Greetings from the Director

We are reaching the end of another productive year for the Center for Middle East Studies at UCSB. CMES sponsored a number of important activities in the Spring Quarter. These included an eye-witness report of the arrival of Syrian refugees on the island of Lesbos, a lecture by Adam Mestyan (Harvard Society of Fellows) on “The Just Prince and the Nation: Muslim Patriotism and the Politics of Notables in late Ottoman Egypt, 1860s,” a lecture by Lerna Ekmekcioglu (MIT) on “Survivors into Minorities: Armenians in Post-Genocide Turkey,” and a visit by this year’s R. Stephen Humphreys Distinguished Visiting Scholar, Michael Cook, of Princeton University (see below). Our graduate students organized the 6th Annual Islamic Studies Graduate Student Conference under the title “Identity, Memory, and Diaspora.”

A number of faculty members also made significant contributions to scholarship. Racha el Omari (Religious Studies) published her book, The Theology of Abū l-Qāsim al-Balkhi al-Ka'bī (d. 319/931) with Brill. This work deals with an important figure in early Islamic theology. Janet Afary (Religious Studies) published a translation with John R. Perry of Charand-o Parand (Stuff and Nonsense) with Yale University Press.

Originally satirical columns by Ali-Akbar Dehkhoda, these essays provide an important window into Iranian society and politics in the era of the Constitutional Revolution.

Finally, a number of students are headed off for summer study and travel with financial support from CMES. These include Jesilyn Faust (Morocco), Lucas Wright (Modern Hebrew), Caleb McCarthy (Beirut), Gregory Goalwin (New York and Washington DC), Jared Holton (Cordoba, Spain), James White (Azerbaijan), Margarita Safronova (Kazakhstan), Liza Munk (Amman, Jordan), Sarp Kurgan (Istanbul, Turkey), Navid Yousefian (Istanbul), John Thibudeau (Fez Morocco), and Steph Wright (Ramallah, Palestine).

Here is wishing everyone a wonderful and productive summer. We have a lot in the works for the fall, but more on that as we get closer.

- Adam Sabra, Director, Center for Middle Eastern Studies
Another Successful Year for UCSB Model Arab League

We are pleased to announce another year of excellent work from our Model Arab League team, who traveled to the University of La Verne to compete in the Southern California Regional competition.

Students gathered over the weekend of March 4-6, 2016, and discussed and debated numerous political, social, and environmental issues currently facing the Arab League alongside delegates from a number of schools representing a wide range of Arab league countries.

This year UCSB represented the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The team spent the winter quarter, under the guidance of Stephanie Wright and Caleb McCarthy (and Aaron Sokoll in spirit/skype), researching the kingdom’s positions and aims in relation to the complex issues facing the region. As Saudi Arabia our team led many profitable discussions, and in particular our delegates for Joint Defense and Political Affairs were recognized with awards.

It is always a pleasure to boast of the success of these students who voluntarily devote their time during winter quarter to participate in MAL. This year’s team consisted of yet another fine example of dedicated and engaged UCSC undergraduates. Lola Maraiyesa and Kirsten Bejarano represented in the Joint Defense council; Hubert Zhang and Brett Ferguson for Political Affairs; Katrina Padilla and Jacob Bavoso in Environmental Affairs; and, James Harrington and Bridget McWaid represented a special joint Palestinian-Social Affairs council. Working with them throughout the winter quarter remains a highlight of the year, and we thank them for their hard work.

- Caleb McCarthy and Stephanie Wright, Model Arab League Advisors

Michael Cook: R. Stephen Humphreys Distinguished Visiting Scholar

Each year, CMES invites a senior scholar in the field of pre-modern Middle Eastern studies to meet deliver a public lecture and lead a seminar for graduate students. This year, the honoree was Professor Michael Cook, Class of 1943 University Professor of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University, and perhaps the leading figure in Islamic history in the United States. Cook began his career as a social and economic historian of the early Ottoman Empire, and his dissertation, *Population Pressure in Rural Anatolia, 1450-1600*, was famously cited by Fernand Braudel in the second edition of Braudel’s *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*. He later co-authored with the late Patricia Crone the controversial book *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World*, which did a lot to re-invigorate the debate about the origins of Islam.

