



THE ABBASI PROGRAM IN ISLAMIC STUDIES

NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2010

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DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Shahzad Bashir,

Associate Professor, Department of Religious Studies



The Abbasi Program in Islamic Studies is a relative newcomer on the academic scene at Stanford and it is my pleasure to write this note as we start the tradition of a newsletter. I commenced my term as the Program's director in September 2009 and feel that I must begin here with expressions of gratitude to those whose generosity and hard work has made the Program possible and successful. Sohaib and Sara Abbasi's endowment gift founded the Program and I am grateful to them for their continuing interest in helping us define our mission and events. Lysbeth Anderson Working's gift of a professorship in Islamic Studies in the department of Religious Studies forms another cornerstone that has enabled a PhD program in that field at Stanford. Immense thanks are owed to Professor Bob Gregg, the Program's founding director, who presided over the hiring of additional faculty and the creation of an institutional identity for the Program between 2003 and 2009. Dr. Marie-Pierre Ulloa served as the Associate Director until 2008 and we are glad that we can continue to cooperate with her now that she is at the Stanford Humanities Center.

The heart of any academic program is the work of faculty, staff, visitors, and students associated with it. I hope that the various reports provided in this newsletter will convey a sense for the wide variety of ways in which we engage the field at Stanford. Indeed, if I were allowed to highlight only one thing about our vision, it would be our equal openness to all time periods, geographical locations, and methodologies that bear on developing sophisticated ways of thinking about Islam as a set of global phenomena. In addition to purely academic explorations, our mission includes providing venues for public reflection on topics relating to the lives of Muslims through events that invite the larger community to engage with guests from around the world.

The two facets of our mission are conjoined in past and future programs that you see highlighted in this newsletter. Our workshop on Afghanistan and Pakistan, held this past December, included panels on specialized academic topics as well as a concluding session in which our guests reflected on the current state of affairs in that region and addressed the audience's questions (page 5). Similarly, we are looking forward to organizing intimate as well as large events in conjunction with extended visits by Dr. Anies Baswedan and Dr. Elif Şafak during the academic year 2010-11 (page 6).

I would like to end this note with the invitation to you, and others you may know, to become a part of the Islamic Studies community at Stanford. You can do so by attending our events, by providing us feedback, and by subscribing to our email list or becoming a friend on Facebook (page 8). We have many exciting new academic ventures and public programs in the works, about which we will send news through these channels in the months and years to come. ■

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Burçak Keskin-Kozat,
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CALL FOR APPLICATIONS:

2009-10 ABBASI PROGRAM STUDENT GRANTS

The Abbasi Program in Islamic Studies invites proposals from continuing Stanford students for projects pertaining to Islam and to Muslims in Muslim-majority and –minority societies, including history from the beginnings of Islam to the twenty-first century, systematic study of Islamic social contexts, the religion of Islam in all its internal complexity, and the diversity of human experience as seen in literature and the arts originating in societies affected by Islamic civilizations.

Awards will be up to \$3,000 per proposal and made on a competitive basis. Projects may be pursued during the summer or the academic year. Two types of projects are supported:

1. Graduate student research projects, including fieldwork. Only graduate students are eligible.

2. Intensive language study abroad or in the United States. Both undergraduate and graduate students can apply. The proposed course of language study should potentially contribute to the applicant's academic development and/or research.

Eligibility:

Applicants must be students in good standing at Stanford University and will be enrolling as undergraduate or graduate students the following academic year.

Requirements:

Award recipients are accepted to submit a 1-page report upon the completion of their project, describing what they have accomplished.

Application Procedures and Deadline:

Proposals should be e-mailed to abbasiprogram@stanford.edu on or before Friday, April 2nd 2010 by 5 p.m. Please submit the following in one single Word or PDF file:

1. a 1- to 2- page project proposal, describing the project to be undertaken
2. an itemized budget, specifying the overall project costs, the amount of funding requested and pending sources of funding
3. a CV, listing the applicant's academic standing, previous academic accomplishments, publications and/or conference presentations
4. a copy of official transcript
5. one letter of recommendation from the applicant's thesis advisor or the primary faculty member with whom she/he is working. If applying for language study, please submit two recommendation letters (only one of which may be from a language instructor). The letter writer(s) should speak to the specific project being proposed and send the letter directly by email to abbasiprogram@stanford.edu by April 2nd 2010.

