

The World History of Rashid al-Din, 1314: A Masterpiece of Islamic Painting

Fighting between Mahmud and Isma'il, from the *Jamī' al-tawārikh* of Rashid al-Din, Tabriz, 714/1314, MS Arab 20, fol. 119, Courtesy of University of Edinburgh Library



12

From the Head of IMES

By Dr Andrew Marsham



Welcome to the Summer 2014 issue of the IMES Alumni Newsletter. It's been inspiring to hear from many of you while I have been acting Head of IMES (replacing **Dr Tony Gorman**, on research leave).

Five alumni feature in the Digest in this issue, with their stories from Palestine, Lebanon, Dubai, Egypt and the USA, on subjects as diverse as curating, journalism and skateboarding.

Nineteen more of you joined the alumni's ranks in July, and it is a great pleasure to congratulate you all—further details of the graduation are found inside.

Sadly, we say farewell this summer to **Professor Marilyn Booth**, who has accepted a chair at Oxford. There is more about **Professor Booth's** enormous contribution to IMES since 2009 in Headlines.

The visual arts of Iran feature prominently this semester. Several folios of Rashid al-Din's *World History*—perhaps the greatest treasure of the University's Library—are currently on display to the public at the Main Library. **Dr Yuka Kadoi** introduces the exhibition in the Features section. This is followed by 'With the Filmmakers', which was

organised by **Dr Nacim Pak-Shiraz** at the Edinburgh International Film Festival. An update on Persian Studies in general is found at p. 11.

The Spring Semester has also seen a busy calendar of other events, including a Monday seminar series focusing on classical Islam and Islamic civilisation, as well as theatre, lectures and conferences—among them the inaugural meeting of the British Association of Islamic Studies (BRAIS), hosted by the Alwaleed Centre.

We hope you enjoy reading about all of this, as well as another instalment of **al-Mu'arrikh's** history of IMES, and very much look forward to hearing from you. Please get in touch at imesalumni@ed.ac.uk.

Issue no. 3**Head of IMES**

Dr Andrew Marsham

Editor and Designer

Fayaz S Alibhai

With thanks to

Eleanor Birch, Linda Grieve and all our contributors.

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

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

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Staff and new graduates strike a pose at George Square Gardens

1 From the Head of IMES**Snapshots****4** Congratulations to our graduates!**8** Headlines**10** History of IMES**11** Persian Studies updates**Features****12** The World History of Rashid al-Din**14** With the filmmakers: continuities and discontinuities in Iranian cinema**Seminars and Conferences****16** IMES Spring seminar series**18** Alwaleed Centre: from talks, festivals and events...**19** ... to showcasing Islamic studies in the UK**Alumni Digest****20** Skateboarding in Palestine**22** Teaching in Palestine**24** Preserving Protestant heritage in the Middle East**26** Spotlight: Sam Wilkin**27** Spotlight: Henry Huttinger**28** The last word



4



Professor W. Montgomery Watt

10



Still from *The Mongols* (Parviz Kimiavi, 1973)

14



May, 11, takes her new-found skateboard skills onto the miniramp

20



Israeli and Palestinian 'fire'

22

We Did It! Congratulations to IMES' latest graduates!

Compiled by Eleanor Birch and Linda Grieve

The following were awarded degrees in July 2014. We wish them all the very best for the future.

Undergraduate

Arabic

Thomas Finch
Vera Halvorsen
Pesha Magid
Nicholas Zambellas

Arabic and Economics

Hashim Ul-hassan

Arabic and French

Amy Walton

Arabic and History

Ailie Burningham
Carrie Cuno-Booth

Arabic and History of Art

Alyssa Gregory

Arabic and Persian

Sophie Spencer

Arabic and Politics

Laurene Veale

Arabic and Spanish

Alexandra Barmby
Charles Cutteridge

Islamic Studies

Elisabeth Simpson

Middle Eastern Studies

Darren Baldwin

Persian and English

Literature

Rebecca Hughes

Persian and Middle Eastern Studies

Jessica Myers

Postgraduate

IMES PhD Programme

Majied Robinson
(PhD title: 'Approaches to the *Nasab* Tradition: A Study of Marriage and Concubinage in the tribe of Muhammad, 500-750 CE'; supervisor: Dr Andrew Marsham)

Suhaili Sarif
(PhD title: 'Income Generation through Zakat: The Islamization Impact on Malaysian Regions'; supervisor: Dr Andrew Newman)

Awards

The **Irene Crawford Prize** for best final year student was awarded to

Laurene Veale (Arabic and Politics).

Laurene also received the **Carole Hillenbrand Prize** for best dissertation. Entitled 'How do young Palestinian refugees in the West use activism to cultivate their ties to Palestine and reject the so-called "peace process"?', it was described by one marker as 'A remarkable piece of research.'

Very well done, **Laurene!**)

A summer afternoon, champagne, juice and strawberries in George Square gardens to celebrate IMES graduations







Headlines

August 2014

By Dr Andrew Marsham



Professor Marilyn Booth

A Fond Farewell

Professor Marilyn Booth has accepted the Al Saud Chair in the Study of the Contemporary Arab World at Magdalen College, Oxford. She will leave Edinburgh in September and will spend a year as a Senior Research Fellow at the research institute of New York University, Abu Dhabi, before taking up her post at Oxford.

Professor Booth came to Edinburgh from the University of Illinois in January 2009 as the Iraq Chair in Arabic and Islamic Studies, serving as Head of Department from 2009 until 2012 and as Director of the Centre for the Advanced Study of the Arab World (CASAW) from 2009 until 2014. Her research work while at Edinburgh has focused on 19th and early 20th century Egypt, on modern Arabic fiction, and on gender studies and translation studies.

Her recent publications have included *The Long 1890s in Egypt* (co-edited with **Dr Tony Gorman**), an English translation of **Elias Khoury's** novel *As Though She Were Sleeping*, and articles in the *Journal of Women's History*, *Feminist Studies* and the *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*.

Professor Booth's courses at Edinburgh included Harems, Homes and Streets: Space and Gender in Middle Eastern Literatures, Modern Arabic Literature, and Egyptian Colloquial Texts: Literature and the Sounds of Life (with Jonathan Featherstone).

Professor Booth has made an enormous contribution to all aspects of the life of the department and to the study of Islam and the Arab World at Edinburgh and far beyond, and we all wish her well in her new position.

Movers and Shakers

Jade Scott joined the department as the Administrator for CASAW in January this year, replacing **Valentina Gorgoni**, who has taken up a post elsewhere in the University.

