

History of Islamic Studies at Harvard Timeline

About

The History of Islamic Studies at Harvard digital timeline was created by the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Islamic Studies Program at Harvard University to trace the development of the study of Islam at Harvard, the oldest institution of higher learning in the United States, from the University's founding in the 17th century to the present. While this timeline is far from comprehensive, we hope 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. Former Harvard faculty, directors of the Alwaleed Islamic Studies Program, and professors with endowed chairs have been highlighted individually and the final slide includes a list of current faculty members whose work is related to Islam and Muslim societies. We intend for this timeline to be a living project that is updated to reflect what we hope will be the further expansion of Islamic studies at Harvard.

Editors:

Meryum Kazmi and Harry Bastermajian

Advisory Committee:

William Graham, Roy Mottahedeh, Ali Asani, Tarek Masoud, Khaled El-Rouayheb, and András Riedlmayer

Graphic Design:

Ivan Bolivar

Web Development:

Kate Brodoff and Zoraida Cabrera-Mieles,
Harvard Web Publishing

Other Contributors:

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Introduction

The founders of Harvard College, “dreading to leave an illiterate Ministry to the Churches,”¹ had long required students to study Hebrew for the purpose of Biblical studies.² Interest in Hebrew

¹ “New Englands First Fruits.” London: Printed by R.O. and G.D. for Henry Overton, 1643.
<https://archive.org/details/NewEnglandsFirstFruitsInRespectFirstOfTheCounversionOfSome>,
22.

² Lyon, David G. “XIII. Semitic, 1880-1929.” In *The Development of Harvard University since the Inauguration of President Eliot, 1869-1929*, edited by Samuel Eliot Morison. The Tercentennial History of Harvard College and University, 1636-1936. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1930, 231.

extended, to interest in Arabic for its utility in shedding light on Hebrew, and to the ancient Near East as the “Bible lands.”³ Interest in Islam as a religion and Muslim societies slowly began to develop in the late 19th century at Harvard and expanded tremendously with the development of area studies after World War II. From Biblical studies and Orientalism to postwar area studies to an interdisciplinary and global field, Islamic studies has evolved alongside Harvard over much of its long history and now reflects increasingly diverse interests, perspectives, and approaches.

1654-72 – **Early Arabic Instruction**

According to Harvard historian Samuel Eliot Morison, Harvard’s first two presidents, Henry Dunster and Charles Chauncy, were “primarily Orientalists”⁴ who studied and taught not only Hebrew, but also Aramaic, Arabic, and Ethiopic.⁵ In his 1896 paper on “Semitic Studies in American Colleges,” Rabbi William Rosenau wrote that Arabic was added to the Semitic languages already being taught during the presidency of Chauncy (1654-1672).⁶ This instruction was most likely from Chauncy himself, who had studied Arabic at University of Cambridge in England,⁷ taught it to local ministers outside of Harvard,⁸ and “boasted that he knew more Arabic than any other person in the American colonies.”⁹ After Chauncy’s presidency, Arabic was offered at Harvard occasionally as an adjunct to Hebrew, but was only formally taught as a course in its own right with Professor Crawford H. Toy’s appointment in 1880.¹⁰

³ Lockman, Zachary. *Field Notes: The Making of Middle East Studies in the United States*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2016, 8.

⁴ Morison, Samuel Eliot. *The Intellectual Life of Colonial New England*. New York: New York University Press, 1956, 20, 45.

⁵ Goldman, Shalom. *God’s Sacred Tongue: Hebrew & the American Imagination*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004, 9.

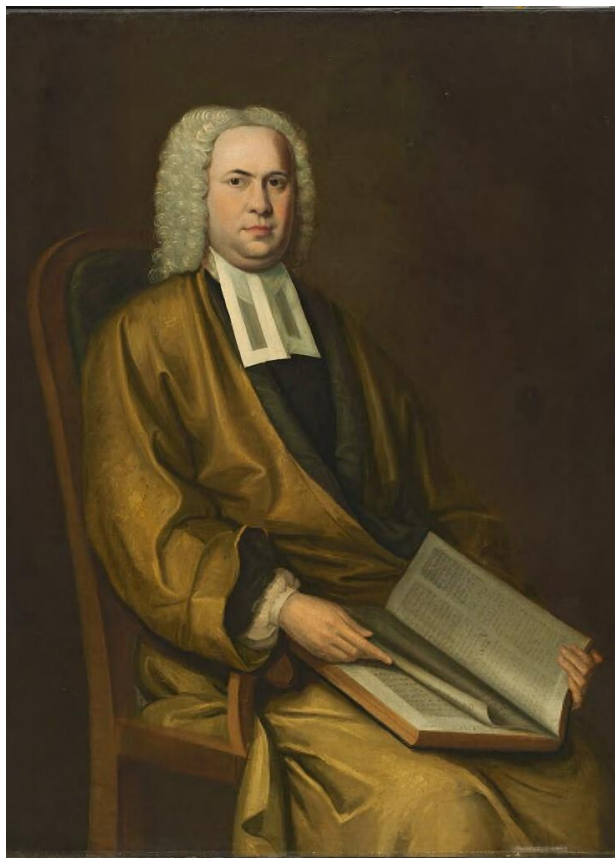
⁶ Rosenau, William. *Semitic Studies in American Colleges: A Paper Read Before the Central Conference of American Rabbis in Milwaukee, Wisc.*, July, 1896, 8. Chicago: Bloch & Newman, 1896. See also Ernest McCarus, “History of Arabic Study in the United States” in Rouchdy, *The Arabic Language in America*, 207.

⁷ Harvard University. “Charles Chauncy.” Accessed April 14, 2021. <https://wayback.archive-it.org/5456/20111123114412/http://www.harvard.edu/history/presidents/chauncy>.

⁸ Edwards, B. B. “Reasons for the Study of the Hebrew Language.” Edited by Absalom Peters. *American Biblical Repository* 12, no. 31 (1838), 115.

⁹ Goldman, *God’s Sacred Tongue*, 9.

¹⁰ Yamak, Labib Zuwiyya. “The Middle Eastern Collections of the Harvard Library.” *Harvard Library Bulletin* 16, no. 4 (1968), 313.



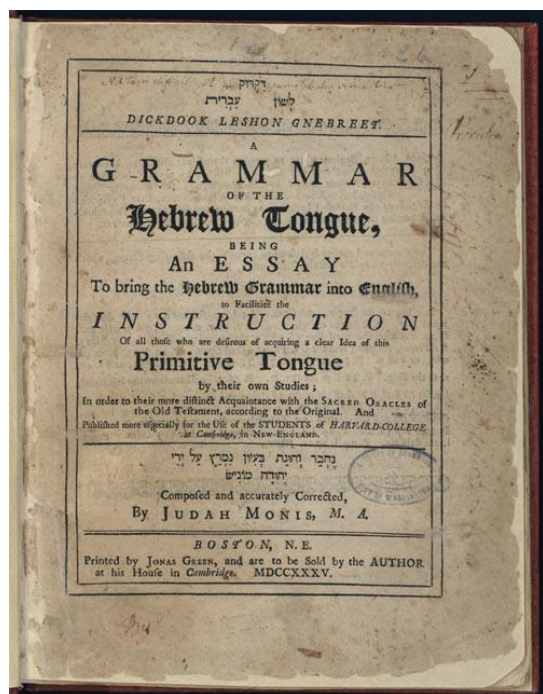
Portrait of a Cleric [formerly entitled *Charles Chauncy (1592-1672)*], c. 1755-1756, oil on canvas, 48 7/16 x 38 in. Harvard University Portrait Collection, Harvard Art Museum, Cambridge, MA, <https://hvrtd.art/o/304845>.

1765 – Hancock Professorship of Hebrew and Other Oriental Languages Established

The Hancock Professorship of Hebrew and Other Oriental Languages, the third oldest endowed chair at Harvard after the Hollis Professorship of Divinity and the Hollis Professorship of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, was established in 1765 and was the professorship through which Arabic was taught at Harvard, even if sporadically, in the 18th and 19th centuries. The statutes for the Hancock Professorship required that the professor be a Protestant, a Master of Arts, instruct students in the Oriental languages, especially Hebrew and Chaldee [Chaldaen Aramaic], give public lectures in the chapel once per week, and offer private instruction 2-3 hours per week to such of his pupils as should desire it “in the Samaritan, the Syriac, and the Arabic.”¹¹ The first instructor dedicated to teaching Hebrew at Harvard was Judah Monis, a

¹¹ Peirce, Benjamin. *A History of Harvard University: From Its Foundation in the Year 1636 to the Period of the American Revolution*. Cambridge, Mass: Brown, Shattuck, and Company, 1833. <https://books.google.com/books?vid=HARVARD:32044011751534&printsec=titlepage#v=onepage&q&f=false>, 232.

former Jewish rabbi born to Sephardic parents¹² “in Italy or in one of the Barbary states,”¹³ possibly in Algiers,¹⁴ who published the first Hebrew grammar in America. Monis’s successor in Hebrew instruction, Stephen Sewall, was the first to hold the Hancock chair.¹⁵



Judah Monis, *Dikdook Leshon Gnebreet* [A Grammar of the Hebrew Tongue], 1735, Boston: Jonas Green, Hebraic Section, Library of Congress (22), www.loc.gov/exhibits/haventohome/haven-haven.html#obj19.

1766 – Harvard Library Collects Islamic Titles

As early as 1648, Harvard’s first president, Henry Dunster, sought out Arabic books from Europe for Harvard’s collection.¹⁶ However, the number and titles of works related to Islam and Muslims in Harvard’s library in this early period are unknown. After a catastrophic fire burned down the Harvard Library in 1764, donations to rebuild the collection included a work on Islamic theology, which the library acquired in 1766 (right).¹⁷ By 1830, the library catalog included over 50 Islamicate titles such as George Sale’s English translation of the Qur’an, Latin

¹² Rosovsky, Nitzza, Pearl K. Bell, and Ronald Steel. *The Jewish Experience at Harvard and Radcliffe: An Introduction to an Exhibition Presented by the Harvard Semitic Museum on the Occasion of Harvard’s 350th Anniversary, September, 1986*. Cambridge, Mass: The Museum : Distributed by Harvard University Press, 1986. [https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:48677268\\$16i](https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:48677268$16i), 4.

¹³ Peirce, *A History of Harvard University: From Its Foundation in the Year 1636 to the Period of the American Revolution*, 232.

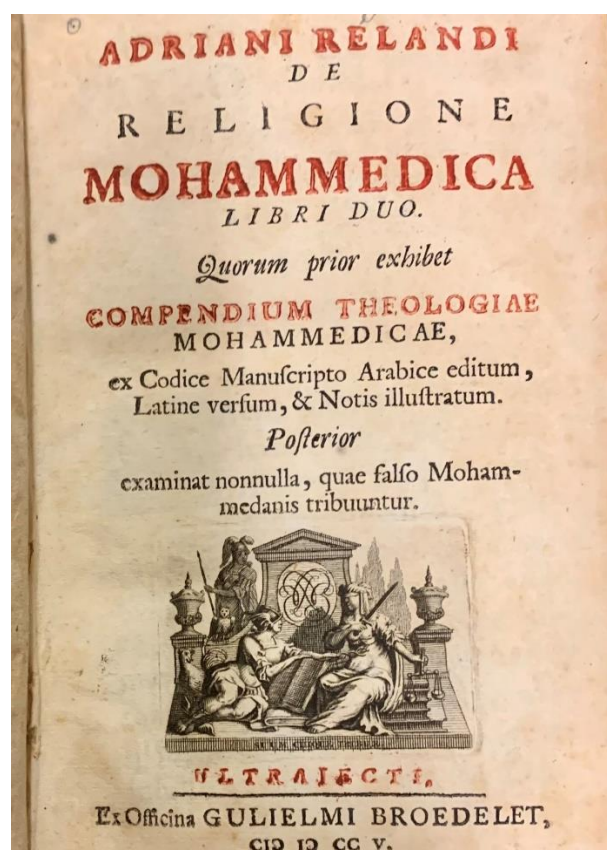
¹⁴ Adams, Hannah. *The History of the Jews from the Destruction of Jerusalem to the Nineteenth Century*. Vol. 2. 2 vols. Boston: J. Eliot, Jr., 1812, 211.

