

# Annual Report 2022





*The Orient-Institut Beirut (OIB) is an independent academic research institute, part of the Max Weber Foundation and mainly funded through the Federal Ministry of Education and Research in Germany. It conducts interdisciplinary research on the Arab world and the region of the Middle East and North Africa at large. Its research community comprises long-term research associates and short-term visiting fellows from all over the world, who represent the major disciplines of the humanities and social sciences, including Islamic and Arab studies, history and anthropology of West Asia, as well as sociology and political sciences. The OIB is a long-standing partner of academic institutions in Lebanon and the region at large. It aims to foster academic relations across the MENA region and increasingly conducts its research in transregional perspectives.*

*One of the great academic treasures of the OIB is its public research library, which holds important collections of books, journals and newspapers. It comprises around 130.000 volumes relating to Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies in the broad sense. The OIB publishes two major book series and additional titles through extra series. The institute engages with a larger academic community through regular research seminars, lecture series, international conferences and workshops. Local and international partnerships are crucial in designing and funding the institute's projects. In particular, the OIB is at the forefront of facilitating research collaborations between institutions in the Arab world and institutions in Germany and Europe. It thereby seeks to encourage innovative academic perspectives on the region.*

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# OIB in numbers

## RESEARCH



**26** RESEARCH PROJECTS

## SUPPORT



**5** POSTDOCTORAL VISITING FELLOWS

**11** DOCTORAL VISITING FELLOWS

**9** RESEARCH RELIEF FELLOWS

**16** INTERNS

## PUBLICATIONS



**3** INSTITUTE **22** RESEARCHERS

## LIBRARY



**> 140.000** VOLUMES

## SOCIAL MEDIA



**5.669** FACEBOOK ABOUNNEMENTS

**748** INSTAGRAM ABOUNNEMENTS

## EVENTS



**3** CONFERENCES

**8** WORKSHOPS

**1** ROUND TABLE / PANEL DISCUSSION

**4** SEMINARS

**1** PUBLIC TALK

**20** COLLOQUIA

**1** EXHIBITION

**4** LECTURES

**2** SUMMER SCHOOLS

**1** FILM SCREENING AND MUSIC PERFORMANCE

**1** LAUNCH OF THE GERMAN-LEBANESE HISTORY PRICE

# *Director's Address*

THOMAS WÜRTZ



The year 2022 has enabled the OIB to become more active again in many areas than was possible in the previous 2 years because of the pandemic and the port explosion. Nevertheless, the economic crisis in Lebanon persists, and the inflation of the national currency has continued to preoccupy the country, including the staff at the Institute. Yet, one gets the impression that today far more people in the country can again participate in social life. In 2022, for example, the streets filled up again, which had sometimes been empty because of gasoline and diesel shortages. Academic and cultural life has also enjoyed a welcome upswing. Some of the international guests we were able to invite to the OIB in 2022 were delighted to personally view the situation on the ground. The Lebanese are particularly pleased when visitors come from abroad and are not scared off by the negative headlines that continue to dominate the media. In addition to working on specific scientific projects and the often long-term publication projects, it has increasingly become a task of the OIB to be a gateway to international contacts for our younger Lebanese colleagues, as travel is less a matter of course than it used to be.

The beginning of 2022 was positive for the OIB, when it built on the momentum from the OIB's 60th-anniversary celebrations in December 2021. Over the subsequent months, we were finally able to implement many long-term projects. Then, in the fall, there was a change in the directorate, which resulted in the phasing out of the "Relationships" research profile. All of these factors resulted in diverse activities with many exciting encounters, findings, and insights, some of which are presented here, in the hopes of increasing your curiosity about the Annual Report.

On the rather cold days at the beginning of February, we experienced the opening of a photo exhibition with pictures by Mahmoud Dabdoub on the life of Arab students in the former GDR, accompanied by a film screening on the work of Sudanese directors in the former Eastern Bloc.

The Turkish medical historian Yesim Işıl Ülman introduced the lecture activities of the Orient Institut. She reported on the vaccination practices in the Ottoman Empire as part of the activities of the Medical School at Galatasaray and its modernisation strategy. The stimulus for this, of course, was the topical theme of the worldwide pandemic and its control, but the lecture went far beyond that in many historical details.

