

Stuart Borsch, PhD

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## Education

### **Columbia University, New York, NY**

Ph.D. in History (2002)

Medieval Islamic History and Economic History

Dissertation Chair: Charles Tilly

Dissertation Advisor: Richard Bulliet

### **Columbia University, New York, NY**

Master of International Affairs (1993)

### **US Naval Academy, Annapolis, MD**

B.S., Engineering (1986)

## Research Interests

### **Economic History**

Middle East (640 – 1814 CE)

Western Europe (in comparative perspective)

### **Historical Nile Floods Analysis/Simulation**

Egypt (640 – 1902 CE)

### **History of Irrigation**

Egypt (Antiquity – 1800s)

### **Plague Mortality**

Egypt (Second Plague Pandemic, 1347 – 1844 CE)

## Academic Background/Positions

### **Associate Professor**

**History Department**

**Assumption College**

**Worcester, MA**

**2002 –**

### **Senior Research Fellow**

**Annemarie Schimmel Kolleg of Bonn  
University  
Bonn, Germany  
2013 – 2014**

**Research Fellow**

**Institute for Advanced Study  
Princeton, NJ  
2005**

**Teaching Fellow**

**Columbia University, SIPA  
Columbia College (Contemporary  
Civilization)  
1998 – 2000**

**Recent and Forthcoming Publications (2014-2015)**

“Qānūn al-Riyy: The Water Law of Medieval Egypt,” *Der Islam: Journal of the History and Culture of the Middle East*, Ed. by Heidemann, Stefan, Hagen, Gottfried, Kaplony, Andreas, Matthee, Rud De Gruyter Press (under review)

“Plague Mortality in Late Medieval Cairo: Quantifying the Plague Outbreaks 833/1430 and 864/1460 CE.” *Mamluk Studies Review* (forthcoming)

“Nile Floods and the Egyptian Irrigation System” Plagues in Nomadic Contexts, *Historical Impact, Medical Responses, Cultural Adaptations*, Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg and Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen, Asien-Orient-Institut | Department of Oriental and Islamic Studies (forthcoming)

“Grain, Textiles and Demand Elasticity in Late Mamluk Egypt,” Proceedings of *International Mamluk Studies Conference*, April, 2011, University of Haifa, Department of Middle Eastern History, Haifa, Israel (forthcoming)

“The Black Death and Human Impact on the Environment,” Forthcoming in *Disaster as Image: Iconographies and Media Strategies across Europe and Asia*, ed. Monica Juneja and Gerrit Jasper Schenk, Regensburg (Schnell & Steiner) 2014

“Plague Depopulation and Irrigation Decay in Medieval Egypt,” in *Pandemic Disease in the Medieval World: Rethinking the Black Death*, Monica Green, ed., *The Medieval Globe* (2014) [http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/medieval\\_globe/](http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/medieval_globe/)

“Medieval Egyptian Economic Growth: The Maryūt Basin,” Annemarie Schimmel Kolleg

Working Paper 14 (Bonn, 2014) <http://www.mamluk.uni-bonn.de/publications/working-paper/ask-wp-14.pdf>

“Subsistence or Succumbing? Falling Wages in an Era of Plague,” Annemarie Schimmel Kolleg Working Paper 13 (Bonn, 2014) <http://www.mamluk.uni-bonn.de/publications/working-paper/ask-wp-13.pdf>

### **Selected Publications (prior to 2014)**

*The Black Death in Egypt and England: A Comparative Study*. Austin: University of Texas Press. (2005)

“Thirty Years after Lopez, Miskimin, and Udovitch” *Mamluk Studies Review*. VIII (2004)

“Standards of Living in East and West: England and Egypt Before and After the Black Death.” Jean Marc Oppenheim, Nequin Yavari, and Lawrence Potter eds. *Views from the Edge* New York: Columbia University Press (2004)

“Environment and Population: The Collapse of Large Irrigation Systems Reconsidered.” *Comparative Studies in Society & History* 46 (2004)

“Nile Floods and the Irrigation System in Fifteenth Century Egypt.” *Mamluk Studies Review* IV (2000)

