From the Editor’s Desk

On January 13, 2017, the Department of Near Eastern Studies turned ninety years old. On that date in 1927, the Princeton University Board of Trustees approved the establishment of a new department, that of Oriental Languages and Literatures, for graduate instruction and research in Semitic and Indo-European philology. Its faculty was to consist of four professors: Harold H. Bender, Professor of Indo-Germanic Philology and chairman of the new department; Robert William Rogers, Visiting Professor of Ancient Literature on the William Paton Foundation; Edmund Yard Robbins, Ewing Professor of Greek Language and Literature, and Philip K. Hitti, formerly of the American University of Beirut, Assistant Professor of Semitic Literature (to read an article about Philip Hitti’s role in establishing Near Eastern Studies at Princeton click here).

Professor Bender stated that “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.”

The university library was already prepared to support the instruction in the new department. There were approximately one hundred periodicals in the fields of Oriental and comparative philology; the Oriental Seminary of 12,000 volumes, including the David Paton ’74 Collection of Oriental Philology and History of 3,000 volumes; the Rudolph Ernest Brünnow Collection of languages, chiefly Arabic; some 700 cuneiform tablets, mainly Babylonian and Assyrian; and 287 papyri, including those in the Garrett Collection.

In the department’s initial year of operation, 1927–28, the Princeton University Catalogue listed graduate courses in Classical Sanskrit, Vedic Philology and Literature, The Elements of Linguistic Science, Comparative Grammar of the Indo-European Languages, Gothic, Lithuanian, and Syriac (in case of sufficient demand). For upper-class undergraduates, there were courses in Elements of Linguistic Science, Ancient Oriental Literature, Elementary Sanskrit, Classical Arabic, and Biblical Hebrew, but “No undergraduate will be permitted to elect Oriental Languages and Literatures as a department.” Hitti was listed as the instructor for the Classical Arabic, Biblical Hebrew, and Syriac courses, as well as preceptor for the Ancient Oriental Literature course.

In the ninety years following the Trustees’ decision, Oriental Languages and Litera-
tures has experienced great growth and undergone such major transformations that today's Near Eastern Studies bears little resemblance to its beginnings as a graduate department of comparative philology. The following snapshots, taken at thirty-year intervals, illustrate the growth and changes.

By the 1957–58 academic year, the focus of the department had shifted from comparative philology to the civilizations, history, languages, law, literatures, and religions of the Near East, with a hint of its further expansion of coverage to East Asia, and from graduate to combined graduate and undergraduate education. The faculty had grown from four professors to eight, with an additional two lecturers, three instructors, two visiting professors, and a graduate student bringing the total number of faculty to sixteen. There were now nineteen undergraduate courses listed in the catalog, including elementary and intermediate courses in Arabic, Chinese, Persian, and Turkish languages. While Sanskrit, linguistics, and literary masterpieces were still being taught, undergraduates could now take courses on the ancient Near East, the Near East from Alexander to Muhammad, the rise of Islam, Islamic civilization, the world of Islam from the Abbasids to the Ottomans, the modern Near East, and Chinese thought. Undergraduate fields of study were the Semitic, Indo-Iranian, medieval Islamic, and through the Program in Near Eastern Studies, established in 1947, the modern Near East.

The Graduate School catalog for 1957–58 still showed vestiges of the original purpose of the department, listing as one of the three doctoral degree courses of study Indo-European, including general linguistics, but the other two doctoral fields, Ancient Semitic and Islamic, clearly demonstrate the shift in emphasis. The catalog, while ignoring the Indo-European field, further breaks down the Semitic and Islamic areas of study into the follow subfields: for Ancient Semitic, Semitic Orient to 1200 B.C.; Semitic Orient, 1200–330 B.C.; Hellenistic-Roman Near East, 330 B.C. to 225 A.D.; and Early Byzantine-Sasanian Near East, 225–622 A.D.; and for Islamic, Islamic Near East, 600–1050; Islamic Near East, 1050–1517; Islamic Near East, 1517–1800; Islamic Near East, since 1800; Islamic Literature; Islamic Religions and Institutions; Islamic Philosophy, Theology, and Mysticism; Islamic Art and Archaeology (with the Department of Art and Archaeology, but suspended); and Near Eastern Social Studies. The listing of graduate courses further illustrates the shift in emphasis, showing not one course in Indo-European or general linguistics but containing seventeen courses on ancient Near Eastern languages and history, advanced and classical Arabic, advanced Persian and Turkish, Arab history and civilization, Ottoman and Turkish history, Safavi and modern Iranian history, Islamic religion and culture, and Islamic law. As for the library’s holdings, the Oriental Seminar had expanded to 16,000 volumes and the Garrett ‘97 Collection of manuscripts now totaled approximately 10,000 volumes. Furthermore, in another indication of the incipient importance of East Asian studies, the Gest Oriental Library of 135,000 mostly Chinese volumes was placed on deposit in the university library.

