arabic language. It reminds me of math in many ways. The grammar and sentence structures are like a puzzle, and once you learn how to solve it, it all makes logical sense."

After graduation, Brett hopes to continue studying Arabic abroad and reach fluency.



Brett Crawford

Micah Friedman wins humanity in action fellowship award



Rising senior Micah Friedman, pictured in center, is seen with Humanity in Action program fellows. Students, from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Poland and Ukraine, explored past and present examples of resistance to intolerance, with a goal of encouraging future leaders to be engaged citizens and responsible decision makers.

By Rachel Easterbrook

This summer, rising senior and Arabic student Micah Friedman received the Humanity in Action fellowship, which awarded him the chance to travel to Europe to spend a month in Germany's capital city. Together with 21 other young people, Micah met with leading academics and activists engaged in a wide variety of issues of human and minority rights in Germany.

The goal of the program was to help young leaders like Micah to develop a complex understanding of the contemporary issues of systemic discrimination in Germany and the various tactics of resistance undertaken by different actors in the country and Europe at large.

Centered in Berlin, the shadow of history informed many of the discussions, as Germany's role in perpetrating systematic executions of Jews, Roma, homosexuals, and other groups during World War II provided historical context for the importance of human and minority rights.

For Micah, the program was a once-in-a-lifetime chance to learn from other young people passionate about social change.

"Engaging in daily conversations about deeply important and troubling topics with bright people from dramatically different backgrounds and national contexts than myself provided me with a lot of valuable, new insight into how minority rights issues can and should be addressed," Micah said.

After graduation, Micah hopes to apply these new experiences to work with Jewish communal organizations in order to address the systemic inequalities that different groups of people face today in the United States.

"In my life, I hope to build bridges across historically divisive lines, such as those of religion and race, and the approaches to understanding complex histories that Middle Eastern Studies courses have taught me will surely prove valuable in that pursuit," Micah said.

Micah will graduate next spring with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Religion.

check out our website at mec.fsu.edu for Micah's full interview!

on their marks...

By Rachel Easterbrook

Middle Eastern Studies program alumni Madison and Jesse Marks share their work and travel experiences in the Middle East

Siblings Madison and Jesse Marks have more than just DNA and a degree from Florida State in common. Both Madison and Jesse share a passion for Middle Eastern Studies that has taken them around the globe.

A recipient of both the Winthrop-King and Boren scholarships, Madison spent a summer and a full academic year studying in Amman, Jordan, before graduating from FSU in 2013. It was in Amman that her younger brother



Jesse visited her for a few months in 2012. Three years later, Jesse himself received the Boren scholarship and spent the next year studying Arabic at the Qasid Language Institute in Amman.

Despite their extensive collegiate travels in the MENA region, both Jesse and Madison described a deep-seated passion for the region.

According to Madison, her interest in Middle Eastern Studies was initially a personal one. “My great-great grandfather is Syrian, but there is little information about his background preserved within my family...I wanted to understand the history of the Middle East, the role of religion in historical and contemporary events, and learn Arabic so I could connect personally and professionally with the Arabic-speaking world,” she said.

Jesse echoed Madison’s personal and professional intrigue in the region, sharing that his travels in the region “were the thread that weaved a passion for the region into my life, particularly in a humanitarian context.”

For both Marks siblings, “Arabic was the key that unlocked the door to the Arab world,” allowing them to enter into Arab society and connect with individuals on a deeper level. Jesse explained, “With the inclusion of dialect to my linguistic knowledge, I could communicate with virtually every person I met despite class, nationality, legal status, or religion. Studying Arabic helped shape the way I perceive the region and the frameworks I was taught in the west.”

Jesse emphasized the importance of language study in his experience of the region, stating: “It is hard to explain...but Arabic enabled me to explore topics where I was previously restricted simply by my ability to bridge social and linguistic gaps.”

Put simply by his sister Madison, “You can never learn enough Arabic.”

After graduation, Madison interned with the Qatar Foundation International - an organization that seeks to connect cultures and advance global citizenship through education - before joining their full-time staff. She is now a Senior Research Associate and oversees the Young Engagement Program and works closely with Arabic Language and Culture programs.

