

Mellon grant supports several PAS publishing initiatives

Funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has supported a number of initiatives at PAS since 2008. The current Mellon grant has supported various publishing ventures, including an e-journal, potential publication of African scholars' dissertations, and an international conference on publishing markets for African studies.

Islamic Africa thriving as it enters its third year

The electronic journal *Islamic Africa* has completed its second volume year with a level of submissions that indicates "it is internationally recognized as the appropriate forum for timely and nuanced scholarship" about the broad field of Islam in Africa, says M. Sani Umar (religious studies and PAS), who edits the e-journal with a team of international board members.

Since its conception in 2009 and first volume year in 2010, *Islamic Africa* has produced four issues of source material, theoretical articles, and book reviews that are available to subscribers. The first issue (spring 2010) may be downloaded for free at <http://islamicafricajournal.org>.

PAS and Northwestern University Press collaborate on *Islamic*

Africa, which received seed funding from the Mellon Foundation. Among the topics covered in the second volume year were the preservation of vital primary-source Arabic manuscripts in Nigeria, linguistic investigations of religious orators in Senegal, and varying religious identities of Salafi followers in Ghana and South Africa. Articles planned for the first issue of 2012 deal with the education of Muslim women, political Islam in Kenya, and a history of the Wahhabi figure Shaykh Ja'far Mahmoud Adam.



Website for the e-journal *Islamic Africa*

Islamic Africa is intended to be the main journal in the field, providing a forum for scholarly communications from around the world. In particular, it mentors, encourages, and spotlights the work of Africa-based scholars who are investigating crucial topics in the field but have limited access to international journals.

"It is very encouraging to see that many essays submitted by Africa-based scholars have successfully passed through the supportive but rigorous review process and met the high standards set by the editors of *Islamic Africa*," says Umar, adding that he has also been pleased by the submission of essays by scholars in the United States and Europe and the steady stream of books sent by publishers for review.

The journal's collaboration with Northwestern University Press helps ensure continuing success, Umar notes. The founding editors

continued on page 6

Inside

<i>Fighting famine in East Africa</i>	2
<i>Conference on Nigerian politics, 1987–present</i>	3
<i>ISITA visits Cape Town</i>	4
<i>Community news</i>	5

Students fight famine in the Horn of Africa

Northwestern students from several groups have come together to form NU Sounds the Horn for East Africa to help victims of the famine in the region.

Led by the African Students Association (ASA), the Muslim-Cultural Students Association, and the Northwestern University Conference on Human Rights, NU Sounds the Horn

NU SOUNDS
THE HORN FOR
EAST AFRICA



is a campus-wide effort to build awareness and collect funds for victims of drought and famine in the Horn of Africa.

Fundraising began in mid-October with a weeklong booth in Norris University Center, to which students of diverse backgrounds donated money and time. Additional money was raised from ticket and T-shirt sales at ASA's annual Afropollo, the largest talent show on campus, on November 18.

NU Sounds the Horn has chosen UNICEF as its beneficiary because of the agency's record in providing food, vaccinations, safe water, and access to child-friendly and safe spaces in the region.

NU Sounds the Horn is also planning winter educational programming to

combat "compassion fatigue." An early January panel discussion on the crisis will feature experts on humanitarian aid and Somalia. Other informative events will be held throughout the school year.

"For those of us who grew up in the '90s, references to the region conjure up images of war, disease, corruption, and anarchy, but most people do not realize that the Horn's current crisis is exceptionally bad," says group spokesperson Mark Birhanu. Drought, soaring food prices, and armed conflict have combined to create a famine of devastating proportions in the Horn of Africa. The situation is especially dire in Somalia, where weak state authority and an ongoing civil war have produced massive refugee flows. Humanitarian aid and food remain inadequate as malnutrition, conflict, drought, and the strains of refugees continue. More than 13 million people are in need of assistance, including some 700,000 Somali refugees and nearly 1.5 million displaced people inside Somalia. Half of the needy are children.

For more information on NU Sounds the Horn, visit www.facebook.com/nusoundsthehorn and www.nusoundsthehorn.wordpress.com and follow the group on Twitter @NUSoundstheHorn. To learn how you can contribute or volunteer as a speaker at the winter panel, e-mail markbirhanu2007@u.northwestern.edu.