Then, at the first, more extensive workshop after the jubilee of the previous year with numerous researchers, we took a closer look at ongoing ethical discourses in Islamic intellectual history. In particular, we focused on the role of typologies of human characters in Islamic ethical discourses. Bilal Orfali from the American University of Beirut (AUB) as well as our former fellow scholar Enrico Boccacini and Fatih Ermis from the OIB were responsible for organizing this workshop.

At the end of March, the distinguished scholar Tarif Khalidi gave a lecture on the biographical tradition in premodern Arabic literature. This laid the groundwork for the central event of the ERC-funded project LAWHA (Lebanon's Art World at Home and Abroad), the Moving Biography summer school. Thus everyone was well prepared when the Summer School started in June.

Another Summer School, held in Wittenberg and Berlin, allowed OIB researchers to improve their skills in reading and analyzing Ottoman sources available in manuscript form. It was gratifying to have this means of broad cooperation between the Islamic institutes in Germany and research institutions in Lebanon, such as the IFPO. In cooperation with the IFPO and the ERC project "Dream" as well as the AUB, the workshop "Revolt in(g) Collapse. Protest and Everyday Adjustments in Contemporary Lebanon", organised by Pierre France (OIB), examined Lebanon's current situation from very different angles. June was also the appropriate time for two events on Arab music. Our fellow scholar Rosy Beyhoun introduced us to the multifaceted connections between music and politics in 20th- and early 21st-century Lebanon. The Arab Music Archiving and Research (AMAR) Foundation commemorated the legacy of the traditional Oud-builder, Albert Mansour, with a film screening and performance.

Then, in the summer of the same year, a workshop was held on a decidedly anthropological theme. Researchers from Europe, the United States, and the Arab world discussed "Reckoning with God: Divine-Human Relations after the Arab Spring" for 2 days, from 30 June–1 July 2022. The workshop was initiated by fellow scholar Joud Alkorani from Radboud University in Nijmegen (The Netherlands). Yasmin Moll (University of Michigan) presented the public keynote lecture entitled "Can There Be a Godly Ethnography? Islamic Anthropology, Decolonisation, and the Ethnographic Stance". This workshop emphasised that the image of God in many Muslim-majority societies has changed following the events of the Arab Spring; the question of theodicy has become more relevant in the region.

At the Beirut site, the first half of the year concluded with another workshop coordinated by our fellow scholar, Hussein Ibrahim, which took place in cooperation with the Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich and was dedicated to the multifaceted reception of the Muslim philosopher Avicenna. Only a few days later, the office of the OIB in Cairo once again became active, after having successfully filled the position of an OIB representative locally with Dr Yasmin Amin in April. Thus, on 26–27 July 2022, a kick-off workshop took place in the DAAD building, in which we have also rented our two offices, on the framework topic of the Cairo Office "The Interdependence of Humans, Religion, and the Environment". This theme will be continued at three conferences in 2022 and 2023. The workshop was dedicated primarily to the religious perspective and particularly to the approach of a theology of coexistence. The Program Officer for the activities, Ahmed Abd-Elsalam, opened the workshop. There followed the keynote address by Mohamed Habash, who spoke on the brotherhood of religions in the teachings on divine and human matters.

The end of September saw the farewell conference of Professor Birgit Schäbler, Director at the OIB from 2017–2022. It was dedicated to the theme of "Labors of Love, Trials of Friendship: Challenges of Modern Social Relationships". Thus, the multiyear institute profile "Relationships" found a worthy conclusion. Mrs. Schäbler was thanked on behalf of the President of the Max Weber Foundation for her work in times of numerous crises. A convivial evening concluded her 5-year directorship, with some of her fellow scientists and scholars presenting her with a piece of moon rock.

Thereupon, the leadership of OIB passed to me for 9 months, until the arrival of Professor Jens Hanssen in July 2023; the office of Vice-Director was assumed on a transitional basis by the long-time Head of the Library, Dr Hans-Peter Pökel.

