

Near Eastern Studies

At Princeton University

Greetings from the Chair!

With the 2014–15 academic year winding to a close, I am delighted to announce three additions to our department faculty. **Lara Harb** will join the department



as an assistant professor of classical Arabic literature. She earned her Ph.D. from New York University and is currently an assistant professor of Arabic at Dartmouth College. **Eve Krakowski**, also an assistant professor, works on the Jewish communities of the pre-modern Muslim world and on women and gender in the pre-modern Middle East. She earned her Ph.D. from the University of Chicago and is currently the Rabin Postdoctoral Fellow in the Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies, Columbia University. **Satyel Larson**, too, will join Near Eastern Studies as an assistant professor. She comes to us from the University of Chicago, where she has been a postdoctoral fellow since 2012. Larson earned her doctoral degree from the University of California, Berkeley. Her research and teaching focus on women and gender in the modern Middle East and North Africa. Drs. Harb, Krakowski, and Larson will enrich our department and the university community in important ways. We look forward to welcoming them in the fall.

I am also very pleased to announce that the Board of the Cleveland H. Dodge Foundation has made a gift of \$250,000 to Near Eastern Studies in memory of **Robert Garrett '59**. Rob Garrett, who passed away in March 2014, had for many years been the chairman of the advisory council of our department. The proceeds from this gener-

ous gift, to be called the Robert Garrett '59 Summer Study Abroad Fund, will assist the department's undergraduate and graduate students in pursuing language study and research in the Middle East. On behalf of the department, I am most grateful to the Dodge Foundation for honoring Rob Garrett's memory and his long association with us in this enduring way.

I wish, finally, to take this opportunity to extend our best wishes to **Mirjam Künkler**, who will be leaving the department at the end of June.

Muhammad Qasim Zaman

Greetings from the Director!

This past fall the U.S. Department of Education renewed its designation of the Program in Near Eastern Studies as a National Resource Center (NRC) for Middle Eastern Studies for



another four years. NRCs are funded under Title VI of the National Defense Education Act of 1958, and with Princeton's designation as an NRC comes a grant of \$200,000 per year, federal budget permitting. NRCs teach foreign languages, provide "instruction in fields needed to provide full understanding of areas, regions, or countries in which the language is commonly used; resources for training and research in international and foreign language aspects of professional and other fields of study; or opportunities for training and research on issues in world affairs that concern one or more countries"; provide "outreach and

consultative services on a national, regional and local basis," and maintain "linkages with overseas institutions of higher education and other organizations that may contribute to the teaching and research of the Center." NRCs also maintain "specialized library collections," and employ "scholars engaged in training and research which relates to the subject area of the Center."

In fact, the Program in Near Eastern Studies was one of the first NRCs, having been a recipient of Title VI funding from the very beginning of the Title VI program, in 1959. The Program itself, however, was launched even earlier, in 1947, through the generosity of the Rockefeller Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation, the William T. Grant Foundation, and the Cleveland H. Dodge Foundation. It provided for the first time American undergraduates with the opportunity to concentrate their studies on the Middle East. Previously, Princeton's Department of Oriental Languages and Literatures—the predecessor of today's Near Eastern Studies—had been a graduate-level department, but the lack of adequate university-level instruction in the modern Middle East and the demonstrated need of the United States for personnel trained in Middle Eastern studies arising during World War II and after prompted the university to establish the Program.

How does the Program in Near Eastern Studies today differ from the Department of Near Eastern Studies? The biggest difference is that the Department oversees a major in NES for undergraduates and trains doctoral students, while the Program oversees both an interdepartmental and interdisciplinary certificate for undergraduates majoring in other departments and an M.A. for students contemplating careers in government, business, or journalism.

The Program does not “house” any faculty but relies on faculty residing in academic departments, such as NES, Comparative Literature, History, Politics, and Religion. The Program financially supports the instruction of the Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, and Turkish languages and offers support to the library. The Program also provides outreach to the community, examples of which are the high school teacher training workshops offered regularly and designed to give high school teachers knowledge in Middle Eastern studies that can be incorporated into their classrooms.

Cyrus Schayegh

Faculty news

Michael Barry was invited by the Azerbaijan government to give lectures in Baku and Ganja on Nizâmî in July 2014 and to explore with Azerbaijani scholars the creation of a world center or international institute or “circle” to promote international study of Nizâmî. During Fall break 2014, he traveled to Afghanistan at the invitation of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs to present illustrated lectures (in Persian) in Kabul, Mazâr-i Sharîf, and Herât (Afghanistan) to Afghan audiences on the royal manuscript of ‘Attâr’s *Canticle of the Birds* (now in the NY Metropolitan Museum), which was illuminated by Afghanistan’s greatest medieval artist, Bihzâd of Herât (1465–1535). On December 9, 2014, he participated in the “Islam in Conversations Series,” speaking on “Searching for Beauty in a Turbulent World: A Presentation & Commentary on *The Canticle of the Birds*: Poetic Expression of a Universal Quest for Love, Truth, and Unity.”

Mark Cohen, Khedouri A. Zilkha Professor of Jewish Civilization in the Near East, Emeritus. Professor of Near Eastern Studies, Emeritus, has been honored with a Festschrift, *Jews, Christians and Muslims in Medieval and Early Modern Times* (Leiden: Brill, [2014]), edited by **Arnold E. Franklin** (Ph.D. 2001), **Roxani Eleni Margariti** (Ph.D. 2002), **Marina Rustow**, and **Uriel Simonsohn** (Ph.D. 2008).