“We aim to provide opportunities for students at the K-12 level to study Arabic and learn about Arab culture. We do this through sponsorship of school programs, curriculum development, teacher support,

student scholarships, and cross-cultural opportunities,” Madison explained.

Madison also received funding from Georgetown University to pursue a Master of Arts in Arab Studies. She will finish the program in 2017.

From the United Nations to the Jordan Center for Strategic Studies, Jesse has gained a wealth of experience studying and interning abroad. During this time, he explained, “I learned the Amiya dialect quickly due to work environments where it was the only dialect spoken. Working within an emergency response like the Syrian refugee crisis opened my eyes to perspectives of both the Syrian conflict and the humanitarian response.”

Like Madison, he also plans to pursue graduate studies in the MES field and hopes “to complete an MSc in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies at the University of Oxford,” he said. He is also



interested in working in the humanitarian sector, but is still exploring long-term career possibilities.

Thanks to his Arabic language skills, however, Jesse has a good shot at working in his field of interest - forced migration and movement - “while using the language in a professional context to meet an immediate need of UNHCR and the refugee community,” he explained.

Both Jesse and Madison look forward to the next set of global adventures their education and careers have in store for them.

postdocs...continued from page 3

huda, "Teaching Hebrew in Madrid: The Emergence of Sephardi Studies in Spain (1949)," in *Sephardi Lives: A Documentary History, 1700-1950*, eds. Julia Phillips Cohen and Sarah Abrevaya Stein, (Stanford University, 2014). Her work has been supported by a Fulbright-Hays Award, the Tauber Institute for the Study of European Jewry, and an Andrew Mellon Dissertation-Year Fellowship.

González is the first post-doctoral scholar in the Religion Department at FSU and she teaches courses such as *The Jewish Tradition* and *The Jews of Spain*. She will also team up with Dr. Martin Kavka to teach *Zionism and its Discontents in the Fall*. Some of the classes are a mix of undergraduate and graduate students, which can be a challenge for an instructor, but González says she enjoys the different perspectives of all of her students.

González's work explores the complex intersections of gender, class, and ethnicity amid changing political regimes. Her passion for her work is

clear as she talks. Her eyes widen as she describes making discoveries in source materials and between the words and records people left behind and the larger context of early 20th century political change. She is eager to work with students who share her curiosity about the people and events that shaped modern life.

"To go through certain landscapes with students is deeply compelling," González says as she describes the shared process of learning as teacher and students go through a text together, sharing ideas and engaging in discussion about the material.

FSU's Middle Eastern Studies Program benefits from the new perspectives post-doctoral scholars bring to campus. They bring the latest scholarship in their respective fields to FSU and act as mentors to our brightest students.

founder's...continued from page 2

have followed in his footsteps as academics or gone to work for the State Department.

While Garretson enjoys teaching, and has been a favorite professor of many, he is also a serious scholar who specializes in African and North African History. While at FSU, Garretson has taught survey courses on Middle Eastern Civilization, Middle Eastern History and Northern African History. He also has held graduate seminars on minorities in the Middle East, Islam in the Middle East, Frontiers in the Middle East and North Africa, Biographies in the Middle East, and *The Modern History of Israel*. His publications include his book on the history of Addis Ababa and a number of articles on the 19th and 20th century history of Ethiopia and the Sudan.

Garretson's early life put him on a path of lifetime learning about Ethiopia, Sudan, and Somalia. When he was an infant, his father accepted what was supposed to be a temporary teaching position in Ethiopia. "My father was supposed to be an advisor to the Ethiopian Foreign Ministry for six months, but we stayed for 10 years," Garretson says with a laugh.

Growing up in Ethiopia's capital city, Addis Ababa, he met suffragist Sylvia Pankhurst and Hakim Azaj Wärqenäh, a doctor and diplomat who was known as Dr. Charles Martin in the West. Martin is the subject of Garretson's most recent book, *"A Victorian Gentleman and Ethiopian Nationalist: The Life and Times of Hakim Wärqenäh, Dr. Charles Martin,"* which was published in 2012 by Boydell & Brewer.