Applications that do not follow these criteria will not be accepted. Grant applications are reviewed by an interdisciplinary committee of faculty members and staff affiliated with the Abbasi Program in Islamic Studies. Decisions will be made within a month after the application deadline. For questions, please contact Dr. Burçak Keskin-Kozat by email at burcak@stanford.edu. ■

UPDATES

2008-09 ABBASI PROGRAM STUDENT GRANT RECIPIENTS

Zaid Adhami (Co-terminal M.A. Student, Sociology): I conducted a qualitative study exploring the attitudes and beliefs concerning philanthropic contribution and civic engagement among Muslims in three Los Angeles Islamic centers. My study relied primarily on participant observation and also in-depth interviews with 25 religious leaders, community activists, and lay participants in all three centers. I now work on turning my findings into a publishable paper.

Jessica Lilu Chen (Ph.D. Student, Religious Studies): I undertook intensive Chinese language study that would be relevant for my doctoral research on Muslims in late Qing to contemporary China. I enhanced my reading and comprehension skills, working on texts about the origins of Islam in China, Islam during the Tang Dynasty, the Five Pillars of Islam, Muslim rituals and holidays, Sufi orders and sects in China, the history of Qur'anic translation in China, and also short biographies of famous Chinese Muslims.

Megan Dean (Ph.D. Candidate, History): My dissertation explores how basic economic exchanges and cultural interactions unfolded in daily life in the Caucasus and thereby challenges readers to reflect upon the limits of identity politics, state control and violence in the region. This summer, I began my archival research at the Finnish National Library in Helsinki, reading through decades of nineteenth century Russian language newspapers from the Caucasus. I then went to the Georgian National Archives in Tbilisi and the regional archives in Batumi, immersing myself in the records of the Office of the Governor General of the Caucasus and the communication of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs with its consular offices in the Ottoman Empire and Persia.

David Kessler (Junior, History): I attended intensive advanced modern Arabic language program offered at UCLA this summer. The program greatly improved my Arabic skills. I can now read newspaper articles and listen to formal speeches and lectures in modern standard Arabic usually with only minor gaps in comprehension. I also met scholars who work on issues related to my research project on religious minorities living under Islamic rule from 17th to 19th century.

Alice Nam (Junior, Economics & Comparative Literature): I studied third-year Arabic at the University of Virginia – Yarmouk (Irbid, Jordan). By the end of the summer, I was reading poems and short stories by contemporary and classical Arab writers. Outside the classroom, my adventures throughout the Levant as well as my friendships with the people of Irbid confirmed my desire to live and work in the Middle East. If it is the goal of the Abbasi Program to provide unparallel academic opportunities as well as the means to experience the richness of Islamic and Middle Eastern culture, then at least in my case, it has succeeded.

Mohsen Goudarzi Taghanaki (M.A. Candidate, Religious Studies): “I analyzed the verse division patterns of regional codices of the Qur’an in order to discern their stemma. I also examined the verse divisions of an Umayyad-era Qur’an in order to see how it fits the stemma discerned in the first phase. I also worked on 38 folios of the Sana’a manuscript which is argued to be the oldest Qur’anic manuscript. Each folio is a palimpsest with two layers of text, many parts of which are hardly legible. I completed reading the upper layer of all of the folios, and I am working on deciphering the lower layer so that I can conduct a textual analysis of the two layers of this manuscript.” ■

AFFILIATED FACULTY

ANTHROPOLOGY

James Ferguson
Ian Hodder
Alma Kunanbaeva

ART HISTORY

Bissera Pentcheva

FRENCH

Elisabeth Boyi

HISTORY

Joel Beinlin
Robert Crews
Sean Hanretta
Kathryn Miller
Richard Roberts
Aron Rodrigue
Priya Satia

IBERIAN & LATIN AMERICAN CULTURES

Vincent Barletta

LANGUAGE CENTER

Salem Aweiss
Khalil Barhoum
Ravi Dhillon
Shahla Fahimi
Khalid Obeid
Nalan Ozisik
Ramzi Salti

POLITICAL SCIENCE

Lisa Blaydes
David Laitin

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Shahzad Bashir
Robert Gregg
Behnam Sadeghi

AFFILIATED SCHOLARS

Michael Cooperson
John B. Dunlop
John Eilts
Donald Emmerson
Heather Ferguson
Gail Lapidus
Alan Mikhail
Abbas Milani

PROFILE

Dr. Heather Ferguson,
*2010 Abbasi Program Postdoctoral Fellow,
Department of History*



Dr. Heather Ferguson

Heather Ferguson's research focuses broadly on comparative early modern empires, vocabularies and discourses of power and Islamic legal history; more specifically, she's worked on Ottoman social and cultural history, and identity formation in the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire. She received an M.A. in Middle Eastern Studies from University of Texas- Austin in 1999 and a Ph.D. from University of California- Berkeley in 2009. She has taught courses on Middle East history, gender and Islam at La Sierra University, UC-Berkeley and Stanford University.