Contributors with Princeton connections were Khedouri A. Zilkha Professor of Jewish Civilization in the Near East, Emeritus, **Abraham L. Udovitch** (“Preface”); **Arnold Franklin** (“Introduction” and “More than

Words on a Page: Letters as Substitutes for an Absent Writer”); **Roxani Margariti** (“Introduction” and “Aṣḥābunā al-tujjār—Our Associates, the Merchants: Non-Jewish Business Partners of the Cairo Geniza’s India Traders”); **Uriel Simonsohn** (“Introduction” and “Are Geonic Responsa a Reliable Source for the Study of Jewish Conversion to Islam? A Comparative Analysis of Legal Sources”); **Yaron Ayalon** (Ph.D. 2009; “Poor Relief in Ottoman Jewish Communities”); **Oded Zinger** (Ph.D. 2014; “‘What Sort of Sermon is This?’: Leadership, Resistance and Gender in a Communal Conflict”); **Jane Hathaway** (Ph.D. 1992; “Jews among the Grandees of Ottoman Egypt”); **Philip I. Ackerman-Lieberman** (Ph.D. 2007; “The Muḥammadan Stipulations: Dhimmī Versions of the Pact of ‘Umar”); **Jessica M. Marglin** (Ph.D. 2012; “Jews in Shari’a Courts: A Family Dispute from the Cairo Geniza”); **Hassan S. Khalilieh** (Ph.D. 1995; “Perception of Piracy in Islamic Shari’a”); Dayton-Stockton Professor of History **William Chester Jordan** (“Jew and Serf in Medieval France Revisited”); **Olivia Remie Constable** (Ph.D. 1989; “Cleanliness and Convivencia: Jewish Bathing Culture in Medieval Spain”); **Petra M. Sijpesteijn** (Ph.D. 2004; “Financial Troubles: A Mamluk Petition”); William H. Danforth Professor of Religion **Martha Himmelfarb** (“‘Az milifnei vereishit’: The Suffering Messiah in the Seventh Century”); and Henry Charles Lea Professor of History, Emeritus, **Natalie Zemon Davis** (“Epilogue”).

During the Fall semester 2014, **Cohen** was a visiting professor at New York University in Abu Dhabi. While there, he gave lectures on the Cairo Geniza at King Saud University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. While in Riyadh, he was interviewed by Joseph Preville. Click [here](#) to read this interview.

Michael A. Cook, Class of 1943 University Professor of Near Eastern Studies, was featured in a *Princeton Alumni Weekly* article, “[Near Eastern Studies: Understanding Islam](#),” following his being awarded the 2014 Holberg Prize and the publication of his most recent book, *Ancient Religions, Modern Politics*, also in 2014. His book was also the subject of a panel discussion, “What Makes Islam Unique?” held at Labyrinth Books on December 5, 2014. Cook was



joined by **Mark Beissinger**, Professor of Politics and Director of the Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies (PIIRS), **Jack Tannous**, Assistant Professor of History, **Kanchan Chandra**, Visiting Research Scholar at PIIRS, and **Kevan Harris**, Postdoctoral Research Associate in Near Eastern Studies, in a discussion of how the heritages of Islam, Hinduism, and Christianity affect the roles of these religions in modern political life.

Assistant professor **Jonathan Gribetz** spoke at Rutgers about his new book, *Defining Neighbors: Religion, Race, and the Early Zionist-Arab Encounter* (see below).

Professor **Bernard Haykel** has been a much sought after expert on the Islamic State and al-Qaida. He was quoted extensively in an article appearing in the Atlantic (“[What ISIS Really Wants](#)”), which also quoted **William McCants** (Ph.D. 2006) and current graduate student **Cole Bunzel**; by CNN for its report, “[Al Qaeda says it’s opening new branch in India](#)”; in a *Newsweek* article, “[Is It Unfair to Compare ISIS to the Nazis?](#)”; and in a Reuters article published in the *New York Times* (“[Yemen Crisis Is First Big Test for Saudi Arabia’s King Salman](#)”).

Associated faculty member **Amaney Jamal** was named the Edwards S. Sanford Professor of Politics, effective July 1, 2014. Jamal recently completed research analyzing millions of Arabic language tweets with colleagues at Princeton and Harvard. To read about this research, click [here](#).

Labyrinth Books hosted in November a “Conversation” between **Lital Levy** and **Benjamin Conisbee Baer** about Levy’s new book, *Poetic Trespass: Writing Between Hebrew and Arabic in Israel/Palestine* (see below). Levy, an assistant professor in Comparative Literature and an associated faculty member in NES, and Baer an associated professor in Comparative Literature, discussed the book’s “portrait of the literary imagination’s power to transgress political boundaries and transform ideas about language and belonging.”

Associate professor **Michael A. Reynolds** (Ph.D. 2003) spoke in October on “Post-Visit Retrospectives on the Caucasus and Russia” at a Crisis Diplomacy Lunch Seminar hosted by the Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination.

Associate professor in History and Near Eastern Studies **Max Weiss** organized and moderated a panel discussion, “The Salaita Case and Beyond: Academic Freedom, ‘Civility,’ and the Future of the University,” on October 6, 2014. Panelists were **Eddie Glaude**, Religion and African-American Studies, **Anthony Grafton**, History, **Joseph Massad**, Columbia University, and **Joan Scott**, Institute of Advanced Study. Weiss also served as the moderator of a November 17, 2014, event, “Political Dissent, Digital Media, and Futures of Academic Freedom: An Evening with Steven Salaita.”

Faculty Books

Gribetz, Jonathan Marc. *Defining Neighbors: Religion, Race, and the Early Zionist-Arab Encounter*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014.