In the thirty years before the next snapshot from 1987–88, the East Asian component of Oriental Languages and Literatures expanded considerably, the department was renamed Oriental Studies, and in 1969 Oriental Studies was divided to form the departments of East Asian Studies and Near Eastern Studies. By 1987, the Near Eastern Studies faculty had grown to 13 professors, with two language lecturers and two visiting professors. The number of undergraduate courses listed in the catalog had grown to thirty-seven, and Modern Hebrew had been added to the curriculum. The strength of the faculty was almost entirely in the pre-modern period, and this was reflected in the types of courses offered. Concentrations for undergraduates were in the Islamic Near East, Near Eastern History, Near Eastern Literature, Hebrew Studies, and Pre-Islamic Near East. A certificate in Near Eastern Studies was also offered through the Program in Near Eastern Studies.

At the graduate student level, there was no longer any mention of comparative philology; the department’s doctoral fields were the Ancient Near East and Islamic, with a definite emphasis on the Islamic. The only graduate level course listed in the catalog that was related to the Ancient Near East was Syriac, and Syriac is also relevant to the early Islamic period. Of the remaining twenty-three courses listed, sixteen dealt with the pre-modern Near East. Graduate students could also take courses at NYU. The library’s holdings about southwestern Asia had expanded considerably to over 100,000 volumes, and the Islamic manuscript collection, largely consisting of the Garrett Collection, now contained over 10,000 titles.

Over these last thirty years, as interest in the Near East has grown in the United States, the Department of Near Eastern Studies has also grown and changed to reflect the burgeoning public interest in the modern Near East. While traditionally the strength of the department had been in the medieval and pre-modern studies of the geographical area that includes the Arab lands, Iran, Israel, and Turkey, greater emphasis has been given more recently to the modern Muslim world in its entirety, including the Caucasus, Central Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. In 2016–17, there are now fifteen professors and nine language lecturers, an increase in the faculty of sixty per cent from 1987. Of the fifteen professors, only three have been in the department since before 2005. Eight of the twelve professors hired since 2005 have at least one foot in the study of the modern Near East. This significant shift in faculty research interests is reflected in the courses they teach. Of the twenty-nine undergraduate subject courses listed on the NES Web site, approximately two-thirds include coverage of the modern Near East, again a major change from 1987–88. Another sixteen courses are languages courses, bringing the total number of courses listed to forty-five, a 22% increase over the number of courses listed in 1987–88. Near Eastern Studies has also changed at the graduate student level. Gone is the Ancient Near East field. According to the Graduate School Web site, “The Department of Near Eastern Studies offers training leading to doctoral degrees in the study of the Middle East and more broadly the Islamic World, from the rise of Islam to the present day.” The shift to a more modern focus within the faculty is also reflected in the content of the graduate courses taught—at least half of thirty courses address the modern Near East, with many of the others containing content applicable to the modern Near East. Another area of major growth has been in the library’s Near East Collections, which now contain over 450,000 printed books and over 10,000 manuscript volumes in Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, and Turkish and
which constitute one of the major assemblages of Near Eastern research materials in the United States. In addition, the library maintains subscriptions to over 1,000 journals related to the field, as well as subscriptions to numerous online resources that did not exist thirty years earlier.

In its ninety-year history, Near Eastern Studies has grown and changed significantly. Starting out as a department of comparative philology, it is now an area studies department focused on “the study of the Middle East and more broadly the Islamic World, from the rise of Islam to the present day.” Other than the teaching of Arabic and Syriac, none of its course content is remotely similar to that offered in 1927. Over the same ninety years, its faculty has expanded from four to twenty-four members; the number of courses has increased from twelve undergraduate and graduate courses to some seventy-five undergraduate and graduate courses; and the Library’s Near East Collections have grown from a few tens of thousands of volumes in the languages of the Near East to around a half million volumes.

Near Eastern Studies at ninety is alive and prospering!

William Blair
Editor

Faculty news
A translation done by Gregory Bell, Lecturer in Near Eastern Studies and Associate Director of the Arabic Language Program, of a Mikhail Naimy short story has been published in Middle Eastern Literatures 19, no. 2 (2016), with the title of “Shorty.” This story was based upon Naimy’s experiences serving in the U.S. Army in France in World War I.

Jonathan Gribetz has been reappointed for a second three-year term as assistant professor of Near Eastern Studies and the Program in Judaic Studies.

Bernard Haykel participated with eight other Princeton professors in a Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies roundtable discussion held November 28, 2016, on “Trump and the World.”