Heather's M.A. thesis, "Handicrafts, Heritage, and History: Rural Weavers, Urban Elites, and the Construction of Cultural Identity in Jordan," investigated the family and legal dynamics of identity formation in contemporary Jordan through ethnographic and archival research. Her doctoral dissertation, "The Circle of Justice as

Genre, Practice, and Objectification: A Discursive Re-Mapping of the Early Modern Ottoman Empire," engaged with the pivotal debate in Ottoman historiography about a post- 16th century decline in the imperial ability to control and direct state affairs. Offering a robust alternative to such ahistorical claims, Heather evaluated the 17th century Ottoman transformation with special respect to genres of Ottoman self-understanding. She specifically argued that contemporaneous Ottoman elites generated a vision of decline and worked tirelessly to produce reform tracts and policies aimed at forestalling what they perceived to be inevitable collapse.

Heather's current research interests have moved to the Tanzimat era to test further the viability of a discursive approach to social history. She intends to investigate changing understandings of productive property and ownership so as to highlight the Ottoman rethinking involved in the attempt to create a modern imperial formation in the nineteenth century. The project will focus on the 1687 Ottoman Land Law that granted life-term tax farms to various state and non-state actors. She will make use of Islamic court records, a revealing yet increasingly controversial source for understanding property, authority, and social relations.

Heather will be in residence from January 2010 to December 2010. In Spring 2010, she will teach "History 281C Urban History of the Middle East: Aleppo and Istanbul on the Eve of Modernity, 1650-1850." ■

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

WORKSHOP EXPLORES THE POLITICS OF "AF-PAK"

By Robert Crews,
Associate Professor, Department of History



Workshop participants

Hosted by the Abbasi Program, an international workshop on “Alienated Nations, Fractured States” brought together a dozen scholars at Stanford on December 3rd to investigate the entangled past, present, and future of Afghanistan and Pakistan. The event was an interdisciplinary forum in which scholars from religious studies, history, economics, political science, and anthropology joined a journalist and policy analyst to examine the varied forces that both link and separate the two countries. Seeking to challenge and pose alternatives to reigning conceptions of the region derived from a narrow understanding of security, participants juxtaposed analysis of state policies and great power strategy with close attention to transformations in the history, culture, economics, and politics of the Afghan-Pakistan border. The workshop suggested how the study of poetry, mysticism, language, and the arts, including truck decoration, carpet production, and history-writing, as well as analysis of the politics of madrasa schooling, and the recounting of stories about women’s opium cultivation all reveal perspectives about the complexity and dynamism of Afghan and Pakistani lives that conventional policy studies too frequently overlook. In a final session in which participants offered policy recommendations and fielded questions from the public, the panelists differed in their specific recommendations but voiced a general consensus about the imperative to deepen American understanding of a complicated region whose future is now so closely tied to that of the US. ■



(Photo Credits: Tatiana Deogirikar)

EVENT ANNOUNCEMENT

INDONESIAN INTELLECTUAL ANIES BASWEDAN AND TURKISH NOVELIST ELIF ŞAFAK TO VISIT STANFORD

Two Abbasi Program nominees, Anies Baswedan and Elif Şafak, are selected as 2010-11 International Visitors in a campus-wide competition organized by Stanford Humanities Center, Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies and Stanford Institute for Creativity and the Arts. Baswedan and Şafak will be in residence for a month during 2010-2011 academic year, sharing their recent work with Stanford community.



Dr. Anies Baswedan

Dr. Anies Baswedan, currently President of Paramadina University in Jakarta, is a prominent public intellectual in Indonesia, the largest Muslim-majority country in the world. He was named one of the world's top 100 public intellectuals by Foreign Policy in 2008 and one of 230 young global leaders by The World Economic Forum in 2009. Baswedan received a Ph.D. Political Science from Northern Illinois University and an M.A. in Public Policy from University of Maryland-College Park. His meticulous and nonpartisan research was instrumental in stimulating Indonesia's transition from military rule to democracy. Since the fall of Suharto regime in 1998, Baswedan has spoken and written prolifically about Indonesia's democratic transition. As an

adviser to the government, he has influenced the process of political reform, including assessing the tensions inherent in the country's mixed presidential-cum-parliamentary system and the costs and benefits of radically decentralized political power since the end of Suharto's regime. As research director of the Center for Public Policy Analysis in the Indonesian Institute and senior researcher at the Indonesian Survey Institute, he has closely analyzed and interpreted Indonesia's ongoing experiment with accountable rule. In 2007, Baswedan has become the youngest person ever to run a university in Indonesia. His pedagogical objective is to create a wide-ranging culture of self-starting entrepreneurs who invest in their society as critical and ethical actors.