“Drawing on archival documents as well as newspapers and other print media from the final decades of Ottoman rule, Jonathan Gribetz argues that Zionists and Arabs in pre-World War I Palestine and the broader Middle East did not think of one another or interpret each other’s actions primarily in terms of territory or nationalism. Rather, they tended to view their neighbors in religious terms—as Jews, Christians, or Muslims—or as members of “scientifically” defined races—Jewish, Arab, Semitic, or otherwise. Gribetz shows how these communities perceived one another, not as strangers vying for possession of a land that each regarded as exclusively their own, but rather as deeply familiar, if at times mythologized or distorted, others. Overturning conventional wisdom about the origins of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Gribetz demonstrates how the seemingly intractable nationalist contest in Israel and Palestine was, at its start, conceived of in very different terms.”

Defining Neighbors has been called a “truly extraordinary scholarly accomplishment” and an “erudite and engaging work.” For more about this book, click [here](#).

Hefter, Thomas. *The Reader in al-Jahiz: The Epistolary Rhetoric of an Arabic Prose*

Master. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2014.

“Thomas Hefter takes a new approach in interpreting some of al-Jāhiz’s ‘epistolary monographs.’ By focussing on the varying ways in which he wrote to the addressee, Hefter shows how al-Jāhiz shaped his conversations on the page in order to guide (or manipulate) his actual readers and encourage them to engage with his complex materials.”

For more about this book, click [here](#).

Taher, Walid. *A Bit of Air*. Translated by **Anita Husen**. [Austin, Tex.] : Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Texas at Austin, 2012.

“Presenting a unique blend of poetry, visual art, and architecture, this bilingual English-Arabic volume introduces the English-speaking world to an award-winning Egyptian author who is in the vanguard of a new Arab literature.”

For more about this book, click [here](#).

Levy, Lital. *Poetic Trespass: Writing between Hebrew and Arabic in Israel and Palestine*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014.

“Blending history and literature, *Poetic Trespass* traces the interwoven life of Arabic and Hebrew in Israel/Palestine from the turn of the twentieth century to the present, exposing the two languages’ intimate entanglements in contemporary works of prose, poetry, film, and visual art by both Palestinian and Jewish citizens of Israel. In a context where intense political and social pressures work to identify Jews with Hebrew and Palestinians with Arabic, Levy finds writers who have boldly crossed over this divide to create literature in the language of their “oth-

er,” as well as writers who bring the two languages into dialogue to rewrite them from within.”

“Erudite and elegant,” *Poetic Trespass* has been called a “pathbreaking work in comparative literary and cultural studies,” and “a work of immense accomplishment.”

To read more about this work, click [here](#).

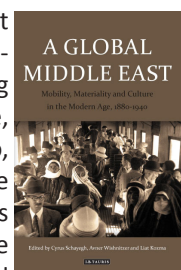
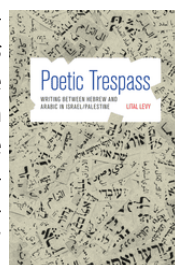
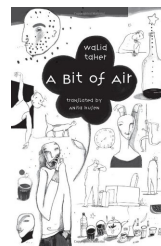
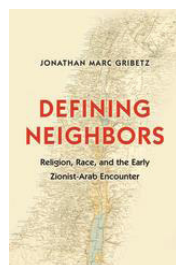
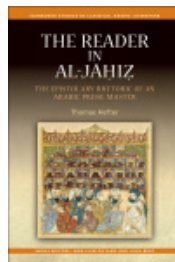
Kozma, Liat, **Cyrus Schayegh**, and Avner Wishnitzer, eds. *A Global Middle East: Mobility, Materiality and Culture in the Modern Age, 1880–1940*. London: I.B. Tauris, [2015].

“Approaching the first period of modern globalization by investigating the movement of people, objects and ideas into, around and out of the Middle East, the authors demonstrate how the Middle East in this period was not simply subject or reactive to the West, but rather an active participant in the transnational flows that transformed both the region and the world. *A Global Middle East* offers an examination of a variety of intellectual and more material exchanges, such as nascent feminist movements and Islamist ideologies as well as the movement of sex workers across the Mediterranean and Jewish migration into Palestine. *A Global Middle East* emphasises this by examining the multi-directional nature of movement across borders, as well as this movement’s intensity, volume and speed. By focusing on the theme of mobility as the defining feature of ‘modern globalization’ in the Middle East, it provides an essential examination of the formative years of the region.”

For more information about this book, click [here](#).

Undergraduate News

Senior **Mason Herson-Hord** spent the summer conducting research in Israel and the West Bank for his thesis “on how communities under military occupation maintain social cohesion despite occupation’s socially disintegrating effects, and how those



strategies of resilience blend into various modes of resistance.” Herson-Hord’s advisor is Associate Professor Max Weiss. To read about his experiences, click [here](#).

Final Public Oral Examination

Rephael G. Stern defended his master’s thesis, “‘A Vestige from the Days of the British Mandate’?: Emergency Law, Detainment, and Prisons in Early Israel, 1948–1950,” on September 3, 2014. His advisors were M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, Cyrus Schayegh, and Max Weiss.



Rephael Stern with advisor M. Şükrü Hanioğlu

Graduate Student News

Sixth-year Ph.D. student **Simon Wolfgang Fuchs** was awarded one of three European Association for South Asian Studies Research Student Awards for his paper, “It’s not the economy: Taking Pakistani Sunni-Shi’a polemics (and rapprochement) seriously,” which he presented at the 23rd meeting of the organization held July 23–26, 2014, at the University of Zurich (Switzerland). The awards are given for the “most outstanding papers by currently registered research students presenting at the conference” and carry with it a prize of €300. Fuchs has accepted a four-year Junior Research Fellowship at Gonville and Caius College at the University of Cambridge, starting in Fall 2015.

Fifth-year Ph.D. student **Nebil Husayn** wrote the introduction, “The Veneration of Companions in Imāmī Shī’ism,” (pp. 11–18) for Sayed Ammar Nakshawani’s book, *The Ten Granted Paradise* (Washington, DC: Universal Muslim Association of America Publishing House, 2014).