### **Presentations and Activities (2009 – 2015)**

“Qānūn al-Riyy: The Water Law of Medieval Egypt,” Paper presented at *Evolutions and Revolutions in Water Management*, (Milja van Tielhof, Maarten Prak, Petra van Dam) Huygens Institute for the History of the Netherlands, Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences & Utrecht University: The Hague (March 2015)

“The Egyptian Irrigation System and the Transition from Mamluk to Ottoman Provincial Administration” Paper presented at *The Mamluk-Ottoman Transition: Continuity and Change in Egypt and Bilad al-Sham in the Sixteenth Century*, Annemarie Schimmel Kolleg, “History and Society during the Mamluk Era (1250-1517)” at the University of Bonn (<http://www.mamluk.uni-bonn.de/> in the spring of 2015, organized by Dr. GulSen, Institute of Oriental and Asian Studies, Dept. of Islamic Studies and Middle Eastern Languages.

“Lost Technologies from the Medieval Islamic World: Muqalqila, Zallāqa, Jisr-Baḥr, and the Saigerhütten Process” *Thematic Panel: Pre-Ottoman Technology in the Middle East and North Africa*, Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting Washington, DC, November

2014

**Primary Historical Consultant** (Archaeological) Ground and Aerial Water Supply Investigation (with staff of German and American technical experts for underground water channels, laser mapping, and aerial (drone) search) Tall Ḥisbān Excavations (Phase III), Mabada Plains, Jordan, May-June 2014.

“The Pools of Hesbon, Tall Ḥisbān’s Conduit to Water,” Presentation/lecture for the Jordan Field School of the Archeological Expedition, Tall Ḥisbān Excavations (Phase III), Mabada Plains, Jordan, June 2014.

"Grains, Textiles, and Demand Elasticity in Late Mamluk Egypt: A Preliminary Sketch" in the Social and Economic History ESH seminar in Utrecht University (November 2-13) draft available at <http://vkc.library.uu.nl/vkc/seh/research/Pages/Seminars.aspx>

“The Water Regime of Medieval Alexandria” Sixteenth Ulrich Haarmann Memorial Lecture, distinguished lecture hosted by the Annemarie Schimmel Kolleg of Bonn University “The History and Society during the Mamluk Era 1250-1517” (January, 2014)

“Depopulation’s Impact: The Black Death and the Medieval Egyptian Landscape” AALIMS Workshop, Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University, October 2013 with working paper published online: COERCION AND CATASTROPHE THE BLACK DEATH IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE, [www.princeton.edu/.../Borsch-Coercion-and-Catastrophe](http://www.princeton.edu/.../Borsch-Coercion-and-Catastrophe)

“Irrigation and social structure in medieval Egypt” *Why were some pre-industrial societies resilient over the long-term while other pre-industrial societies were vulnerable to exogenous crises?* Rural History 2013 held under the auspices of the European Rural History Organisation (EURHO) Bern, Switzerland (August 2013)

“The Water Regime of Alexandria in the Longue Durée: 1315-1814” *Colloquium on the History of Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras* (10<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries) Mamluk History and Culture: *CHESFAME*, Faculty of Arts and Philosophy and Department of Languages and Cultures: the Near East and Henri Pirenne Research Institute for Medieval Studies, University of Ghent, Leuven (May 2013)

“Maryūt Lagoon: Ḥawḍ 15?” *The Nile: Natural Landscape & Cultural Landscape* (Workshop) FSP Historische Kulturwissenschaften Geschäftsstelle Johannes Gutenberg-Universität. (February 2013) Mainz Germany

“Trade and the Export Industries in Late Mamluk Egypt: Demand Elasticities and Production Possibilities.” *Everything is on the Move: The Mamluk Empire as a Node in (Trans-) Regional Networks*, International Conference, Festival hall, University of Bonn, hosted by the

Annemarie Schimmel Kolleg of Bonn University

“The Egyptian Province of al-Buḥayra: 1000 years of irrigation development and change,” *XVIIth Annual World Economic History Conference*, Stellenbosch, South Africa, July 2012

“Grains and Gukh: Comparative Development in Grains and Textiles ” Egypt and Syria under Mamluk Rule: Political, Social and cultural Aspects" University of Haifa, Israel, April 2011..

