



PRINCE ALWALEED BIN TALAL ISLAMIC STUDIES PROGRAM AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY

2020–2021

YEAR IN REVIEW







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COVER: Ghazan studies the Quran in a tent mosque / photo credit: Harvard Fine Arts Library, Digital Images & Slides Collection

INSIDE COVER: Masjid al-Nabawi in Madinah / photo credit: Adil Wahid via Unsplash

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Director's Message



Professor Khaled El-Rouayheb

The study of the Islamic world—its histories, cultures and societies—is an important and growing part of academic life at Harvard. It takes place in numerous departments and across different schools: The Faculty of Arts & Sciences,

the Harvard Divinity School, the Harvard Law School, the Kennedy School of Government, the Harvard Business School, and the Chan School of Public Health. The Alwaleed Bin Talal Program in Islamic Studies offers a valuable forum for faculty and students belonging to different disciplines, departments, divisions and schools to come together to exchange ideas and perspectives. Without it, there would be a real danger that the study of the Islamic world at Harvard would take place in institutional and disciplinary “siloes” with little or no interaction.

Building and nurturing a community of scholars and students has been particularly difficult over the past two years. The pandemic has, sadly, had a strong centrifugal effect. Departments have long looked eerily deserted as many of us spent considerably less time on campus, interacting with the outside world through Zoom. We are all thankful for Zoom, but few do not miss the spontaneous run-ins, the packed seminar rooms, and the in-person social gatherings. Few events in recent memory have as forcefully brought home to us Yeats’s famous lines:

*Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world...*

Battling against the odds, the Program has managed to maintain an impressive array of activities. In the past year, it has run a seminar series featuring established

and upcoming scholars from inside and outside Harvard. It organized an online workshop on research methods in Islamic studies and another workshop on digital resources. It has initiated a podcast featuring the work of Harvard faculty, recent Harvard Ph.D.s, and visiting scholars. It has also set up a pioneering, well-researched timeline of Islamic studies at Harvard (**available at timeline.islamicstudies.harvard.edu**). The Program has also handed out student prizes for particularly superb and innovative Ph.D. dissertations and senior theses relating to Islamic studies. Much of the credit for this impressive range of activities goes to the Executive Director Harry Bastermajian and the Senior Coordinator Meryum Kazmi, as well as to the former Academic Director Tarek Masoud, the members of the faculty steering committee, and the graduate student coordinator Johannes Makar.

The famous quantum physicist Niels Bohr reportedly once quipped, “It is very hard to predict, especially the future.” And the future is still looking unsure at the time of writing. But the Program is committed to maintaining its wide range of activities: The seminar series and the podcasts are continuing. A new round of dissertation and thesis prizes is around the corner. A workshop on Islamic manuscripts is planned for later this year. We hope to be able to sponsor postdoctoral fellows in the near future, in an effort to bolster Islamic studies further at Harvard.

For these continued efforts, we are indebted to Provost Alan Garber, Vice-Provost Mark Elliot, and Dean David Hempton of Harvard Divinity School for their strong and unwavering support of the Program in these difficult times. We hope that they—and any reader of this report—will conclude that their trust in the Program has been well placed.

— Professor Khaled El-Rouayheb

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'K. El-Rouayheb'.

Faculty News 2020-21

A few highlights from the many accomplishments of the Islamic studies faculty at Harvard



ALI ASANI

In 2020, Ali Asani, Murray A. Albertson Professor of Middle Eastern Studies, Professor of Indo-Muslim and Islamic Religion

and Cultures, and former Alwaleed Program Director, received the Harvard Foundation Faculty of the Year Award for going above and beyond his responsibilities to make Harvard a more inclusive place. In 2021, he was recognized by Harvard's Alpha Iota chapter of Phi Beta Kappa for Excellence in Teaching. In the award's citation, Professor Asani is described as "an amazing and brilliant instructor" and "warm and inclusive community member" who gives his students "the tools to think critically about religion in a way that privileges diverse and marginalized religious traditions and emphasizes inclusivity and religious pluralism."



TEREN SEVEA

Teren Sevea joined the Harvard Divinity School faculty in 2020 as Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies. Professor Sevea, who

earned his Ph.D. from UCLA and began his teaching career at the University of Pennsylvania, is a scholar of Islam in South and Southeast Asia, making him the first professor at Harvard to focus on Southeast Asian Islam. His research focuses on Indian Ocean networks, Sufi textual traditions, Islamic erotology and the socioeconomic significance of spirits. His recent book is *Miracles and Material Life: Rice, Ore, Traps and Guns in Islamic Malaya* (2020). In 2021, Professor Sevea was appointed Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies, making him the fourth Alwaleed Professor at Harvard.



KHALED EL-ROUAYHEB

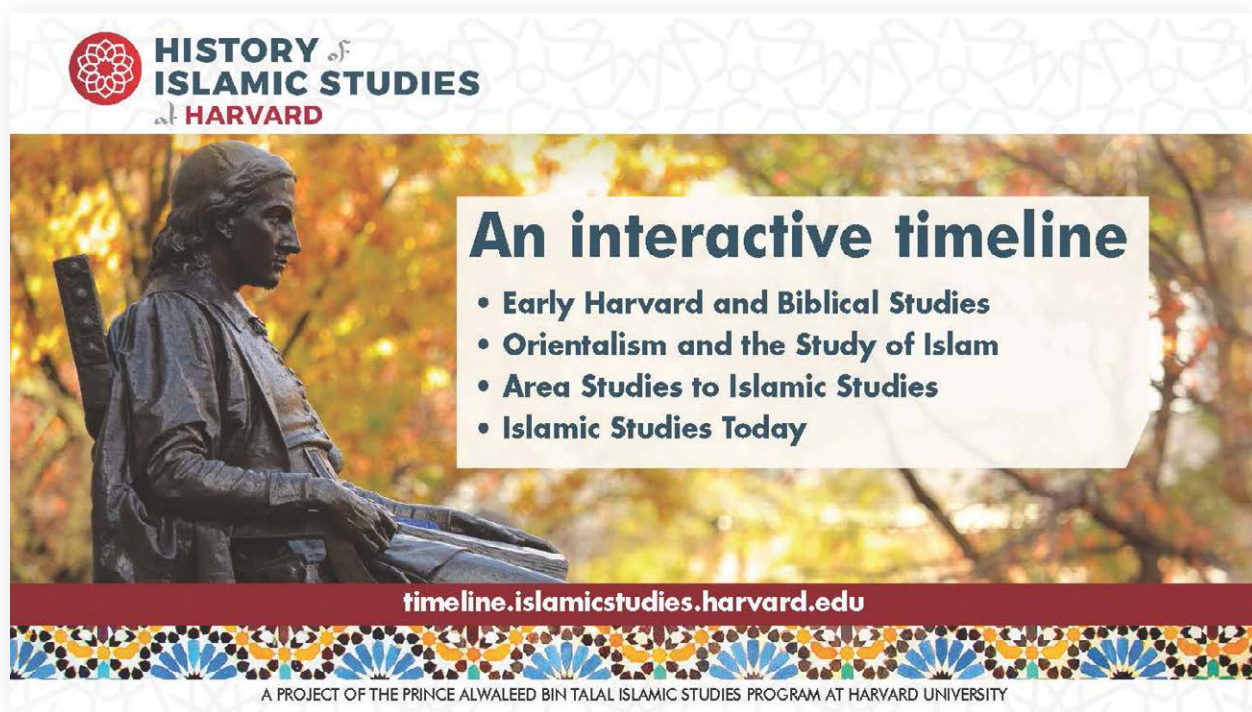
Khaled El-Rouayheb, James Richard Jewett Professor of Arabic and Islamic Intellectual History, received

the *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 2020 Best Article Prize for his article, "The Liar Paradox in Fifteenth-Century Shiraz: The Exchange between Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Dashtakī and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī" (volume 28, issue 2).

Abstract: *Two rival scholars from Shiraz in Persia, Dawānī (d. 1502) and Dashtakī (d. 1498) engaged in a bitter and extended dispute over a range of meta-physical and logical issues. One of these was the liar paradox. Their debate on this point marked the most extensive scrutiny of the paradox in Arabic until that time. Dashtakī's solution was to deny that the statement 'What I say is false' is true or false, on the ground that there is one statement and one application of the falsity predicate. Given that—ex hypothesi—there is no other statement, there is no basis for a reiteration of the truth or falsity predicate and describing the statement itself as true or false. Dawānī's solution was to deny that 'What I say is false' is a statement at all, and he argued that it is instead akin to a performative utterance such as 'I hereby sell you this'.*

In 2021, Professor El-Rouayheb became the Director of the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Islamic Studies Program, succeeding Professor Tarek Masoud who led the program from 2018 to 2021.

History of Islamic Studies at Harvard Timeline



The History of Islamic Studies at Harvard digital timeline traces the development of the study of Islam at Harvard from the University's founding in the 17th century to the present. The goal of this project is to shed light on some of the important people, events, and institutions that have shaped what has become the global and interdisciplinary field of Islamic studies as we know it today and also inspire its growth in the future. Some of the timeline's 45 slides include audio clips from interviews with experts intimately familiar with the history, including former Alwaleed Program directors, Professors Roy Mottahedeh, William A. Graham, and Ali Asani, and former Aga Khan Bibliographer of Islamic Art and Architecture at the Harvard Fine Arts Library, András Riedlmayer.

The timeline is divided into four time periods. The first period, Early Harvard and Biblical Studies, covers approximately the first two and a half centuries of Harvard's history when Arabic was occasionally taught as an extension of Hebrew studies and for the purpose of biblical exegesis. The library contained some Islamic titles in this period, but Islam was not a serious focus of study. This began to change, however, in the period of Orientalism and the Study of Islam, which is marked in this timeline with the arrival of Professor Crawford H. Toy at Harvard in 1880. Professor Toy not only taught Arabic but was the first to teach Islamic history at Harvard, teaching courses on "History of the Spanish Caliphate" and "History of the Bagdad Caliphate." After Professor Toy,

other scholars such as Professors George Foote Moore and William Thomson taught courses on Islam at Harvard Divinity School in the late 19th and first half of the 20th century. After World War II, when American universities created area studies programs to train experts in regions of the world of strategic interest to the United States, the study of Islam was incorporated into Middle East studies. This period was epitomized by scholars such as Professor Richard N. Fry, a Persianist who worked for the Office of Strategic Services in Afghanistan, and Professor Sir Hamilton Gibb, the Arabist who played an important role in

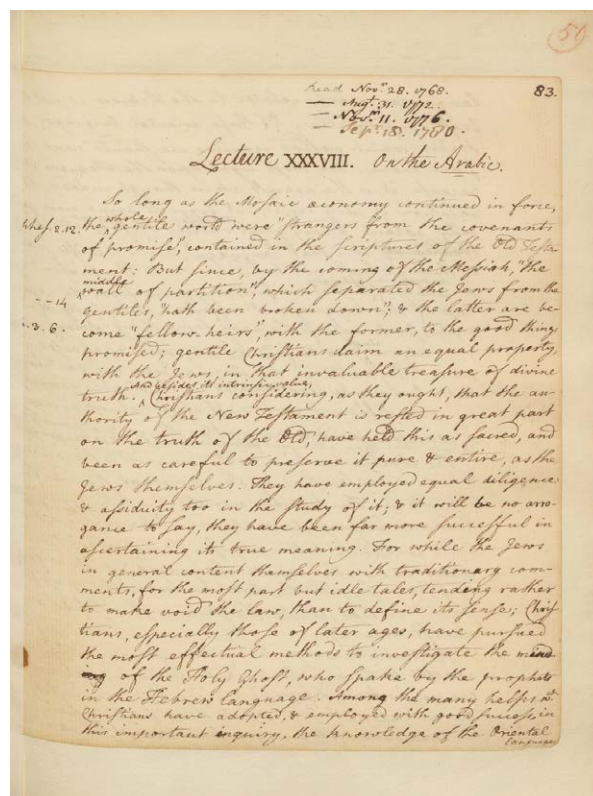
the establishment of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies. The final period, Islamic Studies Today, includes developments from the 1990s to the present when the study of Islam became established institutionally through programs at Harvard Law School and the Harvard Kennedy School, through an increased number of endowed chairs, and through the university-wide Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Islamic Studies Program.