Fifth-year Ph.D. student **Aaron Rock-Singer**’s article, “Pious Public: Islamic Magazines and Revival in Egypt, 1976–1981,” has been published online by the *British*

Journal of Middle Eastern Studies (2015).

Two NES Ph.D. students, **Nebil Husayn** and **Wasim Shiliwala**, led sessions in the Circles of Knowledge program offered by the Muslim Life Program during the Fall semester. Husayn led the eight-week circle, “The Study of Muslim Conflicts,” Monday evenings, and Shiliwala led the four-week circle, “Essentials of Islam: Belief, Practice, Spirituality,” Friday evenings.

Alumni News

Former NES faculty member **Michael Doran** (Ph.D. 1997) of the Brookings Institution visited campus for an interactive public interview on “The US in Iraq and Syria.” NES associate professor **Michael A. Reynolds** (Ph. D. 2003) moderated the event. Doran was formerly Assistant Secretary of Defense and Senior Director of the National Security Council during the George W. Bush administration.

Khaled Abou El Fadl (Ph.D. 1999) returned to Princeton in December for a public lecture, conversation, and book signing in the “Islam in Conversation Series” sponsored by the Muslim Life Program. Abou El Fadl, the Omar and Azmeralda Alfi Distinguished Professor in Islamic Law at the UCLA School of Law, spoke on “Reasoning with God: Reclaiming Shari’ah in the Modern Age.”

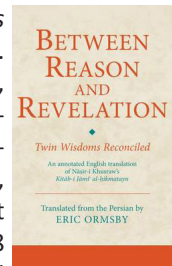
George Hatke (Ph.D. 2011) is a senior lecturer at the Institut für Orientalistik, University of Vienna. He has been teaching courses on ancient South Arabian history and languages and Arabic epigraphy and literature and next fall will start teaching Ge’ez.

Eric S. Lob (Ph.D. 2013) has won the 2013–14 Best Ph.D. Dissertation of the Year on a Topic of Iranian Studies Award awarded by the Foundation for Iranian Studies. Lob’s dissertation, “An Institutional History of the Iranian Construction Jihad: From Inception to Institutionalization (1979–2011),” was supervised by **Mirjam Künkler** and is the first organizational history of the rural development organization Jihad-e Sazandegi. According to the Selection Committee, Lob has made an “exceptional contribution to the field of Iranian and Middle Eastern Studies” by, among other achievements,

“stating clearly the study’s problematic... constructing an adequate and efficient theoretical framework... developing and using successfully a rigorous methodology to bring together a significant array of primary and secondary sources, including critical information secured through interviews judiciously conducted in the field in Iran and abroad, to support an innovative approach to the empirical study of post-revolutionary politics in general and politics of the Islamic Republic in particular.”

This is the second dissertation award that Lob has earned, the first being an Honorable Mention in the Mehrdad Mashayekhi Dissertation Award competition of the International Society for Iranian Studies. “The Mehrdad Mashayekhi Dissertation Award is presented biannually to the author of an exceptional Ph.D. dissertation dealing with the broad themes of politics and the public sphere in Iran, written in any language.” Lob is currently an assistant professor in Middle East comparative politics, Department of Politics and International Relations, Florida International University.

Eric Ormsby (Ph.D. 1981), Deputy Head of the Department of Academic Research and Publications at The Institute of Ismaili Studies, has won The World Book Award of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his translation of Nasir-i Khusraw’s *Jami’ al-Hikmatayn* under the title *Between Reason and Revelation: Twin Wisdoms Reconciled* (London : I.B. Tauris, 2012). “The award, given for works that further an appreciation of Islamic culture and thought, was conferred in Tehran at a formal ceremony on 8 February 2014, presided over by a number of leading Iranian scholars and religious leaders. The secretariat of the World Book Award ... commended Professor Ormsby’s work as the first complete English translation of the final work of the great 11th-century Ismaili philosopher and poet, and praised the accuracy and stylistic beauty of his translation.”



Alice Su ’13 (BA WWS, Certificate in Near Eastern Studies) has won the 2014 Elizabeth Neuffer Memorial Prize awarded by the United Nations Correspondents Association for her Pulitzer Center-supported project titled “[Interim Lives: Refugee Sur-](#)

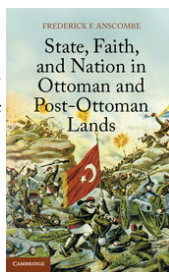
vival in Jordan and Lebanon,” which “explores how refugees mobilize to take care of themselves when aid agencies fail.” To watch her acceptance speech, please click [here](#). The prize is for written media (print and online) coverage of the United Nations and its agencies, and is named in honor of Neuffer, *The Boston Globe* U.N. bureau chief who died while on assignment in Baghdad in 2003.

To read more about the prize and to read samples of Su’s reporting, click [here](#). She has been published in *The Guardian*, *The Atlantic*, *Wired* and *Al Jazeera*, among other outlets.

Alumni Books

Anscombe, Frederick F. (Ph.D. 1994). *State, Faith, and Nation in Ottoman and Post-Ottoman Lands*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

“Current standard narratives of Ottoman, Balkan, and Middle East history overemphasize the role of nationalism in the transformation of the region. Challenging these accounts, this book argues that religious affiliation was the most influential shaper of communal identity in the Ottoman era, and that it continues to mold the relationship between state and society today. In this way, the book affords unusual insights not only into the historical patterns of political development but also into the forces which are shaping contemporary crises, from the dissolution of Yugoslavia to the rise of political Islam.”



To learn more about this book, which “offers an unusual synthesis of scholarship covering regions rarely considered together,” click [here](#).