In October, during the visit of a group of scholars active in interreligious dialog, we discussed the topic of religious pluralism in Lebanon and in Germany. Ziad Fahed of Notre Dame University explained the theological foundations that – despite the complicated political situation – can inspire the actions of Christian actors, and Elie El-Hindy, Executive Director of the Adyan Foundation, drew a very vivid picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the political system in Lebanon, emphasizing that a reorganisation of the system that fails to take the various religions and denominations into account would be practically impossible to implement. Thanks to Aydin Süer's contribution, the situation of Islam in Germany could also be related to this.

The same month, we had hosting Christoph Günther from the University of Mainz as a guest. He spoke on the topic: "Mere Desolation? On Daesh's Iconoclasm". (Daesh is more commonly known in German as the terrorist organisation ISIS). He elaborated on the destruction of the Nuri Mosque in Mosul (2017) and other symbolic sites aimed at erasing collective memory.

At the end of November, Christian Mauder from the University of Bergen spoke about the negotiation of different identities in late Mamluk court culture in the learned sessions of the ruler Sultan Qanisawh al-Ghawri (r. 1501–1516), using the topics of gender, law, and exegesis to illustrate the multifaceted connections between society and academia as well as the historical positioning of the ruler vis-à-vis foreign policy rivals. December was marked by the second event of the Cairo Office, which took place in Alexandria on the topic of "Religion, Religiosity, and Society". This was a large conference following the first smaller workshop in the summer, led off by the Egyptian writer and intellectual Abdul Jawad Yassin with a keynote lecture in which he asked at what point religion and religiosity had first become a problem for societies. One focus of the following days, which brought together more than 40 scholars from Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, Oman, Iraq, Germany, and The Netherlands, was the contribution of religions to the transformation of contemporary societies.

At the last evening event of the year, in Beirut, Tine Gade, the author of the book "Sunni City", led a discussion on the Sunni character of Tripoli, Lebanon's second-largest city, its current situation, and future prospects. A workshop on Quranic manuscripts in their respective artistic contexts, organised by Alya Karame, who started working at OIB in April of that year, gathered high-level experts at OIB. On the question of the materiality of the Qur'an, it became clear that the book-shaped Qur'an gained in importance especially in the Mamluk period and that the Qur'an as an object thus acquired a special sacrality. Numerous scholars and fellows came to the Institute in 2022. Three Hans-Robert Roemer Fellows also temporarily became part of the research community at OIB. Mahmood Makvand and Qodratullah Qorbani from Kharazmi University joined us from Iran, and Sebastian Günther from the University of Göttingen visited in the early fall.

More intensive cooperation is planned with the Leibniz Center for Modern Oriental Studies (ZMO), the MENA Study Center of the Maecenata Foundation, and the Catholic Academy in Berlin, beginning in November 2022. This will take place in Berlin in the fall of each year and will be dedicated to a topic of interest from the perspective of political science and religious studies. The OIB joined the cooperation, which has existed for years, in 2022. The topic of the kick-off in November 2022 was "Women against Violence against Women: Turkey, North Africa, Iran".

In December, we agreed on an intensified cooperation with the University of Balamand in the field of Digital Humanities. We also largely completed the planning for a cooperation to hold a conference on the "Religious Other in Quranic Exegesis" with the IDEO (Institut dominicain d'études orientales) in Cairo, in May 2023.

A trip to the book fair in Sharja and to the Mohammed Bin Rashid Library in Dubai as well as to the National Heritage Center in Abu Dhabi revealed to the leadership of the OIB that German institutions that are academically and journalistically active in the Arab world should become more involved in the Arab-Persian Gulf region. The importance of intellectual life, spurred on by the founding of numerous universities and libraries, is clearly shifting to this region.

A very practical new development also deserves mention here: Given the worldwide energy crisis, which affects the OIB as well, we decided to install a solar panel system on the roof of the Institute to be prepared should the supply situation deteriorate again. The installation of the solar system and its smooth functioning required that numerous power lines within the Institute's historic building be renewed.

All past and future activities would be inconceivable without the staff of the Orient Institute Beirut. I want to express my sincere thanks to all of them in these times of transition and new beginnings. I owe a special debt of gratitude to my deputy during the transition period, Hans-Peter Pökel, who has magnificently supported the OIB and me personally. I wish you a fruitful and enjoyable reading of this Annual Report, which visually takes up the theme of trees and thus refers not the least to the enduring, albeit distressed, beauty of the country's natural surroundings. It represents the traditional symbol of hope – the hope Lebanon continues to need, even in times of reawakened cultural and academic life.