Cook has also written the political dimensions of Islam, from medieval times to the present. Many consider his masterpiece to be *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought*, a work which addresses the obligation of Muslims to intervene in their society to correct moral and religious practices.

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The Center for Middle East Studies and the Arab Studies Institute (George Mason University) hosted a four-day research collaboration workshop on the five-year anniversary of the Tahrir Square uprising in 2011 that toppled Egypt’s long-term dictator Hosni Mubarak. These uprisings in Egypt accelerated waves of anti-crony-capitalist demonstrations, worker organizing, youth revolts, media insurrections, and police brutality protests that overthrew governments, mobilized populations throughout the Middle East, and inspired the world from Wisconsin, to Mexico, to Baltimore. The Tahrir uprisings are called the January 25 Revolution in Egypt and the Arab world; it was on that day that millions of protesters first descended upon downtown Cairo with the aim of reclaiming history and power for the people.

The Egyptian uprising was one global turning point in the history of repression. Immediately following the January 25 Revolution in Egypt, at least fifty-eight countries around the world passed draconian laws to restrict or fundamentally cripple the right to protest and occupy civic space. Government in ostensibly “democratic” regions of North America, the European Union, and Latin America ratified repressive dictates. They also developed and deployed new apparatuses of surveillance and criminalization against those using the internet as one site of many for civic op-

eighty, the challenges of gender/sexuality/race justice in the context of repression, and the cultures of authoritarianism that are shaping our times, globally.

The After Tahrir Conference included a number of engaging workshop sessions and also featured a series of film shorts, new media projects, and video installation in the Michael Douglas Lobby of the Pollock Theater. Award-winning filmmaker Omar Robert Hamilton, internationally acclaimed curator Sarah Rifky, and media artist Heba Amin were among the conference participants who lead a lively discussion after the programming of video-clip artists and community-based street videographers. All of the works featured in the After Tahrir conference series have emerged out of or tell stories in light of the revolutionary moment in Egypt.

On Monday, January 25th over 100 attendees joined conference participants for a day of panels and conversation covering a wide-range of topics, including issues of revolution and history, memory, temporality, the State, community building and organization, and queerness.

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Between May 20th and May 22nd, 2016, the Center for Middle East Studies at UC Santa Barbara hosted the Sixth Annual Islamic Studies Graduate Student Conference. This year’s conference was inspired by the topics of Diaspora, Identity, and Memory. The organizers of the graduate conference hoped that focus on these themes would enable graduate students from a wide range of academic disciplines - including Religious Studies, History, Anthropology, Comparative Literature, Political Science, and Sociology - to interrogate the relationships inherent to identity formation, diaspora, and the migration of Muslim communities, understood both in terms of geographical and abstract communal concepts. The papers presented at the conference by twenty-one graduate students, some of whom travelled to the UCSB campus from as far away as India and Turkey, explored the diverse manifestations of identity, pluralities of religious content, patterns of diaspora movement, and the ways in which identities are preserved in private and public practice.

This year the conference featured Dr. Sherman A. Jackson from University of Southern California as the keynote speaker. Dr. Jackson presented a talk titled “Islamic Studies 2.0: Whose Authority; Whose Objectivity?,” which sparked a lively dialogue among conference attendees regarding the usefulness of the term “diaspora” as an analytical tool for understanding Islam both in American society and global civil society. Additionally, his keynote address raised important questions about

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The Theology of Abū l-Qāsim al-Balkhī/al-Ka‘bī (d. 319/931)
A New Book By UCSB Religious Studies Professor Racha el Omari

