

## Middle Eastern Studies Research Colloquium

Ertegun House, the Middle East Centre at St. Antony's College and Oxford Middle East Studies Graduate Group are pleased to announce the second 'Middle Eastern Studies Research Colloquium'. The colloquium will take place on Wednesday Week 8, (June 12th 2013) between 2.00pm-6.30pm at Ertegun House. Below you will find the colloquium programme and directions to Ertegun House.

We invite and encourage all those interested to attend. Refreshments will be served.

<http://www.oxfordmiddleeastgrad.net/index.html>

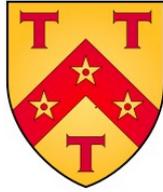
### Panel One (2.00 - 3.00)

#### **Graham Jevon, Dphil candidate in History, St. Antony's College, "Transjordan Independence and the Role of Glubb Pasha"**

Between 1939-56 the Jordanian Army, otherwise known as the Arab Legion, was commanded by a British officer, Glubb Pasha. This paper considers Glubb's role pre- and post-independence (1946) from the perspective of: 1) London; and 2) Himself. It argues that the Treaty, as with the Legion, inadvertently and unexpectedly changed Glubb's status. At the end of the Second World War Glubb was a frustrated man. He felt he had been left in a 'sluggish backwater' and he was opposed to British policy, but felt he was not being listened to – indeed he was not. This paper reveals how Glubb resigned himself to attempting to exert influence at the local level, where he sought to circumvent London. Inadvertently, however, Glubb's position changed as a result of the 1946 Treaty. When the Foreign Office assumed responsibility for Trans-Jordan from the Colonial Office after independence Glubb was afforded a fresh start. Glubb expected independence to mark the beginning of the end for him, but unexpectedly, it enhanced his position.

#### **Will Clegg, Dphil candidate in History, Balliol College, "Sultan Sa'id bin Taimur and the Late Colonial Shift in Southeast Arabia: *State Formation, Imperial Formations, and Decolonisation*"**

Following the British-led coup d'état that replaced Sultan Sa'id bin Taimur with his son, Sultan Qaboos bin Sa'id, Oman's 'New Order' regime promoted an image of the country's recent past premised on a dichotomy between Qaboos' 'Renaissance' (*Nahda*) state and the supposedly 'medieval and harsh rule' imposed by his father, Sa'id. Historians have

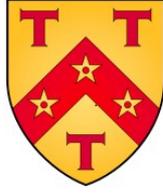


begun critiquing this dichotomy by arguing that the Omani state underwent several stages of state building during Sa'id's reign (1932-1970) and that Qaboos' 'New Order' reign (1970-) should be perceived as merely another phase in an on-going process of state building (Rabi, 2007). Nevertheless, the long-standing dichotomy between 'Old Oman' and 'New Oman', 'tradition' and 'modernity', 'tribal' rule and 'state' administration, and, most basically, 'illegitimate' and 'legitimate' domination, remains a standard feature of the literature. This paper establishes a framework for my doctoral project that, amongst other things, re-assesses the reign of Sultan Sa'id. In contrast to the extant literature, which accounts for Sultan Sa'id's policy and behavior in terms of pseudo-psychological factors, his formative experience of indebtedness, his education in British India, or what one historian has termed 'the colonial origins of Sultanic dualism' (Takriti, 2010), I consider Sa'id as a ruler responding strategically to the way in which the collapse of the global colonial order (Darwin, 1988) affected his personal rule, ethic of governance, and Southeast Arabian political development. The argument is that this approach not only makes better sense of the relevant facts but that it also sheds light on the late colonial shift and the decolonisation process as it affected Southeast Arabia, a region that although never formally 'colonised' was nevertheless an important imperial formation within Britain's global colonial-empire and, after 1945, critical to British adaptation to the collapse of the geopolitical system that enhanced Britain's global standing pre-1939.

## **Panel Two (3.15- 4.45)**

### **Şeyma Afacan, Dphil candidate in Oriental Studies, St Antony's College, «Reinvention of Psychology in the Ottoman Empire»**