¹⁵ Peirce, 234.

¹⁶ Einboden, Jeffrey. *The Islamic Lineage of American Literary Culture: Muslim Sources from the Revolution to Reconstruction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016, 6.

¹⁷ Overholt, John. Twitter Post. October 29, 2021. https://twitter.com/john_overholt/status/1454113906423705603.

translations of the Arabic poetry of Imru' al-Qays and Ka'b b. Zuhayr, Arabic dictionaries and grammars, works on Islamic history and the life of the Prophet Muhammad, and a Persian manuscript of Saadi's *Gulistan*. In the early 20th century, Professors James R. Jewett and William Thomson acquired classical Arabic works from the Bulaq Press in Cairo as well as Western critical editions.¹⁸ While most Islamicate acquisitions in this period were in Arabic, titles in other languages increased in the mid-20th century¹⁹ thanks to the efforts of Professor Richard Frye, who acquired Persian materials, and Professor Stanford Shaw, who acquired Ottoman Turkish materials.²⁰ The founding of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies in 1954 and appointment of Professor Hamilton Gibb in 1955 led to a substantial growth in the number of Arabic works, particularly modern works, including periodicals.²¹ In 1956 the library hired its first full-time cataloger of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish materials, Flora Rizk, and in 1961 created the Middle Eastern Division.²² In 2005, Prince Alwaleed bin Talal's gift to Harvard made possible the Islamic Heritage Project that cataloged, conserved, and digitized hundreds of Islamic manuscripts, maps, and published texts in Harvard's library and museum collections and made them available to researchers worldwide.



¹⁸ Yamak, "The Middle Eastern Collections of the Harvard Library," 320.

¹⁹ Yamak, 316.

²⁰ Yamak, 317.

²¹ Yamak 321.

²² Yamak, 319.

Reelant, Adriaan. 1705. *De religione Mohammedica libri duo*. Ultrajecti.

1768 – Stephen Sewall Delivers Lectures on Arabic

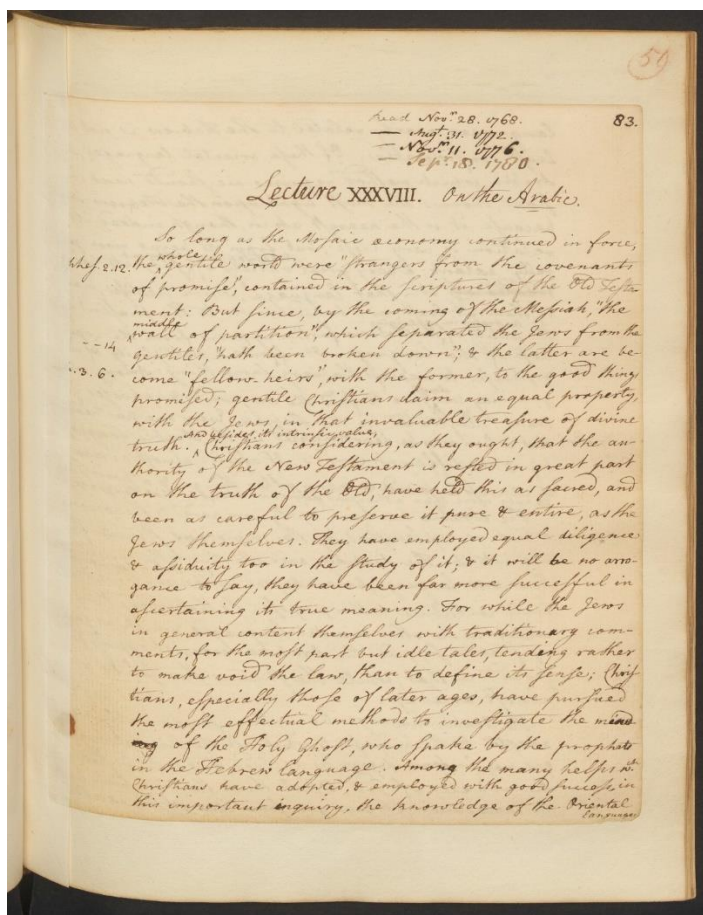
Stephen Sewall, the first Hancock Professor, delivered lectures on Arabic as part of his lecture series on Oriental languages in which he discussed Arabic's alleged origin at the Tower of Babel, development, characteristics, and importance to the "Mahometans" because of its being the language of the "Alcoran."²³ 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.²⁴

Link :

https://islamicstudies.harvard.edu/files/aisp/files/stephen_sewall_on_the_arabic.pdf?m=1606754594

²³ Sewall, Stephen. "Professor Sewall's Lectures on the Hebrew and Oriental Languages." Vol. 3d, 1768-1780. Papers of Stephen Sewall, HUG 1782. Harvard University Archives. Accessed June 26, 2020. <https://id.lib.harvard.edu/ead/c/hua57010c00008/catalog>.

²⁴ Edwards, B. B. "Reasons for the Study of the Hebrew Language." Edited by Absalom Peters. *American Biblical Repository* 12, no. 31 (1838), 116.



Harvard University, Harvard University Archives, HUG.1782_B06-METS

Sewall, Stephen, 1734-1804. *Papers of Stephen Sewall, 1764-1797*. Professor Sewall's lectures on the Hebrew and Oriental languages, Vol. 3d, 1768-1780. HUG 1782 Box 6, Harvard University Archives, <https://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.ARCH:11148290>.

1880 – Crawford H. Toy Joins Harvard Faculty and Teaches Arabic

Crawford H. Toy was born in Virginia in 1836 and studied at the University of Virginia and the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. After serving in the Confederate Army during the Civil War, Toy spent two years in Germany studying theology and Semitic languages at Berlin. He then became a professor of Old Testament interpretation at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary but resigned due to his unwillingness to accept the doctrine of inspiration of the scriptures, which was insisted upon at that institution.²⁵ Professor Toy then joined Harvard Divinity School, at which “no assent to the peculiar doctrines or practices of any denomination of Christians” was required, as Hancock Professor of Hebrew and Other Oriental Languages and

²⁵ “Toy, Crawford Howell.” In *Dictionary of American Biography*. Vol. 18. New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1943, 621-22.

Dexter Lecturer on Biblical Literature.²⁶ In his first year at Harvard, Professor Toy taught Old Testament Hebrew and offered Arabic as an elective.²⁷



Crawford Howell Toy (1836-1919), Harvard Divinity School Library, <https://library.hds.harvard.edu/exhibits/hds-20th-century/toy>.

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.²⁸ This course and “Political and Literary History of the Bagdad Califate” were then offered in alternate years²⁹ and were both expanded over time to include topics such as the Qur’an,³⁰ the history of Islam in India and Egypt, Islamic law, the Crusades, the Barbary States, and Muslims in Sicily.³¹ Professor Toy’s Arabic offerings also

²⁶ Sever, Charles. “Harvard University Catalogue 1880-81.” Harvard University, 1880. Harvard University Archives. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015066578066>, 28.

²⁷ “Annual Reports of the President and Treasurer of Harvard College 1880-81.” Harvard University Press, 1882. Harvard University Archives. <https://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.ARCH:30013161>, 57.

²⁸ “Harvard University Announcement of Courses of Instruction 1889-90.” Harvard University, 1889. Harvard University Archives. [https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467059407\\$1i](https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467059407$1i), 3-4.

²⁹ “Harvard University Announcement of Courses of Instruction 1890-91.” Harvard University, 1890. Harvard University Archives. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015030722956>, 3.

³⁰ “Harvard University Announcement of Courses of Instruction 1896-97.” Harvard University, 1896. Harvard University Archives. [https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467059505\\$7i](https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467059505$7i), 1.

³¹ “Harvard University Announcement of Courses of Instruction 1899-1900.” Harvard University, 1899. Harvard University Archives. [https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467060023\\$6i](https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467060023$6i), 332.

expanded in subsequent years to include the study of Wright's *Grammar, The Thousand and One Nights*, the Mu'allaqāt, Mutanabbī, the Qur'an,³² Ibn Khaldūn,³³ and *Kitāb al-Aghānī*.³⁴

104

HARVARD COLLEGE.

11. General Semitic Grammar. *Half-course. Sat., at 9.* Professor TOY. (VII.)

Course 11 can be taken by those only who are acquainted with at least three Semitic languages, of which one must be Arabic.

The following courses do not require a knowledge of Semitic languages

6. Babylonian-Assyrian History from native sources, with comparison of the Greek and Roman writers. *Half-course. Fri., at 2.* Professor LYON. (V.)
12. History of Israel, political and social, from the period of the Judges until Ezra. *Mon., Wed., at 2.* Professor LYON. (V.)
13. History of the Hebrew religion, with comparison of other Semitic religions. *Fri., from 2 to 4.* Professor TOY. (V.)
14. History of the Spanish Caliphate. *Half-course. Sat., at 12.* Professor TOY. (VIII.)

The Semitic Seminary meets on the first and third Mondays of each month, at 7½ P.M.

Indo-Iranian Languages.

1. Sanskrit. — Perry's Primer (Sanskrit into English and English into Sanskrit). — Reading at sight. — Whitney's Grammar. — Lanman's Reader (the classical part). — The Pañcatantra (Book II.). *Mon., Wed., Fri., at 3.* Professor LANMAN. (VI.)
2. Sanskrit Drama. — Kālidāsa's three plays (Çakuntalā, Urvaçi, Mālavikā). — Ratnāvalī. *Mon., Wed., Fri., at 2.* Professor LANMAN. (V.)
3. Sanskrit Epos. — Reading and critical study of the Mahā-Bhārata. *Tu., Th., 1.30 to 3.* Professor LANMAN. (X.)
- [4. Old Iranian. — Reading of the Avesta. *Three times a week.* Professor LANMAN.] (XI.)
Omitted in 1889-90.
- [5. Pāli. — The Sacred Books of Buddhism. *Tu., Th., from 2 to 3½.* Professor LANMAN.] (XI.)
Omitted in 1889-90.

Greek.

Harvard University Course Catalog, 1889-1990, in which the "History of the Spanish Caliphate" course is first listed under Semitic Languages and History, Harvard University, Faculty of Arts and Sciences. Announcement of Courses of Instruction Provided by the Faculty of Harvard College for the Academic Year 1889-90. Cambridge, Mass.: Published by the University, May 1889, <https://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.ARCH:39991423>.

1889 – Harvard Museum of the Ancient Near East Founded

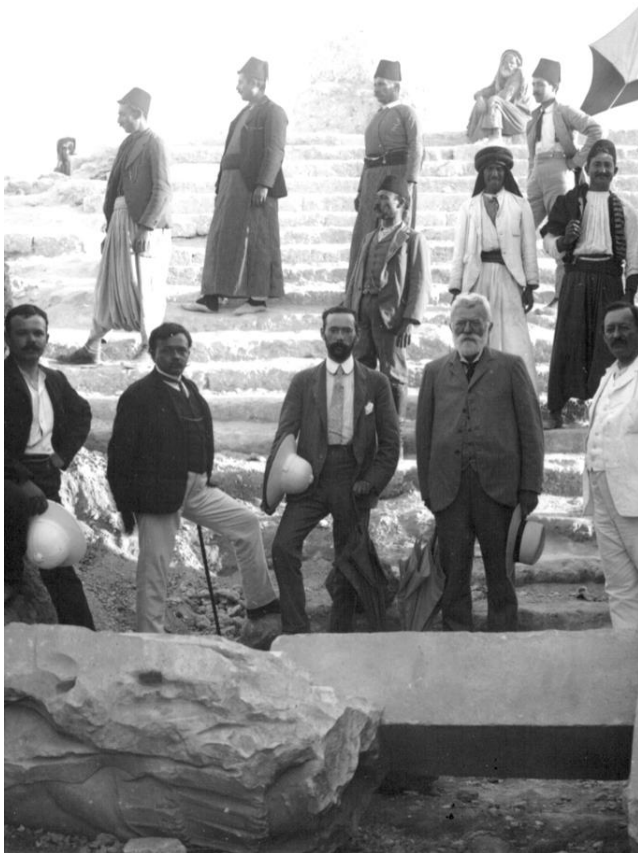
Today's Harvard Museum of the Ancient Near East was founded in 1889 as the Harvard Semitic Museum by Assyriologist David Gordon Lyon, first Hollis Professor of Divinity and later

³² "Harvard University Announcement of Courses of Instruction 1890-91," 4.