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Das Jahr 2022 hat es dem OIB ermöglicht, in vielen Bereichen wieder stärker aktiv zu werden, als es wegen der Pandemie und der Hafenexplosion in den beiden Vorjahren der Fall gewesen war. Immer noch besteht allerdings die wirtschaftliche Krise im Libanon fort und die Inflation der Landeswährung hat das Land und auch die Mitarbeitenden am Institut weiterhin beschäftigt. Dennoch drängt sich der Eindruck auf, dass wieder weitaus mehr Menschen im Land am sozialen Leben teilnehmen können. So haben sich 2022 die Straßen wieder gefüllt, die aufgrund vorheriger Benzin- und Dieselknappheit manchmal wie leergefegt waren. Auch das akademische und kulturelle Leben hat einen erfreulichen Aufschwung genommen. Einige der internationalen Gäste, die wir im Jahr 2022 ans OIB einladen konnten, waren erfreut sich persönlich ein Bild von der Lage vor Ort machen zu können. Libanesen und Libanesinnen freuen sich inzwischen besonders, wenn Besucher aus dem Ausland kommen und sich nicht von den Negativschlagzeilen, die in den Medien weiterhin dominieren, abschrecken lassen. Neben der Arbeit an den konkreten wissenschaftlichen Projekten und den oft langfristigen Publikationsvorhaben ist es daher zunehmend eine Aufgabe des OIB, auch für unsere jüngeren libanesischen Kollegen und Kolleginnen ein mögliches Tor zu internationalen Kontakten zu sein, da Reisen weniger selbstverständlich sind als früher.

Der Beginn des Jahres 2022 war für das OIB positiv, da es die Dynamik der Feierlichkeiten zum sechzigjährigen Bestehen des OIB im Dezember 2021 aufgreifen konnte. Im Laufe der folgenden Monate konnten viele länger geplante Projekte endlich umgesetzt werden und im Herbst gab es dann einen Wechsel im Direktorat zu verzeichnen, was ein Auslaufen des Forschungsprofils "Beziehungen" mit sich brachte. Aus all diesen Faktoren resultiert eine Vielgestaltigkeit der Aktivitäten mit spannenden Begegnungen und vielen Erkenntnissen und Einsichten, von denen einige hier schon vorab präsentiert werden, um Ihre Neugier auf den Jahresbericht weiter zu steigern.

Anfang Februar erlebten wir an recht kalten Tagen zunächst die Eröffnung einer Fotoausstellung mit Bildern von Mahmoud Dabdoub zum Leben arabischer Studentinnen und Studenten in der ehemaligen DDR, die von einer Filmvorführung zum Wirken sudanesischer Regisseure im ehemaligen Ostblock begleitet wurde.

Die Vortragsaktivitäten am Orient-Institut wurden von der türkischen Medizinhistorikerin *Yeşim İlşil Ülman* eröffnet. Sie berichtete über die Impfpraxis im Osmanischen Reich als Bestandteil der Aktivitäten der medizinischen Schule am Galatasaray und ihrer Modernisierungsstrategie. Die Anregung hierzu hatte natürlich das Weltlebensthema der Pandemie und ihrer Bekämpfung gegeben, aber der Vortrag führte in vielen historischen Details weit darüber hinaus.

Die ethischen Diskurse in der Islamischen Geistesgeschichte nahmen wir dann beim ersten größeren Workshop nach dem Jubiläum im vorherigen Jahr mit zahlreichen Forschern und Forscherinnen in den Blick. Hierbei stand insbesondere die Rolle von Typologien menschlicher Charaktere für die islamischen ethischen Diskurse im Mittelpunkt. Beteiligt waren hierbei Bilal Orfali von der American University of Beirut (AUB) sowie unser ehemaliger Stipendiat Enrico Boccacini und Fatih Ermis vom OIB.

Ende März hieß der angesehene libanische Gelehrte Tarif Khalidi einen Vortrag über die biographische Tradition in der vormodernen arabischen Literatur, um das zentrale Jahresereignis des vom ERC geförderten Projekts LAWHA (Lebanon's Art World at Home and Abroad) gedanklich schon einmal vorzubereiten. So waren alle bestens vorbereitet, als sich die Tore der Sommerschule zum Thema Biografien in Bewegung öffnete.

