

Research grant awards

Sergio Castignani has been awarded £300,000 by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) for a three-year collaborative grant with Dr Victoria Basham of the Department of Politics. The project 'Sustaining Future Reserves 2020: Assessing Organisational Commitment in the Reserves' is part of the ESRC's Future of the Armed Forces initiative.

At a time in which the Army will become increasingly reliant on reservists because of the Army 2020 reforms, the long-term sustainability of the British Army, which will increasingly integrate a sizeable Reserve Component, will require much greater reservist personnel retention rates.

Thus, the principal objective of this research project is to examine the key factors that influence the volunteer reservist's organisational commitment to the British Army – that is, his/her decision to remain or leave the Reserves. It will do this by examining specifically how the reservist's reserve service, family and job commitments and demands affect his/her organisational commitment.

In order to understand what reservists think about balancing competing role commitments and demands and how this might influence their reserve service and organisational commitment, this project focuses on their perceptions and experiences, and those of their families.

This project will aim to benefit researchers that conduct interdisciplinary research on military families, retention, organisational commitment and reservist experiences. It will also aim through its various engagement activities to inform stakeholders on key future organisational and personnel reforms. The project will also aim to benefit welfare and charitable organisations that will probably find themselves increasingly needing to support more reservists and their families who will be affected by the greater demands that Army 2020 will expect of them in order to sustain the Future Reserves.

Dr Castignani works within the University's Strategic Studies Institute.

Prizes

Dionisius Agius has been honoured and affiliated as Distinguished Professor at King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah.

Visiting Speakers

On March 25, 2014 the Institute's European Centre for Palestine Studies (ECPS) received an honoured guest speaker; **His Excellency Dr Salam Fayyad**, former Prime Minister of the Palestinian National Authority. His talk was entitled: *Why Should Palestine Still Be an Issue?*

Publications

Dionisius A Agius (2014): "Ships that sailed the Red Sea and Early Modern Islam: Perception and reception", in *The Hajj: Collected Essays*, eds Venetia Porter and Liana Saif (London: British Museum), pp. 84-95.

Jenny Balfour-Paul (2014): 'Only Connect' and 'Indigo: From Bengal to Blue Jeans' in *Marg*, Vol.65, no.2. She was guest editor for a special edition of the Indian magazine of the arts, *Marg* – Vol. 65, no.2 on 'Colours of Nature: Dyes from the Indian Subcontinent'.

Richard Hitchcock (2014): *Muslim Spain Reconsidered*, Edinburgh University Press.

Sajjad Rizvi (2013): "Seeking the Face of God": The Şafawid *hikmat* tradition's conceptualisation of *walāya takwīniya*, in F. Daftary and G. Mizkinzoda (eds), *The Study of Shi'i Islam*, (London: Tauris), pp. 391–410.

Clémence Scalbert Yücel and Muriel Girard (2013): « La construction du patrimoine comme catégorie d'action publique dans la région du GAP en Turquie », in Elise Massicard, Marc Aymes, Benjamin Gourisse (ed.) *L'art de l'Etat. Arrangements de l'action publique en Turquie, de la fin de l'Empire ottoman à nos jours* Paris: Karthala, pp. 196-221.

Marc Valeri (2014): 'Oman's Mediatory Efforts in Regional Crises', Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre (<http://bit.ly/1h2sqhs>).

Marc Valeri (2013): "J'ai respiré l'air de la liberté". La légitimation autoritaire au Bahreïn et en Oman à l'épreuve du "printemps arabe" ("I Breathed the Air of Freedom": Authoritarian Legitimation in Bahrain and Oman to the Test of the "Arab Spring"), *Critique Internationale*, no. 61, pp. 107-126.

Marc Valeri (2013): 'Identity Politics and Nation-Building under Sultan Qaboos', in Potter, L G (ed), *Sectarian Politics in the Persian Gulf* (London, Hurst), pp. 179-206.

BIPS Persian Language Course

The second of the British Institute of Persian Studies Intensive Persian Language Courses took place at the University of Exeter, March 31 to April 5, 2014. Twenty-six students, including postgraduate students and research staff from the UK, Europe and North America, were joined by participants from the private sector and the UK Diplomatic Service.

The programme followed the extremely successful course run in 2013 at the University of St Andrews, with intensive language sessions in the morning and lectures on Iranian thought, politics and culture in the afternoons. The language sessions were provided by three, dedicated Persian teachers, working in small groups carrying out applied tasks supplemented by our own Mr Ali Mossadegh. The afternoon lectures were provided by staff at the University of Exeter's Centre for Persian and Iranian Studies, and included Rob Gleave, Michael Axworthy, Leonard Lewisohn, Jane Lewisohn and Eskandar Sadeghi.