Wärqenäh was born into a good family in 1865, but ad-

opted by a British officer and raised in India. He was educated as a doctor and later returned to Ethiopia where he played a "significant role in influencing medicine, education, and economic development" throughout the first half of the 20th century.

When Garretson returned to Ethiopia as an adult, Wärqenäh's family often hosted him during his research visits and gave him access to the diplomat's diary, which Wärqenäh had kept from 1899 to 1947.

Garretson is now Professor Emeritus and occasionally teaches courses at FSU while he pursues his research and writing projects. Currently, he is focusing on a history of U.S. advisors in post-WWII Ethiopia, Iran, and Thailand, and a short biography of an uncle who was shot down and killed during WWII and after whom he was named. He also maintains ties with the university through events and supporting the Middle East Center. He recently donated a collection of his books to the MEC's library, which has hundreds of books and films in its catalog.

As we finish our coffee, Garretson says he is happy to have more time for traveling and writing. He says Tallahassee is home and he loves coming back to the canopy roads and moss-draped trees, but there is still a world out there he is itching to explore.

hosainy...continued from page 3

of the documents. The endeavor is an ongoing one. Keeping a balance between producing a historical narrative while simultaneously questioning and critically interrogating my data has been both the most challenging and simultaneously the most rewarding part of writing this dissertation.

Q: Which languages can/do you conduct research in?

A: My native language is Persian. My undergraduate education in Turkey started with learning...English. In the meantime, I studied Turkish, which was the language of the country, and Arabic, which I found useful for my future research. Learning the Ottoman language then became a much easier job since it is the combination of the three languages (Turkish grammar with a lot of Persian and Arabic vocabulary).

Q: What future research topics do you plan on pursuing, while at FSU or in the long-term future?

A: I will primarily work to turn my dissertation into a monograph. It requires me conducting further archival research to illuminate some new aspects of the social, urban, and legal history of Istanbul. My second project will be about a legal history of the early modern Islamicate empires, namely the Ottomans, the Safavids, and the Mughals. The three empires had much in common, includ-

ing their religion, their Turkic background, and the Persian literary and administrative influence. I hope such a comparative research will help to integrate the research on early modern Muslim societies into that of the world history.

Q: Do you have any words of encouragement or advice for students pursuing a degree in Middle Eastern Studies?

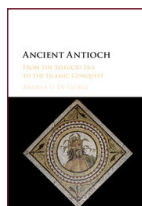
A: A degree in MES provides the students with a unique set of linguistic and analytical skills about a wide geography from Morocco to Afghanistan. It helps students to have a deep understanding of the historical and current events and institutions of the region. Learning about the Middle East will also increase awareness about and appreciation of diversity, the absence of which is felt on our everyday life.

Q: What is one thing you want your students to know about you?

A: Sincerity! I will be sincere about my views and will encourage my students to be so. That is how we can achieve the goal of creating a democratic environment in which each and every point of view will have a chance to be expressed, discussed, and criticized.

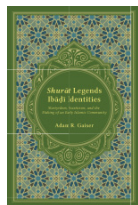
MES faculty strive for excellence in the field

recent publications & accomplishments



Dr. Andrea U. De Giorgi, assistant professor in the Department of Classics, published his most recent book, *Ancient Antioch: From the Seleucid Era to the Islamic Conquest*, in May 2016. This book draws on a century of archaeological fieldwork to offer a new narrative of Antioch's origins and growth, as well as its resilience, civic pride, and economic opportunism. It also brings into focus the archaeological data, thus proposing a concrete interpretative framework that enables the reader to move beyond text-based reconstructions of the city's history.

Associate professor in the Department of Religion **Dr. Adam Gaiser** wrote his forthcoming book about the origins and early development of Islamic notions of martyrdom and of martyrdom literature. He offers an analysis of a variety of early Islamic texts to understand processes of identity formation and community. Look for the title, *Shurāt Legends, Ibādī Identities: Martyrdom, Asceticism, and the Making of an Early Islamic Community*, from the University of South Carolina Press in October 2016.



