

Near Eastern Studies

At Princeton University

Welcome to the 2016–17 academic year! While every academic year is exciting in its challenges and opportunities for learning, 2017 will be a special year in that Near Eastern Studies at Princeton will be celebrating two anniversaries.

Ninety years ago, on January 13, 1927, the Board of Trustees approved the establishment of the Department of Oriental Languages and Literatures. The *Princeton Alumni Weekly* reported that the “new Department . . . has been designed for graduate instruction and research in Semitic and Indo-European philology.” The chairman of the new department, Harold H. Bender, a professor of Indo-Germanic Philology, was quoted in the *PAW* article as saying, “We are trying to meet a real demand which is the result of increasing interest in the Orient. Every year makes the linguistic evidence of the East more important in the study of the origins and development of civilization. And today, among other things, there is the rising national consciousness of the Moslem world. We will offer graduate courses and degrees in comparative Semitic and Indo-European philology, and in Sanskrit, Arabic, and Hebrew. In research and publication we expect to specialize chiefly in the editing and translating of Oriental texts.” One of the founding members of the department was Philip K. Hitti, an assistant professor of Semitic languages.

The second anniversary is of the founding of the Program in Near Eastern Studies, established in the fall of 1947, which provided “for the first time . . . an American undergraduate . . . with an opportunity to concentrate in his studies on the Moslem world, with its three major languages—Arabic, Turkish and Persian—, while still receiving a liberal education for any life career he may later choose.” The goal of the

Program was “the systematic investigation and presentation of all important features and institutions of an area’s people—their history, their forms and concepts of government, their social, cultural, economic and artistic life. Basic to such a goal was, of course, full-scale instruction in the relevant languages.” The Program was also open to graduate students.

In the fall preceding this anniversary year, a combined eighteen faculty, students, and visitors are joining the department. We would like to welcome the many new members of the Department, Program, and Transregional Institute, whose biographies and photographs are featured in this issue of the *Near Eastern Studies Newsletter*, and wish everyone a productive and successful year!

Muhammad Qasim Zaman, Chair of the Department of Near Eastern Studies

Cyrus Schayegh, Director of the Program in Near Eastern Studies

Faculty

Faris Al-Ahmad

I am a lecturer of Arabic in the Near Eastern Studies Department. My interests in Arabic and the Arab world are very diverse. I received my BA in Arabic-English Translation from the University of Damascus in Syria. I also earned my MA in Middle Eastern Studies with a focus on Islamic thought from The CUNY Graduate Center. In 2010, I received a Fulbright Program (FLTA) scholarship. Since then, I



have taught Arabic language and culture in many universities. Before Princeton, I was a full-time lecturer of Arabic at Columbia University in New York. Prior to that, I taught Arabic at Hunter College of CUNY as a part-time instructor for two years. The language classes I taught ranged from elementary to advanced levels. I also taught classes of Arabic literature in Arabic.

In addition to my interest in Arabic language and literature, I am interested in Islamic jurisprudence, modern Islamic thought, Muslims in North America, and Arabic and Islamic intellectual history. My current research interests concern exploring and comparing the works of certain contemporary Sunni Muslim scholars that call for a comprehensive renewal of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence).

Daniel Sheffield

Daniel J. Sheffield is Assistant Professor in the Department of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University, where he specializes in the religious, intellectual, and social history of the medieval and early modern Persian-speaking world. He holds a Ph.D. in Iranian and Persian Studies conferred by the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University in 2012. Before joining the Department of Near Eastern Studies, Daniel was a member of the Department of History at the University of Washington. From 2012–2015, he was a Link-Cotsen Postdoctoral Fellow in the Princeton University Society of Fellows. Daniel is a specialist in exchanges between



