SSA 2011 Annual Business Meeting

The SSA Annual Business Meeting was held in conjunction with the Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA) Annual Meeting on December 1, 2011, in Washington, DC.

The Business Meeting was convened at 3pm. The Secretary/Treasurer, Zayde Antrim, reported that the SSA had a balance of $1363.38 in the bank and 67 paid members, including one institutional member. The Newsletter Editor, Andrea Stanton, and Book Review Editor, Beverly Tsacoyianis, made brief announcements reminding members about the recent publication of the Syrian Studies Association Newsletter, vol 16, no 2 (2011), available at https://ojcs.siue.edu/ojs/index.php/ssa/issue/view/51/showToc, and calling for volunteer book reviewers for future issues. The Webmaster, Hilary Kalmbach, also made a brief announcement regarding updates to the SSA website (http://www.ou.edu/ssa/), including the Study in Syria page.

Next, Prize Committee Chair, Steve Tamari, announced the winner of the 2011 article prize:


Then James King from the Scholar Rescue Fund announced the organization’s interest in working with the SSA to identify Syrian scholars at risk who might benefit from one of the SRF fellowships. Questions about this program should be directed to James King (JKing@iie.org; www.scholarrescuefund.org).

Finally, Fred Lawson announced the outcome of the 2011 elections for President, Member-at-Large, and Grad Student Rep and thanked outgoing Board Members, including President Fred Lawson, Past-President Peter Sluglett, and Member-at-Large Elyse Semerdjian, for their service to the SSA.

The SSA Board for 2012:
President: Joshua Landis
Past-President: Fred Lawson
Secretary/Treasurer: Zayde Antrim*
Webmaster: Hilary Kalmbach
Newsletter Editor: Andrea Stanton
Book Review Editor: Beverly Tsacoyianis
Prize Committee Chair: Steve Tamari*
Senior Member-at-Large: Heghnar Watenpaugh*
Junior Member-at-Large: Benjamin White
Graduate Student Representative: Benjamin Smuin
*Terms ending next year. These positions will be up for election in the fall of 2012.

The meeting was concluded at 3:30 to begin a special panel discussion honoring the recently published fourth edition of Nikolaos van Dam’s classic study, The Struggle for Power in Syria: Politics and Society under Asad and the Ba’th Party (I. B. Tauris, 2011), with the author, Joshua Landis, and Lisa Wedeen.

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The SSA also sponsored the following two panels at the 2011 MESA Annual Meeting:

Thursday, 12/1: Grassroots Syria: New Insights into Contemporary Society, Politics and Economics, 5pm Daniel Neep (British Institute in Damascus, University of Exeter), Chair
Paul Anderson (University of Cambridge), “Trust in a ‘transitioning’ economy: the rise and fall of Aleppo’s ‘money collectors’”
Erik Mohns (University of Southern Denmark), “Representations of Nationness among Palestinians in the 'Yarmouk Camp' of Damascus”
Sebastian Maisel (Grand Valley State University), “Construction of Yezidi Identity in Syria: Attitudes towards reform from the bottom of society”
Bethany Honeysett (Edinburgh University), “Furniture and Pickles: An Anthropological take on Grassroots Syria”

Friday, 12/2: Cotton, Camels, and Chemicals: Environmental Perspectives on the History of Bilad al-Sham, 2pm
Samuel Dolbee (NYU), “Fighting Pests and Tarbushes, Too: Rural Development and the Ecology of Class in Late 1930s Syria”
Graham Pitts (Georgetown), “Paradise Dried Up: The Rise and Fall of the River Barada, A Hydrogeography of Damascus from the beginning of time to the present”
Elizabeth Williams (Georgetown), “Contesting Cotton: The Production of Agricultural Space in French Mandate Syria”
Chris Gratien (Georgetown), “Climate, Geography and Settlement in Ottoman Cilicia, 1600-1900”
Sherene Seikaly (American University in Cairo), Discussant

As a MESA affiliate, the SSA is permitted to sponsor up to three panels at each Annual Meeting. Sponsorship highlights the panel to MESA attendees and underscores the significance of the study of Syria. Participants in sponsored panels should be members of the SSA. For membership and other information about the SSA, please visit the website: [http://www.ou.edu/ssa/](http://www.ou.edu/ssa/).