The Lions of Gnawa: Authenticity and Opportunity in Moroccan Ritual Music.

Dr. Christopher Witulski, specialized teaching faculty at the College of Music, has a manuscript under contract with Indiana University Press, entitled, *The Lions of the Gnawa: Authenticity and Opportunity in a Moroccan Ritual Music*. The work, scheduled to be published this year, is part of the "Middle East and North Africa" series. An ethnography, the publication will examine innovation alongside reactionary discourses against it.

Corbin Treacy | Modern Languages

"L'effet Barzakh," *Contemporary French & Francophone Studies* 20:1 (2016): 76-83.

"The German Moudjahid and the Danish Prince: Boualem Sansal's *Le Village de l'Allemand*," *French Forum* 40:1 (2015): 123-37.

Will Hanley | History

"International Lawyers without Public International Law: The Case of Late Ottoman Egypt," *Journal of the History of International Law* 18.1 (2016): 98-119

Daniel Pullen | Classics

"The Life and Death of a Mycenaean Port Town: Kalamianos on the Saronic Gulf," *Journal of Maritime Archaeology* 8(2): 245-262

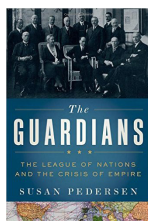
recommended by the faculty...

Will Hanley, history



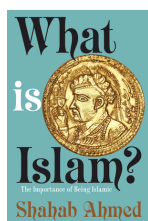
film: Barakah
Meets Barakah,
starring FSU & MES
alumnus Hishem
Fageeh

book: *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire*, by Susan Pedersen



website:
ottomanhistorypodcast.com

Adam Gaiser, religion



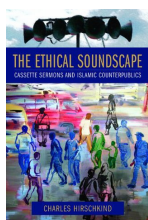
book: *What is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic*, by Shahab Ahmed

Corbin Treacy, modern languages

book: *Transcolonial Maghreb: Imagining Palestine in the Era of Decolonization*, by Olivia Harrison



Christopher Witulski, music



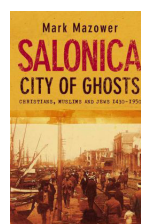
book: *The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counterpublics*, by Charles Hirschkind

film: *I Bring What I Love*, directed by Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi

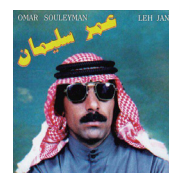


Andrea u. de Giorgi, classics

book: *Salonica: City of Ghosts*, by Mark Mazower



Music: Omar Souleyman, syrian musician



film: *Mustang*, directed by Deniz Gamze Ergüven



website:
asor-syrianheritage.org

Winthrop-King scholarship winners take language study to the next level

By Rachel Easterbrook



This year, the Arabic division of the Modern Languages department awarded Winthrop-King scholarships to rising seniors Kelly Baker and John Searcy. The award, which is open to Florida State University undergraduates that are studying Arabic, is for summer study at California State University's summer Arabic program in Amman, Jordan.

Totalling \$7,000 each, these Winthrop-King Scholarships are life-changing opportunities for motivated undergraduates to further their course of study in an immersive abroad experience. This year's winners each spent ten weeks of their summer studying at the Qasid Arabic Institute in Amman, where they took courses in both Modern Standard Arabic and the Levantine dialect.

For Kelly and John, traveling to Jordan was a doubly exciting opportunity to experience the history and culture of the country, but also - and foremost - a once in a lifetime chance to improve their Arabic language skills.

"My first and primary goal is to become more fluent in the language. I'm hoping by the end of my trip that I will be able to hold a conversation with a native speaker and be able to thrive as an individual in an Arabic speaking country," John explained. "Another goal I have while I am here is to make friends with locals and have as many interactions as possible so that I can

put my new skills to real use and dive into the culture."

Kelly, too, emphasized the importance of learning to communicate with native Jordanians in day-to-day life in Amman.

"This summer I hope to be able to communicate solely in Arabic with my classmates and teacher, as well as on the street when I am out shopping or taking a taxi throughout the city," she



Rising senior **John Searcy** sits atop a camel while traveling in Jordan.

said.