Safavid Iran and Mughal India, and in particular, the history of Zoroastrian communities during this period. More broadly, he is interested in the transmission and transformation of ideas from Late Antiquity into Early Modernity. His current research project examines the role that ideas about language and translation play in the development of religious and historical thought. Daniel has recently completed a book manuscript entitled *Cosmopolitan Zarathustras: Religion, Translation, and Prophecy in Iran and South Asia*, a book which tells the story of the Zoroastrian communities of Iran and South Asia by tracing how the embrace of a cosmopolitan theological vocabulary and the reception of the canon of Classical Persian literature affects these communities, promoting the production of new forms of meaning-making and literary production under the specter of scholastic traditions inherited from Late Antiquity. His recent publications appear in the *Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Zoroastrianism* (ed. Stausberg and Vevaina), *No Tapping around Philology: A Festschrift for Wheeler M. Thackston Jr.'s 70th Birthday* (ed. Korangy and Sheffield), and *On the Wonders of Land and Sea: Persianate Travel Writing* (ed. Micallef and Sharma). He is currently pursuing research on a second book project, tentatively entitled *On Translation and Toleration: The Free-Thinkers of Safavid Iran and Mughal India*. At Princeton, Daniel will be teaching undergraduate lectures on the history of Iran from the Sasanians to the Safavids, thematic seminars on themes such as translation and scripture, as well as graduate courses on Persian historiography. He is organizing a Classical Persian reading group for interested students and teaches ancient Iranian languages to anyone who asks. In his spare time, Daniel enjoys cooking, playing the accordion, and chasing his two-year-old.

Philip Zhakevich

Philip Zhakevich is a lecturer of Hebrew in the NES department. His research focuses on Classical Hebrew and other ancient Semitic languages. His current book project is based on his dissertation, which is entitled, "The Tools of an Israelite Scribe." The study considers the processes of writing



in ancient Israel by examining ancient Hebrew terms that signified the tools and materials involved in writing. Prior to joining the NES department, Zhakevich served as lecturer of Hebrew at Columbia University. He has also taught Hebrew at the University of California in Los Angeles and the University of Texas in Austin.

Zhakevich received a B.A. with a major in History and a minor in Hebrew from UCLA in 2006; and in 2008 Zhakevich obtained an M.A. in the Bible and the Ancient Near East at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. In 2015, he completed a Ph.D. in Hebrew Bible and Comparative Semitic Languages at UT Austin. His research interests include Modern Hebrew and Classical Hebrew, the revival of Hebrew, Epigraphy, Hebrew Bible, comparative Semitics, and linguistics.

Ph.D. Students

Murat Bozluolcay

Before I found myself dabbling with documents at the Ottoman archives in Istanbul for the first time, I had already finished my double-major degree in Sociology (B.A.) and Computer Science (B.S.). What took me to the archives was my growing interest in the late Ottoman world, which offered me an intriguing context to rethink and mold many of theoretical questions shaped by my social theory background, contemporary politics, and personal experiences. After a captivating visit to Syria in 2009, this temporal shift was accompanied by a geographical one. Having taught myself Ottoman and started learning Arabic, I embarked on the historian's craft during my M.A. at Boğaziçi University, Istanbul.



My M.A. research focusses on the Ottoman state response to the infamous Damascus Events of 1860. For me, this episode in history is a strategic entry point for many historiographical debates within and outside the field. I therefore want to extend my research into my doctoral study at Department of Near Eastern Studies. On the one hand, it is an opportunity to put various sources and historiographies (Arabic, Ottoman, and European) in a much needed

conversation, therefore underlining the connections between these entities during the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, it is a fecund context to delve deeper into my interests in urban violence, inter-communal relations, nineteenth-century "modernizing" reforms, and what constitutes "a historical event."

Duygu Coşkuntuna

I started my journey towards Ottoman history from a sociological point of view when I entered Boğaziçi University in 2004. My initial curiosity about the past way of things soon materialized in a double major: I graduated in 2010 with B.A.'s in Sociology and History. My research interests focused on the later days of the Ottoman Empire and how individuals there slowly gained a new sense of their selves. Throughout my graduate studies towards a M.A. degree, also completed at the Department of History at Boğaziçi University, I tried to take a deeper look at the mindset of the members of the Committee of Union and Progress by employing their and their contemporaries' memoirs. The spotlight was on their understanding of themselves, of women and of relatively new concepts such as homeland and nation. I published my thesis in 2014 under the title *Minds of Passage: An Interpretation of the Memoirs of Young Turks (1908–1923)* from Libra Yayınevi. Topics such as everyday interactions, making of the individual, nationalism, and orientalism never ceased to amaze me. Thus, for my graduate studies at Princeton University, I preferred to remain within the same time frame while shifting the weight to the German-Ottoman alliance during the First World War. I aim to inquire into the daily life of the soldiers on the field, which will be useful in reinterpreting the Great War as well.