The following are some highlights from the timeline.

1768

Stephen Sewall delivers lectures on Arabic

Stephen Sewall, the first Hancock Professor, delivered lectures on Arabic as part of his lecture series on Oriental languages in which he discussed Arabic's alleged origin at the Tower of Babel, development, characteristics, and importance to the "Mahometans" due to its being the language of the "Alcoran." Like his predecessors, Sewall viewed Arabic as a tool for Biblical exegesis. "Of the Oriental languages," he said, "the Arabic, which method requires we should next consider, throws the most light upon the Hebrew. Not because it is the nearest akin, though indeed its relation is very close, but from its being more generally extant, a very great variety of treatises on different subjects being written in that language, which treatises, many of them at least, are handed down to the present day." Professor Sewall called it a "pity, not to say disgrace," that Harvard was behind its peer institutions in Europe in the study of Arabic. Sewall himself taught Arabic through private instruction, as was required by the statutes of his professorship.



Notes from Stephen Sewall's lectures on the Arabic language/
photo credit: Harvard University Archives

1889–90

Crawford H. Toy first to teach Islamic history



The division of “Semitic Languages” founded by Professor Toy was re-named “Semitic Languages and History” and his “History of the Spanish Califate” became the first course on Islamic

history taught at Harvard. This course and “Political and Literary History of the Bagdad Califate” were then offered in alternate years and were both expanded over time to include topics such as the Qur’an, the history of Islam in India and Egypt, the Crusades through Muslim sources, the Barbary States, and Muslims in Sicily. Professor Toy’s Arabic offerings also expanded in subsequent years to include the study of Wright’s *Grammar*, *The Thousand and One Nights*, the Mu’allaqāt, Mutanabbī, Ibn Khaldūn, and *Kitāb al-Aghānī*.

Crawford H. Toy/photo credit: Harvard Divinity School Library

1954

Center for Middle Eastern Studies founded

The Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES) at Harvard was founded in 1954 to “counter the Soviet threat in the Middle East” and “to train selected men for service in private industry and in government,” according to the proposal by the Committee on International and Regional Studies. Its first director was William Langer who, although primarily a scholar of modern European and diplomatic history, had been teaching courses on the modern Middle East since 1935. CMES saw tremendous growth from 1957 to 1964 under the leadership of Sir Hamilton Gibb, who secured significant funding for the Center, especially from the Ford and Rockefeller foundations. In 1990, in line with the emphasis of his predecessor as director, Roy Mottahedeh, the new CMES director William Graham sought to expand the mission of CMES to encompass the broader Islamic world by having Professor Mottahedeh chair a new Islamic Studies Committee under the CMES umbrella. This led to the two working together over a decade later to establish the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Islamic Studies Program in 2005, which enabled CMES to return to its original focus on the Middle East.



(Top left) Founding Director of CMES, William Langer; (top right) Founding Associate Director of CMES, Richard Frye; (bottom, left to right) Former Associate Director Susan Miller, Director William Graham, Professor Roger Owen, Former Associate Director Thomas Mullins, and Former Director Roy Mottahedeh in the mid-1990s / photo credit: Center for Middle Eastern Studies

2021

Islamic studies today

Today, Islamic studies at Harvard is represented across the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Harvard Divinity School, Harvard Law School, Harvard Kennedy School, Harvard Business School, Harvard Graduate School of Design, and Harvard Medical School. It is also increasingly interdisciplinary and global in nature, with faculty, visiting scholars, students, and programs that increasingly represent the scope, diversity, and complexity of Muslim societies and communities around the world.



Harvard Islamica Podcast



In Fall 2020, the Alwaleed Program launched the *Harvard Islamica Podcast* to utilize the increasingly popular podcast medium to engage a broader audience and to showcase exciting developments in Islamic studies, primarily at Harvard. In this podcast, executive director Harry Bastermajian and program coordinator Meryum Kazmi talk to scholars about their new research, methods, and reflections on the current state and development of the field of Islamic studies.

In the inaugural episode, the Alwaleed Program team interviewed Dr. Mary Elston, who completed her Ph.D. in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Harvard and won the first Alwaleed Bin Talal Dissertation Prize in Islamic Studies in 2020 for her dissertation entitled, “Reviving Turāth: Islamic Education in Modern Egypt.” This episode included an in-depth discussion of Dr. Elston’s research on Islamic education at al-Azhar University in Cairo since the 19th century and recent attempts to revive “turāth,” or Islamic heritage.

The podcast then had a four-part series of episodes in which former directors of the Alwaleed Program, Professors Roy Mottahedeh, William Graham, and Ali Asani, spoke about the history of Islamic studies at Harvard. All of these professors not only served as long-time faculty at Harvard, but also earned their Ph.Ds at the university, and were therefore able to speak to Islamic studies at Harvard over the course of several decades and talk about mentors who helped to shape their scholarship, including Sir Hamilton Gibb, Wilfred Cantwell Smith, Annemarie Schimmel, and others.



Mary Elston



Roy Mottahedeh



William A. Graham



Ali Asani

In the episode on “Podcasting and the Islamic History Classroom,” the podcast zoomed out of its usual Harvard focus to discuss creative methods of teaching Islamic studies and how instructors can use the latest technology, particularly podcasts, to engage undergraduate students and introduce them to the field. This episode was made in collaboration with the *Ottoman History Podcast* and featured its producer and co-creator, Chris Gratien, Assistant Professor of History at the University of Virginia, who created a

series called “The Making of the Islamic World” that he used to teach an introductory Islamic history course remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. Dana Sajdi, Professor of History at Boston College, shared her experience teaching a course called “Podcasting the Ottomans” using material from the *Ottoman History Podcast* and reflections on how academics can adapt to the ways in which the internet is changing their profession.



(Top row, left to right) Meryum Kazmi and Harry Bastermajian (bottom row, left to right) Dana Sajdi and Chris Gratien recording “Podcasting and the Islamic History Classroom” episode

In “Seeking What Is Good: Harvard Law Review, Islamic Law, and Legal Studies Across Traditions,” Dr. Hassaan Shahawy (A.B. ‘16, J.D. ’22), who was elected the first Muslim president of the *Harvard Law Review* in January 2021 and who also holds a Ph.D. from the University of Oxford in Islamic law, appeared as a student guest on the podcast. In the discussion, Dr. Shahawy talked about his role at the *Harvard Law Review* and how his background in Islamic law gave him a unique perspective in his work. Furthermore, he talked about his dissertation on *istihsān* in the early Hanafi school and its implications for modern legal issues.



Hassaan Shahawy

The final podcast of 2020-21, “How Has the Pandemic Affected Religious Behavior in the Muslim World?”

ventured into the study of Islam within the social sciences. Three political scientists, former Alwaleed Program Director, Tarek Masoud, and his colleagues, A. Kadir Yildirim, Fellow at Rice University’s Baker Institute for Public Policy, and Peter Mandaville, Professor of International Affairs at George Mason University’s Schar School of Policy and Government,

appeared on the podcast to discuss their study on the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on religious behavior in the Muslim world.

All *Harvard Islamica Podcast* episodes, hosted on SoundCloud, can be found on the Alwaleed Program website at islamicstudies.harvard.edu/podcast as well as popular platforms including Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, and Spotify.



(Top row, left to right) Harry Bastermajian, Meryum Kazmi, Tarek Masoud (bottom row, left to right) A. Kadir Yildirim and Peter Mandaville recording “How Has the Pandemic Affected Religious Behavior in the Muslim World?” episode

“Rather than seeing them as two different ideas, the new smartphone historian versus the old school historian, I think the digital technologies [e.g. podcasts] provide a venue to do something that has always been lacking....which is that there’s this gulf between [scholarship and] a public audience who is the majority of people who actually have this thirst, these questions.”

Chris Gratien, Assistant Professor of History at the University of Virginia, producer of the *Ottoman History Podcast*, and guest on the *Harvard Islamica Podcast* episode, “Podcasting and the Islamic History Classroom”

Alwaleed Bin Talal Seminar in Islamic Studies

The Alwaleed Bin Talal Seminar in Islamic Studies, led by Professor Shady Nasser, brings world-class experts from an array of fields within Islamic studies to engage with the Harvard community on a range of topics. Recordings can be viewed at islamicstudies.harvard.edu/seminar.



ALWALEED BIN TALAL SEMINAR IN ISLAMIC STUDIES

Fall 2020

10.20 **After the Canon: A History of Post-Canonical Hadith Transmission**
Tuesday, October 20, 2020 | 4–5:30 p.m. | via Zoom
GARRETT DAVIDSON, Assistant Professor of Arabic and Muslim World Studies, College of Charleston

10.22 **The Prophet as a 'Sacred Spring': Late Ottoman Hilye Bottles**
Thursday, October 22, 2020 | 4–5:30 p.m. | via Zoom
CHRISTIANE GRUBER, Professor and Chair in the History of Art, University of Michigan in Ann Arbor
Co-sponsors: Department of History of Art and Architecture and Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture

11.03 **Mobility, Power, and Knowledge in the Mongol Empire**
Tuesday, November 3, 2020 | 4–5:30 p.m. | via Zoom
AHMED AL-RAHIM, Associate Professor and Director of Islamic Studies, University of Virginia
Co-sponsor: Committee on Inner Asian and Altaic Studies

12.01 **Competing with the Saints: Dynastic Burial Practices and Cults in the Medieval Western Maghrib**
Tuesday, December 1, 2020 | 3–4:30 p.m. | via Zoom
AMIRA BENNISON, Professor in the History and Culture of the Maghrib, University of Cambridge
Co-sponsors: Mahindra Humanities Center Medieval Studies Seminar and Department of History

Please RSVP for Zoom links
islamicstudies.harvard.edu/seminar

 **PRINCE ALWALEED BIN TALAL ISLAMIC STUDIES PROGRAM AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY**
Harvard Semitic Museum
6 Divinity Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138
T: 617-495-1179
F: 617-800-0996
Photo: Sa'dian Tombs in Marrakech, Morocco