³³ "Harvard University Announcement of Courses of Instruction 1895-96." Harvard University, 1895. Harvard University Archives. [https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:490324723\\$5i, 2](https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:490324723$5i, 2).

³⁴ "Harvard University Announcement of Courses of Instruction 1893-94." Harvard University, 1893. Harvard University Archives. [https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:490324471\\$4i, 4](https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:490324471$4i, 4).

Hancock Professor of Hebrew and Other Oriental Languages,³⁵ for teaching and research related to the ancient Near East. In the same year, Lyon's mentor and friend, Crawford Toy, proposed the establishment of a Semitic Fund to purchase manuscripts and other materials in Hebrew, Arabic, Syriac, and other Near Eastern languages for Harvard. A gift from Jacob H. Schiff, a Jewish investment banker and philanthropist from New York, made the establishment of the Semitic Fund and Museum possible.³⁶ Professor Lyon assembled the original collections between 1889 and 1929 when he travelled to the Ottoman lands of Cairo, Beirut, Damascus, and Jerusalem to purchase hundreds of ancient artifacts and manuscripts.³⁷ Although the Semitic Museum was established for the study of the Near East before Islam, its founding demonstrated Harvard's commitment to the study of the "Orient" and became a means for its first significant interactions with Muslim societies. In 2020, the Museum was re-named the "Harvard Museum of the Ancient Near East" to more clearly reflect its core mission.³⁸



³⁵ Lyon, "XIII. Semitic, 1880-1929," 231.

³⁶ Parsons, Mikeal C. *Crawford Howell Toy: The Man, the Scholar, the Teacher*. Perspectives on Baptist Identities. Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 2019, 205-7.

³⁷ Greene, Joseph A. "A Complicated Legacy: The Original Collections of the Semitic Museum." *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology and Heritage Studies* 5, no. 1 (2017), 61.

³⁸ Der Manuelian, Peter. "A New Name for the Harvard Semitic Museum." *In Situ*, no. Spring 2020 (2020), 24.

David Gordon Lyon (white-bearded) on an excursion in Samaria in 1908 / photo courtesy of Joseph Greene, Harvard Museum of the Ancient Near East, Cambridge, MA

1902 - George Foote Moore Teaches Islam in History of Religions

George Foote Moore was born in Pennsylvania in 1851 and studied at Yale University and Union Theological Seminary before joining the Presbyterian ministry. He began his teaching career at Andover Theological Seminary before joining the Harvard faculty in 1902.³⁹ At Harvard Divinity School, Professor Moore taught a course under the new heading of “History of Religions” that included the religions of Japan, China, Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, the Western Semites (including Judaism and Mohammedanism), India, Persia, the Greeks, the Romans, the Germans, the Celts, and Christianity.⁴⁰ He later also taught courses focused on Islam that covered the topics of the life of Prophet Muhammad, the Qur’an, the Muslim conquests, and Islamic law and theology.⁴¹ The second volume of his two-volume work, *History of Religions* (1919), is devoted to Judaism, Christianity and Islam.⁴² Professor Moore also had an interest in the “history of Mohammedan heresies” and presented a paper on Babism and Bahaism at the American Oriental Society while he was its president.⁴³

³⁹ Harvard Divinity School. “George Foot Moore,” n.d. <https://library.hds.harvard.edu/exhibits/hds-20th-century/g-f-moore>.

⁴⁰ “Harvard University Announcement of Courses of Instruction 1902-3.” Harvard University, 1902. Harvard University Archives. [https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467060577\\$47i](https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467060577$47i), 45.

⁴¹ “Harvard University Announcement of Courses of Instruction 1911-12.” Harvard University, 1911. Harvard University Archives. [https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:490325377\\$12i](https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:490325377$12i), 106.

⁴² Barton, George A. “A Great Book on Three Great Religions, History of Religions II.” *The Biblical World* 54, no. 4 (July 1920), 425-7.

⁴³ “The American Oriental Society.” *The Nation* 96 (April 3, 1913).

<https://books.google.com/books?id=ggUyAQAIAAJ&dq=%22George%20F.%20Moore%22%20Mohammad&pg=PP9#v=onepage&q&f=false>, 329.



George Foote Moore (1851-1931), Harvard Divinity School Library, <https://library.hds.harvard.edu/exhibits/hds-20th-century/g-f-moore>.

1911 - James Richard Jewett Becomes First Professor of Arabic

James Richard Jewett began pursuing Semitic studies at Harvard College, from which he graduated in 1884, and then continued in Germany and Syria. He received his Ph.D. at the University of Strasbourg where he wrote a dissertation on “Arabic Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases”⁴⁴ and then taught Semitic languages at Brown University, the University of Minnesota, and the University of Chicago. In 1887, Professor Jewett returned to Harvard as Instructor in Semitic Languages and taught courses in Hebrew Bible, Arabic, and Ethiopic. In 1911, he was appointed Harvard’s first Professor of Arabic.⁴⁵ Professor Jewett’s Arabic courses included the study of Wright’s *Grammar*, Socin’s *Grammar*, selections from the Qur’an, hadith, and classical works on geography and history.⁴⁶ He also taught Semitic 15 on the “Political and Social History of Mohammedanism till the End of the Crusades,”⁴⁷ later the “Political and Social History of the

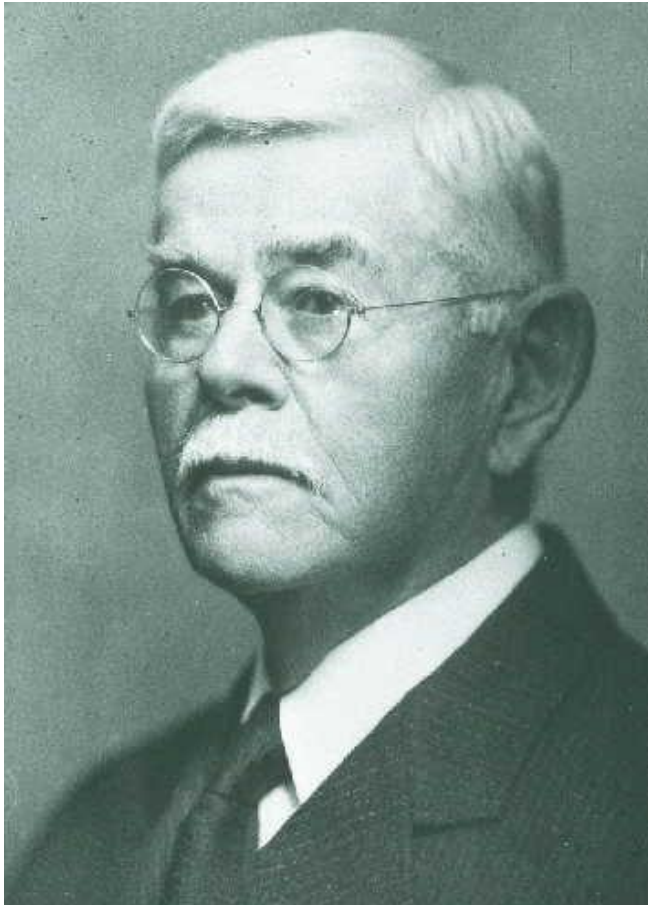
⁴⁴ Jewett, Frederick Clark. “James Richard Jewett.” Memorial. Find a Grave. Accessed May 4, 2021. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/87213659/james-richard-jewett>.

⁴⁵ Lyon, “XIII. Semitic, 1880-1929,” 235.

⁴⁶ “Harvard University Announcement of Courses of Instruction 1911-12,” 10.

⁴⁷ “Harvard University Announcement of Courses of Instruction 1912-13.” Harvard University, 1912. Harvard University Archives. [https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467220994\\$11i](https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467220994$11i), 9.

Mohammedans to the Conquest of Egypt by Selim I”⁴⁸ and a research course on “Arabic Sources for the History of the Crusades.”⁴⁹



James Richard Jewett / photo courtesy of Jim Childers, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/87213659/james-richard-jewett>.

1919 – Harvard Collects Islamic Art

The Fogg Art Museum, founded in 1895, acquired its first works of Islamic art in 1919 from the bequest of Hervey Wetzel, a graduate of Harvard College in 1911 and later Ph.D. student at Harvard in “Persian and Mohammedan Art,” who died tragically of pneumonia in 1918. Eric Schroeder, who became the first curator of the Fogg Museum’s Islamic collection in 1938 with the title, “Keeper of Persian Art,” and John Coolidge, who became the museum’s director in 1948, both worked to expand and showcase its Islamic art collection.⁵⁰ In the 1950s, art collector

⁴⁸ “Harvard University Announcement of Courses of Instruction 1916-17.” Harvard University, 1916. Harvard University Archives. [https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467221872\\$12i](https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467221872$12i), 9.

⁴⁹ “Harvard University Announcement of Courses of Instruction 1914-15.” Harvard University, 1914. Harvard University Archives. [https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467221292\\$13i](https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467221292$13i), 331.

⁵⁰ Cudon, Benedict. “A Field Pioneered by Amateurs: The Collecting and Display of Islamic Art in Early Twentieth-Century Boston.” *Muqarnas Online* 30, no. 1 (2014), 24.

Bernard Berenson, whose interest in Islamic art was sparked by his experience studying Arabic at Harvard with Professor Crawford Toy in the 1880s,⁵¹ left his estate of Villa I Tatti in Florence, Italy, consisting mostly of an Italian Renaissance library and art collection but also an Islamic collection, to his alma mater. In 1979, the gift from Karim Aga Khan (A.B. '59) that established the Aga Khan Program in Islamic Architecture and the Aga Khan Professorship in Islamic Art also established the Aga Khan Center at the Harvard Fine Arts Library, which gave the library the resources and specialized staff to build a world-class collection in the fields of Islamic art and architecture.

1929 – William Thomson and Islamic Intellectual History

William Thomson earned his Ph.D. in 1924 at Harvard where he wrote a dissertation entitled, “Isaac of Nineveh: A study in Syrian mysticism.” He began his career at Harvard as Associate Professor of Arabic in 1929⁵² and later became the first James Richard Jewett Professor of Arabic⁵³ until his retirement in 1954.⁵⁴ Professor Thomson’s research and teaching focused on early Islam, Islamic intellectual history, and Eastern Christian mysticism. His courses spanned the departments of Semitic Languages and History, History of Religions, and History and included, “The Political and Social History of Moslems to the Decline of the Abbasid Caliphate (c. 950 A.D.),”⁵⁵ “The History of Moslem Religious Thought from Mohammed to Al-Ghazali,”⁵⁶ “The Development of Moslem Orthodoxy,” and “The Development of Moslem Sects.”⁵⁷ His publications included articles on “The Early Muslim Sects” (1937), “The Concept of Human Destiny in Islam” (1945), and “An Introduction to the History of Sufism” (1945).⁵⁸

⁵¹ Casari, Mario. “Bernard Berenson and Islamic Culture.” In *Bernard Berenson: Formation and Heritage*, edited by Joseph Connors and Louis Waldman. Villa I Tatti, The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, 2014, 175.

⁵² Lyon, “XIII. Semitic, 1880-1929,” 235.

⁵³ Lockman, *Field Notes*, 16.

⁵⁴ “Divinity School to Lose Three Professors in July.” *The Harvard Crimson*, March 29, 1954. <https://www.thecrimson.com/article/1954/3/29/divinity-school-to-lose-three-professors/>.

⁵⁵ “Harvard University Announcement of Courses of Instruction 1934-35.” Harvard University, 1934. Harvard University Archives. [https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467232694\\$113i](https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467232694$113i), 111.

⁵⁶ “Harvard University Announcement of Courses of Instruction 1934-35,” 118.

⁵⁷ “Harvard University Announcement of Courses of Instruction 1935-36.” Harvard University, 1935. Harvard University Archives. [https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467233032\\$129i](https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467233032$129i), 127.

⁵⁸ Harvard Divinity School. “Harvard Divinity School Faculty Writings File: BMS 13001/Thomson: Writings of William Thomson,” n.d. <https://div.hds.harvard.edu/library/bms/13001/bms13001thomson.html>.