Eleanor Birch (née **Humphrey**) joined the department as the new IMES Administrator, having already acted as temporary cover following the departure of **Paulo Nunes de Moura**, who now has a post at the School of Engineering.

Dr Songül Mecit moves within IMES from her Postdoctoral Fellowship to a Teaching Fellowship.

Dr Majied Robinson (PhD, 2014) will continue to work as a Research Fellow in Assessment Practice for the School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures, before taking up a Leverhulme Early Career Research Fellowship at IMES in 2015.

Dr Tim Peace completes his postdoctoral fellowship at the Alwaleed Centre in September and is moving to a six-month Marie Curie Fellowship at the University of Padua, Italy, to continue his research on Muslim Political Participation in Europe, and then to a Lectureship in Comparative European Politics at the University of Stirling.

Farida El Keiy, who was with us for one year as the temporary replacement for **Dr Richard Todd**, has been appointed to an Arabic teaching post at the University of Cambridge. **Dr Todd** returns to IMES from his year at the American University in Sharjah in August.



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1. Eleanor Birch
2. Dr Majied Robinson
3. Dr Tim Peace
4. Dr Elif Shafak

Event Roundup

In February, the acclaimed storyteller, **Xanthe Gresham**, performed extracts from the great Persian epic the *Shahnameh* in 'Lust, Tragedy and War: The *Shahnameh* in Theatre' at the George Square Lecture Theatre. She was accompanied by the Iranian musician, **Arash Moradi** in her performance to an audience of 200 from across the UK. The event was organised by IMES and sponsored by the Edinburgh Iranian Festival and the Alwaleed Centre for the Study of Islam in the Contemporary World.

In March, the award-winning Turkish novelist and writer, **Elif Shafak**, came to speak at an event organised by IMES and The Istanbul Review. **Elif Shafak** read from her most recent work and spoke engagingly on her experiences as a novelist as well as on politics and society in modern Turkey.

In April, **Professor Angelika Neuwirth** came to speak on 'The Qur'an as a Text of Late Antiquity' in an event organised by IMES in collaboration with the University of St Andrews. **Professor Neuwirth**, who is Senior-Professor of Arabic Studies at the Freie Universität Berlin and director of the Corpus Coranicum research project at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, made a detailed case for the Qur'an's importance and theological originality as scripture within a wider late antique tradition that includes paganism, Judaism and Christianity.



4

History of IMES

Three departments into one

By al-Mu'arrikh

(Part 3)

Arabic language was first taught at the University of Edinburgh in the 18th century but it was not until 1912 that an Arabic department was formally established. For almost the next forty years it continued to be the home for the study of Middle Eastern languages and culture.

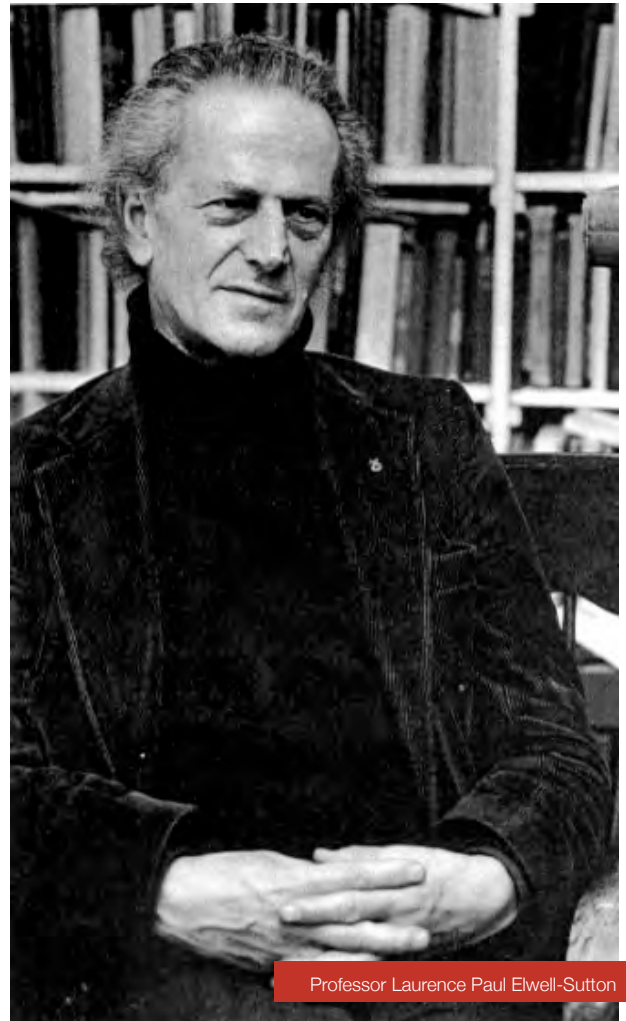
In 1947 with the publication of the Scarbrough Report a new national policy was announced to expand the capacity of British universities to produce graduates of strategic languages. At Edinburgh this impetus, subsequently reinforced by the Hayter Report in 1961, resulted in the establishment of a Turkish Department in 1950 and a Persian Department the following year. Over the next three decades this troika of departments would provide not only the three languages but also their respective histories and literature.

The existence of three departments should not suggest a large staff; the emphasis was on quality not quantity. Arabic as the senior department was headed by **W. Montgomery Watt** (1909-2006), by this time a Lecturer and ultimately Professor in Arabic and Islamic Studies. He was joined by **Pierre Cachia** (b. 1921) in 1951, an Edinburgh PhD who had taught previously at the American University in Cairo. Whereas **Watt** enjoyed an international reputation for scholarship on early Islam, the Egyptian-born **Cachia** was developing an expertise in modern Arabic literature, an innovation for the time.

The Turkish Department was headed by **John R. Walsh** (1919-1993), an American who saw service in Europe during the war. **Walsh** married an English woman in 1944, and subsequently gained a degree in Turkish at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London in 1950. Appointed directly afterwards to head this new department at Edinburgh he would serve in that capacity until his retirement. The Persian Department was created in 1952 with the appointment of its first lecturer, **Laurence Paul Elwell-Sutton** (1912-1984). Like **Walsh**, **Elwell-Sutton** was a graduate of SOAS although he proved more prolific in publication with over a hundred articles and twelve books to his name.

Over the next thirty years these three departments, Arabic, Turkish and Persian, operated side by side in teaching and research on three of the main languages of the Middle East. With the retirements of **Watt** and **Walsh** in 1979 and 1980 respectively, the university decided, no doubt for reasons of economy, on the need for a reconfiguration. The result was an amalgamation of the three departments into a single entity called Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies. The new name maintained the emphasis on the study of Islam that had been a strength long held at Edinburgh while the addition of Middle Eastern Studies offered a more contemporary ring. Despite the change in name, language study remained the focus of an IMES degree.