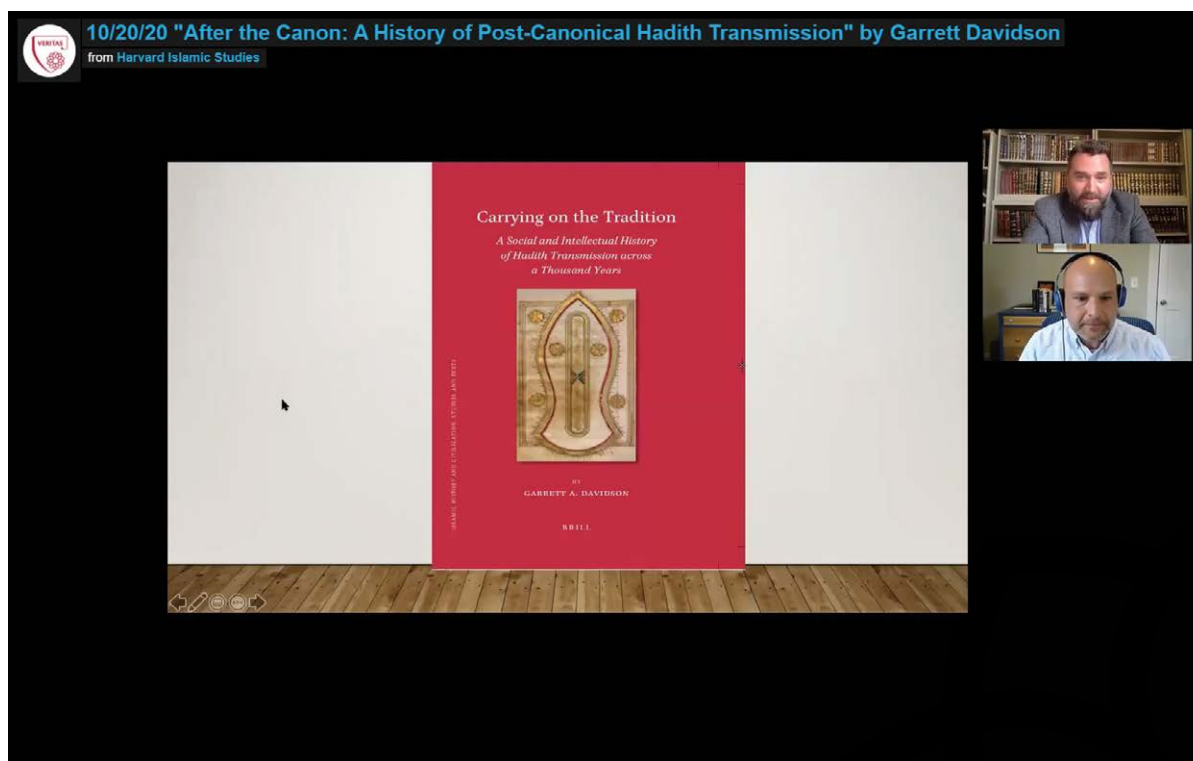
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OCTOBER 20, 2020

“After the Canon: A History of Post-Canonical Hadith Transmission”

On October 20, 2020, **Garrett Davidson**, Assistant Professor of Arabic and Muslim World Studies at the College of Charleston, spoke at the first Fall 2020 meeting of the Alwaleed Bin Talal Seminar in Islamic Studies about his new book, *Carrying on the Tradition: A Social and Intellectual History of Hadith Transmission across a Thousand Years* (Brill, 2020). In this work, Professor Davidson tells the story of post-canonical hadith transmission. He shows that, although it has

until now been overlooked by historians of Islam, for more than a millennium post-canonical hadith transmission was a highly innovative and prolific field of scholarly production as well as a prominent devotional practice. This practice created numerous new genres and sub-genres and a body of hadith literature that dwarfs the canon many times over, and remains a living tradition even today.



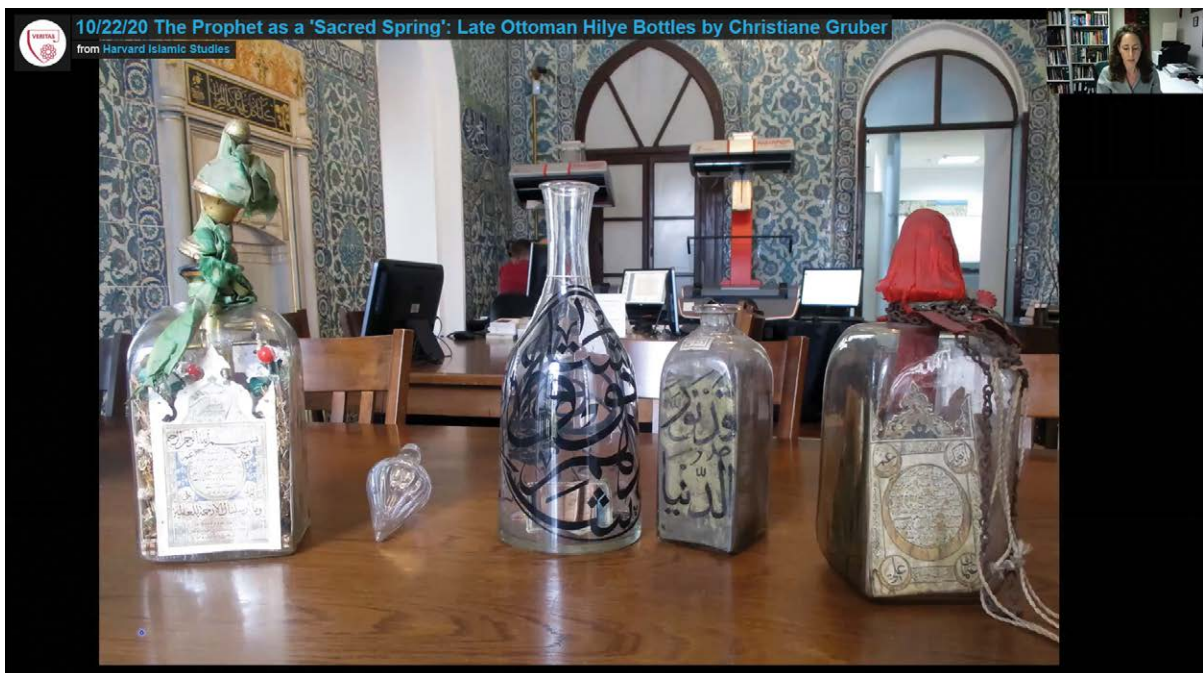
(Top right) Garrett Davidson

OCTOBER 22, 2020

“The Prophet as a ‘Sacred Spring’: Late Ottoman Hilye Bottles”

Christiane Gruber, Professor of the History of Art at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, then joined the seminar on October 22nd and discussed three ornamented bottles from the late 19th century she discovered at the Topkapı Palace Library containing the hilye, the famous description of the Prophet Muhammad. These bottles, Professor Gruber argues,

provided a new kind of prophetic pharmacon, whereby the Prophet Muhammad was reified and symbolically ingested as the ultimate *elixir vitae*. These bottles facilitated numerous multisensory pious engagements with a “bottled Prophet” of sorts which promised blessings such as cure for illness and a long life.



Christiane Gruber

NOVEMBER 3, 2020

“Mobility, Power, and Knowledge in the Mongol Empire”

Ahmed al-Rahim, Associate Professor of Islamic Studies at the University of Virginia, joined us on November 3rd to talk about his current project. Professor al-Rahim’s research investigates patterns of migration, transmission of knowledge, and interreligious history after the Mongol conquests of the Middle East and East Asia in 1206-1405. In particular, his research examines Islamic learning under the Mongol Empire, specifically the founding of “mobile schools,” or madrasas, which accompanied the nomadic Mongolian institution of the *ordo*, or the peripatetic court. Described by Marco Polo and Ibn Battuta as a traveling city, this royal court played a crucial role in projecting Mongol political power into the world, in transmitting knowledge of science (particularly astronomy) and philosophy globally, from China to the Middle East and to Eastern Europe, and in creating a lively history of religious polemics among Muslims, Christians, Jews, and Buddhists.

DECEMBER 1, 2020

“Competing with the Saints: Dynastic Burial Practices and Cults in the Medieval Western Maghrib”

In our final seminar of 2020, **Amira Bennison**, Professor in the History and Culture of the Maghrib at the University of Cambridge, delivered a presentation entitled, “Competing with the Saints: Dynastic Burial Practices and Cults in the Medieval Western Maghrib.” In this talk, Professor Bennison discussed how, as popular mysticism, or Sufism, spread in the Western Maghrib, dynasties in the 12th to 16th centuries, such as the Almohads, the Marinids, and the Sa’dis, began to use their burial practices as a way of demonstrating their power and inspiring veneration for their leaders on the basis of their claims to prophetic lineage. While some had limited success, by and large, these dynasties were unable to attract the same level of veneration as the Sufi saints.

12/1/20 Competing with the Saints by Amira K. Bennison
from Harvard Islamic Studies



Mawlay Idrīs Zarhūn and
Volubilis

Amira Bennison



**ALWALEED BIN TALAL
SEMINAR IN ISLAMIC STUDIES**

Spring 2021



MARCH 11, 2021 | 4-5:30PM

Beyond Centers and Peripheries: Islam and Asia

Chiara Formichi
Associate Professor in Southeast Asian Studies
Cornell University
CO-SPONSORED: Harvard University Asia Center

APRIL 7, 2021 | 4-5:30PM

Rumi's Ancestors on the Path of Radical Love (Mazhab-e 'Eshq): Ahmad al-Ghazali and Kharraqani

Omid Safi
Professor of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies
Rutgers University
CO-SPONSORED: Mahindra Humanities Center, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Persuasive Studies Seminar, and Aga Khan Center for Islamic Studies

APRIL 29, 2021 | 4-5:30PM

Ibn Taymiyya on Reason and Revelation

Carli Sharif El-Tobgui
Associate Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies
Stanford University
CO-SPONSORED: Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations


PLEASE RSVP for Zoom link at: islamicstudies.harvard.edu/seminar


MARCH 11, 2021

“Beyond Centers and Peripheries: Islam and Asia”


The spring seminar began with a talk entitled, “Beyond Centers and Peripheries: Islam and Asia” by **Chiara Formichi**, Associate Professor of Southeast Asian Studies at Cornell University. Professor Formichi spoke about her own journey as a scholar of Islam in Southeast Asia, feeling that she was on the periphery of Islamic studies. She argued, however, that the academy’s focus on the Middle East as the heartland of Islam must be challenged given the reality of large populations of Muslims outside that region, and particularly in Southeast Asia. Both historically and in the present, many Muslims across the world have decentered the Middle East in their religious imaginations and have looked to other localities as centers of religious authority and devotion.

3/11/21 Beyond Centers and Peripheries: Islam and Asia by Chiara Formichi
from Harvard Islamic Studies







← Qutb Mosque, Delhi, reused pillar showing untouched *kirtimukha* face, with faces of corner *apsarids* removed. Photo by Unknown, published in Flood 2009, fig. 96 p. 168



→ Cheraman Juma Masjid
Methala, Kerala
© Benjamin John
Claimed to be built in 629



← Great Mosque (Huijuejiao), Xi'an, China (ca. 8th century, rebuilt under Ming Dynasty, 1392).
© Chiara Formichi



→ Der moren tempel (moskee) binnen de stad Ispahan, published in Wouter Schouten 1676 “Oost-Indische voyagie”

Chiara Formichi

APRIL 7, 2021

“Rumi’s Ancestors on the Path of Radical Love (*Mazhab-e ‘Eshq*): Ahmad al-Ghazali and Kharaqani”

On April 7, 2021, **Omid Safi**, Professor of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at Duke University, spoke about “Rumi’s Ancestors on the Path of Radical Love (*Mazhab-e ‘Eshq*): Ahmad al-Ghazali and Kharaqani.” While Rumi has become one of the most widely celebrated poets even in North America, less well known are his predecessors, Abu ‘I-Hasan Kharaqani,

a Persian mystic from Khorasan, and Ahmad al-Ghazali, also a Persian mystic and brother of the famous Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, who influenced Rumi. The world-renowned poet should therefore be understood not only within the context of the Quran and Sunnah, but also early Sufism.

4/7/21 Rumi's Ancestors on the Path of Radical Love by Omid Safi
from Harvard Islamic Studies

THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

Top Stories Quizzes Sections

Persian Poet Top Seller In America

Rumi Revival

By **Alexandra Marks**, Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor / November 25, 1997

Christian Science Monitor story, 1997

Coleman Barks


Omid Safi

APRIL 29, 2021

“Ibn Taymiyya on Reason and Revelation”

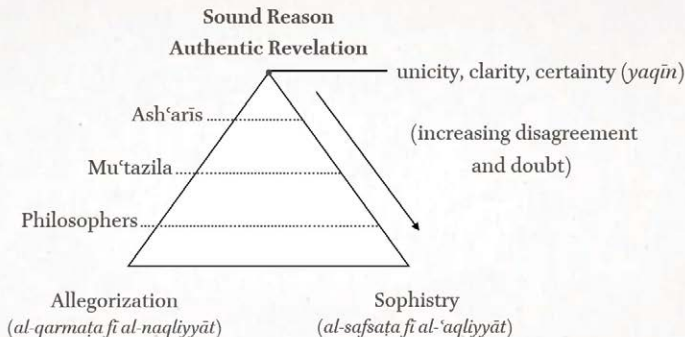
On April 29, 2021, **Carl Sharif El-Tobgui**, Associate Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies at Brandeis University, gave a talk about his new book, *Ibn Taymiyya on Reason and Revelation: A Study of Dar' ta'arud al-'aql wa-l-naql* (2020). As Professor El-Tobgui explains, in his magnum opus, Ibn Taymiyya aims to refute the notion that there is a contradiction between true human reason and authentic divine revelation as

indicated by the “universal law” of the Ash'arite theologians, particularly Fakhr al-Din al-Razi. According to Ibn Taymiyya, any perceived conflict between reason and revelation is due to a misunderstanding of revelation or a misconstrual of reason and, when understood properly, there is actually harmony between the two.



