

## EDITORIAL FOREWORD

This special issue on World War I appears on the centennial of the war. The issue went to press as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) was challenging the borders set nearly a hundred years ago in the Middle East by the imperial powers. Guest editor Mustafa Aksakal introduces the six research articles, part of a wave of scholarship examining the “transformative processes spawned by the war” in response to new historical questions and newly available archival sources. That half of the articles touch on sieges (in Medina) and famine (Syria/Lebanon, and in particular Beirut) produces an eerie echo at a time when civilians once again face hunger and the ravages of an armed conflict, with large numbers of refugees on the move. As we look back, so do the articles, moving backward chronologically from the “minority protection regime” established by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 to “atrocities propaganda” of the Balkan Wars of 1912–13. The issues raised by these two articles resonate loudly, as does the matter of American influence in the region, which is discussed in an article on the wartime politics of Syrians in Cairo. So, too, does the photograph on the cover of this special issue: *Ruins of Gaza at the Time of the Great Attack, 1917*.

In keeping with the theme of war, Toby Jones has helped to curate a roundtable on the technopolitics of war, which he introduces. The essays look at the “productive power of war” by reflecting on “the roles of experts, technical expertise, and the science of war” to assess how new relations—social, political, economic, and cultural—are forged across the region. War, it seems, can be everywhere but is not always the same and leaves its distinct imprints on bodies, landscapes, and cultures. In this issue’s review essay, Miriam Cooke surveys a collection of diaries and memoirs written by soldiers, diplomats, and private citizens who lived in Palestine under Ottoman and British rule and experienced one or both world wars. Cooke shows how the recently discovered texts, edited and translated from Arabic, Hebrew, Ladino, and Spanish, provide a window onto the tensions of war and vagaries of daily life in Palestine.

This is the final issue under my editorship. I had originally planned to go out with a “last laugh,” looking at scholarship on humor, for even in the midst of protests and revolution, Middle Easterners have turned to humor as a way to cope and survive. The special issue on the hundredth anniversary of World War I trumped that idea. Special thanks to Mustafa Aksakal and Toby Jones for making this issue possible.

It is hard to believe that five years have elapsed since Sara Pursley and I started our terms as editors, and I could not have dreamed for a better partner for the journey. As managing, then associate editor, she often led the way, getting the journal onto the online system ScholarOne, superbly commenting upon and editing article after article, spearheading roundtables, dealing delicately with referees and authors, and all this while assiduously meeting *IJMES* deadlines. I learned an enormous amount from her, and while I may not miss the pressure of those deadlines and a constant stream of articles to evaluate and edit, I will sorely miss working with her. I will also miss working with

Jeff Culang, who has done an amazing job as assistant book review editor over the past five years. He worked graciously and with good spirit throughout, even in the face of the occasional irate reviewer or author. We both appreciate the many good reviews the journal received, though we wish that caustic reviewers could have been a bit more kind toward authors, acknowledging that books are years in the making and almost always have a positive dimension.

Our team could not have prepared the past twenty issues of *IJMES* without the book review editors, who tirelessly solicited and edited the stream of reviews that we featured. We must also credit the editorial board for help in assessing articles, arranging roundtables, and giving good advice; it has been a real pleasure to meet and work with those who served on our board. Above all, we could not have produced a journal without the authors who entrusted their manuscripts to us and the outside referees who volunteered their time to write insightful reports. We hope that in addition to the research articles and book reviews, readers have enjoyed our forewords, roundtables, and review essays, as well as our new cover, now two years old. Editing *IJMES*, and seeing up close the range and depth of scholarship currently being produced, has convinced us that Middle East studies is one of the most exciting academic fields to work in today.

We thank the Graduate Center, City University of New York, which hosted the journal; the Middle East and Middle Eastern American Center, which provided support; and the Graduate Center doctoral students who served as editorial assistants over the years, among them Arman Azimi, Spencer Bastedo, Khaled Al Hilli, Sara Pekow, Kutlughan Soyubol, and Secil Yilmaz. We also thank Nancy BriggsShearer, who has faithfully shepherded each issue of *IJMES* through production for Cambridge University Press, as well as Ann Avouris, who along with her predecessors has advocated on behalf of the journal as a senior editor at CUP. Through the years, the enthusiasm of Amy Newhall, executive director of the Middle East Studies Association, and the encouragement of the MESA board have been greatly appreciated.

As Sara Pursley moves on to a new job as assistant professor of modern Middle East history at New York University (after a much-deserved rest and a slight detour with a two-year postdoctoral fellowship at Princeton University), I move on to promoting my new book, *The Orphan Scandal: Christian Missionaries and the Rise of the Muslim Brotherhood* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2014), and conceiving new ones. We hand the journal off to a very capable team led by Akram Khater of North Carolina State University, author of *Inventing Home: Emigration, Gender, and the Middle Class in Lebanon, 1870–1920* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2001) and *Embracing the Divine: Passion and Politics in the Christian Middle East* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2011), as well as a founding editor of the online journal *Mashriq & Mahjar: Journal of Middle East Migration Studies*. He will be joined by Jeff Culang, who takes over as managing editor. I know that in editing *IJMES*, Akram and Jeff will have an amazing journey, and I wish them the best of success!

Beth Baron