Elwell-Sutton, by this time professor and close to retirement, was appointed as an interim head while advertisements were placed for the filling of the new Iraq Chair of Arabic and Islamic Studies who would head the new reconfigured unit.



Professor Laurence Paul Elwell-Sutton

Persian Studies Updates

Funding, events and programmes

By Dr Nacim Pak-Shiraz



The Visual World of Persianate Culture

Timed to coincide with the launch of the new MSc in Persian Civilisation in September 2014 and the anniversary exhibition of ‘The World History of Rashid al-Din, 1314: A Masterpiece of Islamic Painting’, this international conference will explore the importance of the visual in the Persian world.

It aims to examine the historic role of visual culture in the shaping, influencing, and transforming of Persian cultures over successive centuries. An immensely rich visual culture has always existed in Iran and the surrounding regions from early antiquity, often shaped by encounters with different zones of contact and patronised by ruling elites and dynasties with a myriad of artistic and cultural traditions, needs and agendas.

This conference seeks to attract scholars working in diverse fields of study connected by the overarching theme of Persianate civilisation. It aims to provide a forum to discuss the visual world of globally defined ‘Persianate’ culture across the various historical periods, ranging from pre-Islamic cultures (Elamite, Achaemenid, Parthian and Sasanian), medieval/early modern Islamic cultures, to Iran’s modern visual cultures (including film and media).

Sponsored by the Iran Heritage Foundation, the conference is jointly organised by IMES, the Alwaleed Centre for the Study of Islam in the Contemporary World, and the School of History, Classics and Archaeology, all at the University of Edinburgh.

For more information, please visit <http://persianconference2014.wordpress.com> or contact persianconference2014@gmail.com. ‘The World History of Rashid al-Din, 1314: A Masterpiece of Islamic Painting’ runs 1 August – 31 October 2014 at the University of Edinburgh’s Main Library at George Square. See Feature article on pp 12-13.

MSc in Persian Civilisation

The MSc in Persian Civilisation is an interdisciplinary programme that builds on a number of fields of study, including Classics, Ancient History, Middle Eastern Studies and Islamic Studies. It is currently accepting applications for September 2015.

For more information, please visit <http://bit.ly/UoE-MScPersianCivilisation>

PhD Scholarships in Iranian Studies

We are delighted to welcome Farshid Kazemi, who will be taking up an IMES PhD Scholarship in Iranian Studies. Farshid will undertake research on Iranian cinema with **Dr Nacim Pak-Shiraz**.

To keep up-to-date with Iranian Studies and the Persianate world at the University of Edinburgh, please visit the Facebook page: www.facebook.com/UoEPersianStudies.



Rashid al-Din's 'World History' A masterpiece of Islamic painting

By Dr Yuka Kadoi

Starting in the summer of 2014 and continuing into the autumn, the University of Edinburgh is holding a public display of the *Jami' al-tawarikh* ('World History' or 'Compendium of Chronicles') of **Rashid al-Din**, one of the masterpieces of medieval Islamic manuscripts.

Celebrating the 700th anniversary of its production (1314-2014), the exhibition, entitled 'The World History of Rashid al-Din, 1314: A Masterpiece of Islamic Painting', features a representative selection of folios from Edinburgh University's Library manuscript (Or.MS.20) and loans from National Museums Scotland.

This exhibition project, initiated by the author in 2012, is organised and sponsored by the Alwaleed bin Talal Centre for the Study of Islam in the Contemporary World (Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies, IMES) in collaboration with the Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

Much has been said on the significance of the *Jami' al-tawarikh* of **Rashid al-Din** in the history of Islamic painting. The Edinburgh copy of the 'World History' was published by **David Talbot Rice** (*The Illustrations to the 'World History' of Rashid al-Din*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1976), and its digital book is now available at the Centre for Research Collections' website (<http://images.is.ed.ac.uk/luna/servlet/UoEsha~4~4>).

Besides its Islamic art historical importance, the uniqueness of the Edinburgh copy lies in its intriguing provenance. Why did this manuscript, produced in early fourteenth-century Iran, end up in Scotland? The original manuscript left Iran at some point in history, and like many other medieval Islamic manuscripts of Iranian provenance, it was eventually passed to the court of the Mughals in India. It was divided into two parts around the mid-1700s, but both sections remained in India until the nineteenth century, when they were acquired by the British.

The Edinburgh portion was acquired by **Colonel John Baillie** (1772–1833) of the East India Company, and together with other Islamic manuscripts he collected in India, **Rashid al-Din's** 'World History' was passed onto the Edinburgh University Library in 1876.

The other portion was bequeathed to the Royal Asiatic Society (RAS) but was sold at an auction in 1980. The ex-RAS portion is currently in the possession of **Dr Nasser D. Khalili** in London (published by Basil Gray, *The World History of Rashid al-Din: A Study of the Royal Asiatic Society*, London, Farber, 1978; Sheila S. Blair, *A Compendium of Chronicles: Rashid al-Din's Illustrated History of the World*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995).

This exhibition, I hope, will arouse fresh research and public interest in Edinburgh's small yet historically important collection of Islamic manuscripts.

The World History of Rashid al-Din, 1314: A Masterpiece of Islamic Painting runs from 2 August - 31 October 2014 at the University of Edinburgh's Main Library in George Square. For further information about the exhibition and related public events, please visit the website of the forthcoming conference on Persian visual culture in Edinburgh on 24-26 October (<http://persianconference2014.wordpress.com/rashid-al-din-13142014/>).