Elif Şafak counts among the very few contemporary Turkish intellectuals who combine a comprehensive training in humanities with internationally acclaimed novels and a public intellectual's arduous struggles. Şafak received an M.Sc. in Gender and Women Studies and a Ph.D. in Political Science with a concentration on contemporary Western political thought and Middle Eastern studies. Her award-winning master's thesis ("Women, Islam and Mysticism: Reflections of Femininity and Feminine God Along the Cyclical Understanding of Heterodox Dervishes in Islam"), and her dissertation ("State, Secularism, and the Masculinities of Turkish Modernization: Male Gender Roles within the Islamist-Secularist Power Frame") engage critically with hegemonic, marginalized, and suppressed discourses and gender practices. As an artist, Şafak is a prolific author who constantly crisscrosses imagined and actual boundaries between the local and the global. Her prodigious output over the last fifteen years includes eight widely acclaimed novels, a collection of short stories, and an autobiography. Her writings examine a wide array of issues, ranging from social voyeurism to marginalized sexualities, Turkish-Armenian reconciliation to post-partum depression, transnational belonging to Sufism. Her latest novel, Forty Rules of Love, focuses on the friendship between Rumi and Shams of Tabriz and will be published in English in February 2010. In addition to her academic and literary engagements, Şafak is involved in many circuits of political activism with particular emphasis on domestic violence, gender discrimination and international conflict resolution. ■



Dr. Elif Şafak

KUDOS

Congratulations to following Abbasi Program affiliates for their accomplishments!

AFFILIATED FACULTY

Salem Aweiss (Lecturer, Language Center) has published “Assessment in Language Education” in *Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language Journal* (2009: 1-18). His “Culture of Peace and Education: The Palestinian Context” will appear in *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: Parallel Discourses* (UCLA Burkle Center Book Series: 2010).

Vincent Barletta (Associate Professor, Department of Iberian & Latin American Cultures) will publish *Death in Babylon: Alexander the Great and Iberian Empire in the Muslim Orient* (University of Chicago Press: 2010).

Shahzad Bashir (Associate Professor, Department of Religious Studies) has published the article “Body” in *Key Themes for the Study of Islam* (Oneworld, 2010).

Lisa Blaydes (Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science) has co-authored “Women’s Electoral Participation in Egypt: The Implications of Gender for Voter Recruitment and Mobilization” in *Middle East Journal* (2009: 63: 3).

Bissera Pentcheva (Assistant Professor, Department of Art & Art History) will publish *The Sensual Icons: Space, Ritual, and the Senses in Byzantium* (Pennsylvania State Press: 2010).

AFFILIATED SCHOLARS

Donald Emmerson (Senior Fellow, Shorenstein Asia Pacific Research Center) has co-authored *Islamism: Contested Perspectives on Political Islam* (Stanford University Press: 2009).

Alain Mikhail (Mellon Post-doctoral Scholar in the Humanities) has received the 2009 Malcolm H. Kerr Award in the Social Sciences from the Middle East Studies Association and the 2008 James H. Kettner Award from the University of California, Berkeley for his dissertation entitled “The Nature of Ottoman Egypt: Irrigation, Environment, and Bureaucracy in the Long Eighteenth Century.”

Marie-Pierre Ulloa (Executive Officer of International Programs, Humanities Center)’s book on Francis Jeanson (Stanford University Press: 2008) has appeared in Arabic (Casbah Editions, Algeria: 2009). She has published “Francis Jeanson et les porteurs de valises - une memoire en images, des images en memoire” in *Espion, Resistant, Terroriste : figures de cinema*, (UTBM: 2009).

Rega Wood (Research Professor, Department of Philosophy) has published “The Influence of Arabic Aristotelianism on Scholastic Natural Philosophy” in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy* (2009).

GRADUATE STUDENTS

Elizabeth Buckner (Ph.D. Student in International/Comparative Education) will present “Re-Imagining Higher Education in Syria” at 2010 Annual Meeting of the Comparative and International Education Society.