Publications: "Mothers, Spies and Signs: Unionist Perceptions of Women at Fin-de-Siècle," in *Balkan Nationalism(s) and the Ottoman Empire*, vol. 3, *The Young Turk Revolution and Ethnic Groups*, ed. Dimitris Stamatopoulos (İstanbul: The Isis Press, 2015); "Bir Çizgi Çekmek: Şarkiyatçılık ve Çizgi Romanlar," *Toplumsal Tarih* 268

(April 2016); and *Minds of Passage: An Interpretation of the Memoirs of Young Turks (1908–1923)* (Istanbul: Libra Yayınevi, 2014).

Varak Ketsemanian

Varak Ketsemanian is a Lebanese-Armenian who was born and raised in Beirut, Lebanon. Ketsemanian attended the American University of Beirut, and graduated in 2013 with a B.A. in philosophy and minor in history. After interning at the *Armenian Weekly* offices in Boston, M.A., and spending a year of doing freelance research and translation, Ketsemanian enrolled at the University of Chicago in the M.A. program at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies (2014–2016). His MA thesis, titled “*Communities in Conflict: the Hunchakian Revolutionary Party 1890-1894*,” examines the socio-economic role of violence in shaping inter-communal and ethnic relations by doing a local history of the Armenian Revolutionary Movement in the Ottoman Empire. Ketsemanian’s work tackles problems such as the development and polarization of mainstream historiographies, inter-communal stratifications, nationalism, and the relationship of the Ottoman State with some of its Anatolian provinces. For his Ph.D. dissertation, Ketsemanian plans on writing the social history of the National Constitution of Ottoman Armenians of 1863 and the communal dynamics/mechanisms that it created on imperial, communal, and provincial levels. Ketsemanian’s research relates to the development of different forms of nationalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, revolutionary violence, and constitutional movements.

Ketsemanian has conducted research and has been involved in various projects in Turkey, the USA, Lebanon, and Armenia. He is the recipient of several awards and fellowships, such as Fulbright, FLAS, and the Gulbenkian Scholarship for Armenian Studies among others. He is a frequent contributor to *Aztag Daily*, *Asbarez* and *Armenian Weekly*. His articles and essays have also appeared in *New Eastern Politics* and *Caucasus Research and Resource Center* blogs.

Publications: “The Feudal Character of the



Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem,” *LIGHTS: THE MESSA JOURNAL* 4, no. 1 (January 2015); “In Search of the A.R.F.’s 1908 Istanbul Headquarters,” co-authored with Daniel Ohanian, *Armenian Weekly Special Issue for the 125th Anniversary of the A.R.F.*, November-December, 2015; “*Straddling Between Two Empires: The Armenian Revolutionary Federation’s Military Academy in 1906-1907*” (forthcoming in *Journal of Ottoman and Turkish Studies*); and “*The Hunchakian Revolutionary Party and the Assassination Attempts Against Maksudzade Simon Bey and Patriarch Khoren Ashekian in 1894*” (forthcoming in *Journal for the Society of Armenian Studies*).

Carolina Mendoza

I study messianism, revolutionary movements, historiography, and histories of time in the medieval Islamic world. I am currently working on the Almohad movement, which emerged in present-day North Africa and went on to conquer significant portions of Iberia in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. I am interested in how messianic narratives reshape imagined spatial and temporal realities and, by extension, in the particular artistic and intellectual output these new realities generate.

My interest in the Islamic world crystallized when I was pursuing my Master’s degree in Islamic Studies at George Washington University. Prior to that, I was an undergraduate at Florida International University, from which I graduated with a degree in International Relations. Up until my studies at GWU, I had approached the Islamic world from a mostly contemporary-political standpoint. It was not until I began studying its diverse religious and intellectual narratives that I came to appreciate the richness and imaginative power of its history.