For motivated language learners like Kelly and John, an immersive learning environment is a challenging but a necessary step toward achieving advanced language proficiency and cultural awareness.

"I enjoy every aspect about my Arabic studies...The most challenging

aspect [it] has been learning to listen to native Arabic speakers and comprehend what they are saying," Kelly explained. "What makes it difficult is that our classes [at FSU] are conducted a lot of the time in English... I believe one of the best ways to work on listening and speaking skills is to fully immerse yourself in the culture and study the language in country where majority of the residents speak Arabic."

John echoed Kelly's sentiments about immersion, explaining that retaining vocabulary is made much easier by the need to use the words you are learning so as to function in your environment.

He explained, "At home, we would usually learn one chapter's worth of vocabulary in two weeks, but here we are expected to learn two chapters' worth of vocabulary in one week which

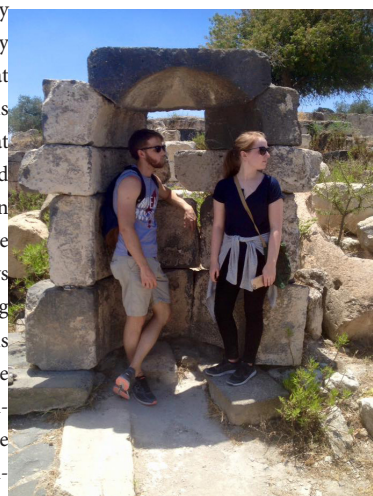
amounts to over 100 words. However, being surrounded by the language allows us to put our new words to practical use, making it easier to learn."

For Kelly - an International Affairs and Middle Eastern Studies

double major - and John - an International Affairs and Criminology double majors - the importance of learning MSA alongside dialect is not lost.

"Writing is my favorite aspect [of Arabic]. I had to learn a new alphabet and how to write right to left which was difficult at first, but now in my sec-

ond year I can write in Arabic almost as fast as in English," John explained.



Winthrop-King winners **John Searcy** and **Kelly Baker** take a break in the shade while obtaining a graduate degree in Middle East-

ern Studies or Arabic, before launching a career in foreign policy or in the federal government.

Her language studies have been a critical factor in this career plan. Kelly said, "Learning Arabic and the different cultures of many Arab countries has helped me grasp a thorough understanding of an area of the world that is quite often misunderstood. Growing up, I hardly knew anything about the Middle East. Due to my studies at FSU, I can think critically and form my own thoughts and opinions on current events in the Arab world, as well as how its history has affected the present status of many Middle Eastern countries."

John, too, looks forward to applying his language skills in a professional environment. "As of right now I am applying for jobs in the federal law enforcement field which is in dire need of individuals who can speak the language and understand the culture," John explained.

"I am hoping that I can bring my language skills and all that I have learned in Arabic and the Middle Eastern Studies department to the federal level and use it as a tool in my career. Hopefully, I will be able to use my understanding of the region...to help improve foreign policy and decisions for the betterment of everyone."

looking forward: upcoming events

September 2016

film screening: the arabic outreach program will host their first film screening of the semester, showing "the syrian bride"

November 2016

middle east center open house: faculty, students, and staff are invited to the middle east center for coffee, tea, and conversation

January 2017

jeannette b. champan lecture: the middle east center hosts the second annual champan lecture

October 2016

exploratory students expo: advisers from the middle eastern studies program will introduce the major to exploratory students

December 2016

film screening: the arabic outreach program will host its second screening, showing, "the english sheik and the yemeni gentleman"

February 2017

middle east film festival: the arabic outreach program and the middle east center welcome the community to the second annual film festival

October 2016

gilman gunn lecture: join us homecoming week for a visit with FSU alumnus gilman gunn, who will offer a lecture on language and entrepreneurship

March 2017

film screening: the arabic outreach program will host its third screening, showing, "the visitor"

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• dates for all events are subject to change. please visit mec.fsu.edu for updated dates and times
• and for more information about middle east center events.
• follow us at [@fsumec](https://twitter.com/fsumec) for the latest info and pictures from our events!
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