Associated faculty member Amany Jamal, Edwards S. Sanford Professor of Politics and Director of the Mamdouha S. Bobst Center for Peace and Justice, moderated a panel discussion on “Muslims and the U.S. Elections” held October 18, 2016 as part of the Islam in Conversation series sponsored by the Muslim Life Program. She also moderated a panel discussion held November 10, 2016, on “What the US Elections Mean for the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process” with Ambassador Daniel C. Kurtzer, Woodrow Wilson School, Shai Feldman, Brandeis University, and Khalil Shikaki Palestine Center for Policy and Survey Research.

Associated faculty member Lital Levy, Associate Professor of Comparative Literature, participated in a panel discussion, “Citizenship and the Humanities at the 10th Annual Humanities Colloquium held September 12, 2016.

Associate Professor Michael Reynolds was quoted in two articles dealing with Russian-Turkish relations. The first, “If Turkey and Russia Restore Ties, It Will Be on Putin’s Terms” by Ben Rosen, appeared in the Christian Science Monitor on June 28, 2016, and the second, “NATO Plays It Cool as Russia and Turkey Grow Closer” by Keith Johnson and John Hudson, appeared on the Foreign Policy web site on August 10, 2016. To read the articles click on the titles.

Professor in the School of Historical Studies, Institute for Advanced Studies, and Lecturer with the rank of Professor in Near Eastern Studies Sabine Schmidtke has published with Wilferd Madelung Al-Sāḥib Ibn ‘Abbād Promoter of Rational Theology: Two Mu’tazilī Kalām Texts from the Cairo Geniza (Brill, 2016).

“The volume contains critical editions of the extant parts of two hitherto unknown theological works by the Būyid vizier al-Sāḥib b. ‘Abbād (d. 385/925), who is well known to have vigorously promoted the teaching of Mu’tazilī theology throughout Būyid territories and beyond. The manuscripts on which the edition is based come from Cairo Geniza store rooms. They consist of two manuscripts for each of the two texts—testimony to the impact of al-Sāḥib’s education policy on the contemporaneous Jewish community in Cairo. The longer treatise of al-Sāḥib of ca. 350/960, possibly his Kitāb Nahj al-sabīl fi usūl al-dīn, appears to be the earliest Mu’tazili work preserved among the Jewish community. The second, briefer treatise also contains a commentary by Abū al-Jabbār al-Hamadānī (d. 415/1025).”

On December 15, 2016, Schmidtkte took part in a Historical Studies—Social Science Library Book Talk discussion on current scholarship on rational theology among Muslims.

Associate Professor of History and Near Eastern Studies Max Weiss and Assistant Professor of English at the University of Notre Dame Roy Scranton (English Ph.D. 2015) appeared at Labyrinth Books to discuss Scranton’s novel about the Iraq, War Porn.

The late Patricia Crone’s Collected Studies in Three Volumes, edited by Hanna Siurua, has been published by Brill (2016). Crone, the Andrew W. Mellon Professor Emerita in the School of Historical Research at the Institute for Advanced Study, was a long-time contributor to scholarly life in Near Eastern Studies, most recently as Lecturer with the Rank of Full Professor.
Pagans and Related Matters, pursues the reconstruction of the religious environment in which Islam arose and develops an intertextual approach to studying the Qur’anic religious milieu. Volume 2, The Iranian Reception of Islam: The Non-Traditionalist Strands, examines the reception of pre-Islamic legacies in Islam, above all that of the Iranians. Volume 3, Islam, the Ancient Near East and Varieties of Godlessness, places the rise of Islam in the context of the ancient Near East and investigates sceptical and subversive ideas in the Islamic world.

Undergraduate news
Becca Keener ’17, a religion major who is pursuing certificates in Near Eastern Studies and Arabic Language and Culture, has been awarded a Daniel M. Sachs Class of 1960 Graduating Scholarship. Keener plans to attend the London School of Economics in order to earn a master’s degree in global Europe: culture and conflict. “For her senior thesis, Keener is studying the effects of religious freedom and minority rights discourse on societal dynamics in Syria. She plans to trace the relationship between religion and governance in Syria since 1970, with particular attention to how foreign intervention has shaped it.”

“I am absolutely delighted about the news of Becca’s winning a Sachs Scholarship: she is a remarkable human being,” said Jack Tannous, assistant professor of history. “In addition to excelling academically here at Princeton, Becca has been deeply involved in helping vulnerable and exploited people — Yezidi sex slaves, Eritrean refugees and others — both in the U.S. and the Middle East. She is the kind of person who, once you have met her, makes you want to be a better person. She is truly an inspiration.”

“The Daniel M. Sachs Class of 1960 Graduating Scholarship commemorates Dan Sachs ... a distinguished student and a fine athlete who intended to enter politics. He died of cancer at the age of 28. Sachs’ friends and classmates instituted the scholarship to provide a senior with an opportunity to study, work, or travel abroad after graduation.