“Egypt and Tunisia: Dictatorships in Crisis” Public presentation of political analysis at Assumption College, 2011.

“Epidemic and Landholding Structure in Egypt and England” *Plagues in Nomadic Contexts – Historical Impact, Medical Responses and Cultural Adaptations in Ancient to Medieval Eurasia*. Orientalisches Institut der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Differenz und Integration; Ortrun Riha, Karl-Sudhoff-Institut für Geschichte der Medizin und der Naturwissenschaften der Universität Leipzig (Dec 2010)

“Gresham’s Law in Medieval Cairo” Annual Meeting: *Middle East Studies Association*, San Diego, California (November 2010).

“Plague and Economic Catastrophe: Egypt 1347 – 1440” *Cultures of Disaster. Shifting Asymmetries between Societies, Cultures, and Nature from a Comparative Historical and Transcultural Perspective*, Cluster of Excellence, Asia and Europe in Global Context, Karl Jaspers Centre for Advanced Transcultural Studies, University of Heidelberg in Cooperation with Orient Institute. At the American University of Beirut, Beirut Lebanon (2010)

Guest Lecture in Islamic History “The Black Death” University of Massachusetts Amherst: November, 2009.

Member of the Panel Selection Committee for the 2010 Annual Conference, *Middle East Studies Association*, 2009 (Amherst Massachusetts)

“The Black Death in Egypt and England” *XVIth Annual World Economic History Congress*, Utrecht, Netherlands: August 2009.

### **Ongoing Presentations and Activities**

“The short and long-term responses of European societies to environmental shocks and hazards in the pre-industrial period: developing comparative research” International Workshop, Utrecht University, November 2015

“Falling Wages in an Era of Plague Depopulation,” panel: “Winners and Losers? Accounting for divergent redistributive effects of environmental shocks and hazards on property

distribution across the pre-industrial world, 1300-1850.” *XVII Annual World Economic History Congress*, Kyoto Japan, July-August 2015

Invited seminar presentation/chair, concurrent/context: *GIS Approaches to Land Development and Social Change in Asia and Africa*, with Hiroshi Kato (professor emeritus, Hitotsubashi University), Tsukasa Mizushima (University of Tokyo), University of Tokyo, Wakako Kumakura (University of Tokyo) (July 2015)

“Awful Arithmetic: Body Counts and the Medieval Islamic Imagination,” *Imagined Plague-Scapes: Imagining the History and Geography of the Plague Over Time and Space*. Annual Conference, American Association for the History of Medicine, New Haven April-May 2015

Invited submission: *Climate and Culture in the Middle East and North Africa*. Series: *Climate and Culture (CLAC)*, ed. Katajun Amirpur and Eckart Ehlers, Akademie der Weltreligionen, der Universität Hamburg

## Ongoing Projects (Webinars, Collaborations, Drafts)

“The Egyptian Irrigation System in the Mamluk era” Online seminar with students in Germany and the US, May 2015 in 57-523 Webinar: *Economy, Commerce and Taxation in the Mamluk State - Reflected in Material Culture*, (Stephan Heidemann) Universität Hamburg (May 2015)

**Project Director**, *Nile Flood Profile Analysis* (ongoing project pursuing funding with the National Endowment for the Humanities Collaborative Grants) 2013-2015 with Wan Kamal Mujani, Historian-Collaborator Professor of History and Islamic Civilization Institute of West Asian Studies National University of Malaysia, Nur Riza Mohd Suradi, Mathematical-Collaborator, Statistics Program, School of Mathematical Sciences Faculty of Science and Technology, UKM, Malaysia, Zainol Bin Mustafa, Mathematician-Collaborator Associate Professor Faculty of Science and Technology, School of Mathematical Sciences National University of Malaysia, Tarek Sabraa, Historian-Collaborator, Annemarie Schimmel Kolleg of Bonn University/University of Damascus.