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THE RENASCENCE OF ISLAM *

WILLIAM THOMSON

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

THE term 'renascence' in the title of this paper is perhaps a misnomer. Neither the blame for its misapplication, however, nor the credit for a just use of it, should be laid at my door. For it has been employed frequently of late with reference to various developments in several Muslim countries. And the chief aim of the following brief examination of the origins and trends of thought within the world of Islam is simply to discover what meaning, if any, it may have in this connection.

The late Adam Mez of Basel entitled his brilliant analysis of tenth century Muslim culture *Die Renaissance des Islams*.¹ This title was not entirely satisfactory, Mez felt, but no better suggestion occurred to him. His subject was the transformation of Islam in the ninth and tenth centuries of our era from a simple faith to a complex civilization through the introduction of Greek scientific ideas, Graeco-Roman legal conceptions, and Christian theological doctrines.

This transformation, however, did not signify to any extent a revival of the old Greek spirit of free, rational enquiry into things with its emphasis upon the natural world and this present life in contrast to the supernatural world and the future life, but simply the application of the ideas of Hellenism to the problems raised for the faith and practice of primitive Islam by its very contact with these ideas. It was not so much a rebirth of the Greek spirit as a reincarnation of its works.

The result of that transforming process was the Islam of to-

* Read before the American Historical Association, General Session: Religious Factors in Modern European History. Providence, R. I., Tuesday, Dec. 29, 1936.

¹ Heidelberg, 1922.

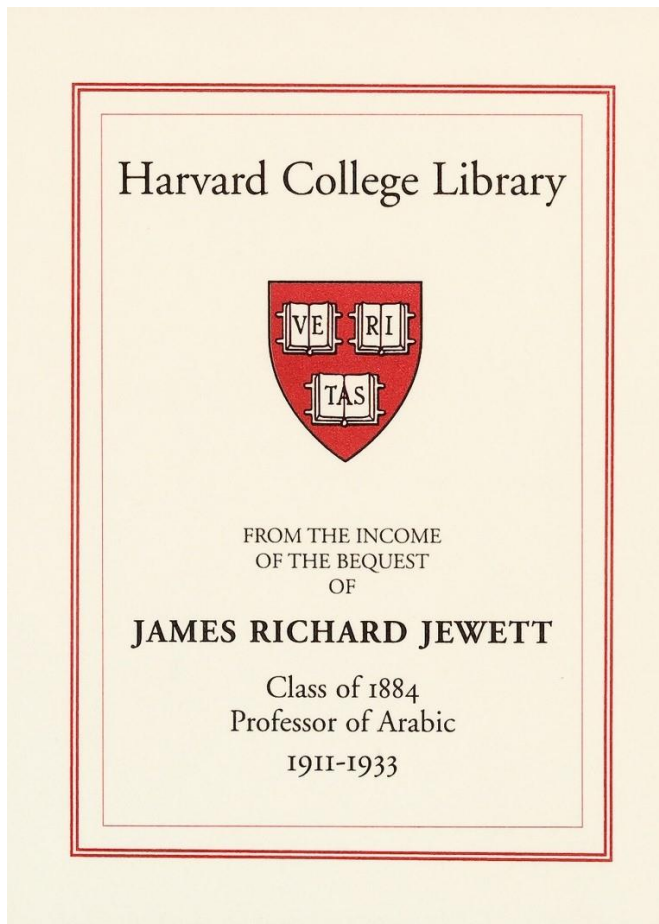
Thomson, William. "The Renaissance of Islam." *The Harvard Theological Review* 30, no. 2 (1937): 51-63. Accessed May 6, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1508244>.

1936 - James Richard Jewett Professorship of Arabic Established

The James Richard Jewett Professorship of Arabic was established through a gift from Professor Jewett's wife, Margaret Weyerhaeuser Jewett, and was the first chair of Arabic established at an American university.⁵⁹ The chair has since been held by William Thomson, Sir Hamilton Gibb, Muhsin Mahdi, Wolfhart Heinrichs, and Khaled El-Rouayheb. Professor Jewett's gift to the Harvard College Library also established a fund for the purchase of Arabic books and books relating to "Moslem religion and history."⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Yamak, "The Middle Eastern Collections of the Harvard Library," 313.

⁶⁰ Harvard Library. "Harvard College Library Funds: James Richard Jewett Fund," n.d. https://library.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/static/funds/415_489706.html.



James Richard Jewett Fund, Harvard College Library Funds,
https://library.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/static/funds/415_489706.html.

1949 – Richard Frye First Professor of Iranian Languages

Richard Frye, “dean of the world’s Iranists,” was born in 1920 in Birmingham, Alabama and earned his B.A. at the University of Illinois and Ph.D. at Harvard. He held posts at Columbia, in Germany, and in Iran and served in the secret intelligence agency known first as the Office of the Coordinator of Information and then the Office of Strategic Services, the wartime agency preceding the CIA, in Afghanistan. Professor Frye’s expertise spanned ancient to contemporary Iranian studies and he was called “*Irاندوست*,” “friend of Iran,” by an Iranian linguist for his love

of all things Iranian.⁶¹ His courses included Old Persian, Middle Persian,⁶² Modern Persian,⁶³ Avestan, Sogdian,⁶⁴ Pahlavi,⁶⁵ Old Turkish,⁶⁶ “Iranian Languages and Literatures to Firdosi,”⁶⁷ and “Iranian Religions.”⁶⁸ In 1957, he became Harvard’s first Aga Khan Professor of Iranian⁶⁹ and was one of the founders of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies. He published over 20 books and 150 articles including *The Heritage of Persia* (1962) and “The Charisma of Kingship in Ancient Iran” (1964).⁷⁰ Among his notable students is Roy Mottahedeh, Gurney Research Professor of History.

⁶¹ Giudicessi, Beth. “Professor Richard N. Frye Dies at 94.” *The Harvard Gazette*, April 4, 2014.

<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2014/04/professor-richard-n-frye-dies-at-94/>.

⁶² “Harvard University Faculty of Arts and Sciences Courses of Instruction 1964-65.” Harvard University, 1964. Harvard University Archives. [https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467252702\\$304i](https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467252702$304i), 304.

⁶³ “Harvard University Announcement of Courses of Instruction 1949-50.” Harvard University, 1949. Harvard University Archives. [https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467241562\\$78i](https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467241562$78i), 76.

⁶⁴ “Harvard University Faculty of Arts and Sciences Courses of Instruction 1965-66.” Harvard University, 1965. Harvard University Archives. [https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:490295935\\$300i](https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:490295935$300i), 298.

⁶⁵ “Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences Courses of Instruction 1984-85.” Harvard University, 1984. Harvard University Archives. [https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467348750\\$545i](https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467348750$545i), 529.

⁶⁶ “Harvard University Courses of Instruction Offered by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences 1959-60.” Harvard University, 1959. Harvard University Archives. [https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467252020\\$223i](https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467252020$223i), 225.

⁶⁷ “Harvard University Faculty of Arts and Sciences Courses of Instruction 1964-65,” 305.

⁶⁸ “Harvard University Faculty of Arts and Sciences Courses of Instruction 1967-68.” Harvard University, 1967. Harvard University Archives. [https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467253504\\$372i](https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467253504$372i), 368.

⁶⁹ “Frye Chosen First Iranian Professor.” *The Harvard Crimson*, February 5, 1957.

<https://www.thecrimson.com/article/1957/2/5/frye-chosen-first-iranian-professor-prichard/>.

⁷⁰ Giudicessi, “Professor Richard N. Frye Dies at 94.”



Richard N. Frye (1920-2014), Voice of America, <https://www.voanews.com/usa/us-scholars-planned-iranian-burial-limbo>.

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.⁷¹ 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 East⁷² 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

⁷¹ Babai, Don. *Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard University Reflections on the Past, Visions for the Future*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006, 3.

⁷² Kann, Peter. “Historian Langer Enters Retirement After 37 Years on Harvard Faculty.” *The Harvard Crimson*, June 9, 1964. <https://www.thecrimson.com/article/1964/6/9/historian-langer-enters-retirement-after-37/>.

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.⁷³ 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.⁷⁴

Link: <https://cmes.fas.harvard.edu/home>



(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; photos courtesy of Eric Edstam, Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA / photos courtesy of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies

⁷³ Babai, *Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard University Reflections on the Past, Visions for the Future*, 27.

⁷⁴ The Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University. "History," n.d. <https://cmes.fas.harvard.edu/history>.

1955 - Sir Hamilton Gibb Bolsters Islamic Studies and Advocates an Interdisciplinary Approach

Sir Hamilton Gibb resigned from his position as Laudian Professor of Arabic at Oxford and became Jewett Professor of Arabic and University Professor at Harvard in 1955.⁷⁵ During his time at Harvard, Professor Gibb drew many students and faculty to the university including George Makdisi, George Kirk, and Albert Julius Meyer. Professor Gibb sought to move beyond the rigid Orientalist approach of European scholarship and embrace a more interdisciplinary one to train each student to be an “academic amphibian” who could be at home in different academic environments while remaining grounded in classical training, with philology and history at its core.⁷⁶ In February 1964, Professor Gibb tragically suffered a stroke, leaving a leadership void in CMES for many years.⁷⁷ His publications include *The Arab Conquests in Central Asia* (1923), “The Islamic Background of Ibn Khaldūn’s Political Theory” (1933), *Modern Trends in Islam* (1945), *Mohammedanism* (1949), and *The Life of Saladin: From the Works of Baha' Ad-Din and 'Imad Ad-Din* (1973). Among his notable students is Roy Mottahedeh, Gurney Research Professor of History.

Audio: <https://soundcloud.com/harvard-islamic/prof-roy-mottahedeh-sir-hamilton-gibb-preeminent-arabist-and-islamicist>

⁷⁵ Babai, *Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard University Reflections on the Past, Visions for the Future*, 7.

⁷⁶ Babai, 9.

⁷⁷ Babai, 11-12.



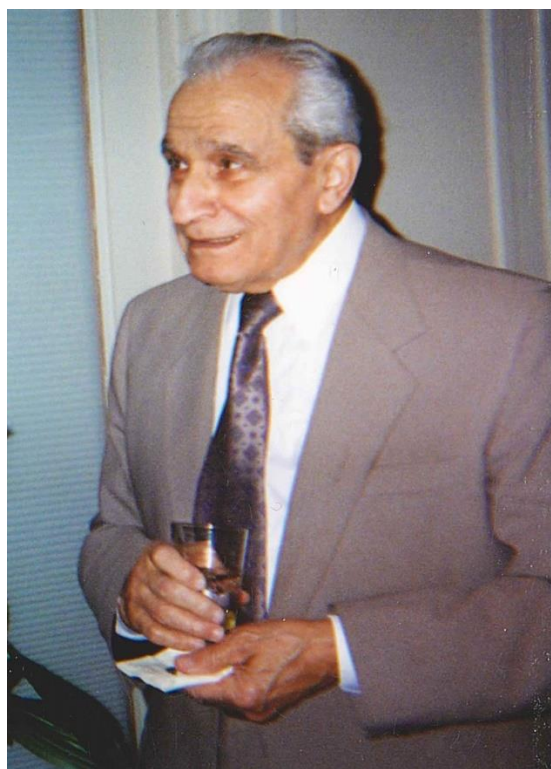
Sir Hamilton A. R. Gibb [photographic Portrait], 1954, Harvard University Archives,
https://images.hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/100kie6/HVD_VIAolvwork281844.

1959 – George Makdisi Teaches Arabic and Islamic History

George Makdisi was born in Detroit, Michigan in 1920 and studied at the University of Michigan and Georgetown University before earning his Ph.D. at the University of Paris at the Sorbonne in 1964.⁷⁸ From 1959 to 1973, he served on the Harvard faculty in the Department of Semitic Languages and History which became the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Literatures, first as a lecturer and eventually as a full professor, and taught courses including

⁷⁸ Cavanaugh Funeral Home. “George Makdisi, May 15, 1920 - September 6, 2002 Media, Pennsylvania,” n.d. <http://cavanaghfuneralhome.tributes.com/obituary/show/George-Makdisi-42563160>.