In parallel with the foundation of psychology as 'the Scientific study of man' in the late nineteenth century, *Ilmi Ahvali Ruh* [psychology] went through a process of reinvention in the late Ottoman Empire. At the turn of the twentieth century, a modern psychological perspective of human nature was fully adopted, while the established Greco-Islamic perspective was gradually removed from the psychology books. In 1911/12 Filibeli Ahmed Hilmi started this process by writing the first psychology book with a claim for scientific authority and a clear break from the old metaphysical perspectives. In these foundational years of psychology, the possibilities of a scientific psychology, biological determinism and the mechanistic view of human nature -rather than Islamic perspectives- were debated in the Ottoman Empire, as well as elsewhere in the world. This paper analyses Filibeli Ahmed Hilmi's *Ilmi Ahvali Ruh* [Psychology] (1911/12) in relation to the Late Ottoman debates on science; and the metaphors of man as a machine (*L'Homme-Machine*) and man as a metaphysical, virtuous being (*Mustesna Mahluk*) [exceptional creature]. His *Ilm-i Ahval-i Ruh* [Psychology] is the first work where the mechanistic view of human nature and biological determinism promoted by Abdullah Cevdet and Baha Tevfik were criticized through a psychological terminology instead of a



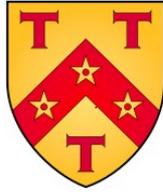
religious one. This chapter argues that Psychology in Ahmed Hilmi's hands served as a scientific way of re-storing human complexity as opposed to reductionist perspectives which render humans adjustable and controllable animals.

Ahmed Hilmi came to an understanding whereby psychology, physiology, and metaphysics, even though closely related, were regarded as separate disciplines having their own methodologies and limitations. This separation exemplifies modern psychology's gradual entry into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman intellectual discussions 'as the scientific study of man.' In response to the mechanistic view of human nature, he made two main points: (1) Human beings were certainly superior to animals in mental and moral activities (as opposed to mechanical, physiological ones) as examined and proven by psychology; therefore the mechanistic frameworks promoted by Abdullah Cevdet and Baha Tevfik were misleading from a 'scientific' point of view. (2) 'Scientific' -exclusively physiological and mechanistic- frameworks were inadequate to explain the concepts of the soul, consciousness, self-awareness, and unconsciousness. These two points served as shields to the early forms of Ottoman social reform and scientism which brought Ahmed Hilmi and Mustafa Şekip Tunç together. Filibeli Ahmed Hilmi's and Mustafa Şekip Tunç's attempts to differentiate human beings from animals and to highlight the limitations of physiology in understanding the 'mysteries of man' represent the last voices to speak out before the early Republican social engineering project was fully implemented in Turkey in the 1920s.

**Servet Erdem, Dphil candidate in Oriental Studies, St Antony's College, «The Strange Love of Politics in Fictional Writings in Kurdish»**

The primary focus of the presentation is the decidedly political nature of the language used in novels and stories in Kurdish; this focus will require some supplementary discussions on the features of so-called "political fiction" and the interrelationship between fiction and politics. The objective is to find a way through fiction in Kurdish language in its integrity and individuality, without adopting a comparative frame of references to any literary tradition in any language. I discuss the place and importance of politics in any kind of prosaic production in Kurdish and endeavour to stress the limit of literary criticism in understanding the significance of the politics in novels and stories by Kurdish writers. This being so, I suggest a new approach to the question regarding the interpretation of fictional texts in both their subjectivity and specificity. In short, my aim is to provide a firmer theoretical basis for the study of the fiction in Kurdish.

**Julia Ley, Mphil candidate in Modern Middle Eastern Studies, St. Antony's College, «Mystics and Materialists: Changing perceptions of Death in Late Ottoman and Early Republican Turkish Literature»**



Turkish modernisation has been studied from a wide range of disciplines, including the intellectual, cultural and social aspects of modernisation as well as technological and political transformations. By looking at changing ideas about death and afterlife in literature, I hope to gain insight into the ways, in which the wider processes of secularisation and modernisation influenced Turkish intellectuals' personal beliefs about death. Suggesting that ideas about death can be understood as broadly reflective of an individual's engagement with religious doctrines, I use this unit of analysis to shine light on the increasingly complex ways, in which late Ottoman and early Republican writers engaged with the problems of secularisation, religion and science. Rather than merely replacing religious narratives on death and afterlife with scientific discourses, authors such as Yahya Kemal used the symbolic power of death to etch out the ways, in which religious discourses continued to be relevant even in an increasingly secular-scientific world.

While my analytical lens is that of perceptions of death, the medium used will be that of literature. Specifically, I will be looking at changing perceptions of death in the works of the late Ottoman materialist Beşir Fuad (1852-1887), the novelist and short story writer Halid Ziya Uşaklıgil (1867-1945), and the conservative modernist poet Yahya Kemal (1884-1958), all of which could be broadly described as belonging to, yet representing different facets of, the Turkish modernist movement. Taking their work as three instances of changing perceptions of death, I hope to contribute to the hitherto understudied field of death in Turkish literature as well as to the wider study of literary encounters with modernity in the late Ottoman Empire.