OpenShutter Project to display Africa images

In the winter quarter PAS will host an exhibit of photographs taken by students who travelled to Africa through the OpenShutter Project, which showcases works that go beyond simplistic narratives of people, problems, and places.



OpenShutter's biannual exhibits display photographs that complicate rather than simplify our view of the world, proving that photography can capture the nuances of human experience and stimulate meaningful dialogue. By translating global awareness into a visual vocabulary and transcending social, cultural, and political barriers through aestheticism, the group hopes to inspire positive social change.

OpenShutter (ges-openshutter.tumblr.com), the visual wing of the Global Engagement Summit, represents through art GES's mission to empower the next generation of global change leaders. Among its activities, GES hosts an annual workshop for students involved in global development projects.

Conference assesses Nigeria's progress in last 25 years

By LaRay Denzer

An international conference in Lagos in September heard differing assessments of the progress of democracy in Nigeria in the quarter century since the publication of former PAS director Richard Joseph's 1987 book *Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria: The Rise and Fall of the Second Republic* (Cambridge University Press).

The conference "Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria: Critical Reinterpretations" was convened and hosted by Kayode Fayemi, governor of Ekiti State, to commemorate the 25th anniversary of Joseph's landmark study. The book reflected on evolving Nigerian governance issues since the Second Republic (1979–83) and considered the interplay of prebendalism (a term defined as patrimonialism but often used to mean corruption) and neoliberal socioeconomic policy in public and private accountability.

Joseph, currently a professor of political science at Northwestern, was the guest of honor, and there was a notable PAS presence among the



From left: Governor Kayode Fayemi, Professor Richard Joseph, Jennifer Joseph

participants. They included past PAS director Jane Guyer; M. Sani Umar, director of ISITA and a Northwestern professor of religious studies; LaRay Denzer, former coordinator of the Program on International Cooperation in Africa; and former PAS visiting scholars Fayemi; Rotimi T. Suberu, a professor of African politics at Bennington College in Vermont; and Adigun Agbaje, a professor of political science at the University of Ibadan.

In his welcome address to the conference, Fayemi lamented that not much progress has been made since the Second Republic in instilling democratic accountability, improving economic life,

and building national unity. He urged Nigerians to address crucial structural issues to overcome socioeconomic and political challenges in governance, particularly endemic corruption. Attending the opening session were representatives of six other state governors, most of them from the Action Congress of Nigeria, the most important opposition bloc to the ruling People's Democratic Party.

Joseph concluded the conference with a more upbeat assessment of Nigeria's prospects. He expressed his belief that Nigerians would ultimately expand democracy, end ethnic conflict, and reduce inequities. He urged Nigerians to embrace some of the tactics used in North Africa to take command of their destiny and end tyranny.

The papers presented at the conference showed how specific groups negotiate grassroots ideas of morality, economy, and politics against the often inimical national or state political elites. In addition, Agbaje, a student of Joseph's at the University of Ibadan when the latter was researching the book that inspired the conference, reflected on Joseph's role as teacher and mentor.



"Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria" conference participants

Cape Town trip paves way for ISITA collaboration in South Africa



Left: Amidu Sanni, Rachida Chih, Benjamin Soares, Roman Loimeier, and M. Sani Umar
Above: Workshop participants at the Centre for Contemporary Islam, University of Cape Town

M. Sani Umar, director of the Institute for the Study of Islamic Thought in Africa, and assistant director Rebecca Shereikis traveled to South Africa in October to discuss formalizing a partnership between ISITA and the Centre for Contemporary Islam (CCI) at the University of Cape Town.

Discussions have been under way in the past year about a research, exchange, and outreach project that would merge the institute's and the centers' complementary strengths in the study of Islam and share their expertise with broader communities. The next stage would be to approach funding agencies.

Meetings between Umar, Shereikis, and CCI core faculty—including Abdulkader Tayob (religious studies) and Muneer Fareed (CCI director)—helped the team refine the plan's intellectual agenda, while the office for development at the University of Cape Town provided guidance on fundraising strategies.