Rachel Gillum (Ph.D. Student in Political Science) has presented “Allies or Adversaries? An Examination of Anti-American Sentiment in Turkey and Iran” at 2009 Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting.

Zhanara Nauruzbayeva (Ph.D. Candidate in Anthropology) has received a humanities fellowship from the Mrs. Giles Whiting Foundation and also presented “Quality of Art: Creativity and Labor in Post-Socialist Kazakhstan” at 2009 American Anthropological Association.

Ugur Pece (Ph.D. Student in History) has presented “Struggle for Political Participation: Ottoman Greeks and the 1908 Elections” at 2009 Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting.

Erin Pettigrew (Ph.D. Student in History) has presented “Unwinding the Turban: French Ethnography and Colonial Knowledge Production in Mauritania, 1902-1938” at 2009 African Studies Association Annual Conference.

Jenna Rice (Ph.D. Candidate in Anthropology) will present “Approaching God: Veiling, Secularity, and Subjectivity in the French Republic” at 2010 Veiled Constellations Conference at York University, Toronto.

Rania Kassab Sweis (Ph.D. Candidate in Anthropology) has received a Stanford Graduate Research Opportunity Award and the Zora Neale Hurston Award from the Association for Feminist Anthropology. She has presented “Transnational Medical Humanitarianism and the Making of the ‘Street Child’ in Cairo” at 2009 American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting.

VISITING SCHOLARS & AFFILIATED RESEARCHERS

Ayca Alemdaroglu (Ph.D. Candidate in Sociology, University of Cambridge) has organized a panel on ‘Class, Gender and Ethnicity in the Restructuring of Labour Markets in the Middle East’ and also presented “Low-wage workers of Bilkent: Class and the Sense of Place in a Changing Urban Landscape” at 2009 Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting.

Nosheen Ali (ACLS/ Mellon Early Career Fellow) has published “Re-Imagining the Nature of Development: Biodiversity Conservation and Pastoral Visions in the Northern Areas, Pakistan” in *Contesting Development: Critical Struggles for Social Change* (Routledge: 2009). Her article “Books vs. Bombs?: Humanitarian Development and the Narrative of Terror in Northern Pakistan” will appear in *Third World Quarterly* (Spring 2010).

Zeynep Atalay (Ph.D. Candidate in Sociology, University of Maryland- College Park) has presented “The Blind Spot of Global Civil Society: Religious NGO Networks in the Muslim World” at 2009 American Sociological Association Meeting. Her co-authored book *Readings in Globalization: Key Concepts and Major Debates* will come out from Wiley-Blackwell in 2010.

Anne Marie Baylouny (Assistant Professor, National Security Affairs Department, Naval Postgraduate School) will publish *Privatizing Welfare in the Middle East: Kin Mutual Aid Associations in Jordan and Lebanon* (Indiana University Press: 2010). ■



WINTER 2010 EVENTS

ISLAMIC STUDIES WORKSHOP SERIES

All workshops will take place on Thursdays from noon to 1:30 pm in Encina Hall West, Room 208. Papers are available to Stanford faculty and students upon request by email to abbasiprogram@stanford.edu.

“UNDERSTANDING EARLY MODERN ISLAMIC EMPIRES THROUGH ARCHIVES AND LITERATURE”

FEBRUARY 11

Sholeh Quinn, Associate Professor of History, UC-Merced

“Through the Looking Glass: Kingly Virtues in Safavid and Mughal Chronicles”

Discussant: **Shahzad Bashir**, Associate Professor of Religious Studies and Director of the Abbasi Program in Islamic Studies, Stanford University
[Co-sponsored by the Moghadam Program in Iranian Studies]

FEBRUARY 25

Munis Faruqi, Assistant Professor, Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies, UC-Berkeley

“Wretches and Ingrates: Princes and Rebellions in Mughal India”

Discussant: **Dr. Parna Sengupta**, Associate Director, Introduction to the Humanities, Stanford University

MARCH 11

Heather Ferguson, Department of History, Stanford University

“Genres of Power: The Circle of Justice as an Administrative Strategy in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire”

Discussant: **Devin Naar**, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of History, Stanford University

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Please add AbbasiProgram Stanford as a friend and get frequent updates about upcoming activities as well as announcements about funding and publication opportunities that have reached our office.

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To subscribe, please send a message to abbasiprogram@stanford.edu with your name and institutional affiliation.

Questions?

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