My previous research gave me the opportunity to engage medieval Islamic texts and develop an understanding of the role of narrative within them. I completed a Master’s thesis on intertextuality between medieval Islamic works and early modern Iberian literature. I also conducted research



problematizing the use of Islamic narratives to bolster nationalist and essentialist claims regarding the “nature” of Spanish history by historiographers of al-Andalus. Throughout the course of my doctoral studies at Princeton, I hope not only to expand but also better communicate the wealth of the Islamic past in scholarship.

Jamie Pelling

I came to the history of the Ottoman Empire while studying Habsburg history at the LSE. The pull of Istanbul over Vienna was too strong and so, after learning enough Turkish at SOAS to order a kebab, I traversed the Atlantic to the University of Chicago for an M.A., which resulted in a thesis which explored the comparative history of the Methodists in London and the followers of Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab in the Najd. On more mainstream Ottoman topics, I became interested in employing critical and post-colonial theory to interrogate the history of the empire. Over the course of my studies at Princeton I hope to engage more fully with several of these themes. I am fascinated by the role of Istanbul as a metropole, as a hub for identity formation, and by the symbolisms of the capital with the palace at its center. I also wish to pay attention to the periphery of the empire, in particular peripheries that have been neglected by Ottomanists to this date. I am intrigued by the Ottoman presence in east Africa, from their conflict with the Portuguese on the coast to their longstanding rule of Sudan. Clearly there are some major divergences between the Ottoman imperial praxis and that, say, of the British Empire in the same period, but are there shared characteristics as well? How pervasive was Ottoman control in the realms of race, gender, and religion? How does this compare with narratives of the Ottoman Empire as a pluralistic and tolerant domain? Perhaps my driving question is, then, why do we call the Ottoman Empire an ‘empire’ at all?



Yaara Perlman



I am currently a first-year Ph.D. student in the Department of Near Eastern Studies. Prior to my arrival at Princeton, I completed both my B.A. and M.A. degrees at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where my primary focus was the history of the early Islamic period. My M.A. thesis, written under the supervision of Prof. Michael Lecker, discusses the tribe of Aws, one of the two main tribes that supported the Prophet Muḥammad in Medina. In general, I attempted to provide a description of the tribe based on the textual evidence extant in the Muslim sources, by placing special emphasis on genealogical and geographical information concerning the members of this tribe and the clans that comprised it. Additional topics I wrote about include the early Islamic institution of the caliphs' guard, as well as idol worship in pre-Islamic Arabia.

During my studies at the Hebrew University, I also worked as a teaching assistant in the Department of Arabic Language and Literature, instructed a linguistics tutorial course, and taught two summer courses for prospective students of the department, which aimed to improve their reading skills of advanced literary Arabic texts. In addition, I was an instructor in a number of Arabic language courses for both beginner and advanced level students at the University's Rothberg International School.

Publications: "The Assassination of the Jewish Poetess 'Aṣmā' bint Marwān," *Pe'amim* 132 (summer 2012) (in Hebrew); "Al-Aws," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE* (first appeared online: 2014); "The Bodyguard of the Caliphs during the Umayyad and the Early Abbasid Periods," *al-Qanṭara* 2015; and Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Khabar 'an al-bashar: The Chapter on the Idols in Pre-Islamic Arabia*, edited by Michael Lecker and Yaara Perlman, translated by Yaara Perlman, Leiden: Brill (forthcoming).

Joshua Picard



While working toward a B.A. and M.A. in Near Eastern and Judaic studies at Brandeis University I developed an interest in Judaeo-Arabic culture, especially among the communities of the Maghreb countries. This was further augmented by a period of Arabic language study in Fez, Morocco. I am especially interested in the adoption of the printing press among North African communities and the effects that this had upon literary production and the reception of these materials. At Princeton I intend to continue studying the development of Judaeo-Arabic literature through the early modern period.