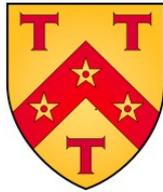
### **Panel Three (5.00 – 6.00)**

#### **Leonardo Davoudi , Dphil candidate in History, St. Antony's College, «Divine Spark: The Prelude to the Tobacco Régie of 1890»**

The paper will look at the negotiations leading up to the Tobacco Régie of 1890 as well as a previous failed Persian Tobacco Régie in 1886. There is no known existing literature on the 1886 failed Tobacco Régie and only a few inconclusive allusions to the negotiation phase of the 1890 Tobacco Régie. Due to newly uncovered diaries, the present paper will be able to retrace, with precision, the negotiations leading up to this historically significant economic concession in Iranian history.

Looking at the 1886 Régie will be useful in showing how this should have foreshadowed the events of 1890 as it also failed due to popular protest during its implementation.

The extent of the direct covert British involvement through Sir Henry Drummond Wolff and other British Legation officials in the granting of the 1890 concession will be revealed. The nature and degree of advancement of the competing contemporaneous French and Russian bids for the same concession will also be reviewed. The paper will also give insights into the decision-making process of Amin al Sultan and Nasser ed Din Shah as well as their real hesitations with respect to the entire affair. The paper is called



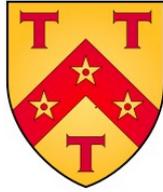
"Divine Spark" as the Shah is said to have taken his final decision on the granting of the concession during a divine consultation (estekhware).

**Maziyar Ghiabi, Mphil candidate in Modern Middle Eastern Studies, St. Antony's College, «Drugs and Addiction in times of Revolution and War: An Iranian Case»**

While touching all the critical centres of power within the Iranian establishment, such as the Judiciary, the Parliament, the Law Enforcement Agencies, Foreign Ministry and the religious authorities, drug control policies are inherently tied to global politics and *a fortiori* have historically been fostered by a US-led momentum initiated in mid-20th Century. Indeed, for the first time in decades, in the words of Juan Manuel Santos, President of Colombia, there is the strong belief "that the time has come to take a fresh look and [...] invite world leaders, scientists and experts to start an open, serious and honest debate about this war. The time has come to think outside the box" (LSE-Ideas, 2012). This research seizes the opportunity of this global debate and its particular importance for the developing world or the Global South.

Iran is at the geopolitical crossroads of international drug routes, it has one of the world highest rates of drug addiction (estimated between 2% - officially (UNODC, 2011: p. 8) – and 6-7% - unofficially – of the entire population) and it is now progressively becoming a producer country for industrial drugs. Because of this reality there has been a significant degree of cooperation over the last decade with regard to drug policy, in spite of Iran's isolation in the international context. In 1999, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime set up an office in Tehran and has provided several assistance programmes. European countries, Italy and the United Kingdom *in primis*, were until recently at the forefront of a diplomatic track on drug control cooperation with Tehran. This partially developed throughout Mohammad Khatami's presidency, unfolding a *sui generis* intermingling between treatment-oriented drug policies, international cooperation and domestic political reforms.

My research, while filling the gap of a regional framework for the study of narcotic politics in the Middle East, focalises also on the period 2005-2013 during which the Iranian state and its superstructure went through a transformation in relation to its public image and its ideological character. Ahmadinejad period's transformations are now emerging under the guise of a generational crisis of legitimacy in Islamic establishment. Being the phenomenon of drugs inherently related to the idea of justice and ethics, its study can reveal the state's nature when confronting the private and public lives of its citizens. Casting a new light on the dichotomy between security priorities and welfare/treatment duties with which the state is charged, can provide an alternative description to the top-down approaches, which most scholars have hitherto adopted. The Iranian state and its priorities over a period of time in which populism and ideological language seemed to be the predominant traits are thus redefined from an infra-analysis perspective.



What the Iranian case reveals of the global War on Drugs is emblematic and can have far-reaching implications. Indeed, as Mohammad Fella, former head of the Iranian government's umbrella organization *Drug Control Headquarter* crudely puts it "no country has had as many death sentences [for drug offences] as we have. No country in the world has hitherto seized more drugs than Iran; and yet, how is it that we have ended up in this dead-end [with the highest rate of addiction and drug trafficking]?" (Madani, 2011: p. 527). Thus, the study of this issue in the context of Iran is not only relevant to the understanding of state, society and policymaking process within non-Western countries; it also provides an insight into, and criticism of, the practices of the War on Drugs.

**Closing Remarks & Drinks Reception (6:00-6:45)**