Bauer, Karen (Ph.D. 2008), ed. *Aims, methods and contexts of Qur’anic exegesis (2nd/8th-9th/15th centuries)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. Institute of Ismaili Studies Qur’anic Studies Series v. 9.

“Although many books and articles use tafsir as a source, this is the first volume dedicated to exploring tafsir as a genre. ... This volume offers fresh analytical perspectives and addresses new methods for

the study of tafsir.

Medieval interpretations of the Qur’an often serve as points of reference for Muslim thought; yet Qur’an commentaries were shaped not only by the Qur’an itself, but also by their authors’ ideological viewpoints, their theories of interpretation, their methods, and the conventions of the genre. This volume focuses on the complex relationship between exegetes’ theoretical aims, their practical methods of writing, and the historical and intellectual contexts of Qur’an commentaries (tafsir). The essays emphasise the ways in which geography, human networks, hermeneutical systems, and genre boundaries affected the writing of these texts.



The volume also includes primary resources in the form of editions and translations of the introductions to al-Basit by Abu’l-Hasan ‘Ali al-Wahidi (d. 468 AH/1076 CE) and to the Tahdhib fi Tafsir al-Qur’an by al-Hakim al-Jishumi (d. 494 AH/1101CE), an edition of the section of Jishumi’s Tahdhib on Q. 68:33–43, and translated selections from the introduction to the tafsir of ‘Abd al-Razzaq al-Kashani (d. 736 AH/1336 CE).”

To learn more about this book, click [here](#) and [here](#).

Ferris, Jesse (Ph.D. 2008). *Nasser’s Gamble: How Intervention in Yemen Caused the Six-Day War and the Decline of Egyptian Power*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012.

“*Nasser’s Gamble* draws on declassified documents from six countries and original material in Arabic, German, Hebrew, and Russian to present a new understanding of Egypt’s disastrous five-year intervention in Yemen, which Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser later referred to as “my Vietnam.” Jesse Ferris argues that Nasser’s attempt to export the Egyptian revolution to Yemen played a decisive role in destabilizing Egypt’s relations with the Cold War powers, tarnishing its image in the Arab world, ruining its economy, and driving its rulers to instigate the fatal series of missteps that



led to war with Israel in 1967.

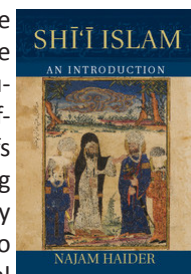
Viewing the Six Day War as an unintended consequence of the Saudi-Egyptian struggle over Yemen, Ferris demonstrates that the most important Cold War conflict in the Middle East was not the clash between Israel and its neighbors. It was the inter-Arab struggle between monarchies and republics over power and legitimacy. Egypt’s defeat in the “Arab Cold War” set the stage for the rise of Saudi Arabia and political Islam.

Bold and provocative, *Nasser’s Gamble* brings to life a critical phase in the modern history of the Middle East. Its compelling analysis of Egypt’s fall from power in the 1960s offers new insights into the decline of Arab nationalism, exposing the deep historical roots of the Arab Spring of 2011.”

To learn more about this book, Winner of the 2013 Reuven Chaikin Prize, click [here](#).

Haider, Najam (Ph.D. 2007). *Shi’i Islam: An Introduction*. New York, NY : Cambridge University Press, 2014.

“During the formative period of Islam, in the first centuries after Muhammad’s death, different ideas and beliefs abounded. It was during this period of roughly three centuries that two particular intellectual traditions emerged, Sunnism and Shi’ism. Sunni Muslims endorsed the historical caliphate, while Shi’i Muslims, supporters of ‘Ali, cousin of the Prophet and the fourth caliph, articulated their own distinctive doctrines. The Sunni-Shi’i schism is often framed as a dispute over the identity of the successor to Muhammad, whereas in reality, Sunni and Shi’i Muslims also differ on a number of seminal theological doctrines concerning the nature of God and legitimate political and religious authority. This book examines the development of Shi’i Islam through the lenses of belief, narrative, and memory. In an accessible yet nuanced manner, it conceives of Shi’ism as a historical project undertaken by a segment of the early Muslim community that felt dispossessed. This book also covers, for the first time in English, a wide range of Shi’i communities from the demographically predominant Twelvers to

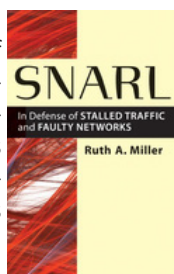


the transnational Isma'ilis to the scholar-activist Zaydis. The portrait of Shi'ism that emerges is that of a distinctive and vibrant community of Muslims with a remarkable capacity for reinvention and adaptation, grounded in a unique theological interpretation of Islam."

To learn more about this book, click [here](#). To read an interview with Haider, click [here](#).

Miller, Ruth A. (Ph. D. 2003). *Snarl: In Defense of Stalled Traffic and Faulty Networks*. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2013.

"Miller excavates a centuries-old history of nonhuman and nonbiological constitutional engagement and outlines a robust mechanical democracy that challenges existing theories of liberal and human political participation. Drawing on an eclectic set of legal, political, and automotive texts from France, Turkey, and the United States, she proposes a radical mechanical rearticulation of three of the most basic principles of democracy: vitality, mobility, and liberty.



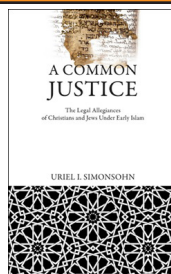
Rather than defending a grand theory of materialist or posthumanist politics, or addressing abstract concepts or "things" writ large, Miller invites readers into a self-contained history of constitutionalism situated in a focused discussion of automobile traffic congestion in Paris, Istanbul, and Boston. Within the mechanical public sphere created by automotive space, *Snarl* finds a model of democratic politics that transforms our most fundamental assumptions about the nature, and constitutional potential, of life, movement, and freedom."

