

Awards/Prizes

European Research Council (ERC) Professor Robert Gleave has been awarded a European Research Council Advanced Researcher Grant – **€2.5 million** over five years.

The academic study of Islamic law has, so far, almost exclusively focused on Sunni legal thought. The legal thought and practice of Shi'ite (and other) traditions has been neglected, and this has created a rather skewed account of the history of Islamic law. This project aims to rectify this inadequacy by producing a body of research in which the Imami Shi'ite contribution to Islamic legal history is described, analysed and evaluated. Imami Shi'ites, sometimes termed Twelvers, are the largest branch of Shi'ism today. Imamis form a majority in Iran and Iraq where the major Shi'i centres of legal learning are located.

The project will examine five independent, but linked, Research Themes, in which research fellows and visiting professors will carry out detailed programmes of research. These will cover Imami law and doctrine, the dynamics of legal authority, the relationship between legal theory and doctrine and the influence of law on political theory. The project will facilitate opportunities to test the researchers' research findings with both international experts in the field, and scholars from within the Imami legal tradition.

HERA (administered by RCUK) Professor Robert Gleave has also been awarded funding for a project entitled 'Understanding Sharia: Past Perfect, Present Imperfect'. This European scheme, looking at 'Uses of the Past', will involve an expert team with researchers from Gottingen, Leiden and Bergen, led by Professor Gleave, for a project worth more than a million Euros, of which Exeter will get **€438,402**.

This project will examine how past precedent is used in Islamic legal discourse to justify contemporary legal practice. Nearly all modern Muslim movements, whether they are radical jihadi or liberal progressive, use past precedent; it is a crucial element of their attempt to establish their authenticity. A corollary of this is a deep dissatisfaction amongst many modern Muslim thinkers with the present, and a call to return to some past ideal.

The outcomes of the Project comprise a body of research examining the four pressing issues of gender, violence, governance and religious practice. The aim is to produce research which enhances not only the academic field, but European policy making, community relations and international relations.

British Academy Dr Christina Phillips has been awarded an additional **£5,000** by the British Academy under its Rising Star Engagement Award to set up an Early Career Middle Eastern Studies Research Network to continue her activities.

PhD Awards

Mohammed Alshimi: *The Concept and Practice of De-radicalisation in the Prevent Strand of the UK Counter-Terrorism Strategy* – supervised by Jonathan Githens-Mazer

Zoheir Ali Esmail: *Between Philosophy and 'Irfan: Interpreting Mulla Sadra from the Qajars to Post-revolutionary Iran* – supervised by Sajjad Rizvi

Farangis Ghaderi: *The Emergence and Development of Modern Kurdish Poetry* – supervised by Christine Allison

Haila Manteghi: *The Alexander Romance in the Persian Tradition: Its Influence on Persian History, Epic and Storytelling* – supervised by Leonard Lewisohn and Professor Lynette Mitchell (Classics)

Cemal Ozkahraman: *Understanding GAP as a 'Social Development' Project: Failure or Success?* – supervised by Gareth Stansfield

Christopher Pooya Razavian: *The Discursive Self: Rethinking the Relationship between Autonomy and Tradition in Shii Thought* – supervised by Sajjad Rizvi

Linda Marianne Sijbrand: *The Social Role of Spiritual Communication: Authority as a Relationship between Shaykh and Follower in the Contemporary Tañqa Shadhuliyya-Yashrutiyya in Amman, Acre and Jaffa* – supervised by Ian Netton

In Memoriam

We are sad to announce the death in February 2016 of Miss Bafrin Hama, a PhD student at the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies. Her work was: Verbal adposition parameters in Persian and Kurdish language within the framework of typological theory. Kurdish literature and language is an area of work that is not overly researched. Her work, if continued, would have made a great contribution to the field.

In tribute, a fellow PhD student has written the following poem:

A Distant Memory

Running in the glowing sand
Trying to return the ball while looking in the sun,
Is now a distant memory,
As life took you away from us too early.