4/29/21 Ibn Taymiyya on Reason and Revelation by Carl Sharif El-Tobgui
from Harvard Islamic Studies

The Taymiyyan Pyramid



The diagram illustrates the Taymiyyan Pyramid, a conceptual model for understanding the relationship between reason and revelation. It is structured as a pyramid with four horizontal levels. The top level is labeled 'Sound Reason' and 'Authentic Revelation', with the attribute 'unicity, clarity, certainty (yaqīn)'. The second level is labeled 'Ash'arīs'. The third level is labeled 'Mu'tazila'. The fourth level is labeled 'Philosophers'. To the right of the pyramid, an arrow points downwards from the top level to the bottom level, accompanied by the text '(increasing disagreement and doubt)'. Below the pyramid, two terms are listed: 'Allegorization (al-qarmaṭa fī al-naqliyyāt)' on the left and 'Sophistry (al-safsāṭa fī al-'aqliyyāt)' on the right. The entire diagram is titled 'The Taymiyyan Pyramid' at the bottom.

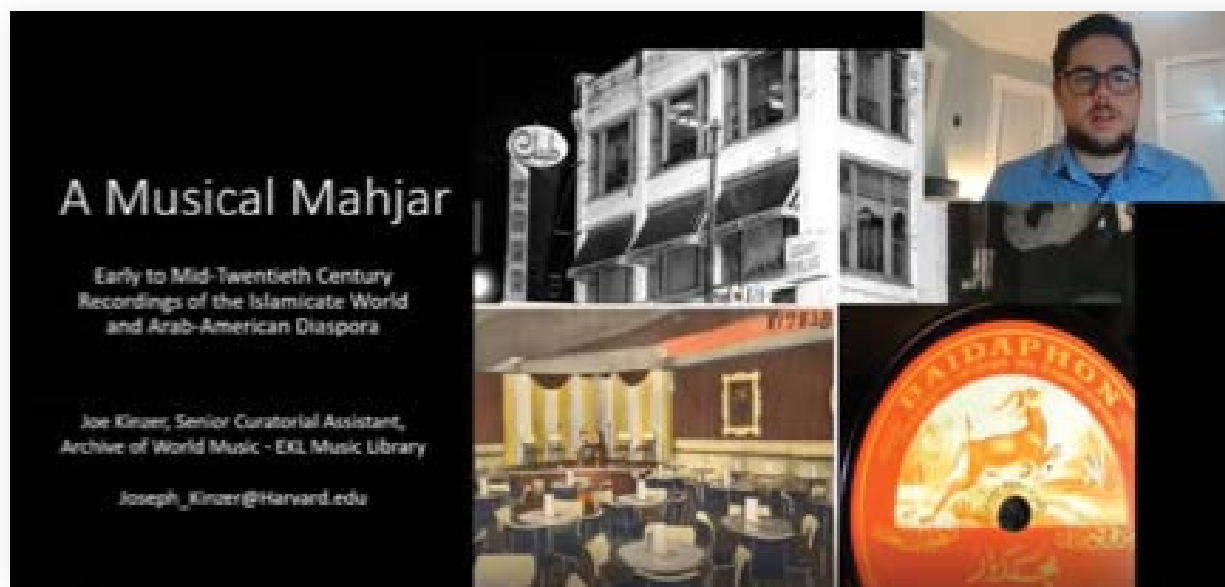
Carl Sharif El-Tobgui

Research Methods in Islamic Studies Workshop

The Research Methods in Islamic Studies Workshop engages graduate students and faculty active in the field of Islamic studies around current methodological questions. Where Islamic studies is informed by, intervenes in, and adds to cognate disciplines such as anthropology, area studies, history, art history, Near Eastern studies, and religious studies, this is an especially productive undertaking. The workshop showcases novel and established methods and draws special attention to the burgeoning potential of the Digital Humanities. Besides offering intellectual and logistical support, the workshop connects researchers to the various libraries, research institutes and other

services at Harvard (and beyond) with the aim of fostering research opportunities and collaboration. Johannes Makar, Ph.D. student in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, continued in his role as Workshop Coordinator in 2020-21.

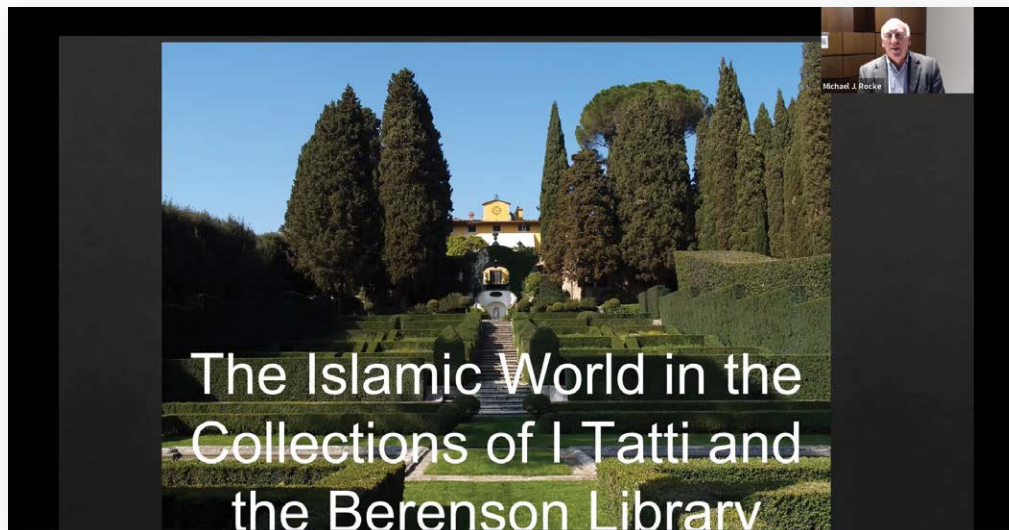
In fall 2020, the Alwaleed Program held three methods workshops, rather than the usual one per term, via Zoom to help researchers adapt to the challenges of the first fully remote semester of the COVID-19 pandemic. These workshops focused on digital collections available both at Harvard and other institutions that could be of use to researchers while physical collections remained closed.



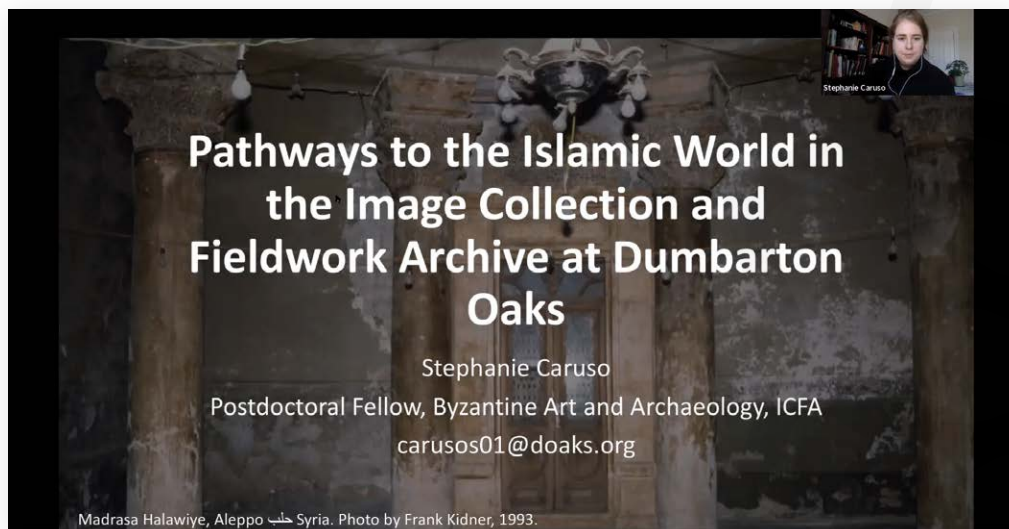
Joseph Kinzer, Senior Curatorial Assistant at the Loeb Music Library, talks about recordings from the Islamicate world and the Arab-American diaspora

The first of these workshops, held on September 18, 2020, “Library Resources for (Remote) Research in Islamic Studies” was designed help new students take full advantage of the essential resources of the Harvard libraries. The second workshop, on October 29th, focused on visual and Islamic legal resources. The third, entitled, “Harvard’s Islamic Collections in

and beyond Cambridge” on November 19, 2020, focused on Harvard’s lesser-known Islamic collections including rare music from the Islamic world at the Loeb Music Library, Byzantine and Islamic collections at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, DC, and the Islamic collections of I Tatti and the Berenson Library in Florence, Italy.



Michael Roche, Nicky Mariano Librarian and Director of the Biblioteca Berenson, talks about the Islamic Collections of I Tatti and the Berenson Library



Stephanie Caruso, Postdoctoral Fellow in Byzantine Art and Archaeology, ICFA, talks about the Islamic collections at Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, DC



ALWALEED BIN TALAL
ISLAMIC STUDIES PROGRAM

Harvard's Islamic Collection

in and beyond
Cambridge

Thu 11.19.20 / 10:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.



PRESENTERS

Joseph Kinzer
Senior Curatorial Assistant, Archive of World
Music, Loeb Music Library

Michael Locke
Nicky Mariano Librarian and
Director of the Biblioteca Berenson

Spyros Koulouris
Collections Services and Photograph Archivist

Giovanni Pagliarulo
Agnes Morgan Curator of the Fototeca Berenson
Curator of the Berenson Art Collection

Joshua Robinson
Byzantine Studies Librarian

Stephanie Caruso
Postdoctoral Fellow
Byzantine Art and Archaeology, ICFA

Betsy Dospel Williams
Associate Curator, Byzantine Collection

Jonathan Shea
Associate Curator of C

TOPICS WILL INCLUDE

- Rare Music from the
Loeb Music Library
- The Islamic World
of Tatti and the B
- Byzantine & Islamic
Dumbarton Oaks

Please contact Johannes Makar
jmakar@g.harvard.edu with any questions.