To learn more about this book, click [here](#).

Simonsohn, Uriel I. (Ph.D. 2008). *A Common Justice: The Legal Allegiances of Christians and Jews Under Early Islam*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011.

"In *A Common Justice* Uriel I. Simonsohn examines the legislative response of Christian and Jewish religious elites to the problem posed by the appeal of their coreligionists to judicial authorities out-

side their communities. Focusing on the late seventh to early eleventh centuries in the region between Iraq in the east and present-day Tunisia in the west, Simonsohn explores the multiplicity of judicial systems that coexisted under early Islam to reveal a complex array of social obligations that connected individuals across confessional boundaries. By examining the incentives for appeal to external judicial institutions on the one hand and the response of minority confessional elites on the other, the study fundamentally alters our conception of the social history of the Near East in the early Islamic period.

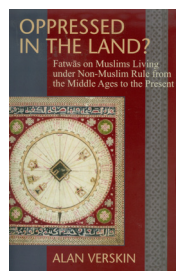


Contrary to the prevalent scholarly notion of a rigid social setting strictly demarcated along confessional lines, Simonsohn's comparative study of Christian and Jewish legal behavior under early Muslim rule exposes a considerable degree of fluidity across communal boundaries. This seeming disregard for religious affiliations threatened to undermine the position of traditional religious elites; in response, they acted vigorously to reinforce communal boundaries, censoring recourse to external judicial institutions and even threatening transgressors with excommunication."

To learn more about this book, click [here](#).

Verskin, Alan (Ph.D. 2010). *Oppressed in the Land? Fatwās on Muslims Living under Non-Muslim Rule from the Middle Ages to the Present*. Princeton Series of Middle Eastern Sources in Translation. Princeton, N.J.: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2013.

"Does Islamic law allow Muslims to live under the rule of non-Muslims? Does it matter who the non-Muslims are? Does it matter how Muslims are treated? How does minority status influence the practice of Islamic forms of worship, charity, familial relationships, and community organization? What relationship should exist between Muslim communities who lack political self-determination and the authorities in the Islamic heartlands? Can there be an authentic Islam where the Shari'ah cannot



be enforced?

This anthology includes translations of some of the key Islamic voices on these issues from the fourteenth century to the present. It includes fatwas (legal opinions) written in response to territorial losses to Spanish Christians and Mongols in the medieval period, the African territories of European empires in the nineteenth century, and Israelis in the twentieth century. It ends with a fatwā addressed to Muslims living in the United States at the end of the twentieth century."

To learn more about this book, click [here](#).

Yosmaoğlu, İpek K. (Ph.D. 2005). *Blood Ties: Religion, Violence and the Politics of Nationhood in Ottoman Macedonia, 1878–1908*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014.

"The region that is today Macedonia was long the heart of the Ottoman Empire in Europe. It was home to a complex mix of peoples and faiths who had for hundreds of years lived together in relative peace. To be sure, these people were no strangers to coercive violence and various forms of depredations visited upon them by bandits and state agents. In the final decades of the nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century, however, the region was periodically racked by bitter conflict that was qualitatively different from previous outbreaks of violence. In *Blood Ties*, İpek K. Yosmaoglu explains the origins of this shift from sporadic to systemic and pervasive violence through a social history of the "Macedonian Question."



Yosmaoglu's account begins in the aftermath of the Congress of Berlin (1878), when a potent combination of zero-sum imperialism, nascent nationalism, and modernizing states set in motion the events that directly contributed to the outbreak of World War I and had consequences that reverberate to this day. Focusing on the experience of the inhabitants of Ottoman Macedonia during this period, she shows how communal solidarities broke down, time and space were rationalized, and the immutable form of the nation and national identity replaced polyglot, fluid associa-

tions that had formerly defined people's sense of collective belonging. The region was remapped; populations were counted and relocated. An escalation in symbolic and physical violence followed, and it was through this process that nationalism became an ideology of mass mobilization among the common folk. Yosmaoglu argues that national differentiation was a consequence, and not the cause, of violent conflict in Ottoman Macedonia."

To learn more about this book, click [here](#).

Events

Brown Bag Lunch Lecture Series

Shelby Cullom Davis '30 Professor of European History and Professor of Byzantine History **John Haldon** opened the Fall 2014 Brown Bag Lecture Series with a well-attended talk and discussion on "An Existential Threat? Medieval East Roman (Byzantine) Views on Islam and on Jihād, ca 850–950 CE." Other speakers in the series and the titles of their talks were: **Christa Salamandra**, Lehman College and the Graduate Center, The City University of New York, "The Persistence of the Real: Syrian Television Drama in the Satellite Era"; **Alan Mikhail**, Yale University, "Ottoman Iceland: A Climate History"; **Toby Jones**, Rutgers University, "Energy and America's Long War in the Middle East"; **Roger Allen**, University of Pennsylvania, "Translating Arabic Fiction into English, with Examples from the Moroccan Tradition"; **Nadia Abu El-Haj**, Barnard College and Columbia University, "History as Tragedy: Ethics, Politics and Responsibility in Late Liberalism"; **Shira Robinson**, The George Washington University, "The Missing Link in Israel's Settler Colonial History: Military Rule over the Palestinians Who Remained after 1948"; and **Alexa Firat**, Temple University, "New Papers on an Old Theme: Awraq and the Re-formation of the Syrian Writers' Collective"

The Near East and the World Seminar Series

The 2014–15 edition of the Near East and the World Seminar Series has as its theme, "Christianity in the Near East: Past, Present...Future?" During the Fall semester, two talks were given: **Sidney H. Griffith**, Emeritus Professor of Early Christian Studies, Catholic University of America, spoke about "Melkites and Muslims: The Longue

Durée of the Arabic Orthodox Church," and **Roberta Irvine**, St. Nersess Armenian Seminary, presented "Like a Tree Planted by the Waters: The Deep Roots of Armenians in Jerusalem."