In the plan, African Muslims and their connections to the wider *umma* (community of believers) serve as a starting point for investigating the global flows of the Muslim faith. Proposed activities include student and faculty exchanges, master workshops, community workshops, joint publications, and public outreach programs.

The visit of Umar and Shereikis coincided with an international conference organized by the CCI, "Islamic Reform and Public Life," which considered public Muslim engagements in modern societies, with Africa as a focal point. Umar presented a paper on "Traditional *Ulama* as Modern Public Intellectuals in Nigeria." Other ISITA affiliates were represented on the program, including Rüdiger Seesemann (Bayreuth), Zachary Wright (Northwestern University-Qatar), Benjamin Soares (Leiden), and Rachida Chih (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique-L'École des Hautes Études

en Sciences Sociales). Focusing on the themes of reform, religious leaders, and education, the papers and stimulating discussion sessions offered an opportunity to look closely and comparatively at the role of religion in public life in various African contexts. The discussion returned often to the imperative of precision and contextualization when using labels such as "reformist," "Islamist," "Salafist," "traditional," "Sufi," and "liberal."

The trip was made possible in part by seed funding from PAS for the development of a collaborative research project.

Community news

PAS visiting scholar **Anne Arabome** (see profile on back page) presented papers at two November conferences: “The Meaning and Challenges of Reconciliation, Justice, and Peace throughout Africa” at Georgetown University and “The Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice, and Peace” at Notre Dame University.

African studies major **Mark Birhanu** received a 2011–12 Undergraduate Research Grant in support of his project “Citizenship and Refugee Mobility in the Great Lakes Region: Assessing the Impact of Displacement on Perceptions of Citizenship and Political Rights among Congolese Refugees in Uganda.” **Galya Ruffer** (international studies) will be his research adviser.

Esmeralda Kale (Herskovits Library) was elected vice chair/chair-elect of the Africana Librarians Council of the African Studies Association.

Alumnus **Neil Kodesh**, associate professor of history at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, won the 2011 Herskovits Prize from the African Studies Association for his book *Beyond the Royal*

Gaze: Clanship and Public Healing in Buganda (University of Virginia Press, 2010).

Alumna **Erin McDonnell** accepted a position at Notre Dame University as an assistant professor of sociology affiliated with the Kellogg Institute for International Study. She is one of four Africanists hired at Notre Dame this year. She also coauthored an article with **Gary Fine** (sociology), “Pride and Shame in Ghana: Collective Memory and Nationalism among Elite Students,” forthcoming in *African Studies Review*.

David Schoenbrun (history) presented his essay “Remain Calm: Emotion and the Fictions of Sovereignty in 16th-Century Bunyoro” at the African History and Politics Seminar at Oxford University on October 24. *Controlling the Fire: The Value of the Bead, Beauty, and Personhood in Contemporary Ghana*, a film he produced in collaboration with **Kearsley Stewart** (anthropology) and Harlan Wallach (academic technologies), was a juried selection for the Royal Anthropological Institute’s Biennial Ethnographic Film Festival in London last June.

Kearsley Stewart (anthropology and International Program Development) was appointed assistant director of Northwestern’s Global Health Studies program, where she will focus on Africa-based study abroad opportunities and coordinate IPD-funded undergraduate research. She was also appointed to the Northwestern Institutional Review Board Social-Behavioral Panel and continues as senior lecturer in anthropology and in medical humanities and bioethics.

The 2011 African Studies Association meetings in Washington, DC, drew several Northwestern Africanist faculty, graduate students, and PAS-affiliated scholars who presented papers, including **Emily Callaci**, “A Hive of Activity Where Night Is Hell’: Urban Imagery and National Narratives in Tanzania’s Ujamaa-Era Newspapers, 1967–75”; **LaRay Denzer**, “Yoruba Studies at the Crossroads: Critical Perspectives and New Directions in Yoruba Historiography” (roundtable); **Ayuko Picot**, “Pressure from Above or Pressure from Below? International

Influence on Women’s Political Participation and Representation in Sub-Saharan Africa”; **Rachel Beatty Riedl**, “Transforming Politics, Dynamic Religion: Religion’s Political Impact in Africa”; **Chikwendu Ukaegbu**, “Beyond Good Governance: Leadership for Development in Post-50 Africa”; and **Chelsie Yount**, “Imagining a Franco-phone Senegal.”



