



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**

Chair: Na'ama Rokem

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**

Chair: Ghenwa Hayek

Aidan Kaplan (University of Chicago)

“Performing the Social Construction of Language in al-Shidyaq’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**

Chair: Ahmed El Shamsy

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**

Chair: Hoda El Shakry

Annie Greene (University of Chicago)

“Beyond Fusha in the Iraqi Nahda: Arabic Languages and Plurilingualism”

Benjamin Koerber (Rutgers University)

“Becoming Barbarī, Becoming Bourgeois: The Judeo-Arabic Vernacular Turn in Nineteenth-Century Tunisia”

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

Chair: Orit Bashkin

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**

Chair: Marilyn Booth

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**

Chair: Esra Tasdelen

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**

Chair: Itamar Francez

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”
Via Zoom

3:30 p.m.

Plenary Talk

Chair: Holly Shissler

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 brings 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, co-sponsored by the Joyce Z. and Jacob Greenberg Center for Jewish Studies and the Franke Institute for the Humanities at the University of Chicago.*

Cover image: Map illustration courtesy Itamar Francez.



JOYCE Z. AND JACOB GREENBERG

Center for Jewish Studies

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO





About the Neubauer Collegium

The Neubauer Collegium cultivates communities of inquiry at the University of Chicago. Our faculty-led research projects bring together scholars and practitioners whose collaboration is required to address complex human challenges. Our Visiting Fellows program brings the best minds from around the world for collaboration, animating the intellectual and creative environment on campus. Our gallery presents art exhibitions in the context of academic research, and our public events invite broad engagement with the scholarly inquiries we support. The aim of these activities is to deepen knowledge about the world and our place in it.



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