Please RSVP for
islamicstudies
/fall20worksh



ALWALEED BIN TALAL
ISLAMIC STUDIES PROGRAM

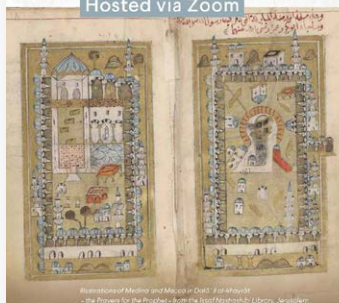
Digital Resources

and Manuscript Collections
of the Islamicate World Workshop:

The Hill Museum and
Manuscript Library

Thu. April 22nd / 11-1P.M. (ET)

Hosted via Zoom



Please RSVP via this link:
islamicstudies.harvard.edu/spring21workshop

SPEAKERS

Columba Stewart
Executive Director

Catherine Walsh
Director of Cataloging

Joshua Mugler
Curator of Islamic Manuscripts

David Calabro
Curator of Eastern Christian Manuscripts

Daniel Gullo
Director of the Manuscript Study Center

Ali Diakite and Paul Naylor
Catalogers of West African Manuscripts

Celeste Gianni
Cataloger of Arabic Manuscripts

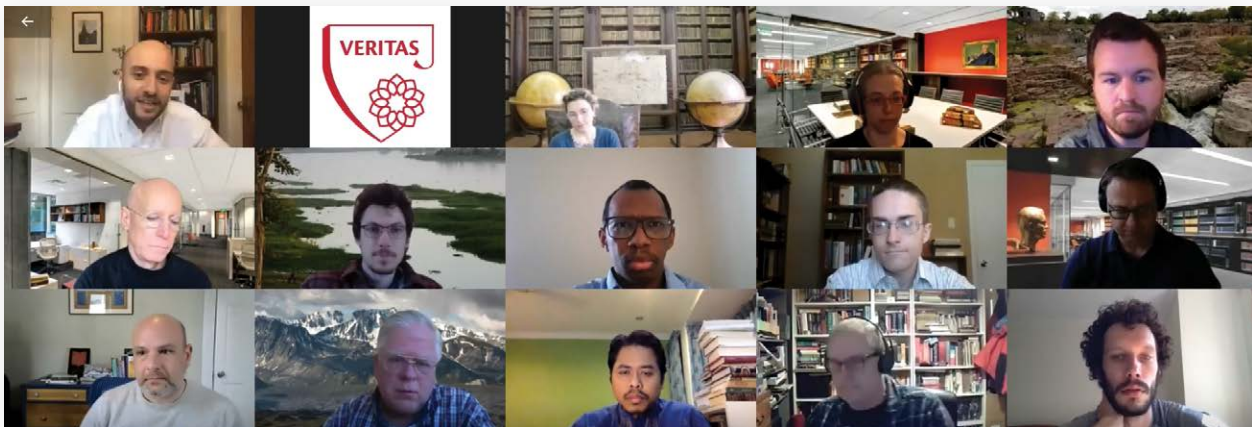
Questions: Johannes Makar
(jmakar@g.harvard.edu)

Mali ('Tombouctou)

- 24,000 (and growing) digital items from 2 large and numerous smaller collections
- Primarily Arabic, with some Fulfulde, Bambara, and other West African languages
- Cataloging ongoing



HMML presentation on West African Arabic manuscripts



Participants in Hill Museum and Library Workshop

Alwaleed Bin Talal

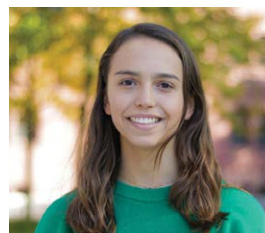
Thesis Prizes

In May 2021, the Alwaleed Program awarded its third annual Alwaleed Bin Talal Undergraduate Thesis Prize in Islamic Studies and second Alwaleed Bin Talal Dissertation Prize in Islamic Studies. Due to the number of excellent submissions, the Selection Committee also recognized an honorable mention for the dissertation prize.

Undergraduate Thesis Prize

ISABEL KENDALL

The Selection Committee announced Isabel Kendall as the winner of the Alwaleed Bin Talal Undergraduate Thesis Prize in Islamic Studies for her dissertation entitled, **“I Know How the Caged Bird Tweets: Online Dissent and Physical Repression in Saudi Arabia, 2015-2020.”**



Ph.D. Dissertation Prize

DR. RUSHAIN ABBASI

Dr. Rushain Abbasi was named the winner of the Alwaleed Bin Talal Doctoral Dissertation Prize in Islamic Studies for his dissertation, **“Beyond the Realm of Religion: The Idea of the Secular in Premodern Islam.”**



Ph.D. Honorable Mention

DR. CAITLYN OLSON

The Selection Committee also recognized Dr. Caitlyn Olson as honorable mention for her dissertation, **“Creed, Belief, and the Common Folk: Disputes in the Early Modern Maghrib (9th/15th - 11th/17th c.).”**



Faculty Research Grants

The Alwaleed Program offers grants for early-career faculty that are conducting new research in Islamic studies. The following are the 2020-21 awardees:



SHADY H. NASSER

Associate Professor of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

Professor Nasser received funding to develop his new website, *The Encyclopedia of the Variant Readings of the Qur'an (EvQ)*, that aims to be the foundation of a critical edition of the Qur'an. While most scholarly critical editions rely on physical manuscripts, EvQ gives priority to the most important defining characteristic of the Qur'an, its orality. EvQ offers a flexible online interface through which users can access variant readings, canonical and non-canonical, for each verse and phrase and their audio recordings.



ROSIE BSHEER

Assistant Professor of History, Department of History

Professor Bsheer received funding to support research for her current book project, *A Return to Land: Private Property, Corporatization, and Agro-Imperialism in Saudi Arabia*, which explores questions of how land rights, corporatization, and the exploitation of nature have produced novel forms of Saudi sovereignty, sociality, and territoriality.



TEREN SEVEA

Alwaleed Bin Talal Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies, Harvard Divinity School

Professor Sevea used his funds to convene three workshops on Islam in Southeast Asia. The first, "Islamic Third Worldism" focused on an early 20th century ideological network that was managed in Southeast Asian cities that propagated "Islamic Third Worldism" across the globe. The second, "Materials from the Islamic East: Textual Traditions from the Malay World" focused on texts and print materials from the Malay world and Bay of Bengal. The third, "Tarikh-i Lanka: Histories of Sri Lankan Islam," aims to describe the distinctive characteristics of Islam in Sri Lanka as a multilingual maritime crossroads of various Muslim communities.

Event Highlights 2020-21

Middle East Beyond Borders Workshop

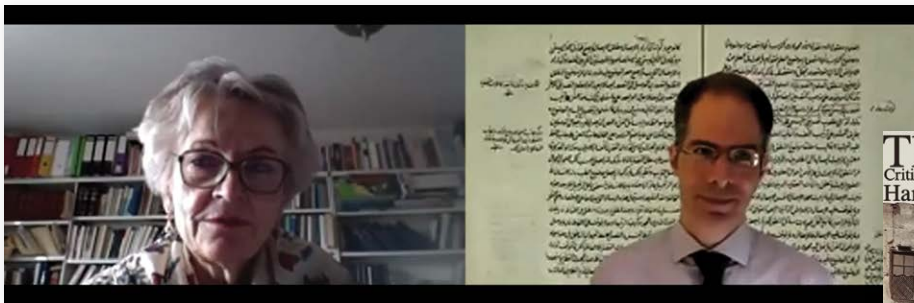
The 2020-21 Middle East Beyond Borders (MEBB) workshop was coordinated by Chloe Bordewich, Ph.D. student in History and Middle Eastern Studies, and Lucy Ballard, Ph.D. student in the Study of Religion. The presenters included graduate students from Harvard and other institutions who represented a range of fields including modern history, philosophy, history of science, and law.



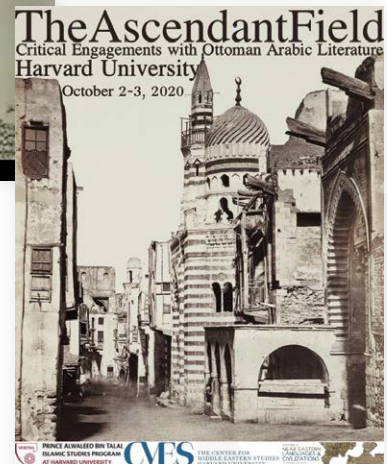
The Ascendant Field: Critical Engagements with Ottoman Arabic Literature

On October 2-3, 2020, Hacı Osman (Ozzy) Gündüz, Ph.D. student in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, convened a conference on Ottoman Arabic literature that featured experts from the United States and Europe including independent scholar Hilary Kilpatrick; Helen Pfeifer from Cambridge

University; Ghadye Ghraoui from Yale University; Theodore Beers from the University of Chicago; Rachida Chih from Ehness-Cnrs, Paris; Hakan Özkan from the University Muenster; and Alev Masarwa from the University of Münster.

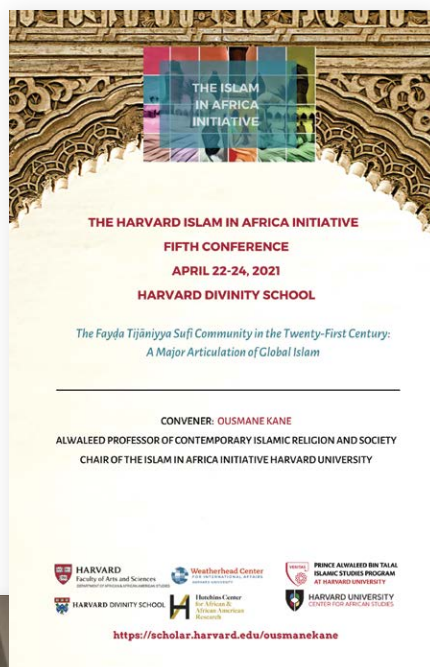


Professor Khaled El-Rouayheb (right) introduces Dr. Hilary Kilpatrick (left) for her keynote address



Islam in Africa Conference

On April 22-24, 2021, Professor Ousmane Kane convened the annual Islam in African conference with the theme, “The Fayda Tijaniyya Sufi Community in the Twenty-First Century: A Major Articulation of Global Islam.” Scholars from the United States, Africa, and Europe gathered over Zoom to present their research on various aspects of the spread of this major Sufi order and held panels on, “Epistemological Foundations of Tijaniyya Sufism,” “Shaykh Ibrahim’s Interventions in Major Debates,” “The Global Spread of the Fayda Tijaniyya,” “Transnational Linkages,” and “New Fayda Tijaniyya Female Leadership.”



Professor Ousmane Kane making opening remarks



Professor Zachary Wright speaking on “Debating the Need for a Spiritual Guide in the Contemporary Tijāniyya: The Kāshif al-Ilbās”

Courses Fall 2020

COURSE	INSTRUCTOR	DESCRIPTION
Introduction to Islamic Mystical Traditions	<i>Ali Asani</i>	This course offered an introductory survey of mystical traditions of Islam, popularly labelled as “Sufism.” It explored the fundamental concepts, practices, and institutions associated with these traditions, their historical development and their influence on the devotional, cultural and social lives of Muslim communities through the centuries.
Being Muslim in South Asia: Religion, Culture and Identity	<i>Ali Asani</i>	South Asia is home to the largest population of Muslims in the world. And yet, within South Asia, Muslims are a minority. What is Islam and what does it mean to be Muslim in South Asia? This course explored the historical development of Islamic institutions in the subcontinent and how ideas about Islam are shaped by evolving literary, linguistic, social, and political landscapes.
Pluralism: Case Studies in American Diversity	<i>Diana Eck</i>	Who do we mean when we say “we?” How does a society deal with religious, ethical, and cultural diversity? This course explored the changing multi-cultural and multi-religious landscape of America with an eye to the growing Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, and Sikh communities in the most recent period of post-1965 immigration.
Arabic Philosophical Texts: Seminar	<i>Khaled El-Rouayheb</i>	Readings on selected topics in Islamic philosophy.
Spiritual Cultivation in Islam Part I: The Classical Era	<i>Ousmane Kane and Khalil Abdur-Rashid</i>	This course, as part of the new HDS Initiative on Islamic Spiritual Life and Service, was intended for students preparing for vocation in a variety of settings in which they will provide Islamically-inspired service and support. The course acquainted students with Islamic pedagogy and practice on spiritual cultivation, highlighting the foundational importance of spiritual-ethical virtues in Islamic piety and the lifelong quest for nearness to and knowledge of God.
Islam, Modernity, and Politics	<i>Ousmane Kane</i>	The aim of this seminar was to study the evolution of Islamic thought and political practices in Muslim societies from the 19th to the early 21st centuries.
Advanced Readings in Classical Arabic Bridge III: Prose, Poetry, and Literary Sources	<i>Shady Nasser</i>	Reinforcement of advanced classical Arabic grammar and stylistics, and introduction to various genres of poetry and prose (adab).