M. Sani Umar at the exhibitor's booth of Northwestern University Press during the fall ASA meetings

PAS publishing initiatives, *continued from front page*

sought to give *Islamic Africa* a solid institutional base so that, he says, “its continuing success is not dependent on the efforts of specific individuals, upon whose commitments and dedication the fortunes of the journal will rise and fall—the unhappy story of previous attempts to establish journals for the field of Islam in Africa.” The journal staff at NU Press has pursued every opportunity to promote the journal, Umar says, citing in particular the efforts of managing editor Gianna Mosser.

“Without Gianna Mosser’s boundless energy and enthusiasm for the journal, *Islamic Africa* would not have achieved success,” he says. “Her dedication has enabled the journal to overcome many initial challenges and get off to a successful start.”

Mosser and Umar promoted the journal at the press’s exhibitor booth during meetings of the African Studies Association in San Francisco in 2010 and Washington, DC, in 2011. The journal was also publicized last spring at the fourth European Conference of African Studies in Uppsala, Sweden, and the annual meeting of the Canadian Association of African Studies at York University.

Umar also credits the editorial board, comprising scholars from around the world, for its collegiality and dedication. “They have been essential to the smooth takeoff of the journal and its continuing success toward establishing a reputation as the premier outlet for publication of outstanding scholarship, insightful reviews, and stimulating scholarly exchanges in the broad field of Islam in Africa,” he says.

A collaboration with the Digital Technologies Team at University Library has boosted traffic on the journal’s website. The team provided resources for creating a more sophisticated site that includes news about relevant conferences and events and about the research activities of the Institute for the Study of Islamic Thought in Africa, the intellectual backbone of *Islamic Africa*. Traffic has increased steadily since the website was revamped.

Grant disseminates scholarship by postdocs from Africa

The research of African scholars will be more broadly disseminated through a grant from the Mellon Foundation. For each of three consecutive years, a scholar who received a PhD from an African university is invited to Northwestern to revise his or her dissertation and, ideally, have it accepted and published by Northwestern University Press.

“The fellowships are really the outreach portion of the Mellon grant, sharing the vast resources Northwestern has in Africana and extending those resources to people who would otherwise not have access,” said NU Press’s Gianna Mosser. “It is a pleasure to offer such an experience to three worthy scholars.”

The revised dissertation of the first Mellon-funded postdoctoral fellow, Hassan Ndzovu of Kenya, is being considered by NU Press. Its title is “Religion and Politics: The Politicization of Islam in Kenya.” The second Mellon fellow, Fantahun Ayele, is on campus this academic year. He is revising his

dissertation for eventual publication as a monograph by NU Press.

The main goal of the Mellon fellowships is to bring the erudition of Africa-based scholars to the attention of the global intellectual community, rather than leaving their work in the narrow confines of African university libraries. Recruited through an international competition, each appointee spends an academic year at Northwestern revising his or her dissertation and using the Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies. If the revised dissertation is positively evaluated through blind external peer review and approved by the editorial board of NU Press, it will be published.

The program promotes the professional growth of the fellows by giving them access to facilities and research resources not readily available in African universities. It also exposes Northwestern faculty and students to the perspectives and expertise of Africa-based scholars. The fellows give presentations in their field of expertise, teach an undergraduate course, and attend workshops, lectures, conferences, and presentations at PAS.

Ndzovu, from Kenya’s Daniel Arap Moi University, competed against 23 candidates from several African countries in 2009 to become the first Mellon fellow. He earned his PhD in religious studies at the University of KwaZulu Natal in South Africa. While at Northwestern in academic year 2010–11, he worked closely with religious studies professor Rüdiger Seesemann and ISITA director M. Sani Umar, who provided mentoring. In addition to revising his dissertation, Ndzovu taught a 300-level course on Islam and politics in Africa; gave presentations at PAS and

the Buffett Center for International and Comparative Studies on the political setting for the Muslim minority in Kenya, including a history of constitutional debates about Islamic law in Kenya; and contributed to many PAS events. Ndzovu was “a valuable conversation partner who extended ISITA’s traditional focus on West Africa by his deep knowledge of Islam in East Africa,” says Umar. “He was a successful example of what could be achieved through the Mellon postdoc targeted at promoting the scholarship and careers of Africa-based scholars.”