This is the first comprehensive monograph on the theology of Abū l-Qāsim al-Ka‘bī al-Balkhī (d. 319/931), a leading Mu'tazilī who flourished at the end of the Baghdādī school and at the beginning of the scholastic phase of Mu’tazilī history. The study of al-Ka‘bī’s theology has been hindered by historiographical barriers: the fragmentary nature of extant articles, and the difficulties of reconstructing their contexts. This work investigates the twofold challenge of recovering al-Ka‘bī’s theology on the basis of a source-critical reconstruction of major extant fragments. One result of this study positions al-Ka‘bī’s theology as influenced less by the precepts of a Baghdādī school, and guided more by his individual views and affinity for earlier independent Mu’tazilī positions. Another result not only corroborates al-Ka‘bī’s previously noted contributions in epistemology and cosmology, but also argues for their centrality to his theology as a whole.
Dwight Reynolds gave both the keynote address at the Medieval Workshop and also the Lansdowne lecture at the University of Victoria in January 2016 and in May gave a lecture at the Sorbonne (La récupération d’un passé sonique: la musique médiévale arabo-andalouse et la question de l’authenticité) and a presentation titled “Music as Desire: Erotic Dimensions of Musical Imagery in the Muwashshah” at the Institut du Monde Arabe as part of a conference called, Words of Desire: The Language of Arabic Erotica and its Translations (Paris, 6-7 May 2016). Several articles have recently been published, among which are, “From Basmati Rice to the Bani Hilal: Digital Archives and Public Humanities,” in Digital Humanities and Islamic & Middle East Studies, ed. Elias Muhanna (De Gruyter: 2016, pp. 251-268), which is the text of a keynote address he delivered in 2013, and, “Music, Poetry, and Lingua Franca in Medieval Iberia,” in Lingua Franca: Explorations of the Literary Geography of the Mediterranean World, ed. Michael Allan and Elisabetta Benigni, the text of a seminar he first gave at the Free University in Berlin in 2011. This summer he will travel to Naples to participate in an International Council for Traditional Music Study Group symposium on “Musicians in the Mediterranean: Narratives of Movement,” and then travel on to Leiden, in the Netherlands, to give a paper titled “Song and Punishment in Early Islam,” at the meetings of the School for Abbasid Studies. In the Fall he will inaugurate a new course at UCSB on “Modern Arab Culture” that will look at modern Arab identity and culture through cultural productions such as literature, music, cinema, television, art, architecture, folklore, humor, food, theater, reality TV shows, youth culture, the blogosphere, and other online forms of expression.
In winter 2015 Juan E. Campo delivered an invited paper on the role of the Indian Ocean in the making of modern pilgrimages at an NYU-Abu Dhabi conference on Cosmopolitan Currents in the Indian Ocean World and participated in a workshop on the history of mortality at the UC Humanities Research Institute, UC Irvine. In spring 2015 he delivered an invited paper on the historical role of the Hajj in Middle East peacemaking and sectarian conflict at a conference sponsored by Bayan Claremont University. Last summer he participated in the XXI Quinquennial World Conference of the International Association for the History of Religions in Erfurt, Germany, where he delivered a paper on the ecological impacts of modern mass pilgrimages in comparative perspective. While traveling in Germany and Austria in September, he and Magda Campo encountered the first waves of Middle Eastern and Afghan refugees arriving via Greece, the Balkans, and Hungary. They were impressed both by the determination of the refugees to make better lives for themselves in a new land and by the outpouring of generosity shown by European volunteer organizations who organized to assist them. Many of the volunteers were young university students.