“Arabic Poetry,”⁷⁹ “Arabic Grammar and Grammarians,”⁸⁰ “Islamic Historiography,”⁸¹ and “Islamic Religion and Law.”⁸² Professor Makdisi was the preeminent Arabist and Islamicist at Harvard immediately after Professor Gibb and was a specialist in Islamic history whose publications include *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West* (1981), *The Rise of Humanism in Classical Islam and the Christian West* (1990), and *Ibn ‘Aqil: Religion and Culture in Classical Islam* (1997). In 1973, he left Harvard for the University of Pennsylvania where he served as Professor of Arabic until his retirement in 1990.⁸³



George Makdisi (1920-2002) / photo courtesy of Linda Greene, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA

1964 – Wilfred Cantwell Smith Teaches Global, Comparative Religious and Islamic Studies

Wilfred Smith was born in 1916 in Toronto, Canada. After he studied Oriental Languages at the University of Toronto and pursued graduate studies in Cambridge, England, Professor Smith and his wife, Muriel, spent five years with the Canadian Overseas Mission Council in Lahore, India

⁷⁹ “Harvard University Faculty of Arts and Sciences Courses of Instruction 1965-66,” 295.

⁸⁰ “Harvard University Faculty of Arts and Sciences Courses of Instruction 1968-69.” Harvard University, 1968. Harvard University Archives. [https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:490297559\\$349i](https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:490297559$349i), 348.

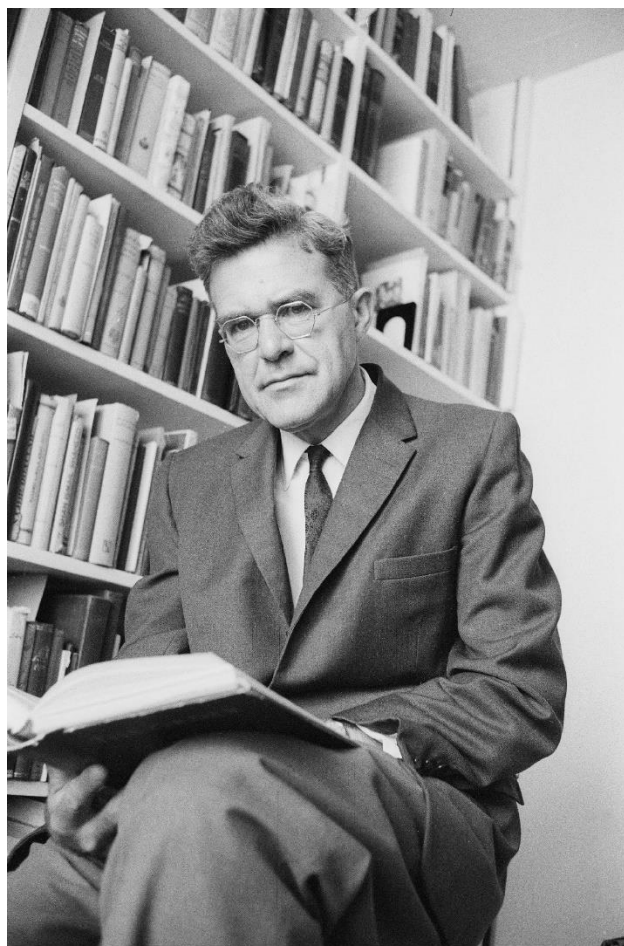
⁸¹ “Harvard University Faculty of Arts and Sciences Courses of Instruction 1964-65,” 301.

⁸² “Harvard University Faculty of Arts and Sciences Courses of Instruction 1964-65,” 335.

⁸³ “George Makdisi, May 15, 1920 - September 6, 2002 Media, Pennsylvania.”

where he taught Islamic and Indian history. When his dissertation at Cambridge was rejected due to its critique of the British Raj, Professor Smith pursued another doctoral program at Princeton, which he completed in 1948. Professor Smith was then appointed the first Birks Professor of Comparative Religion at McGill and became the founding director of McGill's Institute of Islamic Studies in 1951. In 1964, he joined Harvard Divinity School where he and Muriel developed the Center for the Study of World Religions and he built the Comparative Religion and Study of Religion programs.⁸⁴ Among his publications are *Modern Islam in India: A Social Analysis* (1946), *Islam in Modern History* (1957), and *The Meaning and End of Religion* (1962). His colleagues remember him for his critiques of Orientalism and area studies, as “one of the last puritans,” and for his commitment to taking people of all faiths and cultures equally seriously.⁸⁵ Among his notable students is Professor *Emeritus* William A. Graham.

Audio: <https://soundcloud.com/harvard-islamic/prof-william-graham-wilfred-cantwell-smith-and-global-islamic-studies?in=harvard-islamic/sets/islamic-studies-at-harvard>



Harvard University, Harvard University Archives, W557705_1

⁸⁴ Graham, William A., Hilary Putnam, Diana Eck, John Carman, and Tu Wei-Ming. “Wilfred Cantwell Smith, In Memoriam.” *The Harvard Gazette*, November 29, 2001. <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2001/11/wilfred-cantwell-smith/>.

⁸⁵ Graham et al., “Wilfred Cantwell Smith, In Memoriam.”

Pemberton, *Smith, Wilfred C.*, 1965, photograph, Office of News Public Affairs, Harvard University, https://images.hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/100kie6/HVD_VIAolvwork557705.

1967 – Annemarie Schimmel First to Teach Indo-Muslim Culture

Annemarie Schimmel was born in 1922 in Erfurt, Germany. She was introduced to the divan of Jalaluddin Rumi as a student at the University of Berlin and began a lifelong journey of scholarship in the Islamic mystical tradition. After earning her first doctorate in 1941 at the age of 19 and a second in 1951, she became History of Religion chair at Ankara University in Turkey. In 1967, Professor Schimmel accepted Wilfred Cantwell Smith's invitation to come from Bonn to Harvard as its first Lecturer on Indo-Muslim Culture,⁸⁶ a position funded by the bequest of the Afghan inventor of Minute Rice and lover of Urdu poetry, Ataullah Ozai-Durrani. In 1970, Professor Schimmel became the fourth woman granted tenure in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.⁸⁷ Her courses included "Islamic Calligraphy,"⁸⁸ "Ghalib's Persian Poetry in the Context of the Indian Style," and "Maulana Rumi and his Influence on East and West."⁸⁹ Among her publications are *Gabriel's Wing* (1963), *My Soul is a Woman: The Feminine in Islam* (1997), and *Empire of the Great Mughals: History, Art, and Culture* (2004). Her notable students include Ali Asani, Harvard's current Professor of Indo-Muslim Culture, and Wheeler Thackston, Professor of the Practice of Persian *Emeritus*.

Audio: <https://soundcloud.com/harvard-islamic/prof-ali-asani-first-class-with-annemarie-schimmel?in=harvard-islamic/sets/islamic-studies-at-harvard>

⁸⁶ Asani, Ali, William A. Graham, Roy Mottahedeh, Wheeler Thackston, and Wolfhart Heinrichs. "Annemarie Schimmel, Faculty of Arts and Sciences - Memorial Minute." *The Harvard Gazette*, December 16, 2004.

⁸⁷ Harvard University Office of the Senior Vice Provost. "First Tenured Women," n.d. <https://faculty.harvard.edu/first-tenured-women>.

⁸⁸ "Harvard University Faculty of Arts and Sciences Courses of Instruction 1974-75." Harvard University, 1974. Harvard University Archives. [https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467342798\\$502i](https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467342798$502i), 484.

⁸⁹ "Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences Courses of Instruction 1984-85." Harvard University, 1984. Harvard University Archives. [https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467348750\\$545i](https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467348750$545i), 529.



Annemarie Schimmel, 2002, photograph, Alamy,
<https://www.alamy.com/mediacomp/imagetdetails.aspx?ref=D3BD92>.

1969 – Muhsin Mahdi Teaches Arabic Philosophy

Muhsin Mahdi, one of the world’s leading experts in Arabic history, philology, and philosophy, was born in Karbala, Iraq in 1926. After earning his B.A. from the American University in Beirut and Ph.D. from the University of Chicago, he taught at the University of Baghdad and the University of Chicago. Professor Mahdi then came to Harvard in 1969 as Jewett Professor of Arabic and served as director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies and chair of the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations.⁹⁰ He taught courses including “Arabic Philosophic Texts,” “Sources, Methods, and Problems in Islamic Intellectual History,” and “Medieval Arabic Political Philosophy.”⁹¹ He also helped to institute and teach Foreign Cultures 14, a core curriculum course aimed at helping students understand the economic and cultural

⁹⁰ Graham, William A., John E. Murdoch, Abdelhamid I. Sabra, Wheeler M. Thackston, and Wofhart P. Heinrichs. “Muhsin Mahdi, Faculty of Arts and Sciences - Memorial Minute.” *The Harvard Gazette*, April 21, 2011. <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2011/04/muhsin-mahdi/>.

⁹¹ “Harvard University Faculty of Arts and Sciences Courses of Instruction 1978-79.” Harvard University, 1978. Harvard University Archives. [https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467344152\\$542i](https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467344152$542i), 524.

foundations of current political problems, with a focus on the Middle East.⁹² Professor Mahdi is especially known for his work on the philosopher al-Fārābī, *Ibn Khaldūn's Philosophy of History* (1957), and his critical edition of *One Thousand and One Nights* (1995).⁹³ Among his notable students is Professor *Emeritus* William A. Graham.

Audio: <https://soundcloud.com/harvard-islamic/prof-william-graham-muhsin-mahdi?in=harvard-islamic/sets/islamic-studies-at-harvard>



Muhsin Mahdi (1926-2007), Harvard Gazette, <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2011/04/muhsin-mahdi/>.

1969 – Oleg Grabar First to Teach History of Islamic Art and Architecture

⁹² Early, Andrea. “Twelve FAS Faculty Members to Retire.” *The Harvard Gazette*, June 13, 1996. Harvard Gazette Archives. <https://web.archive.org/web/20080907023445/http://www.news.harvard.edu/gazette/1996/06.13/TwelveFASFacult.html>.

⁹³ Graham et al., “Muhsin Mahdi, Faculty of Arts and Sciences - Memorial Minute.”

Born in Strasbourg, France in 1929, Professor Grabar earned his A.B. at Harvard in Medieval History and his Ph.D. at Princeton in Oriental Languages and Literatures and the History of Art. In 1969, he joined the Harvard faculty as Professor of Fine Arts and became the first to teach the history of Islamic art and architecture at Harvard.⁹⁴ His expertise, however, included the peoples, history, and culture of Muslim societies more broadly. Professor Grabar taught courses such as “Medieval Islamic Art (1000-1300)”⁹⁵ and “Studies in Islamic Decorative Art”⁹⁶ and is remembered for his “flamboyant, exciting, and always substantive” lectures and ability to make Islamic art and architecture appealing to non-specialists. His publications include *The Formation of Islamic Art* (1973), *The Illustrations of the Maqamat* (1984), *The Shape of the Holy: Early Islamic Jerusalem* (1996). Professor Grabar played an instrumental role in the founding of the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture in 1979 and became the first Aga Khan Professor of Islamic Art in 1980.⁹⁷ His student, Gülru Necipoğlu, is Harvard’s current Aga Khan Professor of Islamic Art.

⁹⁴ Necipoğlu, Gülru, William A. Graham, Thomas Lentz, and David Roxburgh. “Oleg Grabar, Faculty of Arts and Sciences - Memorial Minute.” *The Harvard Gazette*, May 24, 2012.

<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2012/05/oleg-grabar/>.

⁹⁵ “Harvard University Faculty of Arts and Sciences Courses of Instruction 1970-71.” Harvard University, 1970. Harvard University Archives. [https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467339004\\$293i](https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467339004$293i), 273.

⁹⁶ “Harvard University Faculty of Arts and Sciences Courses of Instruction 1970-71,” 277.

⁹⁷ Necipoğlu et al., “Oleg Grabar, Faculty of Arts and Sciences - Memorial Minute.”



T. Kevin Birch, *Oleg Grabar - portrait*, The Shelby White and Leon Levy Archives Center, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, NJ, USA, <https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12111/5598>.