Samin Rashidbeigi



Education: MSt in Oriental Studies, Hertford College, University of Oxford, 2015–16 (thesis title: "Creative Agencies for Dynamics of Gender: Military Institutions in Iran [1925–1979]"); Academic Supervisor: Dr. Stephanie Cronin); MATILDA program – European master's in Women's and Gender History, Central European University, 2013–15 (Spent Fall 2014 semester as exchange student in University of Vienna; thesis title: "Shahr-i Naw, Tehran's Red-light District [1909–1979]: The State, the "Prostitute," the Soldier, and the Feminist"); Academic Supervisor: Professor Francisca de Haan); Bachelor of Arts in Persian Literature and Language, University of Tehran, 2007–2011.

I like to learn about the recent history of large cities in the Middle East, their margins and undergrounds, and in particular, I like to discover the gender dynamics that have been created in such spaces. At the Central European University, I studied Shahr-i Naw, Tehran's red-light district before the 1979 Revolution. That project extended to another thesis which I wrote at Oxford about the formation of the modern army in twentieth-century Iran from a

gender perspective. Now, at Princeton, I am planning to continue on my previous research but broaden my scope beyond the geographical boundaries of Iran.

M.A. Students

Kaidi Gao



I am currently a first year M.A. student, and I'm very interested in the history of modern Iran, particularly when it comes to revolutions. During my undergraduate years at Duke University, I double majored in Arabic and International Comparative Studies with a concentration on the Middle East. My senior thesis centered on the role of media before and throughout the Iranian Islamic Revolution of 1979 and in the Tunisian Arab Spring that was initially set in motion in December 2010. This thesis project, along with a course I took on the history and culture of Iran, sparked my interest in the mystifying yet captivating land of Persia. During my master's studies, I plan to learn Persian and to expand my knowledge of Iranian and Islamic studies and to build on my earlier research on the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

I have always found the strongest enthusiasm in learning different languages and cultures. I grew up in the city of Harbin in northeastern China. Located close to Russia, Harbin displays a vibrant cultural hybridity. The seeds of my interests in foreign languages lay in the images of unfamiliar alphabets outside of restaurants and shops. I arrived at Duke with the hunger of building on my previous language-learning experience, accidentally discovered the beauty of the Arabic language, and decided to pursue its course. The summer after my freshmen year, I traveled to Jordan through *DukeEngage*, a service-oriented civic engagement program. For two months, I lived with a local family in Amman and interned at the Royal Botanic Garden, a non-profit organization. During the following years, I visited other Muslim-majority countries like Egypt, Morocco, and Turkey. Before coming to Princeton, I was awarded a full scholarship from Qatar University, and attended the Arabic for the Non-Native Speakers (ANNS) Program in Doha.

Alexander Long

I am a first-year M.A. student interested in Central Asia, particularly Tajikistan, from the nineteenth century to the present. A native North Carolinian, I completed my undergraduate studies in International Politics at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service (SFS) in Washington, DC. At Georgetown, I focused on the study of the Russian language, Soviet and post-Soviet history, and American foreign policy. I also received the SFS Fadner Medal for Excellence in Russian Studies. During my junior year, I traveled to Russia and lived with a host family in Saint Petersburg. There I took courses on the Russian language, literature, and history at Saint Petersburg State University (Smolny Sabor Campus).



Back in Washington, DC, to finish my studies, I completed a one-year internship at the Office of Central Asian Affairs at the U.S. Department of State. There I had the chance to cover the Tajikistan Desk for the Department for several months, where I learned more about the State Department's engagements with Tajikistan and Central Asia. After graduating, I became an instructor of English and critical thinking at KIMEP University in Almaty, Kazakhstan, for one year, through a Princeton-in-Asia (PiA) fellowship.

In 2010, I began working at Google as a legal assistant, focusing mostly on intellectual property issues. After two years, I moved to the Google's public policy office in Washington, DC, where I worked on the company's federal legislative reform efforts. In 2013, I took a position in Singapore on Google's government affairs team, where I managed the company's interactions and programs in countries in Asia where Google does not have an office, including Pakistan, Vietnam, Myanmar (Burma), the Philippines, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, and others.

More recently, I lived and worked in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, studying Tajik and Farsi, and spending as much time as possible in the mountains.