During fall 2015, Juan was a scholar-in-residence at the UC Humanities Research Institute, where he participated in a seminar on the history of mortality with a group of other UC humanities faculty. While in residence, he wrote draft chapters about the narratives of mortality associated with modern mass pilgrimages to Mecca, Sabarimala (Kerala, India), and Guadalupe (Mexico) and how the history of mortality has shaped the sacred landscape of Mecca, particularly under Saudi hegemony. He also delivered an invited talk at the Comparative Muslim Societies Seminar, Cornell University, entitled, “Reflections on Islam’s Other Islams: Countering Sunni Hegemonies.” During spring 2016, he presented an invited paper at a Leiden University conference on amulets and talismans in the Muslim world. He talked about the talismanic meanings of epigraphs featured in the Ottoman-era mansions of Cairo. This summer and fall, Juan will once again be on sabbatical leave. He plans to finish his book on modern mass pilgrimages as a Visiting Senior Research Fellow at the Middle East Institute, National University of Singapore. Juan is also pleased to report that he is updating his award-winning one-volume Encyclopedia of Islam (Facts On File, 2009) for a second edition that will be out later this year.

Additionally, in 2015-16, Juan served in his sixth year as faculty director of the UCSB Education Abroad Program. He is excited to note that participation has increased to over 1,000 undergraduates annually, with students able to participate in over 300 programs in nearly 40 countries. Moreover, UCSB now exceeds all other UC
CMES Alumni and Graduate Student Updates

Heidi Morrison (Ph.D. 2009), Assistant Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin - La Crosse, recently published Childhood and Colonial Modernity in Egypt with Palgrave Macmillan. This book examines the transformations of Egyptian childhoods that occurred across gender, class, and rural/urban divides. It also questions the role of nostalgia and representation of childhood in illuminating key underlying political, social, and cultural developments in Egypt. She also contributed a chapter to Childhood in the Late Ottoman Empire and After (Brill, 2015) as well as publishing “Narrating Death, Surviving Life” in the Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth (Fall 2015).

Caleb Elfenbein (Pd.D. 2009) received tenure and promotion in the Departments of History and Religious Studies at Grinnell College. He is also pleased to announce that he recently became the director of the Center for the Humanities on campus, where he hopes to (among other things!) be an advocate for the role of Middle East and Islamic Studies in humanistic inquiry in higher education.

Between 2013 and 2015, George Herbst (Anthropology) led the Cultural Heritage Preservation (CHP) program for a Secretary of Defense economic task force in Afghanistan. The goal was to develop solutions aimed at protecting cultural heritage sites threatened by economic development. The task force CHP program was successful in developing Afghanistan’s first Cultural Heritage Policy and statutory regulation for its Mineral Mining Law, and also provided the framework for cultural heritage management best practices through integrated planning. These actions laid the foundation for more constructive relationships between national and international stakeholders that carefully balance Afghanistan’s strategic needs with responsible stewardship of its invaluable cultural properties.

Silvia Ferreira (Comparative Literature) recently accepted a position as a Full-time Lecturer in the School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences at the University of Washington, Bothell starting this fall.

In April 2016, Mateo M. Farzaneh (Ph.D. 2010) was awarded tenure and promoted to associate professor of history at Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago. While at USCB, Mateo studied with professors Nancy Gallagher, Stephen Humphreys, Dwight Reynolds, Paul Spickard, and Magda Campo in history’s PhD program and completed his dissertation in 2010 when he began his position as assistant professor at Northeastern. His new book, which is based on his dissertation, The Iranian Constitutional Revolution and the Clerical Leadership of Khurasani (Syracuse University Press, 2015), explores the role of Shiite jurisprudence and Muhammad Kazim Khurasani in the success of the Iranian constitutional revolution in 1906-11. Mateo is awarded sabbatical leave in spring 2017 when he will continue writing his second book which is about the role of Iranian women during the Iran-Iraq War (1980-88). This will be the first such study in any language and involves many unexamined documents from various sources.