The scholarship’s purpose is to enlarge the holder’s experience of the world. The scholarship is meant for students of broadly comparable intentions who are thinking of public affairs, whether politics, civil service, international affairs, journalism, and public education; or law, science, or medicine in the public interest.”

For more about Keener’s winning the Sachs, click here and here. For more about the Sachs Scholarship click here.

Preston Lim ’17, an NES concentrator who is also working on a Certificate in the History and Practice of Diplomacy, was named a 2018 Schwarzman Scholar. The Schwarzman Scholars program “is a highly selective, one-year master’s program at Tsinghua University in Beijing that is designed to prepare the next generation of global leaders for the challenges of the future.” During the program, Lim “hopes to examine China’s One Belt One Road Policy, focusing on Chinese investment in Central Asia.” The Schwarzman Scholars program was founded by Blackstone Chairman, CEO, and co-founder Stephen A. Schwarzman “in order to give the most talented future leaders the power to change the course of history.”

Lim was also named a Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies (PIIRS) Undergraduate Fellow for 2016–17. The PIIRS Undergraduate Fellowship program is “aimed at facilitating summer international research for the senior thesis. The fellowships are available to students working in any discipline who are about to begin the second semester of their junior year on campus and are interested in conducting summer research abroad for their senior thesis.” Lim’s proposed research topic is “The Cost of Freedom: Contextualizing Turkey’s Jupiter Missiles.”

Zeena Mubarak participated in the Princeton Internships in Civic Service (PICS) program during both summer 2015 and summer 2016. In 2015, she worked on the academic team for BSAFE, a summer camp for underprivileged children in Boston. In 2016, she worked at Ascend Learning in Brooklyn, NY, on the curriculum development team. Her alumni advisor was Miriam Kuritzkes, Class of 2010. “The PICS program offers Princeton undergraduates 8- to 10-week paid, alumni-sponsored public and nonprofit summer internships in a wide range of national and international organizations in multiple fields including legal services, public policy, environment, health and social services, community development, education and the arts. It also exposes students to the rewards of service and encourages participants to continue as volunteers and board members for nonprofits after graduation, in the Princeton tradition of service to humanity.” To learn more about Mubarak’s experience in this program click here.

Mubarak is also a senior columnist for the Daily Princetonian. Her opinion piece, “The Bachelor(ette): Elections 2016” on the September 26, 2016 presidential debate between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton may be read here.

Graduate news
Fifth-year graduate student Cole Bunzel was quoted in the Washington Post article “Inside ISIS: Quietly preparing for the loss of the ‘caliphate’” which appeared on July 12, 2016. To read this article by Joby Warrick and Souad Mekhenet click here.

Sixth-year graduate student Sarah Islam was one of four recipients (one per graduate division) awarded the inaugural Dean’s 2017 Graduate Teaching Fellowship. Under the auspices of the Office of the Dean of the Graduate School, fellows are paired with “master teachers in their disciplines, receiving personalized mentoring over the course of one semester in inclusive and productive teaching methods as well as making diversity an asset in...
the classroom.” In the semester thereafter, fellows are given the opportunity to teach their own undergraduate course in their respective fields in lieu of assistantships.

After completing fieldwork and primary source research in Jordan and Turkey over the summer with funding from the Andrew Mellon Foundation, Mrs. Islam’s research and primary source procurement is being featured this month in the *Jordan Times*, as well as several European and Middle Eastern news outlets. She was also invited to give a talk at the American Center for Oriental Research on the topic, “Against the death penalty: Ibn ‘Abidin’s Argument for *Hudūd* Avoidance in the Case of *Sabb,*” as well as at the U.S. Embassy in Morocco on the topic, “Blasphemy as a Legal Category in Early and Medieval Islamic History.” She also gave an invited talk at the Social Science Research Council in March 2017 on the topic, “Certainty and Doubt in Islamic Jurisprudence: The Dividing Line between the Hanafis and Shafi’is on Whether and When to Execute for *Sabb.*”

First-year graduate student Yaara Perlman gave a Hebrew language talk on “Mizrahir and Ashkenazim in Israel” on November 9, 2016, as part of the NES Hebrew language program.

Fifth-year graduate student Lindsey Stephenson gave the October 3, 2016, Brown Bag Lunch talk on the topic of “Debts and Death: Bahrain Court Records and the Iranian Everyday, 1920–1945.”