Courses Fall 2020 *continued*

COURSE	INSTRUCTOR	DESCRIPTION
Art Writing in Persianate Culture	<i>David Roxburgh</i>	This seminar focused on the reading and critical study of primary written sources about art in Persian and English translation from the 15th through 17th centuries focused on Persianate culture.
Shamans, Saivas, Sufis or Salafis?: Islam and Islamic Bodies in Southeast Asia	<i>Teren Sevea</i>	This course introduced students to scholarship on Islam in Southeast Asia. It focused on the literature on Islamic bodies and sexuality in Southeast Asia, paying particular attention to how Islamic adepts associated the health, growth and regeneration of religion with the cultivation of bodies and sexual practices.
Islam and Politics in the Modern Middle East	<i>Malika Zeghal</i>	The course critically examined the ideologies and political strategies of twentieth century Islamist movements, as well as their origins and evolution. It related the emergence of organized Islamist movements in the first part of the twentieth century to earlier Islamic reformist narratives and explored the political and social contexts in which these movements emerged and evolved.
Reading <i>al-Manar</i> in the Interwar Period	<i>Malika Zeghal</i>	Meeting approximately every other week, graduate students established digital maps and databases based on <i>al-Manar</i> and other periodicals in Morocco, Tunisia, and Egypt in the Interwar Period.

Courses Spring 2021

COURSE	INSTRUCTOR	DESCRIPTION
Understanding Islam and Contemporary Muslim Societies	<i>Ali Asani</i>	This course was an introduction to the fundamental concepts of Islam and the role that religious ideas and institutions play in Muslim communities around the world. Through specific case studies of countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey, Egypt, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, the course considered the role played by ideologies such as jihad, colonialism, nationalism, secularism, and globalization in shaping the ways in which Muslims interpret and practice their faith today.
Introduction to the Rational Sciences	<i>Khaled El-Rouayheb</i>	Reinforcement of advanced classical Arabic grammar and stylistics, and introduction to the genres of usul, kalam, mantiq and falsafa.
Arabic Philosophical Texts: Seminar	<i>Khaled El-Rouayheb</i>	Readings on selected topics in Islamic philosophy.
Hadith Jibril: An introduction to the theological, legal, and spiritual dimensions of Islam	<i>Yasir Fahmy</i>	This course engaged in a critical reading and analysis of Hadith Jibril. Also known as Umm Al-Hadith (or the mother of Prophetic narrations), this narration gathers the essential acts and practices that are to be performed, internally and externally, in the life of a Muslim.
Spiritual Cultivation in Islam Part II: The Modern Era	<i>Ousmane Kane and Khalil Abdur-Rashid</i>	This course, part of the HDS Initiative on Islamic Spiritual Life and Service, was designed for students preparing for vocation in a variety of settings in which they will provide Islamically-inspired service and support. The course acquainted students with Islamic pedagogy and practice on spiritual cultivation, highlighting the foundational importance of spiritual-ethical virtues in Islamic piety and the lifelong quest for nearness to and knowledge of God.
Spiritual Care from a Muslim Perspective	<i>Yunus Kumek</i>	This course surveyed spiritual care practices of different Muslim cultures, with a focus on the relevant application of these practices in North America, particularly on contemporary issues. It emphasized meditative, philosophical, counseling, and psychological practices that have relevance and meanings in personal journeys of Muslim spiritual experience.

Courses Spring 2021 *continued*

COURSE	INSTRUCTOR	DESCRIPTION
Between Fiction and Science: The Form(s) of Knowledge in the Premodern Persianate World	<i>Justine Landau</i>	This seminar explored the porous boundaries between fiction and science in premodern Persian literature, with readings selected from major prose and poetic texts from the 10th to the 16th century. Students engaged in the close reading of chosen passages spanning across genres, from works on logic and ethics to histories and travelogues, and from treatises on rhyme and agriculture to narrative verse, and manuals of Sufism.
Middle Eastern Politics and Policy	<i>Tarek Masoud</i>	This course explored the major political, economic, social, and security challenges facing - and emanating from - the Middle East. Particular attention was paid to the causes of the so-called Arab Spring and the prospects for genuine democratization. It explored the role of colonial legacies, Islam, peculiarities of the physical environment, demographic patterns, cultures of patriarchy, the distortions of foreign aid and oil wealth, and the machinations of great powers in generating the region's particular pattern of political development.
Word and Image in Persian Painting: Seminar	<i>David Roxburgh</i>	Texts of the Persian literary tradition that were illustrated constituted the focus of this course, including Firdawsi's <i>Shahnama</i> and Nizami's <i>Khamsa</i> . The study of word and image was staged through key examples to open new lines of inquiry.
Landmarks of World Architecture	<i>David Roxburgh and Petricio del Real</i>	This course examined major works of world architecture and the unique aesthetic, cultural, and historical issues that frame them. Faculty members focused each lecture on an outstanding example in their area of expertise, drawing from various historical periods and diverse cultures such as modern and contemporary Europe and America, early modern Japan, Mughal India, Renaissance Europe, and ancient Egypt.
Animals and the Unseen	<i>Teren Sevea</i>	This course considered how we can write histories of religious animals and the Unseen. Students were introduced to academic literature that has criticized scholarly and popular conceptions of humans having a special status, and assumptions that the religious sentience of non-human animals and the materiality of spirits cannot be studied academically.
Islamic Missions: Reforming Muslim South and Southeast Asia	<i>Teren Sevea</i>	How did Islamic missions and missionaries reform Muslim South and Southeast Asia? How did Muslim 'modernists' and 'traditionalists' respond to the challenges of colonialism and modernity? This discussion-based introductory course answered these questions, and more.

Courses Spring 2021 *continued*

COURSE	INSTRUCTOR	DESCRIPTION
Islam in Early America	Arianne Urus	Muslims first arrived on the shores of the Americas at the turn of the sixteenth century, yet their long history in the western hemisphere has been largely forgotten. This course unfolded in four units from the first early modern European encounters with Islam to the stories of Muslim agents of European conquest and Muslim resistance to enslavement in the Caribbean and US South, to how the Founding Fathers thought about Islam and the status of Muslims in the early Republic.
Islamic Law: Human Rights Advocacy in the Muslim World	Salma Waheedi	This course focused on Islamic law and human rights advocacy in Muslim majority and minority contexts. After a brief introduction to Islamic law, the course examined practical and legal human rights questions at the intersection of Islamic law and its present-day application and interpretations.
Reading <i>al-Manar</i> in the Interwar Period	Malika Zeghal	Meeting approximately every other week, graduate students established digital maps and databases based on <i>al-Manar</i> and other periodicals in Morocco, Tunisia, and Egypt in the Interwar Period.
Islamic Institutions - Middle East & Beyond: Modern Transformations & Debates (19th-21st centuries)	Malika Zeghal	This graduate seminar explored the transformation of Islamic institutions in the modern period, such as religious endowments (<i>awqaf</i>), sharia courts, and Islamic education. Students engaged with the historiography of these institutions and with primary sources in Arabic to open new paths for research.

Alwaleed Professorship Spotlights





Malika Zeghal

Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Professor in
Contemporary Islamic Thought and Life

Malika Zeghal is Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Professor in Contemporary Islamic Thought and Life in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Affiliated Professor of Government in the Department of Government, and a Member of the Committee on the Study of Religion. Her work focuses on the interaction between Islam and politics in the modern Middle East. She is particularly interested in studying the formation of modern Muslim states and their religious institutions, as well as the intellectual and political genealogies of Islamist movements in the region. She also has an interest in modern Islamic intellectual history in the Middle East, Europe and North America.

In the 2020-21 academic year, she taught courses for both undergraduate and graduate students and served as the Director of Graduate Studies for the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. She has continued to pursue her own research, which has included expanding her methods and working on collaborative projects with her graduate students.

Professor Zeghal taught a general education course on “Islam and Politics in the Modern Middle East,” which gave students an overview of the history and politics of the region along with critical insights into the debates surrounding issues related to religion and governance. She also taught a graduate seminar on “Islamic Institutions in the Middle East and Beyond: Modern Transformations and Debates” that examined the development of Islamic educational institutions, religious endowments (*awqaf*) and shari’a courts from the 19th to 21st centuries.

Along with Professor Kristen Stilt, Professor of Law and Director of the Program on Law and Society in the Muslim World at Harvard Law School, Professor Zeghal directs the Middle East Beyond Borders Graduate Student Workshop. In 2020-21, it was organized by Chloe Bordewich, Ph.D. student in History and Middle Eastern Studies, and Lucy Ballard, Ph.D. student in the Study of Religion, and gives scholars at Harvard, primarily graduate students, across academic disciplines an opportunity to present and receive feedback on their work. Presentations included, “Conceptions of Science in the Commentaries and Glosses on the Prolegomenon of Katibi’s *Shamsiyya*” by Dr. Kenan Tekin, Visiting Fellow in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations; “How Islamic is Islamic Medicine? Text and the Body in Tibb” by Shireen Hamza, Ph.D. student in the History of Science; “Age, Race, and Jewish Terrorism on Trial in Mandatory Palestine: The Case of Rachel Habshush” by Caroline Kahlenberg, Ph.D. student in History and Middle Eastern Studies; and “Fake Hanafis and Radical Basrans in 9th Century Iraq” by Dr. Hassaan Shahawy, J.D. student at Harvard Law School.

In recent years, Professor Zeghal has expanded her research to include the latest digital methods. She is an affiliated faculty member of the Institute for Quantitative Social Science (IQSS), a Harvard-wide center that empowers researchers to not only study the world’s problems, but also to help solve them by employing cutting-edge methods and technologies. Currently, Professor Zeghal is working with a group of Ph.D. students on her research project, “Reading

al-Manar in the Interwar Period,” in which they develop digital maps and databases using *al-Manar* and other periodicals from Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt in the period between the two World Wars.

Professor Zeghal has also continued her ongoing research in the National Tunisian Archives (Tunis, Tunisia) and in the French Diplomatic Archives (Paris and Nantes, France) and is completing a book on Islam and the state in the Middle East in the modern period (19th-21st century), which is forthcoming from Princeton University Press.



Al-Qayrawan, Tunisia / photo credit: Haythem Gataa via Unsplash



Ousmane Kane

Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Professor of
Contemporary Islamic Religion and Society

Ousmane Kane is Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Professor of Contemporary Islamic Religion and Society at Harvard Divinity School, Professor of African and African American Studies, Denominational Counselor to Muslim Students, and Weatherhead Center Distinguished Faculty Research Associate.

In 2020-21, Professor Kane continued to be active in the intellectual and spiritual life of Harvard, and in the broader field of Islam in Africa, through his teaching, research, and community engagement.

On April 22-24, 2021, Professor Kane hosted the fifth Islam in Africa conference entitled “The Fayda Tijaniyya Sufi Community. A Major Articulation of Global Islam” via Zoom. The conference featured panels on the epistemological foundations of Tijaniyya Sufism, Shaykh Ibrahim Niasse’s intervention in major debates, the global spread of the Fayda Tijaniyya, transnational linkages, and new Fayda Tijaniyya female leadership. Recordings from this conference are available on Professor Kane’s website, scholar.harvard.edu/ousmanekane.

In May 2021, Professor Kane published an edited volume entitled, *Islamic Scholarship in Africa: New Directions and Global Contexts* forthcoming, that seeks to fill the lacuna of the study of Islamic erudition in West Africa. The book includes chapters from scholars across the world on the topics of history, movement, and Islamic scholarship; textuality and orality; Islamic education; and ‘ajami, knowledge transmission, and

spirituality. The work was simultaneously published in French as *Erudition islamique en Afrique. Nouvelles pistes de recherche et contexte Mondial*.