Visiting Student Research Collaborator

Nurullah Ayyilmaz

Nurullah Ayyilmaz is a Ph.D. candidate in International Studies program at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, VA. He will be spending the academic year of 2016–2017 as a Visiting Student Research Collaborator in NES. His research interests include Middle East politics, energy security, and Turkish foreign policy. He holds a B.A. degree in International Relations from Okan University in Istanbul where he also double majored in International Trade. Nurullah spent two semesters at Zeppelin University in Germany in the Fall 2010 and Spring 2011 semesters as an exchange student. He earned his M.A. degree at Old Dominion University with a master's thesis that analyzes the extent to which benefiting from the U.S. shale gas boom in the transportation sector can contribute to U.S. energy security. The languages he speaks are Turkish (native), English (full professional proficiency) and German (minimum professional proficiency).



During the time he will spend in NES, he aims to work on the relationship between Turkey's energy demand and Turkish foreign policy towards Middle Eastern countries in the last 25 years.

Visiting Fellows

Francesca Bellino

I first became interested in the Arab world spending summers in my youth traveling in Syria and the Levant and also doing volunteer work in a Syrian association. I then deepened my curiosities by studying Arabic, Hebrew, and Semitic philology at the University of Turin. During these years, I was lucky enough to be able to travel extensively in various Arab countries.



I received my Ph.D. from the University of Florence in 2005. My doctoral dissertation focused on legendary *maghazi* literature and, more specifically, on one of the most famous stories of this genre titled *Futuh al-Yaman*, known also as *Ghazwat Ra's al-Ghul*, by Abū al-Hasan al-Bakri (thirteenth century?). I outlined the textual history of this *ghazwa*, its circulation and transmission, as well as the peculiarities of the language and style of certain manuscript versions.

Over the years, my field of research has expanded, and I dealt with other genres of the so-called popular literature of the post-classical period. I have carried out researches on Arabic epic, Islamic legends (in particular Moses, Tamim al-Dari, Cain and Abel), and I delved into the textual history of some stories that then became part of the *Arabian Nights* collection (in particular Sindbad the Sailor, Uns al-Wujud and al-Ward fi al-Aknam, Masrur and Zayn al-Mawasif).

At the same time, I have carried out research on geographical literature and Islamic cosmography. In this connection, I translated into Italian al-Qazwīnī's *Cosmography (Le meraviglie del creato e le stranezze degli esseri)*, Milano 2008). More recently, I have published a few articles on Arabic encyclopaedism.

At Princeton, my research project concerns the comparative edition of the Arabic versions along with the Garshuni and Neo-Aramaic versions of the *Travels of Sindbad the Sailor*. My purpose is to study the transmission and dissemination of this story both in parallel with the early European editions of the *Arabian Nights* and in the multilingual and multicultural environment of the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, examining in particular the transmission of the story in a Christian milieu of Syria (Aleppo) and southern Turkey.

Anna Hager

As a postdoctoral research fellow at the Institute for the Transregional Study of the Contemporary Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia,



Anna Hager will look at Islamist and Salafi attitudes towards Coptic Egyptians in post-revolutionary Egypt (2011–2013). Egypt has always been a key center of Islamism and has experienced various developments in this field. Following the revolution of January 25, 2011, Islamism in Egypt seemed to have experienced a new stage, when a number of Islamist and Salafi actors established political parties and tried to appear as pragmatic and inclusive political contenders. In this context, their previously intolerant attitude towards Coptic Egyptians seemed to change and raised questions about the possibilities of them considering Copts equal citizens. Through this research project, Anna Hager aims to further investigate a key outcome of her Ph.D. thesis: the pragmatic attitude of Islamist and Salafi actors towards Copts in the context of the video “The Innocence of Muslims,” which prevented violent backlashes against the Christian communities in Egypt.

Anna Hager earned her Ph.D. in the field of Arabic Studies at the University of Vienna, Austria, on the subject of (Arab) Christian-Muslim relations in the context of the video “The Innocence of Muslims” (produced by extremist Copts in the U.S.) in Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and the Palestinian Territories (September 2012). From September 2014 to May 2015 she received a grant from the Austrian Ministry of Science and Research to carry out research in Beirut, Cairo, Jerusalem, and Amman.