**Alumni news**

Karen Bauer (Ph.D. 2008) and Nadav Samin (Ph.D. 2013) shared the Runner Up prize in the 2016 British-Kuwait Friendship Society Book Prize competition. Bauer won for her book *Gender Hierarchy in the Qur’an: Medieval Interpretations, Modern Responses* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), which was described as “a ground-breaking contribution to the history of Muslim exegesis of the Qur’an. It is highly original not only in its diachronic perspective, but also in the variety of material it examines. The book is highly readable. Through the case studies that lie at its core, Bauer develops convincing arguments that demonstrate her tremendous knowledge and her analytical rigour. She strikes an ideal balance between factual findings and synthesis, providing the reader with a wealth of insights into discursive structures and historical developments. ... [I]t is by far the best monograph on the history of Qur’anic exegesis that has been published in recent years and will be an indispensable resource for future scholars.”

Samin won for his book *Of Sand or Soil: Genealogy and Tribal Belonging in Saudi Arabia* (Princeton University Press, 2015). The prize announcement stated that “the backbone of the book is a remarkable amount of primary research.’ This enables the author to provide us with a series of insights not only into the day-to-day work of a genealogies [sic] within a living tradition, but also into the evolution of the Wahhabi state from the pre-oil period to the 21st century.’ Throughout the book, Samin illustrates ‘a dynamic relationship between the state, scholar and tribe, and in so doing succeeds in his aim of providing a narrative of Saudi history that does not focus solely on oil or Islam. ... The ability of Samin to link the big picture political story to his archival and field work on a scholar almost completely unknown outside the Arabian Peninsula is a remarkable achievement and would make him a worthy winner of this book prize’”

Books by NES-related authors have done quite well in this competition over the years. Three members of the NES faculty have won the British-Kuwait Friendship Society Book Prize. Muhammad Qasim Zaman, Robert H. Niehaus ’77 Professor of Near Eastern Studies and Religion, won in 2013 for *Modern Islamic Thought in a Radical Age: Religious Authority and Internal Criticism* (Cambridge University Press, 2012); Michael A. Cook, Class of 1943 University Professor of Near Eastern Studies, won in 2002 for *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought* (Cambridge University Press, 2000); and Patricia Crone, Visiting Lecturer with the rank of Professor in Near Eastern Studies, won in 2005 for *Medieval Islamic Political Thought* (Edinburgh University Press, 2004). Four other books by NES alumni have also done well in the competition. *State, Faith, and Nation in Ottoman and Post-Ottoman Lands* (Cambridge University Press, 2014) by Frederick F. Anscumbie (Ph. D. 1994) and *Shi‘i Islam: An Introduction* (Cambridge University Press, 2014) by Najam Haider (Ph.D. 2007) were both awarded Honourable Mention in 2015, *Charity in Islamic Societies* (Cambridge University Press, 2008) by Amy Singer (Ph.D. 1989) was awarded Honourable Mention in 2009, and *Marriage, Money and Divorce in Medieval Islamic Society* (Cambridge University Press, 2005) by Yossef Rapoport (Ph.D. 2002) was short-listed for the award in 2006. Finally, former TRI Visiting Fellow Pascal Ménoret won the 2015 Prize for his *Joyriding in Riyadh: Oil, Urbanism, and Road Revolt* (Cambridge University Press, 2014).

“The [British-Kuwait Friendship Society Book] Prize was founded thanks to an endowment of the Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah Foundation. ... The prize is awarded for the best scholarly work on the Middle East each year.”

Cloe Bordewich ’12, a second-year Ph.D. student in history and Middle Eastern studies at Harvard University, was in Istanbul during

Jane Hathaway (Ph.D. 1992) was a member at the School of Historical Studies, Institute for Advanced Study during the fall 2016 semester. Her project title was: “The Chief Eunuch of the Ottoman Imperial Harem from the Origins of the Office to the Beginnings of Westernizing Reform.” She returned to Jones Hall on October 10, 2016, to give a Brown Bag Lunch talk on “Eunuchs and Sunni Orthodoxy: Attitudes of the Ottoman Chief Harem Eunuch to Sufism and Shi’ism.”

Celene Ibrahim ’08 contributed an article, “Explaining Islam: What I Wish You Knew,” to the November 9, 2016, issue of the Princeton Alumni Weekly. She is the Muslim chaplain at Tufts University and co-director of the Center for Interreligious and Communal Leadership Education (CIRCLE) at Andover Newton Theological School and Hebrew College.

Second lieutenant Kate Maffey ’16 was featured in an article, “From Princeton Orange to Army Green.” In the Fall 2016 issue of Princeton International, a new magazine published by PIIRS.

William McCants (Ph.D. 2006) and Jacob Oldsont (Ph.D. 2015) were both quoted by Scott Shane in an article, “Saudis and Extremism: ’Both the Arsonists and the Firefighters’,” that appeared online August 25, 2016 in The New York Times.

