



THE UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO

**NEUBAUER COLLEGIUM
FOR CULTURE & SOCIETY**



The Quest for Modern Language Between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea

April 13-14, 2023

Neubauer Collegium for Culture and Society
The University of Chicago



Thursday, April 13

9:00 a.m. **Coffee and Bagels**

9:30 a.m. **Language in Cultural Transformation I**

Marilyn Booth (University of Oxford): “From Mademoiselle to ‘The Unbored Pearl’: Sexuality, Authenticity, and the ‘Problem’ of Women’s Voices in Language Reform (Egypt, 1892)”

Walid Saleh (University of Toronto): “A New Religious Language: The Salafi Stripping of the Language of Prophetic Charisma”

11:00 a.m. **Language in Cultural Transformation II**

Aidan Kaplan (University of Chicago): “Performing the Social Construction of Language in al-Shidyāq’s al-Sāq ‘alā al-Sāq”

Itamar Francez (University of Chicago): “A Mouth that Sounds All the Notes: Sound and Regeneration in Vladimir Jabotinsky’s Hebrew Revivalism”

12:30 p.m. **Lunch**

1:30 p.m. **Language and National Identity Formation**

Olga Verlato (New York University): “The Precolonial History of Arabization in Egypt, 1860s–1882”

Dyala Hamzah (Université de Montréal): “Early Arab Nationalist Textbooks: A Crucible for Modern Times”

3:00 p.m. **Modernization, Standards, and Vernaculars**

Annie Greene (University of Chicago): “Beyond Fusha in the Iraqi Nahda: Arabic Languages and Plurilinguism”

Benjamin Kroeber (Rutgers University): “Becoming Barbarī, Becoming Bourgeois: The Judeo-Arabic Vernacular Turn in Nineteenth-Century Tunisia”

5:00 p.m. **Plenary Talk**

Dima Ayoub (Middlebury College): “The Paratextual Life of Translation”



Friday, April 14

9:00 a.m. **Coffee and Bagels**

9:30 a.m. **Language Purification**

Stefanos Katsikas (University of Chicago): “Language, Nationalism, and Toponym: Name Cleansing in Modern Greece”

Esra Tasdelen (University of Chicago): “Language as a Tool of Turkism: Ahmet Hikmet Müftüoğlu’s Thoughts on the Turkish Language and its Role in the Project of Nation Building”

11:00 a.m. **Empire, Linguistic Reform, and the Language Sciences I**

Elena Simonato (Université de Lausanne): “Modernizing Vernacular Idioms: A Soviet Experiment”

Usman Ahmedani (University of Amsterdam): “‘Bir lisan-ı vâhid’: Debating Linguistic Kinship in the Late Ottoman Empire”

12:30 p.m. **Lunch**

1:30 p.m. **Empire, Linguistic Reform, and the Language Sciences II**

İlker Aytürk (Bilkent University) and **Emmanuel Szurek** (University of Amsterdam): “Metalinguistic Status Anxiety: Turkish between European Imperialism and Turkish Supremacism”
Via Zoom

Michiel Leezenberg (University of Amsterdam): “The Rise of Vernacular Philologies in the Ottoman Empire: An Interconnected History”

3:30 p.m. **Plenary Talk**

Johann Strauss (University of Strasbourg): “Purism and the Quest for Modernity”

About the Conference

Language ideologies were an important component of modern nationalism, and they figured prominently in the cultural and political discourses of modernity and modernization in and around what came to be known as “the Middle East” in the 19th and early 20th centuries. This conference will bring together scholars across humanistic and social scientific disciplines (such as history, literary theory, linguistics, and anthropology) to explore the articulation, circulation, and mobilization of ideas about language death and revival, language reform, and language modernization in the contexts of empire, emerging nationalisms, and a modernizing world.

*This conference is presented as part of the **Quest for Modern Language Between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, 1820-1948** research project at the Neubauer Collegium.*

Cover image: Map illustration courtesy Itamar Francez.

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