Previously, she completed a Master’s degree in Islamic Studies at the University of Vienna, as well as a Bachelor’s degree in Iranian Studies at the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales in Paris and a Bachelor’s degree at Sorbonne University in Paris. In addition to her native languages French and German, Anna Hager is proficient in Arabic, Persian, and Dari and has spent a little time learning Urdu.

Daniel Lav

Daniel Lav’s research centers on the doctrines and intellectual history of the modern Salafi school of Islam and its medieval forerunners. At the Institute for the Transregional Study of the Contemporary Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia he will conduct an inquiry into the Salafi doctrine known as “allegiance and disavowal” (*al-wala’ wa’l-bara’*), understood by Salafis as the obligation to demonstrate allegiance to

God and to other believers, and to disavow other objects of worship and unbelievers. Various interpretations by different currents of Salafism, the doctrine, like other major tenets of Salafi theology, has clear roots in the writings of the medieval polymath Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328 C.E.), where it intersects with other central features of Ibn Taymiyya’s thought, such as his theory of divine love, his theology of faith, and his doctrine of monolatry (*tawhid al-uluhiyya*). Later, Wahhabi scholars further developed and concretized these themes in the context of conflict with local Arabian opponents, the Ottomans, and the Khedivate of Egypt. Finally, Lav will trace the doctrine as it has been elaborated in the modern Salafi movement, including both quietist and radical interpretations. In addition to providing an account of the intellectual history of this doctrine, the research aims to relate the topic to the contemporary literature on political theology and to describe how modern Salafis deploy the doctrine to contest such distinctive features of modernity as the nation state and the delineation of a secularized and autonomous sphere of politics.

Lav received his B.A. in French Literature at the University of Chicago, and wrote his M.A. and Ph.D. theses at the Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His M.A. thesis, on Ibn Taymiyya’s theology of faith and its role in modern intra-Salafi disputes, was subsequently published in book form as *Radical Islam and the Revival of Medieval Theology* (Cambridge, 2012). His Ph.D. thesis traces the relation between Ibn Taymiyya’s theology and the modern doctrine of *hakimiyya* (theonomy), and drawing on a wide range of sources in Arabic and Urdu, reexamines such topics as the relation between Abu ‘l-A’la Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb, *ijihad* and *taqlid* in pre-modern jurisprudence, and the origins of Wahhabi doctrine. Lav is the recipient of a Yad HaNadiv Rothschild Fellowship and over the course of his studies received the Nathan Rotenstreich scholarship, among other grants and awards. He is fluent or proficient in English, French, Arabic, and Hebrew, reads in Urdu, German, and Spanish, and has studied Farsi.

Joas Wagemakers



Joas Wagemakers is an assistant professor of Islamic and Arabic Studies at Utrecht University. His research focuses mainly on Salafism (particularly Salafi ideology) and Islamism. He has published many chapters and articles in this field as well as several books, including: *A Quietist Jihadi: The Ideology and Influence of Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), *Salafisme* (2014; co-authored with Martijn de Koning and Carmen Becker); and *Salafism in Jordan: Political Islam in a Quietist Community* (Cambridge University Press, 2016).

Generally speaking, he is interested in the intellectual history of modern Islam, with a focus on political thinking among Islamists. He always tries to contextualise ideology by placing it in the broader political and socio-economic history in which ideas are produced, transformed, and adopted, and he often tries to look for links with early-Islamic history to explain modern debates. His research has concentrated on Salafism (particularly Salafi ideology) and Islamism. Geographically, his interests lie mostly in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the Palestinian territories, although he also spends much time reading international Jihadi-Salafi discourse. Apart from the usual forthcoming publications here and there, he is currently working on the intellectual history of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan. Besides all that, he also blogs at Jihadica.com, an international weblog on the world of jihadism.

Class of 2018

The Department of Near Eastern Studies welcomes the following members of the **Class of 2018**: *Avichai Bass, Samone Blair, Emma Claire Jones, Nick Jonsson, Ariana Mirzada, Talya Nevins, Coy Ozias, Marissa Rosenberg-Carlson, and Katie Tyler.*

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Graduate Applicant Visit February 2016

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