Chosen from a pool of 17 applicants from six African countries, the current Mellon fellow, Fantahun Ayele, arrived last fall and will be at Northwestern until May. Ayele received his PhD in 2009 from Ethiopia’s Addis Ababa University and has taught both undergraduate and graduate courses at Bahir Dar University for the last decade. At Northwestern, he has been revising his dissertation, “The Ethiopian Army: From Victory to Collapse, 1977–91,” by rewriting portions on revolutionary armies, counterinsurgency operations in Eritrea and other parts of northern Ethiopia, and the force structure of command and control; Will Reno (political science) and external examiners are providing him feedback. He expects to work closely with Umar in the winter quarter to gain exposure to undergraduate teaching and to prepare a spring course focusing on the outbreak of the Ethiopian Revolution, the Ethio-Somali war, Ethio-Soviet relations, and the Eritrean war of liberation.

The third and final round of the international competition for the Mellon appointment was announced in October. “I am excited to see the new research and scholarship from Africa,” says Umar, who organizes the competition. “The Mellon grant has been very successful in calling attention to the excellent work being done in African universities.”

Publications markets conference results to be published in 2012

Results of last spring’s conference exploring the differences among the academic publishing markets of Africa, Europe, Asia, and the United States for work in African studies will be published in PAS’s working paper series this year.

Northwestern University Press hosted “Bridging Publishing Markets in African Studies: An International Workshop” with funding from the global encounters Mellon grant. Two days of panel discussions examined disparities in cross-continental publishing and also built on publishing ventures that bridge those often isolated and disjointed markets.

Attendees held long discussions on the politics of citation, funding from the private sector for research and publication within the African continent, and raising interest in African translations to make scholarship more accessible to those working in their native languages.

It is hoped that the groundwork laid by the conference will foster greater collaboration and joint publishing opportunities within the African studies field.

David Schoenbrun (history) was the convener of the conference. Participants included M. Sani Umar (religious studies and PAS); Jane Bunker and Gianna Mosser of NU Press; Jean Allman, J. H. Hexter Professor of History at Washington University and coeditor of *New African Histories* (Ohio University Press); Godfrey Asiimwe, chair of the history department at Makerere University, Kampala; Alex Bangirana of CODESRIA, Senegal; Mary Esther Kropp Dakubu, director of publications and professor of African languages at the Institute of African Studies of the University of Ghana Legon; Souleyman Bachir Diagne, professor of French and philosophy at Columbia University; Dee Mortensen, African studies editor for Indiana University Press; and James Tumusiime of Fountain Publishing in Kampala, Uganda.

PAS welcomes visiting scholar Anne Arabome



Anne Arabome, a 2011–12 PAS visiting scholar, researches ethical and theological issues that shape the lives of African women on the continent and in the diaspora. A member of the Sisters of Social Service of Los Angeles, she identifies the need for a paradigm shift in the African church and its relationship with women.

Arabome holds a doctor of ministry degree in spirituality from Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. Her dissertation, "Transforming Grace: Gifts and Challenges of the Spirituality of African Nigerian Women in the Diaspora," is an anthropological approach to understanding who the African woman is in the world and especially in the diaspora. She recently analyzed the church's attitudes and practices regarding women in "Woman, You Are Set Free," a chapter in *Reconciliation Justice and Peace: The Second African Synod* (Orbis, 2011, ed. Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator). She argues for a new language and narratives that liberate women for full and sustained participation in church and society in the current project "Dreams from My Mother, Prayers to My Father: Rethinking the Trinity of God, Woman, and Church" (publication forthcoming in the Catholic Theological Ethics in the World Church series on feminism). Another current project is an upcoming article in *Concilium*, "Gender and Ecclesiology: Authorities, Structures, Ministries," which explores how gender is misrepresented in the subjugation and oppression of African women in the church.

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