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Harry Levin Prize, 2025

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Seth Kimmel (Columbia), 2023-2026

Gal Gvili (McGill), 2024-2027

Winner: *Sacred Language, Vernacular Difference* by Annette Lienau

Spanning sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East, *Sacred Language, Vernacular Difference* is an erudite and ambitious study that redefines Arabic's character as a global language by tracing local currents of anticolonial politics and vernacular literatures beneath the language's perceived uniformity. The book challenges familiar distinctions between sacred and vernacular and Arab and non-Arab ('ajam), revealing their rootedness in pre-colonial and colonial knowledge structures. Through meticulous historical research and insightful literary analysis, this monograph uncovers a complex interplay of languages and histories— French, Arabic, and Wolof in Senegal; Dutch and Indonesian in Indonesia; and English and Arabic in Egypt. Reconstructing the intellectual and poetic networks that fueled anticolonial thought, *Sacred Language, Vernacular Difference* offers a novel perspective on how the politics of language continues shaping comparative literature.