1972 – Abdelhamid Sabra First to Teach History of Arabic Science

Abdelhamid Sabra was born in Tanta, Egypt in 1924 and studied philosophy at the nascent Alexandria University. In 1950, the Egyptian government sent him to the London School of Economics where he earned a doctorate in the Philosophy of Science under Karl Popper and wrote a dissertation on the “Theories of Light from Descartes to Newton.” Sabra then taught at Alexandria University and the Warburg Institute in London. In 1972, he accepted an offer to join the History of Science Department at Harvard, where he remained until his retirement in 1996⁹⁸ and taught courses such as “Arabic Scientific Texts,”⁹⁹ “Islam and Scientific Thought,”¹⁰⁰ and

⁹⁸ Department of the History of Science Harvard University. “A. I. Sabra (1924-2013),” n.d. <https://histsci.fas.harvard.edu/ai-sabra>.

⁹⁹ “Harvard University Faculty of Arts and Sciences Courses of Instruction 1972-73.” Harvard University, 1972. Harvard University Archives. [https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467341476\\$487i](https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467341476$487i), 465.

¹⁰⁰ “Harvard University Faculty of Arts and Sciences Courses of Instruction 1974-75.” Harvard University, 1974. Harvard University Archives. [https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467342798\\$502i](https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467342798$502i), 485.

“The Reception of Greek Thought in Islam.”¹⁰¹ Professor Sabra is best known for his contributions to the study of medieval Arabic science, especially *The Optics of Ibn al-Haytham* (1989), a critical edition, English translation, and commentary of *Kitāb al-Manāẓir*. In 2005 he was awarded the George Sarton Medal for lifetime achievement by the History of Science Society and a prize by the Kuwait Science Foundation.¹⁰²

Audio: <https://soundcloud.com/harvard-islamic/prof-william-graham-abdelhamid-sabras-expertise-in-history-of-science-and-kalam?in=harvard-islamic/sets/islamic-studies-at-harvard>



Abdelhamid I. Sabra (1924-2013), <https://muslimheritage.com/the-late-professor-abdelhamid-i-sabra-an-obituary/>.

¹⁰¹ “Harvard University Faculty of Arts and Sciences Courses of Instruction 1974-75,” 483.

¹⁰² “A. I. Sabra (1924-2013).”

1972 – Wheeler Thackston Brings Expertise in Persian Studies

Wheeler Thackston earned his bachelor's degree at Princeton in Oriental Languages and Literatures and his Ph.D. at Harvard in Near Eastern Languages and Literatures under the supervision of Annemarie Schimmel. From 1972 until his retirement in 2007, Professor Thackston taught as Professor of the Practice of Persian at Harvard in the same department.¹⁰³ He taught courses such as “The Qur'an,”¹⁰⁴ and “Selected Readings in Classical Persian Literature”¹⁰⁵ and is known for his uncanny gift for multiple languages, including Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Urdu, and Syriac. If someone needed training in Uighur, for instance, Professor Thackston could teach them beyond his regular classes. He is known for his Persian and Classical and Qur'anic Arabic grammars and his translations of Saadi's *Gulistan* (2008), the *Baburnama* (1996), and the *Jahangirnama* (1999). Professor Thackston has also produced manuals or editions of texts in Levantine Arabic, Ottoman Turkish, Syriac, Uzbek, Luri, and Kurdish.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Wikipedia. “Wheeler Thackston,” n.d. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wheeler_Thackston.

¹⁰⁴ “Harvard University Faculty of Arts and Sciences Courses of Instruction 1982-83.” Harvard University, 1982. Harvard University Archives. [https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467345650\\$714i](https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467345650$714i), 698.

¹⁰⁵ “Harvard University Faculty of Arts and Sciences Courses of Instruction 1983-84.” Harvard University, 1983. Harvard University Archives. [https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467347332\\$529i](https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:467347332$529i), 513.

¹⁰⁶ “Wheeler Thackston.”



Wheeler Thackston, <https://www.zoominfo.com/p/Wheeler-Thackston/7434968>.

1973 – William Graham Advocates for Islamic Studies across Faculties

After receiving his B.A. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Ph.D. from Harvard, Professor Graham joined the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Harvard in 1973 and later also the Faculty of Divinity in 2002. His scholarship has focused on early Islamic religious history and textual traditions, especially Qur'an and hadith, and on the global history of religion. In addition to his teaching in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations and the Study of Religion and his later work for a decade as Dean of Harvard Divinity School, Professor Graham served as director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, master of Currier House, chair of the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, and director of the Alwaleed Bin Talal Islamic Studies Program. Among his many publications are *Divine Word and Prophetic Word in Early Islam* (1977), which was awarded the American Council of Learned Societies History of

Religions Prize in 1978, *Beyond the Written Word* (1987) and *Islamic and Comparative Religious Studies* (2010).¹⁰⁷

Audio: <https://soundcloud.com/harvard-islamic/prof-william-graham-islam-in-the-broader-university-curriculum?in=harvard-islamic/sets/islamic-studies-at-harvard>



William A. Graham, Harvard Divinity School, <https://hds.harvard.edu/people/william-graham>.

1978 – Wolfhart Heinrichs Brings Expertise in Arabic Studies

Wolfhart Heinrichs was born in Cologne, Germany in 1941 and studied Semitic languages, Arabic, and Islamic studies at Cologne, Frankfurt, London, and Giessen. He joined the Harvard faculty in 1978 and held the James Richard Jewett Chair of Arabic in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. Among his many accomplishments was working with Fuat Sezgin in Frankfurt to produce the first *Geschichte des arabischen Schriftums* (1967) and serving as co-editor of the major second edition of the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, for which he wrote 50

¹⁰⁷ The Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University. “William Graham,” n.d. <https://cmes.fas.harvard.edu/people/william-graham>.

entries.¹⁰⁸ His courses included “History of the Arabic Language,”¹⁰⁹ and “Medieval Arabic Writings on Grammar and Literary Theory.”¹¹⁰ His publications also include *The Hand of the Northwind: Opinions on Metaphor and the Early Meaning of Isti’āra in Arabic Poetics* (1977), *Studies in Neo-Aramaic* (1990), *The Law Applied: Contextualizing the Islamic Shari’a* (2008), and *Die Muqaddima: Betrachtungen zur Weltgeschichte* (2013). His untimely death in 2014 after a brief hospitalization only months before his planned retirement was mourned by the generation of Arabists and Islamicists that he trained and colleagues around the world.¹¹¹



Wolfhart Heinrichs (1941-2014) / photo courtesy of Alma Giese with help from Shady Nasser

¹⁰⁸ Graham, William, Roy Mottahedeh, Peter Machinist, William Granara, and Khaled El-Rouayheb. “Wolfhart Peter Heinrichs, Faculty of Arts and Sciences - Memorial Minute,” *The Harvard Gazette*, July 16, 2015. <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2015/07/wolfhart-peter-heinrichs/>.

¹⁰⁹ “Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences Courses of Instruction 1984-85,” 517.

¹¹⁰ “Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences Courses of Instruction 1984-85,” 518.

¹¹¹ Graham et al., “Wolfhart Peter Heinrichs, Faculty of Arts and Sciences - Memorial Minute.”

1979 – Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture and Professorship of Islamic Art Established

The Aga Khan Programs for Islamic Architecture (AKPIA) at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology were established in 1979 for the study of Islamic architecture, urbanism, visual culture, and conservation and are supported by endowments for instruction, research, and student aid established by Karim Aga Khan (A. B. '59). Through its programs at Harvard's Department of History of Art and Architecture and Graduate School of Design, AKPIA seek to increase the visibility of the pan-Islamic cultural heritage in the modern Muslim world.¹¹² In 1983, AKPIA began to publish *Muqarnas: An Annual on the Visual Cultures of the Islamic World* with Oleg Grabar, Aga Khan Professor of Islamic Art, as its founding editor.¹¹³

Link: agakhan.fas.harvard.edu/

¹¹²“AKPIA.” *Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture Annual Newsletter*, no. 13 (2016). https://agakhan.fas.harvard.edu/files/agakhan/files/akpia_joint_newsletter13_r03_final.pdf.

¹¹³ The Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard University. “Muqarnas,” n.d. <https://agakhan.fas.harvard.edu/muqarnas>.



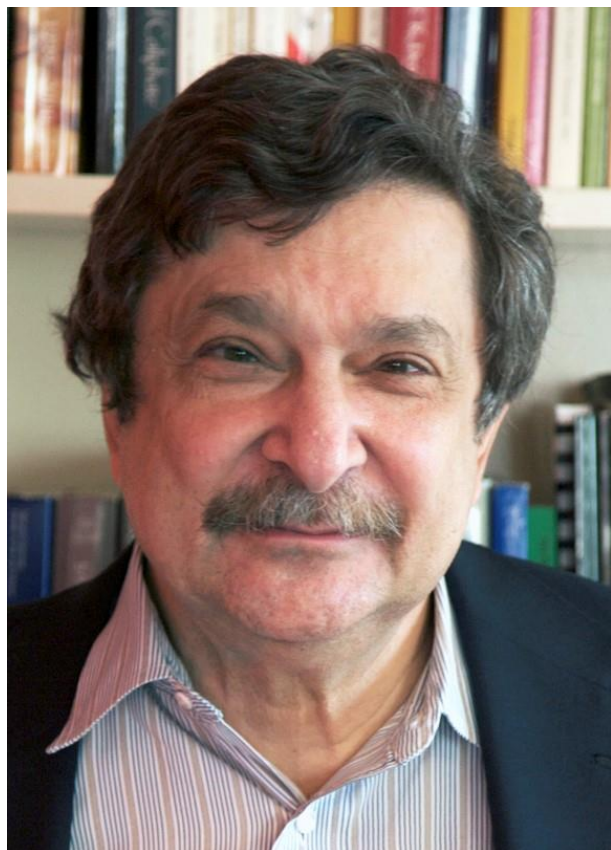
(Top: left to right) Harvard president Derek Bok, the Aga Khan, and MIT president Jerome Wiesner in 1979, https://images.hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/100kie6/HVD_VIAolwork363665; (bottom: left to right) Gülru Necipoğlu, Director of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture Farrokh Derakhshani, and the Aga Khan in Dubai in 2016 / photo courtesy of Cecily Pollard, Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard University

1986 – Roy Mottahedeh Becomes First Professor of Islamic History

Roy Parviz Mottahedeh was born in New York City in 1940. He graduated from Harvard College with an A.B. in history in 1960 and earned a second B.A. in Persian and Arabic from Cambridge University. He then went on to earn his Ph.D. at Harvard under Sir Hamilton Gibb and Richard Frye and was elected a Junior Fellow in the Harvard Society of Fellows. Professor Mottahedeh began his teaching career at Princeton where he earned tenure and was one of the first MacArthur Fellows. He returned to Harvard in 1986 as Professor of Islamic History, where his many accomplishments have included directing CMES, founding the *Harvard Middle East*

and *Islamic Review*, and founding the Alwaleed Bin Talal Islamic Studies Program.¹¹⁴ He is well-known for his many publications including his books, *Loyalty and Leadership in Early Islamic Society* (1980) and *The Mantle of the Prophet: Religion and Politics in Iran* (1985), and his article, “The Clash of Civilizations: An Islamicist’s Critique” (1995).

Audio: <https://soundcloud.com/harvard-islamic/prof-roy-mottahedeh-the-importance-of-history-in-islamic-studies?in=harvard-islamic/sets/islamic-studies-at-harvard>



Roy Mottahedeh, <https://cmes.fas.harvard.edu/people/roy-mottahedeh>.

1991 – Islamic Legal Studies Program Founded at Harvard Law School

With the aim of being a truly global school of law, Harvard’s was the first law school in the United States to begin offering lectures and courses on Islamic law in the 1940s and 1950s. At the invitation of Harvard Law School (HLS) Dean Erwin Griswold, Joseph Schacht, the towering figure in the study of Islamic law of the 20th century, gave the first major lecture on Islamic law at an American law school at HLS in 1947.¹¹⁵ The late comparative law professor, Arthur von

¹¹⁴ The Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University. “Roy Mottahedeh,” n.d. <https://cmes.fas.harvard.edu/people/roy-mottahedeh>.

¹¹⁵ Intisar Rabb. “Methods and Meaning in Islamic Law: Introduction,” *Islamic Law Blog*. December 10, 2020. https://islamiclaw.blog/2020/12/10/legalhistoryroundtable-intro/#_ftnref3.