The birth of the Prophet, page from the *Jami' al-tawarikh* of Rashid al-Din, Tabriz, 714/1314, MS Arab 20, fol. 42r, courtesy of Edinburgh University Library

واخذ ابو القاسم من حجبور ومجلس قيدا القهر ودرية الاسد الى من بين قصر وكذلك استوروا شا الحجاب التي كان ساعدا المنتصر ومعية
 وركبه الادنى واسر الكثر العسكر وخملوا جميعا الى بينة في ليلتين العار ورواها لكسار وانهم المنتصر لجباير العايرة لخطا راها ملك وانظار
 الملكات وتوجه الامير نصرية كفت الاقبال والدولة وشان الشايد والنصرة الى مستقر عترة ووقع المنتصر بين الشرك الاعوز فبناها هو معتد
 بسبب قرابة كانت بينهم وبينه ودخلوا في طاعته ومشقون خدمة لولاية الى بلاد الملكان واسروا جماعة من عسكره وقملوا خيما منهم بالسيف



وتبوا لا القهر وحصلوا من ذلك غنمة وافرة ثم رجعوا فوقع في الآفواه ان القصور قد دسوا على محاذلة الملكان وانهم يعتدرون عن ذلك وردون
 ان تغتفر فواليه باعناق الاسارى واطلاقهم فاستشعر المنتصر من هذا القول ولم يبق له نوم ولا استقرار فخرج من بينهم ومعه سبعة ايه فارس
 من خواتمه ونفاؤه اصحابه فلما وصل الى ساحل حنون وجدته جامدا فامر بان يوضع اللبن على الجليد فوضع ثم عبر فلما وصل اليهم عسكره



الغوز كان قد اصابه النهار وطلعت الشمس وهرل المنتصر على شط امثل وكتب الى السلطان كتابا بعثت فيه ما تراهم عليه من افواج الكربة وما
 فاساه من شدايد العزيمة ولجاء الى كفت اشفاة وظل اشباله وسلم زمام اقباده الى يد مراده وقال **شمس**
جكر در تاب و دل در موج خوشت اگر چه مني و قش كنونست
 فان كان مكان تحت ظل دولتك كثر كالظل ملازم الحسرتك ورجل الى امثل خوفا من ان يخطقه مضرة من ترك الغوز وشي

With the Filmmakers: Continuities and discontinuities in Iranian cinema

By Stephanie Wiseman

The Edinburgh International Film Festival (EIFF) has this year offered an array of films and documentaries created both inside and outwith Iran, by filmmakers who remain in the country as well as those who now consider themselves citizens of the diaspora, or in some cases are in exile. Classic masterpieces such as **Ebrahim Golestan's** *The Brick and the Mirror* and **Dariussh Mehrjui's** *The Cow*, were screened alongside the more contemporary, often boundary-pushing creations of **Mark Cousins** and **Mania Akbari**—*Life May Be*—and **Mehran Tamadoun's** *Iranian*.

It was in this context that **Dr Nacim Pak-Shiraz** of the University of Edinburgh successfully organised 'With the Filmmakers: Continuities and Discontinuities in Iranian Cinema.' This event took place over two days and consisted of a panel discussion of various elements, themes and techniques within Iranian filmmaking. It was a rare occasion in which various Iranian filmmakers and leading academics in the field were brought together to offer their insights and opinions on the process of filmmaking, and discuss the socio-political statements made by many of these films.

Chris Fujiwara (Artistic Director of the EIFF) was joined on stage by **Professor Hamid Naficy** (Northwestern University) and **Mehrnaz Saeed-Vafa** of Columbia College Chicago in a guided discussion led by **Dr Pak-Shiraz**, followed by Q&A from the audience.

The first of these sessions saw the eminent filmmaker **Ebrahim Golestan** discuss issues of gender and 'new-wave' Iranian cinema alongside **Mania Akbari**, whose challenging past and present has manifested itself in the most captivating of films. The result of this pairing was a striking contrast between age and youth, but with great similarities in their passion for cinema—especially in commenting on social and political matters. Given that the world premiere of **Akbari's** latest creation—a collaboration with **Mark Cousins** made entirely with email and video correspondence between the two—was screened just two days before, it was particularly exciting to hear more about the driving forces behind her work.

Other topics included the body and its representation in cinema and society, and the portrayal and utilisation of children on screen. The use of techniques such as the 'long take' was deconstructed by the academic members of the panel, with particular reference to **Shahram Mokri's** 2013 creation, *Fish and Cat*.

For the second session, the academic panel was joined by young filmmaker and actress **Sara Rastegar**, whose 2013 film, *My Red Shoes*, was screened at the festival that evening. The setting of **Rastegar's** new project as well as **Kianoosh Ayari's** *The Paternal House* and **Abbas Kiarostami's** *Ten* inspired the key themes of this second session, which focused largely on the utilisation of various spaces in Iranian cinema: the car, the home, one particular room.

Audience feedback following the event clearly demonstrated that those who had attended not only felt that their knowledge regarding Iran and Iranian cinema had been enhanced considerably, but also that they were fully engaged by the panel and discussion topics broached. In particular, it seems that the audience was delighted by the presence of **Professor Naficy** and his articulate analysis. Indeed, it was a privilege to witness such a rare and exciting event.



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Stills from Iranian films
screened at the Edinburgh
International Film Festival
(EIFF) 2014:

1. *Apparition* (Dariush Mehrjui, 2014)
2. Still from *Fish and Cat* (Shahram Mokri, 2013)
3. *I Hate the Dawn* (Ali Karim, 2013)



3

Islamic Civilisation and the Islamic Tradition: Past and Present

IMES spring seminar series

By Dr Andrew Marsham



Partal Garden, Granada © Professor Robert Hillenbrand

The themed Spring seminar series focused on 'Islamic Civilisation and the Islamic Tradition: Past and Present'. Islamic law and theology were addressed in three talks, spanning more than 1,400 years of history: **Professor Mona Siddiqui** presented an engaging discussion of her experiences as an expert witness in UK legal cases involving Islamic law; **Yaser Mirdamadi**, an IMES PhD student, presented his initial findings on the problem of revelation in modern Judaism and Islam and **Dr Andrew Marsham** took us back to the origins of Islam, with a discussion of the use of fire in capital punishment, and parallels between late Roman and early Islamic practices.

Questions of religious and political identity in the Middle East from pre-Islamic times to the present were the subject of three more talks: **Dr Tim Greenwood** (St Andrews) looked at Christian networks in Armenia and Iraq on the eve of Islam; **Dr Songül Mecit** examined the gap between

the rhetoric of jihad and the reality of political pragmatism in Asia Minor in the 12th and 13th centuries; and **Georgios Rigas**, another IMES PhD student, presented his examination of political relations between Hamas and Egypt in the late Mubarak era.

The memory of the past lies at the heart of a tradition and its interpretation. **Professor Carole Hillenbrand** gave a magisterial survey of the evolution of ideas about jihad in western scholarship. **Dr Saeko Yazaki** (Glasgow, and IMES PhD, 2010) presented her recent work on the modern Jewish scholar **A.S. Yahuda** (1877–1951) and his positive vision of Islamic al-Andalus. **Dr Sarah Bowen Savant** (Aga Khan University) looked at the potential for the digital humanities to identify patterns in the transmission and transformation of historical memory and **Dr Harry Munt** (Oxford) made the case for a new history of local history-writing in the medieval Islamic world.