Princeton Islamic Studies Colloquium

Founded in 2009, the Princeton Islamic Studies Colloquium (PISC) is a monthly forum for discussion and peer review of graduate students' research projects. The colloquium meets roughly once a month over lunch to discuss a pre-circulated paper, and all attendees are expected to have read and reflected on the paper beforehand. A discussant initiates the conversation with a summary of the paper's main argument, taking care to identify what the piece contributes to current scholarship as well as its potential for further development. Following the author's response, a moderator leads roughly an hour of discussion.

During Fall 2014, the following graduate students presented papers: **Aaron Rock-Singer** (NES), "Transmitting a Revival: The Negotiation of Mass Religious Education in Egypt, 1976–1981" (Discussant: Associate professor of History and NES **Max Weiss**); **Emily Goshey** (REL), "Saudi Islamic Universities and their Exclusive Salafi Networks" (Discussant: Class of 1943 University Professor of Near Eastern Studies **Michael Cook**); **Nebil Husayn** (NES), "Enmity for 'Alī and His Family: The Discourse between Anti-Alid and Anti-Shī'ī Sentiment" (Discussant: **Michael Dann** [REL]); **Cecilia Palombo** (NES), "How Could We Be Idolaters?" Representing Christians as Pagans Between Byzantium and Islam (6th–7th Centuries)" (Discussant: Assistant professor of History **Jack Tannous**); **Megan Brankley Abbas** (HIS), "The Struggle Against Intellectual Dualism: Western Education and Islamic Religious Authority in late Colonial Indonesia" (Discussant: **Usama al-Azami** [NES]); and **Brahim El Guabli** (COM), "The 'Self' and the 'Other' in the Prison Poetry of al-Ḥamdānī and Ibn 'Abbād" (Discussant: Cleveland E. Dodge Professor of Near Eastern Studies, Emeritus, **Andras Hamori**)

Lectures

A number of notable lectures were held during the Fall semester. On October 20, **Yair Dalal** presented "Baghdad – Jerusalem Musical Encounters"; on November 13, **David Stephan Powers** (Ph.D. 1979) of Cornell University discussed "The End of

Prophecy in the Near East: How Muhammad Became the Last Prophet"; and on December 1, Dr. **Mustafa A.G. Abushagur**, a member of the Libyan House of Representatives, spoke about "Libya, Transition from Dictatorship to Democracy, Challenges and Prospects."

Conference

On October 10, 2104, the Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP) Conference "Wars, After-Wars and Structural Crises in the Middle East" was held on campus. NES-related participants were postdoctoral fellow **Kevan Harris**, who presented a paper on "Iranian Domestic Politics and Talks with the West," and associated faculty member **Amaney Jamal** (Politics), who served as a discussant and panel chair. The sponsors of this conference included the Institute for the Transregional Study of the Contemporary Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia, the Workshop on Arab Political Development, and the Department and Program in Near Eastern Studies.

TRI Events

In addition to co-sponsoring numerous events, the Institute for the Transregional Study of the Contemporary Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia (TRI) hosted four speakers: **Hussein Ibish** (Senior Fellow, American Task Force on Palestine) discussed "The Israel-Hamas Conflict and Palestinian National Reconciliation" on September 16; **Shadi Hamid** (Fellow, Project on U.S.-Islamic World Relations, Saban Center for Middle East Policy, The Brookings Institution) examined "The Political Islam Problem: Is the Middle East Exceptional?" on October 7; **William McCants** (Ph.D. 2006, Director of the Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World, Saban Center for Middle East Policy, The Brookings Institution) presented "Sectarian Apocalypse: The Syrian Civil War Explained by Islamic Prophecies of the End Times" on November 4; and **Georges Tamer** (Chair of Oriental Philology and Islamic Studies, "Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nuremberg) spoke on "Ibn Taymiyya as a Philosopher in Contemporary Islamic Discourses" on December 2.

Workshop on Arab Political Development Events

Among the events held by the Workshop on Arab Political Development were: "A Discussion with His Excellency **Khalid Bin**

Mohammed Alattiyah, Qatari Minister of State for Foreign Affairs” on September 29; “The Challenge of the ‘Islamic State’ (ISIS): What Should the U.S. and the International Community Do?” a discussion featuring Professor **Bernard Haykel**, Near Eastern Studies, Professor **Amaney Jamal**, Politics, and Professor **Michael A. Reynolds**, Near Eastern Studies, and moderated by Professor **Robert P. George**, Politics held November 12; and “In the Wake of the Uprisings: Economic Development and Social Justice In the Arab World,” a joint workshop of the American University of Beirut and Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs and the Mamdouha S. Bobst Center for Peace and Justice held November 21.

LISD Events

A number of events held by the Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination were co-sponsored by Near Eastern Studies. Associate Professor of Near Eastern Studies **Michael Reynolds** spoke in the Crisis Diplomacy Lunch Seminar about “Post-Visit Retrospectives on the Caucasus and Russia” on October 9, 2014 ; **Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani**, Founder and Chair of Arab International Women’s Forum, discussed “Women as Drivers of Change in the Arab World” on October 14, and **Robert Eisen**, Professor of Religion and Judaic Studies at George Washington University, presented “Justifying Israel’s Wars in Jewish Law: Challenges and Solutions” on January 21, 2015.

Postdoctoral Research Associates

Kevan Harris has been quoted in “**Rush to the centre: Iran’s political elite maintains a delicate balance**,” an article appearing in the November 1, 2014, issue of the *Economist*, and in “**Rise in divorce in Iran linked to shift in status of women**,” an article appearing on the Reuters Web site on Wednesday, October 22, 2014.