Zora O’Neill ’94 published an essay, “For Student of Arabic, a Lifelong Lesson,” in the January 11, 2017 issue of the Princeton Alumni Weekly. O’Neill is the author of All Strangers Are Kin: Adventures in Arabic and the Arab World (Houghton, Mifflin, Harcourt, 2016) as well as a number of travel guides. From the publisher’s blurb for All Strangers Are Kin: “A natural storyteller with an eye for the deeply absurd and the deeply human, O’Neill explores the indelible links between culture and communication. A powerful testament to the dynamism of language, All Strangers Are Kin reminds us that learning another tongue leaves you rich with so much more than words.” To learn more about All Strangers Are Kin click here.

Amr Osman (Ph.D. 2010) has been promoted to associate professor of Islamic history in the Department of Humanities, Qatar University. His first book, The Zāhirī Madhab (3rd/9th–10th/16th Century): A Textualist Theory of Islamic Law, was published by Brill in 2014. “In this book, Amr Osman seeks to expand and re-interprete what we know about the history and doctrine of the Zāhirī madhab. Based on an extensive prosopographical survey, he concludes that the founder, Dāwūd al-Zāhirī, was closer in profile and doctrine to the Ahl al-Ra’y than to the Ahl al-Hadith. Furthermore, Ibn Hazm al-Andalusi may have had a damaging effect on the madhab, which never actually developed into a full-fledged school of law. By examining the meaning of ‘zāhir’ and modern scholarship on ‘literalism’, he challenges the view that Zāhirism was literalist, proposing ‘textualism’ as an accurate reflection of its premises, methodology, and goals as a hermeneutical and legal theory.” To learn more about this book, click here.

Daphne Oz ’08 appeared at Labyrinth Books to discuss her new cookbook, The Happy Cook (Morrow Cookbooks, 2016), on November 3, 2016. Oz, “the bestselling author and Emmy Award-winning cohost of ABC’s The Chew, takes the intimidation out of cooking and shows you how to savor life fully every day with this gorgeous cookbook featuring more than 125 easy, healthy, and delicious timesaving recipes.” To learn more about his book click here.

Former NES postdoc Will Smiley, now assistant professor of History and Humanities at Reed College, is an editor of SHARIAsource. SHARIAsource is the brainchild of Intisar Rabb (Ph.D. 2009), professor of Law and the Director of the Islamic Legal Studies Program at Harvard Law School, and is “an online portal for content and context on Islamic law, designed to make available primary sources as well as informed scholarly commentary about them freely available.” To learn more about SHARIAsource click here.

Jasmine Robinson ’16 is featured in a short article, “Learning the Language,” appearing in the inaugural issue of Princeton International (Fall 2016). The article, which discusses her experiences learning Arabic during two semesters abroad, may be read here.

Aaron Rock-Singer (Ph.D. 2015), currently a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Pennsylvania’s Perry World House, has been hired to a two-year position in Cornell’s Department of Near Eastern Studies beginning in Fall 2017.

David Selim Sayers (Ph.D. 2014) has accepted a position as Lecturer at the Justus-Liebig-Universität in Giessen, Germany. Sayers is an Executive Board Member of the American Association of Teachers of Turkic Languages and is serving as Committee Chair of the Sydney Fisher Graduate Student Prize given out by the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association. In August 2016 he participated in the 39th annual Douarnenez Film Festival (Bretagne, France), which was devoted to the “Peoples of Turkey,” where he took part in a number of debates and gave some talks and interviews on subjects such as Turkish nationalism and cinema on Turkey. Some of his contributions may be found though the following links: A recorded debate on “The Invention of Turkishness” and a
**Events**

**Brown Bag Lunch Series Fall 2016**

**5-day intensive course**

The eleventh 5-Day Intensive Course was held August 29–September 2, 2016 with the topic of the Greco-Arabic tradition taught by Professor Dimitri Gutas of Yale University, a leading expert on Greco-Arabic studies. “Greco-Arabic studies is a supra-disciplinary field that studies the textual transmission of Hellenic science and philosophy and its impact in the western world (west of India) from antiquity to the Renaissance through the pivotal conduit of the Graeco-Arabic translations (8th-10th centuries). The transmission went from Greek into Syriac, Middle Persian, and Arabic, and from Arabic into Latin, Hebrew, and Medieval Greek, which constitutes the philological focus of the study; the common high culture that resulted in each of these linguistic communities, though variously received, constitutes a second major focus of study. The field combines the disciplines of classical philology and the philology of the other languages, the history of science and the history of philosophy, and the social and political history of the ancient world, late antiquity, and the medieval world (west of India).” The Intensive Seminar presented and explored “the various aspects of the field in five days: textual transmission and textual criticism and editorial technique in the various languages; lexicography, translation, and the history of concepts; the history of philosophy; the history of science; social and political history of the West (of India) from antiquity to the Renaissance.” The intensive courses have been funded by generous grants from the David A. Gardner ’69 Magic Project and organized by Near Eastern Studies for graduate students on a variety of subjects in the broad field of Islamic studies not normally covered in the Princeton curriculum.