Mehren, also invited several visiting professors to teach single courses on Islamic law at HLS throughout the 1950s. The Islamic Legal Studies Program (ILSP) was founded in 1991 under the directorship of Frank Vogel, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Adjunct Professor of Islamic Legal Studies, who led the program until 2006.¹¹⁶ Among ILSP's initiatives was the Harvard Islamic Investment Project, undertaken in collaboration with the Center for Middle Eastern Studies and Harvard Business School, that was dedicated to research on Islamic banking and investment.¹¹⁷ In 2014, Professor Intisar Rabb became the first tenured faculty member to be named director of ILSP after a period of the program being on hiatus and not having a permanent director, and Professor Kristen Stilt joined as ILSP's co-director later that year.

Updated January 4, 2022



Frank Vogel, <https://today.law.harvard.edu/the-new-world-of-islamic-legal-studies/>.

1993 - Gülru Necipoğlu Named Aga Khan Professor of Islamic Art

An alumna of Harvard's Department of History of Art and Architecture, Gülru Necipoğlu has taught at Harvard since 1987 and was named the Aga Khan Professor of Islamic Art and Director

¹¹⁶ Program in Islamic Law at Harvard Law School. "Who We Are," n.d. <https://pil.law.harvard.edu/who-we-are/>.

¹¹⁷ Babai, *Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard University Reflections on the Past, Visions for the Future*, 28.

of the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard University in 1993. Professor Necipoğlu's scholarship focuses on questions of aesthetic cosmopolitanism, transregional connectivities between early modern Islamicate empires, and cross-cultural artistic exchanges with Byzantium and Renaissance Europe. Professor Necipoğlu is the editor of *Muqarnas: An Annual on the Visual Cultures of the Islamic World*. She recently edited *Treasures of Knowledge: An Inventory of the Ottoman Palace Library (1502/3-1503/4)* (2019) with coeditors Cemal Kafadar and Cornell H. Fleischer; *The Arts of Ornamental Geometry: A Persian Compendium on Similar and Complementary Interlocking Figures* (2017); and *A Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture* (2017) with coeditor F. Barry Flood. Professor Necipoğlu is an elected member of the British Academy, the American Philosophical Society, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the Centro Internazionale di Studi di Architettura Andrea Palladio in Vicenza, Italy.



Gülru Necipoğlu, <https://cmes.fas.harvard.edu/people/g%C3%BClru-necipo%C4%9Flu>.

1993 – Roger Owen Named A. J. Meyer Professor of Middle East History

Born and educated in Great Britain, Edward “Roger” Owen’s interest in the Middle East began with his military service when he was stationed in Cyprus and traveled across the region. After earning his Ph.D. at Oxford in 1965, he taught Middle Eastern economic history and politics at the same university. In 1993, Professor Owen came to Harvard as the first A. J. Meyer Professor of Middle East History and helped to balance Harvard’s strength in pre-modern Middle Eastern history with his expertise in the modern period. In addition to courses in the Core Curriculum, Professor Owen offered graduate seminars on subjects such as theoretical and empirical debates in the economic and social history of the Middle East. From 1996 to 1999, he served as the director of CMES and made it his priority to re-establish ties between the Center and the Arab World that had withered with the passing of A. J. Meyer.¹¹⁸ Among his many publications are *Cotton and the Egyptian Economy, 1820-1914: A Study in Trade and Development* (1969), *The Middle East in the World Economy* (1993), and *Lord Cromer: Victorian Imperialist, Edwardian Proconsul* (2004).



Roger Owen (1935-2018), <https://cmes.fas.harvard.edu/news/roger-owen-my-mentor-and-my-friend>

1997 – Cemal Kafadar Named Vehbi Koç Professor of Turkish Studies

Cemal Kafadar, a scholar of late medieval and early modern social and cultural history of the Middle East and Southeast Europe, began teaching at Harvard as Professor of History in 1993

¹¹⁸ Babai, 29.

and was named Harvard's first Vehbi Koç Professor of Turkish Studies in 1997. Professor Kafadar teaches courses on Ottoman history, urban space, popular culture, and cinema. His publications include *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (1995); the articles, "How Dark is the History of the Night, How Black the Story of Coffee, How Bitter the Tale of Love: the Changing Measure of Leisure and Pleasure in Early Modern Istanbul" (2014) and "Evliya Çelebi in Dalmatia: an Ottoman Traveler's Encounters with the Arts of the Franks" (2014); and a new book in Turkish: *Kendine Ait Bir Roma* (2017).



Cemal Kafadar, <https://cmes.fas.harvard.edu/people/cemal-kafadar>.

1998 – Middle East Initiative Founded at Harvard Kennedy School

The Middle East Initiative (MEI) at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government was founded in 1998 and became the first initiative at the Kennedy School to focus on a Muslim-majority region of the world. MEI's mission is to advance evidence-based policymaking and good governance in the Middle East as well as training the region's next generation of leaders, practitioners, and scholars. In recent years, MEI has expanded its programs to address topics including alternative energy, humanitarian crisis

response, economic opportunity, demographic challenges, and more. MEI is directed by Tarek Masoud, Sultan Qaboos Bin Said of Oman Professor of International Relations.¹¹⁹

Link: [belfercenter.org/project/middle-east-initiative](https://www.belfercenter.org/project/middle-east-initiative)



(Left to right) Roy Mottahedeh, Kristen Fabbe, Tarek Masoud, Sophie Lemière, and Andrew March at the Islam and Democracy conference in October 2017 / photo courtesy of Alwaleed Islamic Studies Program

1999 – Leila Ahmed Becomes First Professor of Women’s Studies in Religion

Leila Ahmed was born in Cairo, Egypt and earned her bachelor’s degree and Ph.D. at the University of Cambridge. She then moved to the United States and became a professor of women’s studies and Near Eastern studies at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. Professor Ahmed joined the Harvard Faculty of Divinity in 1999 as the first Professor of Women's Studies in Religion, thereby becoming a pioneer not only in Islamic studies but also in

¹¹⁹ Belfer Center. “About MEI.” Accessed December 3, 2021. <https://www.belfercenter.org/project/middle-east-initiative#!about-mei>.

women's and gender studies. She was appointed to the Victor S. Thomas chair in 2003 and became the Victor S. Thomas Research Professor of Divinity upon her retirement in 2020. Professor Ahmed's many publications include her book, *A Quiet Revolution: The Veil's Resurgence, from the Middle East to America* (2011), which has been widely acclaimed and was the winner of the Grawemeyer Award in Religion for 2012, *Women and Gender in Islam: The Historical Roots of a Modern Debate* (1992), and *Edward W. Lane: A Study of His Life and Work and of British Ideas of the Middle East in the Nineteenth Century* (1978), as well as many articles.¹²⁰



Leila Ahmed / photo courtesy of Michael Naughton, Harvard Divinity School

2003 – Aga Khan Program at Harvard Graduate School of Design Founded

The Aga Khan Program at the Harvard Graduate School of Design (GSD), founded in 2003, is part of the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard and MIT, dedicated to the study of Islamic art and architecture, urbanism, landscape design and conservation. The Aga Khan Program at the GSD provides tuition and scholarships to doctoral and Ph.D. students studying the impact of development in the shaping of landscapes, cities and regional territories in the Muslim world. The program's research and activities focus a lens on the design of public

¹²⁰ Harvard Divinity School. "Leila Ahmed." Accessed December 9, 2021. <https://hds.harvard.edu/people/leila-ahmed>.

spaces, environmental concerns and land use and territorial settlement patterns from World War II to the present.¹²¹

Link: [gsd.harvard.edu/research/research-centers/aga-khan-program-at-the-gsd](https://www.gsd.harvard.edu/research/research-centers/aga-khan-program-at-the-gsd)



Marina Tabassum examines student work during final reviews for the fall 2017 studio, “\$2,000 Home,” Aga Khan Program at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, <https://www.gsd.harvard.edu/research/research-centers/aga-khan-program-at-the-gsd/>.

2005 – Baber Johansen Teaches Islamic Law at Harvard Divinity School

Baber Johansen was born in Berlin, Germany where he earned his Ph.D. at Freie Universität Berlin. He then served on the faculty there and later at Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (Centre d'étude des normes juridiques) in Paris. In 2005, he was appointed Professor of

¹²¹ Harvard University Graduate School of Design. “Aga Khan Program at the GSD.” Accessed December 9, 2021. <https://www.gsd.harvard.edu/research/research-centers/aga-khan-program-at-the-gsd/>.

Islamic Religious Studies at Harvard Divinity School, where he taught until his retirement in 2020. Professor Johansen has also been an affiliated professor at Harvard Law School and the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations and has served as acting director of the Islamic Legal Studies Program and the director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies. He has also been a faculty associate and a member of the executive committee of Harvard's Weatherhead Center for International Affairs. Professor Johansen's publications include *Muhammad Husain Haikal Europa und der Orient im Weltbild eines ägyptischen Liberalen* (1967), *Islamic Law on Land Tax and Rent* (1988), and *Contingency in a Sacred Law: Legal and Ethical Norms in the Muslim Fiqh* (1999).¹²²



Baber Johansen / photo courtesy of Michael Naughton, Harvard Divinity School

2006 – Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Islamic Studies Program and Professorships Established

In 2005, Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Bin Abdulaziz Alsaud pledged a \$20 million gift to Harvard University for the establishment of a university-wide Islamic studies program that would be interdisciplinary and global. “I am pleased to support Islamic studies at Harvard and I hope that

¹²² Harvard Divinity School. “Baber Johansen,” n.d. <https://hds.harvard.edu/people/baber-johansen>.

this program will enable generations of students and scholars to gain a thorough understanding of Islam and its role both in the past and in today’s world,” Prince Alwaleed said. The gift also gave Harvard the funds to endow professorships in Islamic studies, support graduate students, and to digitize Islamic manuscripts.¹²³ Roy Mottahedeh, Gurney Professor of History, served as the Program’s founding director and committed to expanding Islamic studies at Harvard to better reflect the geographical spread of Muslim cultures.¹²⁴

Link: islamicstudies.harvard.edu



(Top left) Alwaleed Program office at 8 Story Street; (left middle) András Riedlmayer at a research methods workshop in October 2018; (top right, left to right) Provost Alan Garber, Prince Alwaleed bin Talal, and President Drew Faust in 2011; (bottom) panelists from conference on Intra-Muslim Relations in April 2015 / photos courtesy of Alwaleed Islamic Studies Program at Harvard University

¹²³ “Harvard Receives \$20M Gift for Islamic Studies Program.” *The Harvard Gazette*, December 15, 2005. <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2005/12/harvard-receives-20m-gift-for-islamic-studies-program/>.

¹²⁴ Chen, Yifei. “Islamic Studies Director Tapped.” *The Harvard Crimson*, November 16, 2006. Harvard University Archives. <https://wayback.archive-it.org/5488/20130807024706/http://www.thecrimson.com/article/2006/11/16/islamic-studies-director-tapped-gurney-professor/>.

2007 – David Roxburgh Named Alwaleed Professor of Islamic Art History

David Roxburgh, already a tenured professor in Harvard’s Department of the History of Art and Architecture, was named Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Professor of Islamic Art History in 2007. Professor Roxburgh grew up in the Borders, Scotland, and attended Edinburgh University and Edinburgh College of Art where he received an M.A. with Honors in Fine Art. He then went on to earn his Ph.D. in the Department of History of Art at the University of Pennsylvania. Professor Roxburgh then began his teaching career at Harvard in 1996. His books include *Prefacing the Image: The Writing of Art History in Sixteenth-Century Iran* (2001) and *The Persian Album, 1400-1600: From Dispersal to Collection* (2005). Professor Roxburgh has also worked as a curator on exhibitions including *Turks: A Journey of A Thousand Years* (London, Royal Academy of Art, 2005) and *Traces of the Calligrapher: Islamic Calligraphy in Practice, c. 1600-1900* (Houston, Museum of Fine Arts, 2007). His articles take a variety of approaches to the study of aesthetics, art and culture of the book, history of collections, and written sources.¹²⁵



David Roxburgh / photo courtesy of David Roxburgh

¹²⁵ Department of the History of Art and Architecture Harvard University. “David Roxburgh.” Accessed December 9, 2021. <https://haa.fas.harvard.edu/people/david-roxburgh>.