Traditions that give shape to civilisations also have material manifestations. **Professor Robert Hillenbrand's** talk on the role of light in Islamic architecture from Islam's origins up to the present day drew a much more than capacity audience. Four Edinburgh graduate students also addressed the question of Islamic material culture. Continuities into the present of classical artistic and religious practices were highlighted by **Francesco Stermotich-Capellari** (PhD, IMES and Alwaleed) in his work on calligraphy in Turkey. **Emanuele Intagliata** (PhD, Archaeology and IMES) presented on the transformation of Palmyra in the late Roman and early Islamic period. Finally, **Thibaut Clamart** (MSc, Edinburgh College of Art) looked at early Islamic urban history, through a study of 'Anjar, in modern Lebanon.

The programme for the Autumn seminar series will be posted on the IMES website shortly (<http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/literatures-languages-cultures/islamic-middle-eastern/news-events/events-seminars>). The seminar usually meets on Mondays at 5.30pm in G2, IMES, 19 George Square





Alwaleed Centre Events Talks, festivals and exhibitions

By Professor Hugh Goddard

During the first half of 2014, the Alwaleed Centre has arranged lectures on Global Islam, with talks by **Professor Jonathan Spencer**, the first holder of the university's newly-revived Regius Chair of South Asian Language, Culture and Society, on Muslims in Sri Lanka, and **Professor Oddbjorn Leirvik**, the University of Oslo's Professor of Inter-Religious Relations, on Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations in Norway.

We also explored Inter-Religious Relations, on which, in addition to **Professor Leirvik**, we heard a fascinating pair of talks about the ongoing, and very creative, dialogue between Roman Catholic Christians and Shi'i Muslims, by **Dr Mohammed Ali Shomali** from Qom and **Dr Anthony O'Mahony** from Heythrop College, London.

The Centre is always very active during Edinburgh's festival season, and this year we have sponsored events at the JUST Festival and the International Book Festival. We are particularly looking forward to our Book Festival event on Friday 15 August focusing on **Justin Marozzi's** *Baghdad: City of Peace, City of Blood*, which has received very positive reviews since its publication at the end of May.

The Centre has also sponsored, as part of the Fringe Festival, an exhibition of the university library's manuscript of the *World History* of Rashid al-Din, the 700th anniversary of whose composition falls this year.

The autumn will then see Centre activities focusing on Islamic Civilisation, with a pair of lectures on the Rashid al-Din manuscript, by **Professors Sheila Blair** and **Robert Hillenbrand**, at the National Gallery on Friday 24 October.

This will be followed by events in November on Islamic cartography, and the use of perspective in the Islamic world, a field in which the scientific achievements of the Islamic world also had a dramatic impact in the field of art, including in the Italian Renaissance.

Dr Anthony O'Mahony and Dr Mohammed Ali Shomali discuss Catholic-Shi'i dialogue with the Director of the Alwaleed Centre, Professor Hugh Goddard

Details of all Alwaleed Centre activities, including its outreach work with Scottish schools, Police Scotland, the Scottish Judiciary, the Scottish Government, local authorities and the media can be found at www.alwaleed.ed.ac.uk. You can also follow the Centre's work on Facebook (www.facebook.com/alwaleededinburgh) and Twitter (@alwaleed_centre).

Alwaleed Centre Events

Showcasing Islamic studies in the UK

By Professor Hugh Goddard



Delegates reflect on Professor Bruce Lawrence's opening plenary at the inaugural conference of the British Association for Islamic Studies

The Alwaleed Centre has been the administrative hub for the British Association for Islamic Studies (BRAIS) since its establishment in 2012, and as part of this role the Centre hosted the inaugural conference of the Association on 10th and 11th April. 'Showcasing Islamic Studies in the UK' brought together over 150 academics from across the UK and beyond, from a wide variety of academic disciplines.

An excellent opening plenary lecture on 'Rethinking Islamic Studies: Civilisational Moorings/Cosmopolitan Options' was delivered by **Professor Bruce Lawrence** of Duke University, and over the course of the two days papers were delivered on the whole range of Islamic Studies, from the Qur'an to Islamic History, Philosophy and Theology, Law and Ethics, Art and Material Culture, Education, Inter-Religious Relations, Diversity within the Muslim community, Gender Issues, Islamic Finance, Islam in Africa, Russia and the US, Politics, and Muslim Communities in Europe and the UK, including here in Scotland.

At the close of the first day, we also welcomed **Aaqil Ahmed**, Head of Religion and Ethics at the BBC, who delivered a fascinating talk to a large audience of conference delegates and members of the public on 'Why We Need Religious Programming'.

Overall the conference undoubtedly succeeded in its aim of building up an Islamic Studies community within Higher Education in the UK, and it was particularly gratifying that over 40% of those who participated took the trouble to provide us with formal feedback. Of them over 90% said that they would definitely attend a BRAIS conference again, and the Centre is now contributing to the planning for the Association's second conference, which is going to be held in London from 13-15 April 2015.

Professor Lawrence's plenary lecture and Aaqil Ahmed's talk were both recorded, and can be accessed, along with the full conference programme, and details of all BRAIS' other activities, on the BRAIS website: www.brais.ac.uk.



SkatePAL

Introducing skateboarding into Palestine

By Charlie Davis

My name is Charlie, I am 27, I am an Arabic graduate from Edinburgh University, and I skateboard. After my degree at Edinburgh, I began setting up the organisation SkatePAL, a UK-based charity, which aims to introduce skateboarding into Palestine by building skateboard ramps/parks and holding classes.

Why skateboarding?

The first time I thought about teaching skateboarding in Palestine was on my first visit to Jenin when I taught English as a volunteer after I finished school. After my classes I used to take my board out into the town to skate around and I was amazed by the number of kids who crowded round to watch and wanted to have a shot. They asked me where the magnets were in my shoes to make the board jump in the air. From that moment I knew that skateboarding would be a success if it were introduced.

People have asked me, ‘Why skateboarding over other sports?’ I have been skateboarding for 14 years and have met some of my closest friends on my board. Unlike many other sports skateboarding is one where people of all abilities and ages practice together and encourage each other to keep pushing themselves. Skateboarding builds self-confidence as well as self-discipline, and is also a fantastic form of exercise. There is a spirit of inclusivity and mutual support in skateboarding communities around the world. We aim to foster a community like this in Palestine where both girls and boys can get involved in the sport.

Why Palestine?