Eine andere Summer School, die in Wittenberg und Berlin abgehalten wurde, ermöglichte es Forschenden vom OIB ihre Kompetenzen im Lesen und Analysieren osmanischer Quellen, die in Form von Handschriften vorliegen, zu erweitern. Erfreulich war hierbei auch die Möglichkeit einer breiten Kooperation islamischer Institute in Deutschland und von Forschungseinrichtungen im Libanon wie dem IFPO. In Kooperation mit dem IFPO und dem ERC-Projekt "Dream" sowie der AUB fand Anfang Juni der Workshop "Revolt in(g) Collapse. Protest and Everyday Adjustments in Contemporary Lebanon" statt, der von Pierre France (OIB) organisiert wurde und die aktuelle Lage des Libanons von sehr verschiedenen Seiten beleuchtete. Juni war auch der geeignete Zeitpunkt für zwei Veranstaltungen zum Thema der arabischen Musik. Die Stipendiatin Rosy Beyhoun führte uns in die facettenreichen Verbindungen von Musik und Politik im Libanon des 20. und beginnenden 21. Jahrhunderts ein und die Stiftung AMAR (Arab Music Archiving and Research) gedachte mit einer Filmvorführung und einer Aufführung dem Vermächtnis des traditionellen Oud-Bauers Albert Mansour.

Im Sommer des Jahres fand dann ein Workshop zu einem dezidiert anthropologischen Thema statt. Die Forscherinnen und Forscher aus Europa, den USA und der arabischen Welt diskutierten vom 30.6.–1.7., über das Thema "Reckoning with God: Divine-Human Relations after the Arab Spring". Initiiert wurde der Workshop durch Stipendiatin Joud Alkorani von der Radboud University in Nijmegen (Niederlande). Eine öffentliche Keynote-lecture wurde von Yasmin Moll (University of Michigan) unter dem Titel "Can There Be a Godly Ethnography? Islamic Anthropology, Decolonisation and the Ethnographic Stance". gehalten.

Als Ergebnis des Workshops wurde deutlich, dass sich das Gottesbild in vielen mehrheitlich muslimischen Gesellschaften infolge der Ereignisse nach dem arabischen Frühling gewandelt hat und die Frage der Theodizee in der Region mehr Relevanz gewonnen hat.

Am Standort Beirut wurde das erste Halbjahr mit einem weiteren von unserem Stipendiaten Hussein Ibrahim koordinierten Workshop abgeschlossen, der in Kooperation mit der Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in München stattfand und sich der vielseitigen Rezeption des muslimischen Philosophen Avicenna widmete. Nur wenige Tage später trat das Büro des OIB in Kairo wieder öffentlich in Erscheinung, nachdem es im April gelungen war, die Stelle einer OIB-Repräsentanz vor Ort mit Dr Yasmin Amin zu besetzen. So konnte am 26. und 27.7. im Gebäude des DAAD, in welchem wir auch unsere beiden Büros angemietet haben, ein Auftaktworkshop zur Rahmenthematik des Kairo-Büros "Interdependenz von Mensch, Religion und Umwelt" stattfinden. Dieses Thema wird dann auf drei weiteren Konferenzen in den Jahren 2022 und 2023 fortgeführt. Der Workshop widmete sich dabei zunächst der religiösen Perspektive und hier insbesondere dem Ansatz einer Theologie der Koexistenz und wurde vom Programmverantwortlichen für die Aktivitäten des Kairo-Büros Ahmed Abd-Elsalam eröffnet. Daran schloss sich die Keynote von Mohamed Habash an, der zur Brüderlichkeit der Religionen zwischen den Lehren vom Göttlichen und Menschlichen sprach.

Ende September fand die Abschiedskonferenz von Professor Birgit Schäbler, Direktorin am OIB von 2017–2022, statt. Sie widmete sich dem Thema "Labors of Love, trials of friendship. Challenges of modern social Relation". Somit fand das mehrjährige Institutsprofil "Beziehungen" nochmals einen würdigen Abschluss. Frau Schäbler wurde im Namen des Präsidenten der Max-Weber Stiftung Dank für ihre Arbeit in Zeiten zahlreicher Krisen ausgesprochen.