Publications

Andrea Mura and A.Teti (2016) 'Sunni Islam and Islamism' in Jeffrey Haynes (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Religion and Politics*, second edition

Andrea Mura (2016) 'National Finitude and the Paranoid Style of the One', *Contemporary Political Theory*, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 58-79

Nadia Naser-Najjab and Ilan Pappé (2016) 'Palestine: Reframing Palestine in the Post-Oslo period' in Robert Guyver (ed.) *Teaching History and the Changing Nation State: Transnational and Intranational Perspectives*, Bloomsbury Academic: London

James Onley, Bernard Haykel, Steffen Hertog, Clive Holes, Fahad Bishara (2016) 'The Traditional Economy of the Gulf', in *The Emergence of the Gulf States: Studies in Modern History*, edited by J.E. Peterson, Bloomsbury Academic: London

Emily Selove (2016) *The Hikayat Abi al-Qasim: A Literary Banquet*, Edinburgh University Press

Journal of Arabian Studies 5.2 (December 2015), edited by the Exeter Centre for Gulf Studies (James Onley, Gerd Nonneman, N. Janardhan, et al). This year saw the publication of the tenth issue of JAS. The issue includes a special introduction as well as the following articles:

1. 'Introduction' by the Editorial Team
2. 'A Well-Intentioned Failure: British Anti-slavery Measures and the Arabian Peninsula, 1820-1940' by Benjamin Reilly
3. 'Reform of the *Kafāla* System: A Survey Experiment From Qatar' by Abdoulaye Diop, Trevor Johnston, and Kien Trung Le
4. 'Population, Power, and Distributional Politics in Qatar' by Zahra Babar
5. 'The Hindu Community in Muscat: Creating Homes in the Diaspora' by Sandhya Rao Mehta and James Onley
6. 'Associational Life under Authoritarianism: The Saudi Chamber of Commerce and Industry Elections' by Hendrik J. Kraetzschmar

Conferences, Seminars and Workshops

Forthcoming:

Curse Words: Magic and Obscenity in Medieval Arabic and Classical Literature. 11 May, IAIS. Research workshop organised by Dr Emily Selove.

Past events:

Collaborative workshops, American University Beirut: From 3-7 April a large group of staff and PhD students from the Institute travelled to Beirut to take part in a series of intensive workshops and collaborative fora with colleagues at American University Beirut. The aim of the trip was to identify the most promising areas for collaboration in teaching and, especially, research, and we were very lucky that AUB were so keen to make sure that we really did forge durable links with their faculty. This visit was held under the auspices of our strategy to undertake more and more research collaboration with our three global partners: AUB, Chicago and Brown.



'hard at work...'

Great progress was made in Palestine Studies (represented by our PhD students Yara Hawari, Silvia Truini and Francesco Amoruso, as well as Nadia Nasser Najjab), where we will soon advertise for a PhD studentship shared between Exeter and AUB. This award will be specifically devoted to generating research from AUB's Palestinian Oral History Archive, to which we are gaining privileged access over the coming years. The Archive will also host an oral history workshop, led by Exeter doctoral students, in summer 2016, and we are hopeful that many other productive links will be forged. Scholars working in maritime studies, led by Dionisius Agius, also developed concrete collaborative ideas, and we will host AUB's Alexis Wick as a visiting speaker in academic year 16-17. We will also stage a number of other workshops on discrete themes over 16-17, led by Sajjad Rizvi and Nader El-Bizri (intellectual history) and Knowledge and Middle East Studies (led by Dahlia Gubara, Sarah Doebbert Elstein and William Gallois). In the medium-term we are confident that we may also be able to establish joint doctoral and other postgraduate programmes with AUB.

Conference: Reformulation and Hermeneutics: Researching the History of Islamic Legal Theory, Istanbul, 21-24 February 2016. A collaborative conference between the Islamic Reformulations project and the Faculty of Theology, Istanbul University, examined how, through history, *Shari'a* rules have been justified by Muslim thinkers, with a focus on the debates and discussions in works of legal theory. This was the final conference of the Islamic Reformulations project.

A workshop on '**State-Business Relations in the Gulf**' organised by Dr Marc Valeri was held at Chatham House, London, on 8 April.

A workshop on '**State-Business Relations in the Gulf/Middle East**', organised by Dr Marc Valeri, was held in Georgetown, DC, 13-14 April.

Dr Leonard Lewisohn held a two-day workshop at the Institute on '**Sufis and Mullahs: Sufis and Their Opponents in the Persianate World**', 14-16 April. The event concluded with an evening concert of classical Persian music by Sepideh Raissadat, accompanied by Iman Vaziri.

A workshop on '**State-Business Relations in a Comparative Perspective**', organised by Dr Marc Valeri, was held at the British Library in London, 30 April.

A newly instigated partnership between the University of Exeter and Peking University saw **Dr Emily Selove** and **Dr Istvan Kristo Nagy** participate in a two-day conference – **the Exeter-PKU Forum** – which took place in Beijing on 15 and 16 April.

Dr Nadia Naser-Najjab with Professor Ilan Pappé presented a paper entitled 'History, Curriculum and Textbooks' at **The Third International Conference and Workshop of the Palestine History and Heritage Project**, 11-13 April, Copenhagen.