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Alumni and Graduate Student Updates Continued

Allegra O’Donoghue (2008) recently launched a podcast based on interviews with students of Arabic and Chinese who have studied abroad in order to talk about how their language study, experience abroad and other skills led them down their career paths. It’s a part of a greater initiative to complicate the over simplistic “language = job” narrative and an attempt to help students think carefully about integrating career/life planning into their study abroad experience and offer a little guidance/food for thought when they’ve returned from abroad. For more information on this program please visit http://cketacademicprograms.com/podcast-episode-0/

Jonathan Sciarcon (Ph.D. 2010), Assistant Professor of Jewish History at the University of Denver, recently published “Expanding the Mission: The Alliance Israélite Universelle, the Anglo-Jewish Association, and the Jewish Boys’ School in Basra, 1890-1903” in the International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies (Vol. 9, No. 3, 2015). It is the first study of the Alliance Israélite Universelle’s work in Ottoman Basra and is something of a pre-history to the organization’s schools there.

Adam Morrison (Religious Studies) and his wife, Kate, are excited to announce the birth of their daughter Kathleen (Kally) Haines Morrison, born on January 18th of this year.

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He also wrote a number of articles on the early Wahhabi movement in Arabia. His most recent work, Ancient Religions, Modern Politics: The Islamic Case in Comparative Perspective, compares Islam, Hinduism, and Christianity in terms of their salience as the basis for modern political mobilization.

These scholarly accomplishments have won him a number of prizes and honors. He has been awarded an honorary doctorate from Leiden University, won a Distinguished Achievement Award from the Mellon Foundation, and received the Holberg Prize from the government of Norway.

Delivered on May 2, Cook’s lecture was entitled “Was the Rise of Islam a Black Swan Event?” He examined the rise of a new religion and the consolidation of a strong state in seventh century Arabia as unique and unpredictable “Black Swan” events. His graduate seminar dealt with the political significance of pre-Islamic Arabic poetry.

We are very pleased to announce that next year’s R. Stephen Humphreys Distinguished Visiting Professor will be Everett K. Rowson of New York University.

After Tahrir
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This event was made possible thanks to the generous support of the Division of Humanities and Fine Arts; the Division of Social Sciences; the College of Letters and Sciences; the Endowed Chairs of Adam Sabra (King Abdel Aziz Ibn Saud Chair), Michael Curtin (Mellichamp Chair), Eileen Boris (Hull Chair), and Janet Afary (Mellichamp Chair); various UCSB Centers including the Interdisciplinary Humanities Center, the Multicultural Center, the Center for Work, Labor, and Democracy, the Center for Cold War Studies and International History, and the Carsey-Wolf Center; in addition to the UCSB Departments of History, Film and Media Studies, Global Studies, Computer Science, Chicano Studies, East Asian Languages and Cultural Studies, Sociology, Political Science; and with administrative support provided by Lacy Olivera in The Institute for Social, Behavioral and Economic Research and Adam Morrison in the Center for Middle East Studies. For more information about this event visit aftertahrir.net.
the implied origins of the Islamic community and its displacement, as well as issues of authority in understanding Islamic practice, and teaching it within the academy. A thought-provoking presentation, Dr. Jackson’s talk left many questions unanswered regarding the ways in which to transition to new forms of conceptualizing and teaching Islamic Studies as a field.

The organizers of the conference, Kalina Yamboliev (History), Shyam Sriram (Political Science), and Sergey Saluschev (History), worked many hours to ensure the success of a conference with a theme giving rise to a very timely discussion on identity and memory within diaspora communities. Additionally, Alex Schultz and Susan Lucke at the Art, Design, and Architecture Museum at UCSB curated an exhibit of select medieval and modern Iranian portable objects and art for conference attendees. We are particularly grateful to everyone who donated funds, time, and moral support to help organize the Sixth Annual Islamic Studies Graduate Student Conference, and to continue the legacy of critical analysis of Islamic Studies as an academic field at our university.

Kalina Yamboliev (History), Shyam Sriram (Political Science), and Sergey Saluschev (History)

fields

Juan will continue to serve as EAP director in 2016-17.

Lastly, on a more personal note, Juan and Magda are enjoying being grandparents to Marco Campo, who joined the Campo family in 2014.