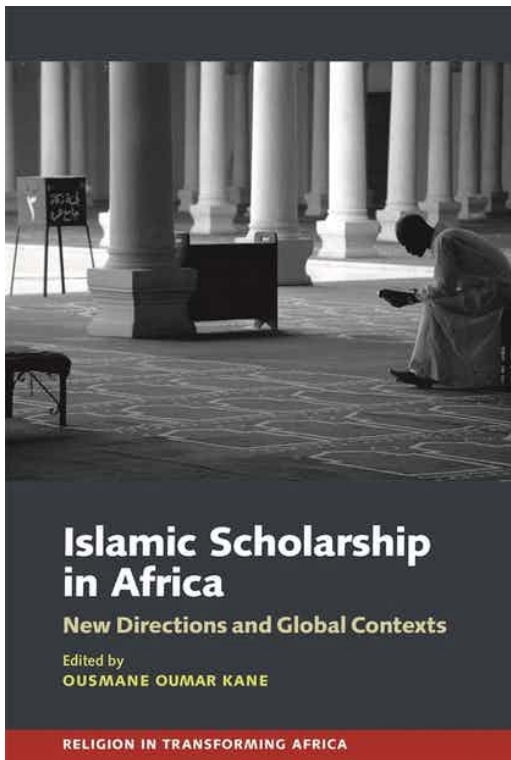
He is also co-editing with Zekeria Ahmed Salem a special issue of the journal *Religions* entitled “Africa, Globalization and the Muslim Worlds” in which select papers of the third Islam in Africa conference “West Africa and the Maghreb” and the fourth one entitled “Africa, Globalization and the Muslim Worlds” will be published.

In 2020-21, Professor Kane taught courses on “Critical Perspectives in the Dynamics and Development of Islam in Africa,” “Islam, Modernity and Politics,” and a two-semester course on “Spiritual Cultivation in Islam,” with a focus on the Classical Era in the fall term and the Modern Era in the spring term.

In addition to his teaching, research and writing, Professor Kane is highly engaged with students. He advises Master of Theological Studies and Master of Divinity students at Harvard Divinity School and Ph.D. students in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. He also serves as spiritual counselor to Muslim students. In this capacity, he has been hosting a weekly gathering for dhikr and spiritual cultivation for them in his home on Friday evenings since 2014. Professor Kane is also the coordinator of the Initiative in Islamic Spiritual Life at Harvard Divinity School.



Armaan Siddiqi (right) introducing Babacar Niang (left) at the 2021 Islam in Africa Conference



Professor Ousmane Kane's recent book, Islamic Scholarship in Africa: New Directions and Global Contexts (2021)



David Roxburgh

Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Professor of
Islamic Art History

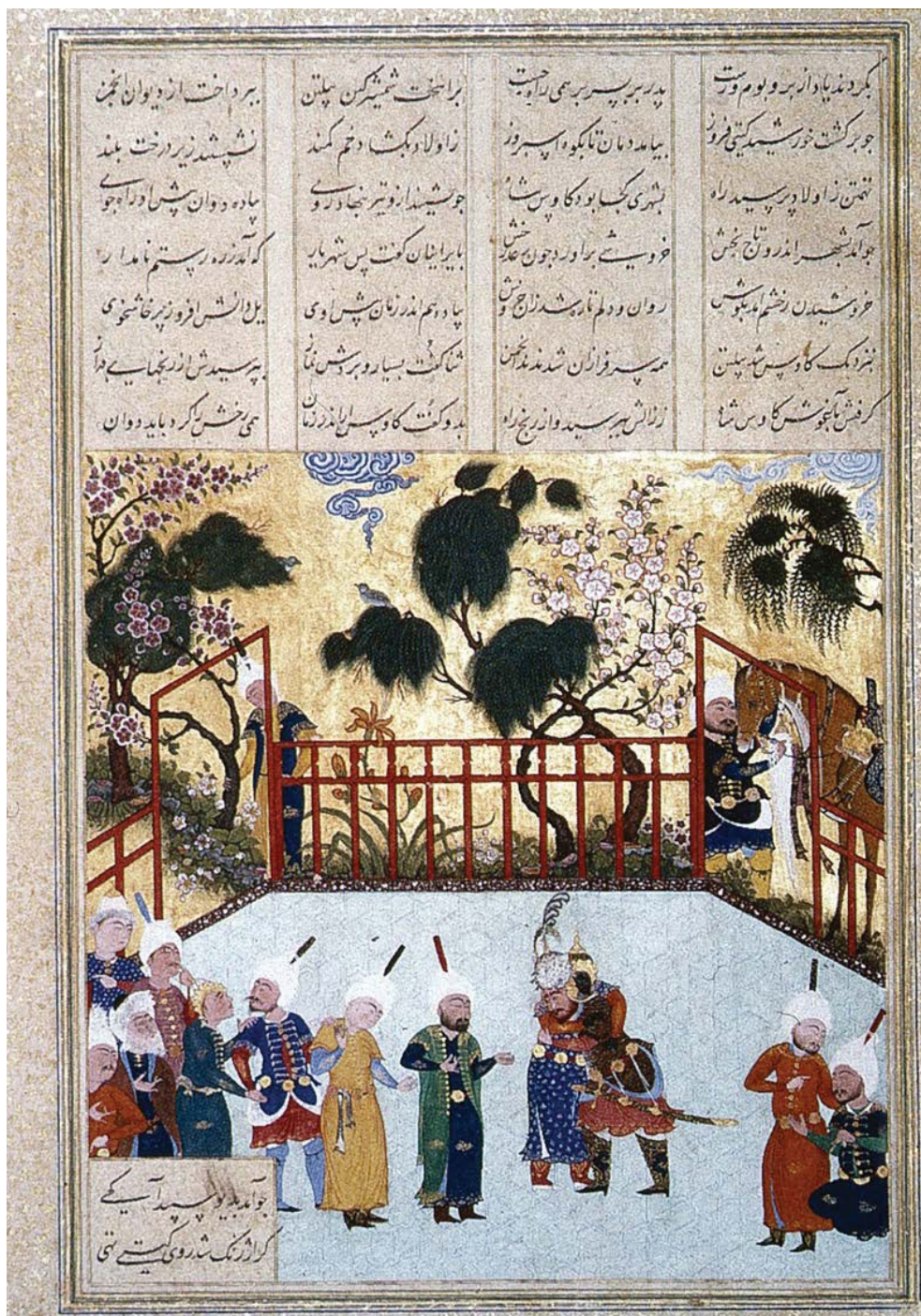
David Roxburgh is Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Professor of Islamic Art History and Chair of the Department of History of Art and Architecture. In the academic year 2020-21, Professor David Roxburgh taught four courses: the lecture course HUMAN20 A Colloquium on the Visual Arts, a graduate seminar HAA266 Art Writing in Persianate Culture, the lecture course HAA11 Landmarks of World Architecture (co-led with Professor Patricio del Real), and the graduate seminar HAA229P Word and Image in Persian Painting.

During the year he presented lectures and participated in conferences. In fall 2020, he gave a paper with Ben Youtz and Nazneen Cooper titled “Reinvigorating a Campus Landmark: Repositioning Stirling’s Museum into a Vibrant Academic Building,” at the International Council of Fine Arts Deans (IFCAD), annual conference. A paper of similar content was delivered in spring 2021 at The Society for College and University Planning, North Atlantic Regional Conference. In the summer of 2021, he was invited to give the keynote lecture at the Persian Arts of the Book conference—celebrating ten years of the Bahari Fellowship at the Bodleian Libraries, Oxford University—about the *Shahnama* made for Timurid prince Muhammad Juki.

During the academic year Professor Roxburgh completed some new essays, or edits to ongoing writing projects, that have all gone to press with

publication dates in 2022 or 2023, comprising studies on the Suez Canal inauguration ceremonies of November 1869 and two essays, one on the diagram in Islamicate manuscripts, the other on the book of fixed stars by Abd al-Rahman al-Sufi (both for the co-edited conference proceedings on the diagram conference held at Dumbarton Oaks in spring 2018). His essay on Timurid prince Baysunghur’s anthology in the Berenson Collection appeared in 2021 (“Calligraphy, Painting, and Illumination in the Berenson Anthology,” in *Persian Manuscripts and Paintings from the Collection of Bernard and Mary Berenson at I Tatti*, ed. Aysin Voltar-Yildirim [Rome: I Tatti in collaboration with Officina Libraria, 2021], 65–95).

Whenever time permits, outside of Chairing his Department, advising and teaching, and other responsibilities at Harvard and to his field, Roxburgh continues to work on his study of art-making in Herat in the first quarter of the 15th century.



“Kay Kavus and Rostam embrace,” Shah Tahmasp (Houghton) Shahnama / photo credit: Harvard Fine Arts Library, Digital Images & Slides Collection

Faculty Steering Committee



GARETH DOHERTY

Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture and Director of the Master in Landscape Architecture Program, Harvard Graduate School of Design

Gareth Doherty's research broadens discussions on ethnography and participatory methods by asking how a socio-cultural perspective can inspire design innovations. Each of Doherty's publications, including *Paradoxes of Green: Landscapes of a City-State*, expands the limits and scope of landscape architectural theory and design by considering people-centered issues alongside environmental and aesthetic concerns. Doherty addresses these issues through research on designed landscapes across the postcolonial and Islamic worlds.



GÜLRU NECİPOĞLU

Aga Khan Professor of Islamic Art, Department of History of Art and Architecture

Gülru Necipoğlu specializes in the arts and architecture of the pre-modern Islamic world, with a focus on the Mediterranean and the eastern Islamic lands. She is interested in questions of aesthetic cosmopolitanism, transregional connectivity between early modern Islamicate empires (Ottoman, Safavid, Mughal), and cross-cultural artistic exchanges with Byzantium and Renaissance/Baroque Europe. Her studies have also addressed architectural practice, plans and drawings, aesthetics of abstraction, and geometric design. Her critical concerns encompass methodological and historiographical issues in modern constructions of the field of Islamic art.



WILLIAM GRANARA

Professor of the Practice of Arabic on the Gordon Gray Endowment, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

William Granara is professor of Arabic and Comparative Literature and Director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University. He specializes in the literature and history of the Arab Mediterranean in both the medieval and modern periods. He is the author of *Narrating Muslim Sicily: War and Peace in the Medieval Mediterranean World* (2019) and *Ibn Hamdis the Sicilian* (July 2021). He also writes on contemporary Arabic literature and has published translations of several Arabic novels into English: *The Earthquake* (2000), *Granada* (2004), and *The Battle of Poitiers* (2011). His articles include: "Nostalgia, Arab Nationalism, and the Andalusian Chronotope in the Evolution of the Modern Arabic Novel" (2005); "Nile Crossings: Hospitality and Revenge in Egyptian Rural Narratives" (2010); and "The Mediterranean in Colonial North African Literature: Contesting Views" (2019).



MALIKA ZEGHAL

Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Professor in Contemporary Islamic Thought and Life, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations; Affiliated Professor of Government,

Department of Government; Member, Committee on the Study of Religion

Professor Zeghal's research focuses on the interaction between Islam and politics in the modern Middle East. She is particularly interested in studying the formation of modern Muslim states and their religious institutions, as well as the intellectual and political genealogies of Islamist movements in the region. She also has an interest in modern Islamic intellectual history in the Middle East, Europe and North America. Professor Zeghal is currently completing a book on Islam and the state in the Middle East in the modern period (19th-21st century), which is forthcoming from Princeton University Press.



LEILA AHMED

Victor S. Thomas Research Professor of Divinity, Harvard Divinity School

Leila Ahmed came to the Divinity School in 1999 as the first professor of women's studies in religion and was appointed to the Victor S. Thomas chair in 2003. Her latest book, *A Quiet Revolution: The Veil's Resurgence, from the Middle East to America* (2011), has been widely acclaimed and was the winner of the Grawemeyer Award in Religion for 2012. Her current research and writing interests include Islam and gender in America, and issues of gender, race, and class in the Middle East in the late colonial era.