As we are all aware, the outlook is bleak for many young Palestinians. 40% of Palestinians are under 15 and over 50% of young people are struggling to find work. However, cultural, educational, and sporting opportunities offer a chance for young people to be involved productively in their community, and also offer them an outlet to express themselves creatively. Skateboarding is a sport that challenges oneself to learn new things every day and focus your energies on something positive—this is especially important in areas where children are caught up in the daily life of military occupation.

How have the skate classes been received?

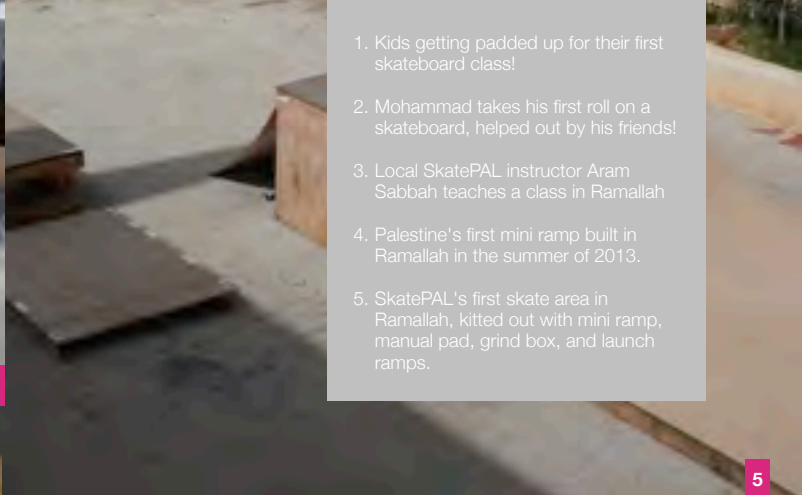
We have had a steady flow of children coming to our skate classes since we began, with over 20 a day coming during the busier weeks. In the village of Zebabdeh we had over 100 students enrolled in a rather intensive skate programme this February! The feedback from both the kids and their parents has been very positive. They have progressed quickly and are really enjoying it. Some of the first students have also been teaching the newer ones which is exactly the sort of inclusive community skateboarding is all about.

What has SkatePAL accomplished so far and what is the next step?

I began planning this project in 2012 when I was working in Tunis. I managed to find a youth centre—the Sharek youth



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1. Kids getting padded up for their first skateboard class!
2. Mohammad takes his first roll on a skateboard, helped out by his friends!
3. Local SkatePAL instructor Aram Sabbah teaches a class in Ramallah
4. Palestine's first mini ramp built in Ramallah in the summer of 2013.
5. SkatePAL's first skate area in Ramallah, kitted out with mini ramp, manual pad, grind box, and launch ramps.

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forum—in Ramallah who wanted to host the project. I started to spread the word about SkatePAL and managed to raise funds through donations as well as receiving some skateboards from a UK skateboard distribution company.

Our first session was in June 2013 at the Sharek Youth Forum with my brother and two engineering volunteers, where we began building skate obstacles including a mini ramp, funbox and a grindbox.

With the help of the Sharek Youth Forum, we advertised the skate classes on the radio and newspaper as well as handing out flyers in town. We then held a successful 8-week skate programme with 20 kids a day, and found the only two local skateboarders to help out and be SkatePAL representatives, carrying on classes after we left.

Since our initial session we have grown and have been teaching classes in various locations around the country as well as gaining more exposure both in Palestine and internationally. SkatePAL has been contacted by organisations such as Surfing for Peace and The Asian Extreme Games, to put forward skateboarders to represent SkatePAL and Palestine.

This summer we are heading back with a multi-disciplined team of 20 volunteers comprising architects, engineers, filmmakers, and of course skateboarders, to build three new skatepark sites across the country and continue classes. We are excited to have some professional skaters coming out as well. At the moment we are fundraising and planning for the project.

The goal of SkatePAL is to link up skaters and skateboarding supply companies around the world with the scene in the Palestine and to create a self-sustaining skateboard scene in the country that will continue to grow.

Charlie Davis graduated from IMES in 2012 with an MA in Arabic. For more information on SkatePAL, please visit www.skatepal.co.uk



Teaching in Palestine

An occupation

By Telche Abu Sulttan

Ever since taking a computerized career compatibility quiz in year 7 in which I scored 100% as a teacher, 99% as a prison warden and 98% as a furniture reclamation worker, I have actively resisted the idea of becoming a teacher.

You would be forgiven, then, for asking me why it is that I began working full-time as a primary school teacher in a Palestinian school in occupied East Jerusalem almost immediately after graduating. The answer quite simply, as with most recent graduates is this: money and experience.

After volunteering as a bridge translator on the incredibly exciting Palestinian poetry project, 'A Bird is Not a Stone', coordinated by IMES's **Sarah Irving**, and following a stint of volunteering on a pioneering transformative learning project, edventure: Frome, I decided it was time to charge off, packed my bags and set-up home in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. As the **Phil Collins** saying goes: 'In learning you will teach, and in teaching you will learn.' Certainly, the last year has provided a steep learning curve. The most difficult and unanticipated lesson was how to interact with children as a figure of authority in Palestinian society; as a Palestinian colleague recently put it: 'It's suppression or death.'

Of course, there's a lot more to it than that and the reasons for children's misbehaviour are manifold, but the Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem certainly plays a role. In addition to policies of settlement construction, house demolitions, forced displacement and a new law that splits up families carrying Jerusalem and

Sources

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West Bank IDs, Israel is now imposing millions of dollars of fines on Palestinian schools in East Jerusalem that refuse to teach the Israeli curriculum and plans to close 30 schools within the next year.

As a result of these heightened pressures, there is a growing number of children who do not have access to education in East Jerusalem, with a shortage of more than



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1,100 classrooms for Palestinian students in East Jerusalem according to a recent report released by the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI). All of this means that up until recently, teachers at the private school College des Frères, where I work, were struggling to control classrooms of over 40 students. Thankfully, when classroom numbers hit 45, they began dividing classes into a slightly more manageable 35. Coming to the end of my first year as a teacher, I'm looking to continue within the field of education with a return to academia, and I am currently preparing a PhD project proposal entitled, 'Agency in Palestine: An Institutional Ethnography of UNRWA'.



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Telche Abu Sulttan graduated from IMES in 2012 with an MA (Arabic and Anthropology).