**Conference**

A conference, “Without Borders? Globalization & the Refugee Crisis,” was held on October 25, 2016. It began with talks by Yingkit Chan (East Asian Studies) on “Neighbors and Refugees in Singapore, 1978–1996” and by Greisa Martinez (United We Dream) on “Undocumented Youth at the Forefront of the US Immigration Debate.” A panel discussion followed the talks, and the conference concluded with a screening of the documentary The Journey to Europe and a Q&A with the director, Matthew Cassel, moderated by Sheryl Mendez (Freedom House).
Panel discussion
On October 21, 2016, a panel discussion, “The Refugee Crisis: Finding a Way Forward,” was held on the protracted refugee crisis and what the long-term challenges and potential solutions look like in the future. The panel consisted of Dr. Charles Benjamin, Sherine Tadros, Firas Kayal, and Charlotte Alfred and Director of the Program in Near Eastern Studies Cyrus Schayegh served as moderator.

Lecture
Karl Reich, Professor Emeritus of the University of Bonn, Honorary Professor of the University of Nukus (Uzbekistan) and a member of the North-Rhine Westphalian Academy of Sciences, spoke about “Epics as Songs: The Interplay of Words and Music in Turkic Oral Epics” on October 10, 2016.

Film screenings
The Program in Near Eastern Studies presented a screening of Theeb, a film by Naji Abu Nowar at the Princeton Garden Theatre on September 29, 2016.

The Department of Near Eastern Studies co-sponsored a Department of French and Italian Film series entitled “Filming at the Borders: Migrating to Europe Today.” Over a period of ten days, October 17–26, the five films were screened: Stop-Over (L’Escaïde), directed by Kaveh Bakhthari; The Messengers (LES Messagers), directed by Hélène Crouzillat and Laetitia Tura; Hope, directed by Boris Ljojkine, Burn the Sea (Brûle la mer), directed by Nadine Nambot and Maki Berchache, and Vol Spécial, Fernand Melgar.

Princeton Geniza Project Seminar
Naim Vanthiwegh, Postdoctoral Research Associate in Near Eastern Studies and Université Libre de Bruxelles, offered a lecture and discussion about “Tax Documents from Fatimid Cairo” on November 14, 2016. During the seminar he presented unpublished documents that shed light on the taxation processes as well as a method to read the documents.

TRI lectures
The Institute for the Transregional Study of the Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia presented six lectures during the Fall semester. Joas Wagemakers (Assistant Professor of Islamic and Arabic Studies at Utrecht University and Visiting Fellow, Department of Near Eastern Studies) spoke on “Moderation, Radicalization or Both? The Trials and Tribulations of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan”; Mr. Daniel Gerlach (editor-in-chief of Zenith Magazine) and Dr. Naseef Naeem (research director of the Zenith Council) analyzed “How is the Syrian Regime Constituted? The Enigma of a Security State”; Hanif Ghaedfar (Inaugural Friedmann Visiting Fellow, The Washington Institute) discussed “The Role of Shiite Militias and Iran’s Policies in the Middle East”; Joseph Bahout (Visiting Scholar, Middle East Program, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace) presented “Syria’s Crucible and Lebanon’s Potential Future”; Hala Aldosari (Visiting Scholar, The Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington) spoke on “Violence against Women as a Social Determinant of Health: The Case of Saudi Arabia”; and Anna Hager (Postdoctoral Research Associate, TRI) discussed “Partners in the United Nation”: Islamists Attitudes towards Coptic Egyptians in Post-Revolutionary Egypt (2011–2013). TRI also co-sponsored with the Mamdouha S. Bobst Center for Peace & Justice and the American University of Beirut a talk by Anaheed Al-Hardan (American University of Beirut) on “Palestinians in Syria: Nakba Memories of Shattered Communities” held November 9, 2016.

Language events
Language tables were held for Arabic (Tuesday evenings in Butler and Thursday evenings at the Center for Jewish Life), Persian (Friday noons in Butler), and Turkish (Monday evenings in Butler).

The annual Arabic Summer Study Information Meeting organized by Arabic Lecturer and Associate Director of the Arabic Language Program Gregory Bell was held on December 8, 2016 and was well attended. Bell provided general information about the range of programs available, applying, funding, etc. Students who attended these programs also spoke about their experiences and answered questions concerning the programs they attended.

Film screenings
The Program in Near Eastern Studies presented a screening of Theeb, a film by Naji Abu Nowar at the Princeton Garden Theatre on September 29, 2016.

