Friday Bulletin, April 26, 2013

*Department of Religion, University of Florida*

**News**

*Č*aleb Simmons (PhD Candidate Asian Religions) has received the Summer 2013 University of Florida Graduate School Dissertation Research Travel Award of $5,000 to visit the Mackenzie Manuscript Collection at British Library, Oriental And India Office in London. He will use the award to collect, copy, and read Kannada manuscripts concerning the Wodeyar Dynasty of Mysore that are housed in the collection. Congratulations, Caleb!

Professor Terje Ostebo has signed a contract with the International Law and Policy Institute [http://www.ilpi.org/?p=20](http://www.ilpi.org/?p=20) in Oslo, and will work as a Senior Advisor/Research Professor II (20%). His tasks will be to lead research projects/conduct research in the Horn of Africa and East Africa regions. This comes as a complement to his work at UF. Prof. Ostebo will remain in Gainesville, spending time in Oslo during the summer.

Prof. Mario Poceski was invited to become Corresponding Research Fellow of the Center for Buddhist Studies, Fo Guang University, Taiwan, for 2013-14.

**Publications**

Prof. Mario Poceski presented a paper, titled “Meditation in Early Chan,” at the FGU Center for Buddhist Studies Inaugural Symposium, held in Taiwan, April 15-18, 2013; the paper was published in *Chinese Buddhism: Past, Present, and Future, Symposium Papers*, Vol. 2: 623-44.

Professor Terje Ostebo’s article “Claims for Authority at the Shrine of Shaykh Husayn, Ethiopia” – has been accepted for publication in the *Journal of Islamic Studies* (Oxford).

**Awards**

**Jaberg Award**

The 2013 Russell Jaberg Award which recognizes outstanding achievement by a graduating religion major went to Jordan Kassabum. He was selected for the University Scholars Program. Jordan’s project, which he conducted under the direction of Prof. James Mueller and Prof. Andrea Sterk (History), was an exploration into the current scholarship on both the historical Jesus and the apocalyptic currents in early Judaism and earliest Christianity. Jordan presented the completed work at both the History honors symposium and at the University Scholars poster session this spring. Jordan will continue his scholarly pursuits at Yale Divinity School, where he has received a full scholarship. The runner ups for the award were Michala Lee, who is also majoring in Biology, and Stefani Broome, who wrote a senior thesis entitled
“Messianic Judaism and Early Christianity: A Comparative Analysis through History” under the direction of Prof. Anna Peterson. Congratulations Jordan, Michala, and Stefani!

**Graduate Student Award**

This year, we are very happy to have our first – but not last – award for a graduate student paper. The competition was open to papers that have been published in scholarly journals this academic year. We had three excellent contributions. The papers were evaluated by a jury of faculty, organized by the graduate coordinator. All three papers were impressive examples of mature scholarly work, showing a range of intellectual interests among our students as well as their outstanding research and writing skills.

Robin Globus Veldman published her article, “Narrating the Environmental Apocalypse: How Imagining the End Facilitates Moral Reasoning Among Environmental Activists,” in the journal *Ethics and the Environment*. This article is based on her dissertation research. The jury was impressed by the thoroughness of her research and her innovative argument that apocalyptic thought may be a more positive force for environmental activism than some scholars have argued.

Alex Savory-Levine published an article titled “Man is the Redeemer of Nature: An Interpretation of Schelling’s *Of Human Freedom*” in the journal *Idealistic Studies*. Alex’s paper is an ambitious exploration of the relevance of Schelling’s thought for environmental philosophy that shows great intellectual maturity and range. We are especially impressed by the fact that Alex is a PhD student and already publishing in a peer-reviewed journal!

Sarah Werner’s article “William Bartram: The Moral Philosophy of a Quaker Botanist,” was published in the journal *Quaker Theology*. Sarah’s paper contributes, first, to scholarly knowledge about William Bartram, a key early natural historian and scientist, showing that Bartram, like many other foundational conservationists, was influenced by religious values and perceptions. In addition, she documents Quaker thought about nature, a tradition that has been largely ignored in the existing literature on religion and nature.

All three papers were deserving, and of course by being selected for publication in peer-reviewed journals, they have already been recognized and rewarded! It was a very difficult decision, but in the end the faculty jury selected Sarah Werner’s paper for this year’s award. Congratulations to Sarah and also to Alex and Robin for your outstanding work!