KHALED EL-ROUAYHEB

James Richard Jewett Professor of Arabic and Islamic Intellectual History; Chair, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

Khaled El-Rouayheb specializes in the intellectual and cultural history of the Arabic-Islamic world in the early-modern period (1500-1800), the history of Arabic logic and Islamic theology and philosophy. His recent publications include *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Philosophy* [2016] co-edited with Sabine Schmidtke and his latest book, *The Development of Arabic Logic (1200-1800)* [2019].



SALMAAN KESHAVJEE

Professor of Global Health and Social Medicine, Harvard Medical School

Salmaan Keshavjee is a professor in the Department of Global Health and Social Medicine and Department of Medicine at Harvard Medical School, and director of Harvard Medical School's Center for Global Health Delivery–Dubai. He also serves as a physician in the Division of Global Health Equity at the Brigham and Women's Hospital. He has conducted research in medical anthropology on the health transition in post-Soviet Tajikistan and extensive work on tuberculosis including working with the Division of Global Health Equity and the Boston-based non-profit, Partners in Health, on a multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) treatment program in Tomsk, Russia. He is the author of *Blind Spot: How Neoliberalism Infiltrated Global Health* (2014).



ALI ASANI

Murray A. Albertson Professor of Middle Eastern Studies and Professor of Indo-Muslim and Islamic Religion and Cultures

Ali Asani holds a joint appointment between the Committee on the Study of Religion and Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. He also serves on the faculty of the Departments of South Asian Studies and African and African American Studies. A specialist of Islam in South Asia, Professor Asani's teaching and research focus on Shia and Sufi devotional traditions in the region. He also teaches courses on Islam in the Harvard's General Education Program, emphasizing the role of the sound arts, visual arts, and poetic arts as the primary ways in which most Muslims around the world experience their faith.



KRISTIN E. FABBE

Associate Professor of Business Administration and Hellman Faculty Fellow, Harvard Business School

Kristin Fabbe is an Associate Professor in the Business, Government, and International Economy Unit. Her primary expertise is in comparative politics, with a regional focus on the Middle East and southeastern Europe, particularly Turkey and Greece. Her recent book is *Disciples of the State?: Religion and State-Building in the Former Ottoman World* (2019).



TAREK MASOUD

Ford Foundation Professor of Democracy and Governance at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government

Tarek Masoud, Professor of Public Policy and the Sultan Qaboos bin Said of Oman Professor of International Relations at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, became the first Director of the Alwaleed Program outside of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and Divinity School in 2018, thereby expanding the reach of the university-wide Program and representing its interdisciplinary mission. Professor Masoud holds an A.B. from Brown University and a Ph.D. from Yale University, both in political science. In addition to his teaching and research on political development in Arabic-speaking and Muslim-majority countries, Professor Masoud serves as the Director of the Middle East Initiative and of the Initiative on Democracy in Hard Places at the Kennedy School. He is the author of *Counting Islam: Religion, Class, and Elections in Egypt* (2014), *The Arab Spring: Pathways of Repression and Reform* with Jason Brownlee and Andrew Reynolds (2015), and several articles and book chapters.



SHADY H. NASSER

Associate Professor of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

Shady Nasser teaches Arabic literature and Islamic Civilizations courses. His research interest is Qur'anic studies in general with particular focus on the history of the transmission of the text, its language, and its reception among the early Muslim community. Pre-Islamic and early Islamic poetry, Akhbar Literature, and Hadith transmission, are also among Professor Nasser's research interests. His recent book is *The Second Canonization of the Qur'an (324/936): Ibn Mujahid and the Founding of the Seven Readings* (2020).



DAVID ROXBURGH

Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Professor of Islamic Art History; Chair, Department of History of Art and Architecture

David Roxburgh has pursued interests including aesthetics and the history of reception—and approaches to the study of art history. He has focused on primary written sources, manuscript painting, art of the book, calligraphy, Timurid art and architecture, exchanges between China and the Islamic lands, travel narratives, and histories of collecting, exhibitions, and museums. He is currently working on two books: the first on the study of Medieval Iranian architecture through the archive of Myron Bement Smith; the second on art and literature in Herat in the early 1400s.

Alwaleed Fellows 2020-21

Each year, two promising Ph.D. students in Islamic studies are selected by the Committee on the Study of Religion as Alwaleed Fellows whose stipends are supported by the Prince Alwaleed's gift.



John Nowak is a Ph.D. student in Islamic Studies with the Committee on the Study of Religion at Harvard University. His research interests are at the intersection of religious identity, reform/revival, and literature in the context of 19th and 20th century South Asia. Mr. Nowak's work considers the ways in which modernity has shaped notions of authority, normativity, and individual devotional piety. He seeks to challenge binaries, such as political/apolitical, legal/mystical, charismatic/bureaucratic, and traditionalist/reformist.

Mr. Nowak received his Bachelor of Arts with First Class Honors in Political Science and a minor in Arabic Language from McGill University. He also holds a Master of Theological Studies in Islamic Studies from Harvard Divinity School.

How did your scholarship develop in the 2020-21 academic year?

“The 2020-21 academic year provided me with the opportunity to further refine my scholarship through teaching, preparation for General Exams, research, and academic workshops. As a Teaching Fellow for three courses (*Pluralism: Case Studies in American Diversity*; *Understanding Islam and Contemporary Muslim Societies*; and *Muslim Politics*), I reflected further on how to best situate my scholarship within broader conversations about inter- and intra-religious pluralism, processes of communal and individual religious identity formation, conceptions of religious and political authority in the context of colonialism and nationalism, and notions of “modernity.” Additionally, preparation for my General Exams has helped further root my scholarship in theory. In seeking to understand how articulating Muslim

identity and authority is a continual process of labor—including collaboration, debate, and conflict in an ever-changing social reality—I am relying on the works of Talal Asad, Pierre Bourdieu, and Wilfred Cantwell Smith, scholars whose writing I had the opportunity to study closely for my exams. During the past academic year, I also surveyed scholarship on *Nadwat al-‘ulama* in preparation for writing my dissertation prospectus, and I served as a Chair for the “Islamic Third Worldism” workshop, co-sponsored by the Harvard University Asia Center, the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Islamic Studies Program at Harvard University, and the Asia Research Institute of the National University of Singapore.



Abtsam Saleh is a Ph.D. student in Islamic studies in the Study of Religion with a Data Science secondary field. Her research examines questions surrounding religion, technology, and transnationalism, and focuses on Islamic education and authority in online contexts. Through her research and fellowships, she has explored a range of issues related to digitality, disinformation, surveillance, the ethical use of AI, and the intersections of law and technology.

Abtsam is currently an Outreach Student Fellow for the Program in Islamic Law at Harvard Law School. She was previously an Assembly Student Fellow at the Berkman Klein Center, the Managing Editor of the Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion, and a Science, Religion, and Culture Junior Fellow at Harvard Divinity School. She received her B.A. with honors from the City University of New York Hunter College and a M.Div. from Harvard Divinity School.

How did your scholarship develop in the 2020-21 academic year?

During the past academic year, I was able to take a variety of coursework that have helped me better approach my doctoral project on Islamic authority and education in online contexts. In an attempt to diversify my perspectives of the Islamic tradition, expanding on the oft-discussed Middle East, I took courses that focused on Islam in Africa, South and Southeast Asia, and the U.S.. This has introduced me to some of the transnational networks of education and authority throughout the 20th-21st centuries. I've been able to take several ethnographic and digital methods courses, both of which have prepared me to acquire, sort, and interpret data as my project continues to unfold. Additionally, I was able to attain basic academic proficiency in Hindi and Urdu using the Devanagari and Nastaliq scripts. This will allow me to work with a wealth of sources throughout my doctoral project, including examining online lectures in Urdu. I plan on turning one of my term papers on Muslim sociality on TikTok into a journal article, which I will also be presenting at next year's American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting.

In addition to my coursework, I have also participated in various programs relating to digital studies and data science throughout the year. As an Outreach Student Fellow at the Program in Islamic Law, I have been able to explore the contours of social media from a practical perspective as well as participate in several SHARIASource Digital Islamic Law Labs. This invaluable experience has introduced me to a variety of projects at the intersections of Islamic studies and the digital humanities, including a number of scholars currently involved in this work. Alongside my time at PIL, I was also a Student Fellow at the Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society during my first year of the PhD. With a cohort of fellows and scholars, I examined theoretical approaches to and solutions for disinformation on social media platforms, which resulted in the curation of a syllabus on disinformation. This experience expanded my knowledge on the architecture of social media platforms and scholarship on digital studies, both being central to my doctoral research. I concluded the year with a TEI XML for Arabic-Script Texts Online Summer Workshop.

Alwaleed Program Team



Professor Khaled El-Rouayheb

Faculty Director, Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Islamic Studies Program;
Chair, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations;
James Richard Jewett
Professor of Arabic and Islamic Intellectual History

Khaled El-Rouayheb is James Richard Jewett Professor of Arabic and of Islamic Intellectual History at the Department of Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations at Harvard University. His research interests include: the intellectual and cultural history of the Arabic-Islamic world in the early-modern period (1500-1800); the history of Arabic logic; Islamic theology and philosophy. He holds a B.A. in Philosophy from the University of Copenhagen (Denmark), a M.A. in Middle Eastern History from the American University of Beirut (Lebanon), and a Ph.D. (2003) in Oriental Studies from the University of Cambridge (United Kingdom). He has been a Junior Research Fellow of the British Academy (2003-2006), a Junior Mellon Visiting Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton (2008-2009), and a Fellow of the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin (2011-12).

His publications include the four monographs: *The Development of Arabic Logic, 1200-1800* (Schwabe Verlag 2019), *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century: Scholarly Currents in the Ottoman Empire and the Maghreb* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), *Relational Syllogisms & the History of Arabic Logic, 900-1900* (Brill, 2010); and *Before Homosexuality in the Arabic-Islamic World, 1500-1800* (University of Chicago Press, 2005). He has also co-edited (with Sabine Schmidtke) the Oxford

Handbook of Islamic Philosophy (Oxford University Press 2016). His edition with introduction of *Kashf al-asrar ‘an ghawamid al-afkar* by Afdal al-Din al-Khunaji (d. 1248), published by the Iranian Institute for Philosophy (2010), was selected in 2011 as the distinguished book by the National Library and Archives of the Islamic Republic of Iran.



Dr. Harry Bastermajian

Executive Director

Harry Bastermajian is the Executive Director of the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Islamic Studies Program at Harvard University and Instructor in the Division of Continuing Education at Harvard University where he teaches courses on Islamic and Middle Eastern history. Dr. Bastermajian earned his Ph.D. in Islamic History and Civilization from the University of Chicago, as well as an A.M. in Islamic History and an A.M. in Middle Eastern Studies. He took his undergraduate degree in Economics and International Relations from Lake Forest College. His dissertation examined Armenian identity formation in nineteenth century Istanbul. His research interests include the role of the history of the press in late modern Islamic societies and the rise of nationalism in the modern Middle East. He is also the co-host of the *Harvard Islamica Podcast*.



Meryum Kazmi

Senior Coordinator,
Programming & Engagement

Meryum Kazmi is the Senior Coordinator of Programming & Engagement for the Alwaleed bin Talal Islamic Studies Program

at Harvard University and producer and co-host of the *Harvard Islamica Podcast*. After working in urban education through AmeriCorps and BPE (formerly Boston Plan for Excellence), she became more interested in Islamic studies and was a student, instructor and program manager at Fawakih, an Arabic institute based in Herndon, Virginia. Meryum also studied and later taught grammar at the Qasid Arabic Institute in Amman, Jordan. She earned her B.A. in History at Georgetown University and A.M. in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University.

Student Coordinator



Johannes Makar

Workshop Coordinator

Johannes Makar coordinates the Research Methods in Islamic Studies Workshop. He is a Ph.D. student in the Department of

Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations (NELC). His research focuses on religious and political reform in the late Ottoman Empire, with special attention to the Coptic community.







2020–2021

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