The Department of Near Eastern Studies co-sponsored a Department of French and Italian Film series entitled “Filming at the Borders: Migrating to Europe Today.” Over a period of ten days, October 17–26, the five films were screened: Stop-Over (L’Escaïde), directed by Kaveh Bakhthari; The Messengers (LES Messagers), directed by Hélène Crouzillat and Laetitia Tura; Hope, directed by Boris Ljojkine, Burn the Sea (Brûle la mer), directed by Nadine Nambot and Maki Berchache, and Vol Spécial, Fernand Melgar.

Princeton Geniza Project Seminar
Naim Vanthiwegh, Postdoctoral Research Associate in Near Eastern Studies and Université Libre de Bruxelles, offered a lecture and discussion about “Tax Documents from Fatimid Cairo” on November 14, 2016. During the seminar he presented unpublished documents that shed light on the taxation processes as well as a method to read the documents.

TRI lectures
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Language talks
Several language talks were held throughout the semester. Talks in Hebrew were given by first-year graduate student Yaara Perlman (“Mizrahim and Ashkenazim in Israel”) and by Haim Soicher (“On Life in Israel, On Life in America”). A Persian talk was given on “Sudi Sharafshahi: Painter, Sculptor, Photographer.” Talks in Turkish were given by Evrim Kaya (film critic, “Türk Sineması Tarihi”), Salim Gurbuz (University of Pennsylvania, “One drop of ebru—The Turkish Art of Marbling,” with an ebru workshop), Bahar Emgin Hatemi, Savk (“Türkiye’de Tasarımın Profesyonel ve Kavramsal Çelikleri”), and Serkan Savk (Izmir Ekonomi Üniversitesi, “Tarihsel Araştırmaları Dijital Araçlar ve Osmanlı Çalışmaları”).

Library news
An article written by Rachel Simon (Technical Services) was recently published in the open-access International Encyclopedia of the First World War. The article’s title is “Italo-Turkish War 1911–1912” and may be found here.
In Memoriam
C. Ernest Dawn
Prominent scholar of Syrian history and Arab nationalism C. Ernest Dawn (Ph.D. 1948) died January 5, 2016, after a short illness at age 97. Professor emeritus of history at the University of Illinois-Urbana, Dawn earned his B.A. from the University of Tennessee in 1941. After serving as a linguist and code-breaker in Army Intelligence in WWII, Dawn earned his Ph.D. in Oriental Languages and Literatures in 1948, writing a dissertation on the “Project of Greater Syria.” In 1949, he joined the University of Illinois, where, except for military service again in army intelligence during the Korean War, he spent his whole career. Starting out as an instructor in history, Dawn became a full professor in 1960, and retired in 1989. Dawn was a recipient of a Social Science Research Council fellowship from 1948 to 1949 and a Fulbright-Hays fellowship from 1966 to 1967. Active in the Illinois Tehran Research Unit, Dawn was its director in Tehran from 1972 to 1974. He was a fellow of the Institute of Advanced Studies of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and served on its faculty from 1981 to 1982. In 1985 he was a visiting professor at the University of Chicago, and in 1995 he delivered the George Antonius Lecture at Oxford University.


Published obituaries may be read here and here.

Sadik Jalal al-Azm
It is with sadness that we announce the passing of Sadik Jalal al-Azm, an eminent Syrian academic, philosopher, public intellectual and critic of authoritarianism in the Arab world. Prof. Sadik al-Azm was a good friend of Princeton University, which he visited on numerous occasions as a visiting scholar, most recently in 2014–15 as a fellow of the Transregional Institute in the Department of Near Eastern Studies. He died on December 11, 2016 in exile in Germany. He will be fondly remembered for being a man of brilliance, courage, and intellectual honesty.

Past Issues of the NES Newsletter
To read past issues of the NES Newsletter click here.

Scenes from the Fall Reception

Arabic lecturer Thomas Hefter, Visiting Fellow Joas Wagemakers, and Arabic lecturer Faris Al-Ahmad

Graduate students Cecilia Palombo, Varak Ketsemanian, and Jamie Pelling

Graduate student Alex Balistreri and assistant professor Jonathan Gribetz

Graduate students Yaara Perlman and Samin Rashidbeigi

Princeton-Mellon Fellow in Architecture, Urbanism & the Humanities Elsa Devienne and associate professor Cyrus Schayegh
More scenes from the Fall Reception

Undergraduates Preston Lim, Nick Jonsson, Samone Blair, and Talya Nevins

Staff member Judy Schedneck and Persia lecturer Amineh Mahallati

Hebrew lecturer Philip Zhakevich, Humanities Council Fellow Alberto Rigolio, and assistant professor Daniel Sheffield

Graduate students Kyle Clark, Thomas Benfey, and Peter Kitlas