With William Tucker: “Ghilā’ wa Jū‘: Famine, Malnutrition and Mortality in the Medieval Islamic World” Collaborative project ongoing

Organizing and directing proposed international workshop, *Al-Kawāriṭh wa-l-muṣā’ib: Natural Disasters in Mamluk Egypt and Syria, 1250-1517*, Workshop at the Annemarie Schimmel Kolleg of Bonn University, proposed funding for 2016 from FRG.

With Wakako Kumakura (University of Tokyo) and Tarek Sabraa (Annemarie Schimmel Kolleg of Bonn University/Damascus University) Mapping Structures - Reshaping Rules: The Qānūn al-Riyy and the Irrigation System of Egypt,

“The Second Plague Pandemic in Egypt, 1347-1844 CE: Demography, Biology and Mortality”, ongoing collaboration with Tarek Sabraa (Annemarie Schimmel Kolleg/University of Damascus), Marielena Layuno Matos (project assistant, Assumption College).

**Examiner and Reviewer** (2015): research work of a senior history professor, 5-year project proposal candidate for funding with the Belgian government (May 2015)

Dissertation Advisor (2012 – 2014) Erin Pocock, PhD Candidate, “Textiles and Economic Development in the Medieval Islamic World,” University of Western Ontario, Canada

## **Teaching Experience (17 years: 1998 – 2015)**

### **Assumption College (2002 –)**

West and the World I (Ancient/Medieval World History)

West and the World II (Early Modern/Modern World History)

Western Civilization I (Ancient/Medieval)

Western Civilization II ((Early Modern/Modern World History)

Islamic Middle East I (600 – 1800 CE)

Islamic Middle East II (1800 – Present)

Ancient Rome

Jesus to Muhammad

Seminars and Colloquia

Golden Age of Islam

Islam in Crisis

Byzantine History

Jesus to Muhammad

### **Columbia University Graduate Program: School of International and Public Affairs**

Teaching Fellow (2000): Masters' degree students in international politics

U6800: Principles of International Affairs

### **Columbia University – Columbia College (1998-2000)**

Preceptor/Instructor: Contemporary Civilization I (“great books course”)  
ancient to early modern

Preceptor/Instructor: Contemporary Civilization II (“great books course”)  
ancient to early modern



## **Honors and Awards**

### **Senior Research Fellow Annemarie Schimmel Kolleg – Research Fellow, (2013 – 2014)**

Assumption College Faculty Development Grant (2011)

### **Research Fellow - Institute for Advanced Study (2005)**

Assumption College Faculty Development Grant (2004)

William Schallek Memorial Fellowship (Richard III Society) 2000

### **Social Science Research Council Fellow (Egypt) 1997-1998**

### **Fulbright Fellow (Egypt) 1996-1997**

Awarded American Research Center in Egypt Fellowship 1996

Awarded Columbia University Traveling Fellowship 1996

Richard Hofstadter Fellow Columbia University 1993-1996

Ibn Khaldun Prize for the Social Science Research Council 1995

Mellon Fellowship: Intensive Arabic - Middlebury College Summer 1994

### **Foreign Language Area Studies Fellow Columbia University 1992-1993**

Dean's Fellow Columbia University 1991-1992

## Languages

Arabic (Colloquial Egyptian): **Fluent**

Arabic (Modern Standard): **Fluent**

Arabic (Medieval): **Fluent**

2 years in residence in Egypt, 1996-1998

2010 Refresher training, Arab Language Academy, Garden City, Cairo

2011- 2015: 4 years of daily Skype for one hour each day with Cairo Egyptian language instructor (Eman Ahmad) Ongoing conversation training, reading (medieval texts, narratives, news analysis), listening (news broadcasts), speaking (in colloquial and modern standard) with Cairo via Skype with Egyptian language instructor Eman Ahmed

French: reading knowledge, ongoing academic work and extensive reading

(Graduate qualifying language examination Columbia University)

Listening/speaking (with limited practice in 1990 - period)

Intensive language classes

US Navy Language School (Monterey, CA) 1986

Summer Program, Paris, 1990

Medieval Latin: reading knowledge

(Graduate qualifying language examination Columbia University)