1. Students from al-'Arroub refugee camp UNRWA school pose with their grandmother
2. A house demolition by Year 6 pupil in East Jerusalem school, 2014 summer camp
3. Fighting between Palestinians and Israelis
4. Fighting at al-Aqsa mosque
5. Orthodox Jewish settlers at al-Aqsa mosque; Israeli army killing Palestinians
6. Palestinian woman weeps for historical Palestine

Preserving Protestant Heritage... ...in the Middle East

By Dr Christine Lindner



Each morning, I am greeted by a desk full of surprises. It might be a journal written by a 19th-century American missionary, a long-lost piece of Nahdawi literature, or an Arabic audio recording of the Passion Story on 7.5 IPS mono tape. I field questions from archeologists excavating the site of a former mission school in Sidon, assist deep-sea divers in searching for clues (in books) for sunken ships off Tripoli's port, and support individual investigations about family members who worked in the Middle East or before immigration to the Mahjar. Often covered in dust and fragrant by the scent of old leather and decaying paper, I try to piece together these transnational narratives in a process akin to detective work, or at least modern archeology.

Since the Autumn of 2012, I have served as the manager for the Preserving Protestant Heritage in the Middle East (PPHME) project at the Near East School of Theology (NEST) in Beirut, Lebanon. As the oldest Protestant seminary in the region, NEST's Special Collections is a treasure of theological as well as historical artefacts from the five churches that it supports: the National Evangelical (Presbyterian) Synod of Syria and Lebanon, the National Evangelical Union [of Lebanon], the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East, the Diocese of Jerusalem of the Episcopal Church, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan. Records from these churches provide witness to the Armenian genocide, insight into the impact of the Nakba on Palestinian Christian communities and offer a more

intimate view of Arab intellectuals such as **Butrus al-Bustani**, **Constantine Zurayk** and **Hanna Kurani**. The archives also hold a number of unique artefacts from the American and British missions that operated in what is now Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Palestine and Israel. As the depository for the Americans' Mission Library in Beirut, the collection contains a number of beautiful medieval manuscripts as well as numerous items printed at the American Mission Press during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

One of the most popular items is the 'Van Dyck Bible' manuscript, which was collectively translated by missionaries **Eli Smith** and **Cornelius Van Dyck** and Arab intellectuals **Butrus al-Bustani**, **Nasif al-Yazigi** and **Yusuf al-Assir**. This manuscript includes comments and corrections to the text that reveal the debates that took place during the translation process.

An important function of my job is to raise awareness of Protestant heritage. This is done by presenting case studies of artefacts from the archives, such as the impressive teaching certificate bestowed on a woman named **Labiba Kurani** in 1887. I have conducted tours of a nearby historical cemetery, blogged about an American barn found in Beirut, and presented papers on WWI relief efforts. This diversity of subjects reflects the vast array of items found in the collection, which is both overwhelming and inspiring, and offers scholars new avenues to re-evaluate established historical narratives.

سفر التكوين الاصحاح الاول

١) في البدء خلق الله السماء والارض (١) وكانت الارض
خاوية غالية وظلمة على وجه الغمر وروح الله يرفرف
على وجه المياه (٢) وقال الله ليكن نور فكان نور
(٣) ورأى الله النور انه حسن. وفصل الله بين النور
والظلمة (٤) ودعا الله النور نهارا والظلمة دعاها
ليلا. وكان مساء وكان صباح يوما واحدا
(٥) وقال الله ليكن رقيق في وسط المياه وليكن فاصلا
بين مياه ومياه (٦) فعل الله الرقيق وفصل بين

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One of the most rewarding aspects of my work is to facilitate the study of archival material. Discussions with scholars over the details of a manuscript often results in exciting and innovative interpretations of the artefact's history, use and impact. Providing details about an ancestor's biography or showing a photograph of a demolished landmark helps members of the local Protestant community reconnect to their past—one that seems, and is, fragile. The stories of how these records came to be located at NEST, transported during exile from Anatolia or Palestine, and salvaged during the Lebanese Civil War, speak to the perseverance of this small community and is a testament to the manifold struggles the region faced—and continues to face.

1. American Mission Press Building-Beirut (1934), courtesy of NEST Special Collections
2. Genesis 1:1-6 of Bustani-Smith-Van Dyck Bible Translation Manuscript (1853), courtesy of NEST Special Collections
3. Labiba Kurani Teaching Certificate (1887), courtesy of NEST Special Collections
4. Christine Lindner giving a tour at the Anglo-American Cemetery (2014), courtesy of Abir Breir-British Embassy Beirut

Christine B. Lindner obtained her PhD in Middle East History from IMES in 2009. She served as Assistant Professor of Cultural Studies at the University of Balamand (Lebanon) before becoming the manager for the Preserving Protestant Heritage in the Middle East project at the Near East School of Theology in Beirut, Lebanon. She has published a number of articles on the history of Protestantism in Ottoman Syrian and is preparing a monograph on the subject.

If you are interested in reviewing the archive, applying for small research grants, or participating in NEST's study abroad programme on Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Studies, please contact Dr Lindner via <http://theonest.academia.edu/ChristineBLindner>

Spotlight: Sam Wilkin

An eventful four years

By Sam Wilkin



It has been an eventful four years since I graduated from IMES in summer 2010. I first attended Army officer training at Sandhurst, following up on a cadetship I had held at Edinburgh, but quickly decided against a military career. I then moved to Paris, where I held an internship at the French Institute for International Relations, researching global energy issues. In May 2011, I was offered a position on the political risk team at

Control Risks, a consultancy. This involved moving to Dubai—something of a *bête noire* for Arabists—but the offer was good, with the promise of extensive travel to the real Middle East. I bade a fond farewell to France and set off for the UAE.

Control Risks has provided some fantastic early-career experiences, including extensive media exposure and the opportunity to address large conference audiences on Middle East politics. There were some interesting client projects too, including a memorable return to the rugged wadis of eastern Yemen, which I had visited while at IMES and where I was now tasked with deciphering village-level politics for an oil firm.

In spite of this, by late 2013 I felt restless and in need of a new direction. I applied for postgraduate study in International Relations at two US schools: an arduous process during which **Tony Gorman** and **Carole Hillenbrand** provided excellent support and references. In March I was awarded places at both schools, one of which also offered a generous scholarship.

At the same time, I applied for a traineeship at Reuters. I had flirted with the idea of journalism for the past year, but I was late to the party and struggled to find a way into the trade without prior experience. Fortunately, Reuters was willing to look past my inexperience and, after a tough and competitive selection process, offered to take me on in September. With a small pang of regret at turning down the opportunity for graduate study, I accepted and will be returning to the UK in the summer.