Evening sessions consisted of films followed by discussions (in Persian, led by our marvellous student helper Pooya Razavian), and an evening meal. The feedback was universally positive from the students and the format, with few adjustments, will be employed for the final course at the School of Oriental and African Studies in 2015.

PhD awards

Mohammed Ahmad, *From Blueprint to Genocide? An analysis of Iraq's Sequenced Crimes of Genocide Committed against the Kurds of Iraq* – supervised by Gareth Stansfield.

Ali Alkandari, *A history of the Muslim Brotherhood in Kuwait, 1941-2000* – supervised by James Onley.

Emile Al Badarin, *The Palestinian Political Discourse between Exile and Occupation* – supervised by Ilan Pappé.

Rahman Dag, *The perception between the Pro-Islamic and Pro-Kurdish Political Steams in Turkey, 1980-2011* – supervised by Gareth Stansfield.

Soudad Fadel, *Libya and Illegal Transit Migration: An Examination of the Causes, Dynamics and Experience* – supervised by Tim Niblock.

Abdelouahad Motaouakal, *Al-Adl wal Ihsan: An explanation of its rise and its strategy for social and political reform in Morocco* – supervised by Lise Storm.

Cornelius (Dylan) O'Driscoll, *Throwing Water over the Tinderbox: An Alternative Suggestion for Kirkuk* – supervised by Gareth Stansfield.

Katherine Ranharter, *Gender Equality and Development After Violent Conflicts: The Effects of Gender Policies in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq* – supervised by Gareth Stansfield.

Andrew Wilcox, *Orientalism and Imperialism: Protestant missionary narratives of the 'other' in nineteenth and early twentieth century missions to Kurdistan – a case study* – supervised by Christine Allison.

Conferences, seminars, workshops

Forthcoming events

Centre for Kurdish Studies: International Doctoral Workshop "Social Movements, Mobilization, and Political Protest in Non-democratic Contexts: An Interdisciplinary Perspective", organised by the Centre for Kurdish Studies (University of Exeter), in collaboration with The Graduate Institute (Geneva) and the CERIC (Aix-en-Provence). It will take place on May 20, 2014, at the University of Exeter. Contact: cks-info@exeter.ac.uk

Centre for Kurdish Studies: Doctoral Workshop "Middle Eastern Literatures: local and global contexts", organised by the Centre for Kurdish Studies (University of Exeter), in collaboration with the Faculty of Oriental Studies (University of Oxford). It will take place on Saturday 7 – Sunday 8 June, University of Exeter. Contact: cks-info@exeter.ac.uk

Past events

An Audience with BBC Security Correspondent Frank Gardner OBE. Rob Gleave chaired "An Audience with Frank Gardner", an alumnus of Exeter (Arabic), on March 19, 2014 as part of the "Global Uncertainties" Research Programme. See www.islamicreformulations.net/gardner-event.php and You Tube www.youtube.com/watch?v=crzf5HephqY

Rob Gleave presented a paper on "The Permissibility of Women Judges in Shi'i law" in Princeton University at the workshop "Of 'Ālimahs, Muḥaddithas and Mujtahidas: The Past and the Present of Female Religious Authority in Shi'i Law", 6-8 March 2014.

Future Cube at TedxExeter: The Cube lives on! Panels from Mohammed Ali's Future Cube – created for the Islamic Reformulations project (video here) formed part of the backdrop for the TedxExeter event on March 28 at Exeter Northcott Theatre, University of Exeter Streatham Campus.

Professor Wael Hallaq: at SOAS and in Exeter. Public lecture and Seminar – in a joint programme with the NWO-AHRC Sharia Project, the Islamic Reformulations project convened a major public lecture in London on February 4, and a two-day workshop in Exeter, jointly with the Leiden University Centre for Islam and Society. See report www.islamicreformulations.net/hallaq-event.php

Dr Ghada Karmi – Muslims in Britain. Not "People like Us"?, 8 March.

Professor Meyda Yegenoglu (Istanbul) – title to be confirmed, 13 March.

Professor Charles Burnett (Warburg Institute, London) – *The West Country as a Cradle for Arabic Science*, 27 March. (Presented by the History department.)

Exhibitions

Forthcoming events

Iraqi artists, May-June 2014 Paintings by Iraqi artist Youusif Alnaser.

Songs of the Desert, 23 October – 19 December 2014

A celebration of the desert in mosaic, calligraphy and storytelling. Artists: Elaine M Goodwin (mosaic), Mohamed Abaoubida (calligraphy), and author Richard Hamilton.

Transhumances Kurdes, January – March 2015

Pictures of pastoral life in Kurdish Turkey and Iraq by Michaël Thevenin.