2010 – Malika Zeghal Named Alwaleed Professor in Contemporary Islamic Thought and Life

Malika Zeghal joined the Harvard faculty as the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Professor in Contemporary Islamic Thought and Life in 2010. Professor Zeghal is an alumna of the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris (rue d'Ulm), and she earned her Ph.D. in political science from the Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris. Before coming to Harvard, she was Associate Professor of the Anthropology and Sociology of Religion at the University of Chicago Divinity School. In addition to her appointment in Harvard's Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Professor Zeghal is an Affiliated Professor of Government in the Department of Government and a member of the Committee on the Study of Religion. Her research focuses on the interaction between Islam and politics in the modern Middle East. Professor Zeghal's publications include *Gardiens de l'Islam. Les oulémas d'al-Azhar dans l'Egypte contemporaine* (1996), a study of the Egyptian ulama of al-Azhar since the 1950s and of their engagement with politics, and *Islamism in Morocco: Religion, Authoritarianism, and Electoral Politics* (2008), a volume on Islam and politics in contemporary Morocco that won the French Voices-Pen American Center Award. She is currently completing a book on Islam and the state in the Modern Middle East, forthcoming at Princeton University Press.¹²⁶

¹²⁶ Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations Harvard University. "Malika Zeghal." Accessed December 9, 2021. <https://nelc.fas.harvard.edu/people/malika-zeghal>.



Malika Zeghal, <https://www.iq.harvard.edu/people/malika-zeghal>.

2010 – Ali Asani Named Director of the Alwaleed Islamic Studies Program

Ali Asani, Murray A. Albertson Professor of Middle Eastern Studies and Professor of Indo-Muslim and Islamic Religion and Cultures, directed the Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Islamic Studies Program from 2010 to 2016. Professor Asani was born and raised in Nairobi, Kenya and came to the United States to attend Harvard College, where he pursued a concentration in the Comparative Study of Religion and graduated summa cum laude in 1977. He continued his graduate work at Harvard in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations (NELC), receiving his Ph.D. in 1984. Professor Asani holds a joint appointment between the Committee on the Study of Religion and NELC and serves on the faculty of the Departments of South Asian Studies and African and African American Studies. He has taught at Harvard since 1983, offering instruction in a variety of South Asian and African languages and literatures as well as courses on various aspects of the Islamic tradition.¹²⁷ Under Professor Asani's leadership,

¹²⁷ Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University. "Ali Asani." Accessed December 13, 2021. <https://nelc.fas.harvard.edu/people/ali-asani>.

the Alwaleed Program expanded its programming in outreach and arts and culture in Muslim societies around the world.

Audio: <https://soundcloud.com/harvard-islamic/prof-ali-asani-multisensory-religion-rethinking-islam-through-the-arts?in=harvard-islamic/sets/islamic-studies-at-harvard>



Ali Asani, <https://nelc.fas.harvard.edu/ali-asani-featured-harvard-gazette>.

2012 – Steven Caton Named Khalid bin Abdullah Professor of Contemporary Arab Studies

Steven Caton, who has taught at Harvard since 1998, was named Khalid bin Abdullah bin Abdulrahman Al Saud Professor of Contemporary Arab Studies in Harvard's Department of Anthropology in 2012. Professor Caton is a scholar of Arabic and the Middle East, with an emphasis on Yemen and the Arabian Peninsula. During his tenure at Harvard, he has served as chair of the Department of Anthropology and director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies and conducted extensive research on topics ranging from the water crisis in Yemen, environmentalism, and political ecology to film and visual images. Professor Caton has

encouraged social science research on contemporary Islam by working with Jocelyn Cesari on a survey of Muslims in the Boston area and directing the joint Ph.D. program in anthropology and Middle Eastern studies that has produced about ten doctorates focused on contemporary Islam, particularly in Europe and the United States. Professor Caton's publications include *Peaks of Yemen I Summon* (1990), *Lawrence of Arabia: A Film's Anthropology* (1999), *Yemen Chronicle* (2005), and *Anthropology, Film Industries, Modularity*, co-edited with Ramyar Rossoukh (2021).¹²⁸



Steven Caton / photo courtesy of Steven Caton

2012 – Ousmane Kane Named Alwaleed Professor of Contemporary Islamic Religion and Society

Ousmane Kane joined Harvard Divinity School in 2012 as the first Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Professor of Contemporary Islamic Religion and Society and Harvard's first professor to specialize in Islam in Africa. Professor Kane earned his Ph.D. at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris and, before coming to Harvard,

¹²⁸ Harvard Department of Anthropology. "Steve Caton." Accessed December 9, 2021. <https://anthropology.fas.harvard.edu/people/steve-caton>.

was Associate Professor of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. In addition to his appointment at Harvard Divinity School, Professor Kane is Professor of African and African American Studies in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. Professor Kane studies the history of Islamic religious institutions and organizations since the eighteenth century, the intellectual history of Islam in Africa, and the phenomenon of Muslim globalization. His publications include *Homeland Is the Arena: Religion, Transnationalism and the Integration of Senegalese Immigrants in America* (2010), *Muslim Modernity in Postcolonial Nigeria* (2003), *Beyond Timbuktu: An Intellectual History of Muslim West Africa* (2016), and articles published in the *Harvard International Review*, *Politique étrangère*, *Afrique contemporaine*, *African Journal of International Affairs*, *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, and *Islam et Sociétés au Sud du Sahara*.¹²⁹



Ousmane Kane, <https://hds.harvard.edu/people/ousmane-oumar-kane>.

2014 – Khaled El-Rouayheb Named James Richard Jewett Professor of Arabic and Islamic Intellectual History

¹²⁹ Harvard Divinity School. "Ousmane Oumar Kane." Accessed December 9, 2021. <https://hds.harvard.edu/people/ousmane-oumar-kane>.

Khaled El-Rouayheb began his teaching career at Harvard in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations in 2006 and was named James Richard Jewett Professor of Arabic and Islamic Intellectual History in 2014. A native of Lebanon, Professor El-Rouayheb first studied history as an undergraduate then as a graduate student at the American University of Beirut before earning a second bachelor's in philosophy from the University of Copenhagen. He earned his doctorate in Oriental Studies from the University of Cambridge in 2003. Professor El-Rouayheb's research ranges from the intellectual and cultural history of the Arabic-Islamic world in the Mamluk and early-Ottoman periods (1200-1800) to the history of Arabic logic and the history of Islamic philosophy and theology. His numerous articles and monographs include *Before Homosexuality in the Arabic-Islamic World, 1500-1800* (2005), *Relational Syllogisms & the History of Arabic Logic, 900-1900* (2010), *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century* (2015), and *The Development of Arabic Logic, 1200-1800* (2019). He is also the co-editor of *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Philosophy* (2016) and the editor of the book series *Makers of the Muslim World*, published by Oneworld Publishers.¹³⁰



Khaled El-Rouayheb, https://scholar.harvard.edu/khaled_elrouayheb/bio.

¹³⁰ Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations Harvard University. "Khaled El-Rouayheb." Accessed December 9, 2021. <https://nelc.fas.harvard.edu/people/khaled-el-rouayheb>.

2018 – Tarek Masoud Named Director of the Alwaleed Islamic Studies Program

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.¹³¹ Under Professor Masoud's leadership, the Alwaleed Program expanded its activities to include the Alwaleed bin Talal Seminar in Islamic Studies, the Alwaleed bin Talal Thesis Prizes, early-career faculty grants, and the *Harvard Islamica Podcast*.

¹³¹ Harvard Kennedy School. "Tarek Masoud." Accessed December 9, 2021. <https://www.hks.harvard.edu/faculty/tarek-masoud>.



Tarek Masoud, <https://www.belfercenter.org/person/tarek-masoud>.

2018 – Program in Islamic Law Founded at Harvard Law School

The Program in Islamic Law (PIL) is dedicated to promoting research and providing resources for the academic study of Islamic law, with the use of data science tools and methods. Formerly part of the Islamic Legal Studies Program (ILSP) until 2018, PIL is directed by Professor Intisar Rabb, joint Professor of Law and History at Harvard. The Program builds data science tools and conducts digital humanities research through its [Islamic Law Lab](#), and it is home to [SHARIAsource](#), a growing digital library of primary sources for Islamic legal and historical texts (highlighting fatwās, judicial decisions, and digital corpora such as OpenITI) and for a developing set of data science tools (Courts and Canons database for research on legal canons, StackLife for Hollis visual searches for the field, and CorpusBuilder for Arabic historic OCR). The Program promotes scholarship on Islamic law through several publications: the Harvard Series on Islamic Law (books published in conjunction with Harvard University Press), the Harvard Papers in Islamic Law occasional papers, and the Journal in Islamic Law, and the Islamic Law Blog. The Program is also home to visiting scholars, workshops, and conferences.¹³²

¹³² “Who We Are.”

Link: <https://pil.law.harvard.edu/>



Intisar Rabb, <https://hls.harvard.edu/faculty/directory/11205/Rabb>.

2018 – Program on Law and Society in the Muslim World Founded

The Program on Law and Society in the Muslim World, formerly part of the Islamic Legal Studies Program (ILSP) until 2018, was established by Kristen Stilt, Professor of Law at Harvard Law School, to support rigorous and cutting-edge scholarship that addresses the complex relationships between law and society in Muslim-majority and minority contexts around the world. Recognizing the complex legal, historical, socioeconomic, and political dimensions that characterize Muslim-majority and Muslim-minority contexts, the Program promotes contextualized approaches to the study of law. The Program offers Visiting Fellowships for scholars and practitioners in the field of law and society and supports student research through travel grants and mentorship. Program faculty and fellows share a common interest in the place of law in political, economic, social, and cultural life and their scholarship covers a

diverse range of thematic areas that include minority rights, gender justice, migration, children’s rights, animal welfare, human rights, criminal law, and family law reform.¹³³

Link: <https://pls.law.harvard.edu/>



Kristen Stilt, <https://hls.harvard.edu/faculty/directory/10852/Stilt>.

2021 – Teren Sevea Named Alwaleed Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies

Teren Sevea is a scholar of Islam and Muslim societies in South and Southeast Asia. He joined Harvard Divinity School in 2020 as Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies and became Harvard’s first professor to specialize in Islam in Southeast Asia. In 2021, he was named Alwaleed bin Talal Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies. Before joining HDS, Professor Sevea earned his Ph.D. in history from the University of California in Los Angeles and served as Assistant Professor of South Asia Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. His research focuses on

¹³³ Program on Law and Society in the Muslim World at Harvard Law School. “About Us.” Accessed December 9, 2021. <https://plsmw.law.harvard.edu/about/>.

Indian Ocean networks, Sufi textual traditions, Islamic erotology and the socioeconomic significance of spirits. Professor Sevea’s publications include *Miracles and Material Life: Rice, Ore, Traps and Guns in Islamic Malaya* (2020), the co-edited volume, *Islamic Connections: Muslim Societies in South and Southeast Asia* (2019), and a number of book chapters and journal articles. He is also the coordinator of a multimedia project called, “The Lighthouses of God: Mapping Sanctity Across the Indian Ocean,” which investigates the evolving landscapes of Indian Ocean Islam through photography, film, and GIS technology.¹³⁴



Teren Sevea / photo courtesy of Michael Naughton, Harvard Divinity School

2021 - Islamic Studies Faculty 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 interdisciplinary and global in nature, with faculty, visiting scholars, students, and programs that

¹³⁴ Harvard Divinity School. “Teren Sevea.” Accessed December 9, 2021. <https://hds.harvard.edu/people/teren-sevea>.

increasingly represent the scope, diversity, and complexity of Muslim societies and communities around the world.

Faculty of Arts and Sciences

- Ali Asani
- Rosie Bsheer
- Melani Cammett
- Steven Caton
- Khaled El-Rouayheb
- Luis Girón-Negrón
- William Granara
- Cemal Kafadar
- Justine Landau
- Annette Damayanti Lienau
- Gülru Necipoğlu
- Afsaneh Najambadi
- Shady Nasser
- David Roxburgh
- Richard Wolf
- Malika Zeghal

Harvard Divinity School

- Mohsen Goudarzi
- Ousmane Kane
- Teren Sevea

Harvard Kennedy School

- Asim Khwaja
- Tarek Masoud

Harvard Business School

- Kristin Fabbe

Harvard Law School

- Intisar Rabb
- Kristen Stilt

Harvard Graduate School of Design

- Gareth Doherty

Harvard Medical School

- Salmaan Keshavjee

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