Former NES postdoc **Elvire Corboz** (2011–13) has accepted a position as assistant professor at Aarhus University in Denmark.

Visiting Fellows

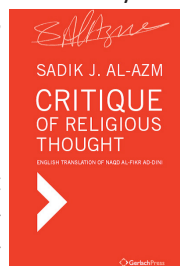
Elisabeth Özdalga is spending the first six months of 2015 as a visiting fellow in Near Eastern Studies. She received her Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. Since 1983, she has been working in the Department of Sociology, Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey, where she was appointed Full Professor in 1994. She has also worked as director of the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul and as head of the Department of Political Science, Bilkent University, Ankara. She is the editor of several anthologies related to religion, politics, and society in Turkey and the Middle East. Her present research project is related to citizenship and national identities as reflected in Turkish Friday sermons during the modern republic.



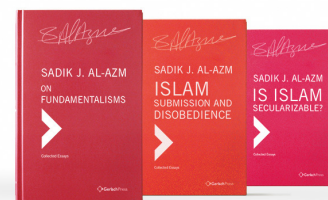
TRI Fellow **Sadik al-Azm’s Critique of Religious Thought: English Translation of Naqđ al-fikr ad-dini**, has been published by Gerlach Press (2014). This book “set off one of the great Arab intellectual uproars of the twentieth century, leading to the author’s imprisonment and trial for mocking religion and inciting sectarian conflict. As in his earlier *Self-Criticism after the Defeat*, al-Azm takes on the taboos of the age and their sponsors: the religious elites. In this book he attempts to awaken the Arab mind from its dogmatic slumber, leading it out of the Middle Ages and into a modern world characterized by science and rationality. *Critique of Religious Thought* is one of the most controversial and influential books about the role of religion in Arab politics.

This is the first authorized English translation of *Naqđ al-fikr ad-dini*, originally published in Arabic in 1969. [It has been] newly translated by George Stergios and Mansour Ajami, with an introduction for this edition by the author.”

For more about this book, click [here](#).



Gerlach Press has also recently published a three-volume collection of al-Azm’s essays, *Secularism, Fundamentalism, and the Struggle for the Meaning of Islam: Collected Essays on Politics and Religion* (2014).



For more about this book, click [here](#).

Near Eastern Language Film Series

Eight films were shown in the Film Series during the Fall semester, two each in Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, and Turkish, with English subtitles. These were: *Where Do We Go Now?* (Arabic film, 2011), directed by Nadine Labaki; *The Wonders* (Hebrew film, 2013), directed by Avi Nesher; *A Cube of Sugar* (Persian film, 2011), directed by Reza Mirkarimi; *Korkuyorum Anne!* (Mommy, I am Scared!/What is a Human Anyway? Turkish film, 2004), directed by Reha Erdem; *Wadja* (Arabic film, 2012), directed by Haifaa Al Mansour; *Dr. Pomerantz* (Hebrew film, 2011), directed by Assi Dayan; *So Far, So Close* (Persian film, 2005), directed by Reza Mirkarimi; and *Coskun* (Yozgat Blues, Turkish film, 2013), directed by Mahmut Fazil.

Library news

Rachel Simon, Leader, Middle Eastern Approvals Section, has contributed the North African section to the online *Oxford Bibliographies in Jewish Studies*.

In Memoriam: Talat Halman (December 5, 2014)

Talat Sait Halman, who taught Turkish to a generation of students at Princeton, passed away on December 5, 2014. Halman first worked in the Department of Near Eastern Studies in the summer of 1965 as Associate Coordinator in Turkish. He returned to NES in 1966 as a Visiting Lecturer, a position he held until 1970, and from 1972 to 1980 he held the rank of Lecturer, resigning in 1980 to become Turkey’s first and only Ambassador for Cultural Af-

fairs. Halman also taught at Columbia, the University of Pennsylvania, NYU, where he served as Chairman of Near Eastern Languages and Literatures for a decade, and Bilkent, where he was the founding chairman of Bilkent's Department of Turkish Literature in 1996 and since 2005 Dean of Faculty of Humanities and Letters. He wrote or translated over eighty books, published approximately 3,000 articles, essays, newspaper columns, and reviews, and translated thousands of poems. Halman was awarded Columbia University's "Thornton Wilder Prize," an honorary doctorate from the Boğaziçi University, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Medal, and the "Knight Grand Cross" from the then British Empire.

NES in Pictures

Fall Reception



Department Chair Muhammad Qasim Zaman welcoming the attendees, with Michael Cook in the background



Jelena Radovanovic, Daniel Fields, Thomas Benfey, and Cole Bunzel



Max Weiss and Sara Pursley



Enis Dinç, M. Şükrü Hanoğlu, and Zeki Sarigil



Jonathan Gribetz, Emmanuel Szurek, and Angelos Dalachanis

"What Makes Islam Unique?" Panel Discussion of Michael Cook's Ancient Religions, Modern Politics



Kevan Harris and Michael Cook



Kevan Harris, Michael A. Cook, Jack Tannous, Kanchan Chandra, and Mark Beissinger

Holiday Party



Simon Wolfgang Fuchs, Jacob Olidort, and Samuel Helfont



Jelena Radovanovic, M'hamed Oualdi, and William Smiley



Thomas Benfey, Peter Kitlas, and Chad Mowbray

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More Scenes from the Fall Reception



Thomas Benfey, Nebil Husayn, and Nathan Hodson



Tori Rinker and Kate Maffey



Mahmoud M. El Ashmawy and M'hamed Oualdi



Edith Chen, Deborah Schlein, Zeki Sarigil, Emmanuel Szurek, and Autumn Patterson