In the course of my career so far, I have learnt a few things I wished I had known when starting out, including:

If you apply for jobs and don't hear back, it's not necessarily because you're not qualified. Sometimes the position is not really open at all, perhaps if the employer already has a shortlist, and sometimes your CV has been filtered because there is a certain box you don't tick. Take heart and keep looking.

A long and difficult selection process, often seen at large firms and the civil service, means that the employer is filtering large numbers of candidates in a systematic way. Smaller employers tend not to do this, and so networking is more important.

Dubai isn't that bad, and if it all gets too superficial, there are some really interesting places nearby. You'll be able to afford the plane ticket, too.

Sam, left, interviewing a local government official in Seiyun, Hadhramaut province, Yemen

Sam Wilkin graduated from IMES in 2010 with a degree in Arabic and Persian. He was awarded the Irene Crawford Prize for the best performance of a graduating student that year.



Spotlight: Henry Huttinger From Cairo to Los Angeles

By Henry Huttinger

If anyone finds themselves in Los Angeles for any reason, look me up! After graduating with the IMES class of 2007, I headed back to Egypt for a year-long fellowship at the American University in Cairo. It was during that year that I finally hit my stride and developed some semblance of fluency in Arabic. A big part of it was finding the patience to start reading full novels in Arabic. I highly recommend it.

I moved to Washington, DC in 2009 to find a job using my language skills in a non-dodgy capacity. That can be challenging in DC. I thankfully ended up working with some dedicated and inspiring people at the National Endowment for Democracy, a congressionally funded foundation focused on promoting democracy and human rights overseas. I worked on a small grants program for human rights organisations in the Middle East and North Africa, and focused primarily on Egypt and Libya.

I had a challenging but exciting run for three years at the organisation during the so-called Arab Spring. We had to adapt our grant-making in Egypt when SCAF and the *fulul*-packed Ministry of International Cooperation decided to shut down the space for civil society. We delivered critical support to Bahraini human rights defenders. In Libya, we supported groups to incubate hundreds of fledgling NGOs that had organised during the uprising against Gaddafi. I enjoyed sharing my hotel's breakfast buffet in Tripoli with some extremely hard-looking militia from Misrata. At the end of it, I was pretty chuffed that I returned unscathed.

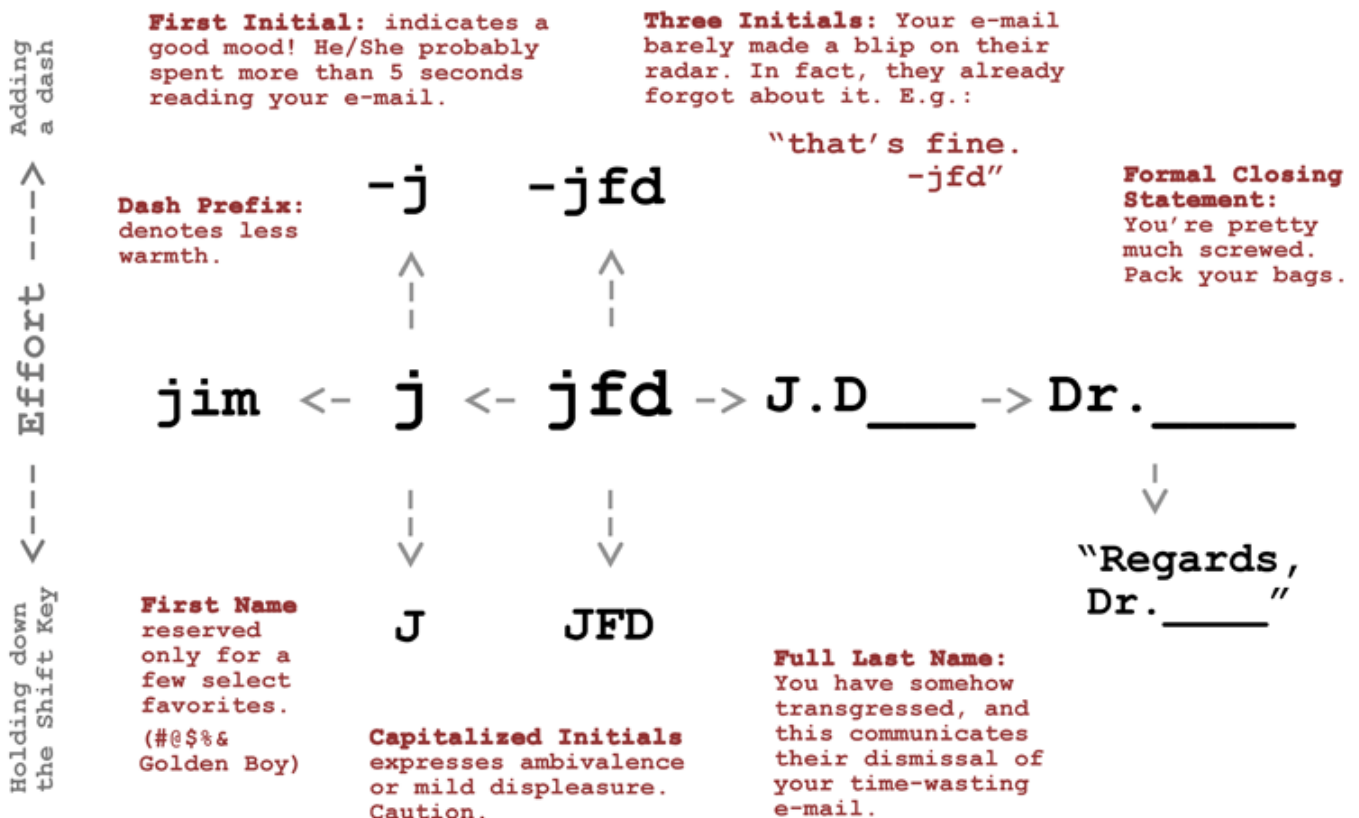
Afterwards, I decided to re-orient my career to do some human rights promotion at home in the US. I got married to my lovely wife **Liz**, and followed her out to Los Angeles where I'm now studying law at UCLA. I'm still using my Arabic doing direct legal services for Iraqi refugees. This summer I'm working with some very talented lawyers on immigration and national security cases at the American Civil Liberties Union. As I mentioned, get in touch if you ever decide to visit California!

Henry Huttinger graduated from IMES in 2007 with a degree in Arabic and Politics.

The Last Word

The Semiotics of Professor E-mail Signatures

Abstract: Professorial types express their mood by a ratio of casualness to effort in how they sign their e-mails. By paying close attention to these variations, you can learn to identify their mood and prepare accordingly.



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(with thanks to Janice from Rice)