Ein geselliger Abend beschloss ihr fünfjähriges Direktorat und befreundete Wissenschaftler und Wissenschaftlerinnen überreichten ihr ein Stück Mondgestein.

Daraufhin ging die Leitung des OIB für neun Monate – bis zur Ankunft von Professor Jens Hanssen im Juli 2023 – auf mich über und das Amt des Vizedirektors übernahm übergangsweise der langjährige Bibliotheksleiter Dr Hans-Peter Pökel.

Im Oktober diskutierten wir anlässlich des Besuchs einer Gruppe von Wissenschaftlern, die im interreligiösen Dialog tätig sind, das Thema des religiösen Pluralismus im Libanon und in Deutschland. Ziad Fahed von der Notre Dame University (NDU) erläuterte die theologischen Grundlagen, die trotz aller politischen Gemengelagen für christliche Akteure inspirierend sein können, und Elie El-Hindy, Geschäftsführer der Adyan-Stiftung, zeichnete ein sehr lebendiges Bild von den Stärken und Schwächen des politischen Systems im Libanon und betonte, dass eine Neuordnung des Systems ohne Berücksichtigung der Religionen und Konfessionen praktisch nicht umsetzbar sei. Dank des Beitrags von Aydin Süer ließ sich auch die Situation des Islams in Deutschland hierzu in Beziehung setzen. Im gleichen Monat hatten wir Christoph Günther von der Universität Mainz zu Gast. Er sprach zum Thema: "Mere Desolation? On Daesh's iconoclasm" (Daesh ist im Deutschen eher als Terrororganisation ISIS bekannt). Er ging dabei auf die Zerstörung der Nuri Moschee in Mosul (2017) und anderer symbolischer Orte ein, die auf eine Auslöschung des kollektiven Gedächtnisses abziele.

Ende November sprach Christian Mauder von der Universität Bergen über die Aushandlung verschiedener Identitäten in der späten mamlukischen Hofkultur in den gelehrten Sitzungen des Herrschers Sultan Qanisawh al-Ghawri (reg. 1501–1516) und ließ anhand der Themen Gender, Recht und Exegese die vielseitigen Verbindungen zwischen Gesellschaft und Wissenschaft, aber auch die historische Positionierung des Herrschers gegenüber außenpolitischen Rivalen deutlich werden.

Der Dezember war geprägt von der zweiten Veranstaltung des Kairo-Büros, die in Alexandria zum Thema "Religion, Religiosität und Gesellschaft" stattfand. Dabei handelte es sich nach dem ersten kleineren Workshop im Sommer um eine größere Konferenz, die von dem ägyptischen Schriftsteller und Intellektuellen Abdul Jawad Yassin mit einer Keynote Lecture begonnen wurde, in welcher er fragte, wo Religion und Religiosität für Gesellschaften überhaupt zum Problem würden. Ein Schwerpunkt der folgenden Tage, bei der über 40 Wissenschaftlerinnen und Wissenschaftler aus Ägypten, dem Libanon, Marokko, Tunesien, Oman und dem Irak sowie aus Deutschland und den Niederlanden miteinander ins Gespräch kamen, war auch der Beitrag von Religionen für den Wandel zeitgenössischer Gesellschaften.

In Beirut diskutierten wir bei der letzten Abendveranstaltung des Jahres mit Tine Gade, der Autorin des Buches "Sunni City" über den sunnitischen Charakter von Tripoli, der zweitgrößten Stadt des Libanon, die aktuelle Situation und die Zukunftsperspektiven der Stadt. Ein Workshop zu Koranmanuskripten in ihrem jeweiligen künstlerischen Kontext, organisiert von Alya Karame, die im April des Jahres am OIB ihre Arbeit aufgenommen hat, versammelte hochkarätige Fachleute am OIB. Es wurde deutlich, dass während der Mamlukenzeit der buchförmige Koran zunehmend an Wichtigkeit gewann und somit dem Objekt des Korans eine verstärkte Sakralität zuteil wurde.

Auch im Jahr 2022 kamen zahlreiche Stipendiati und Stipendiatiinnen (Fellows) ans Institut. Drei Hans-Robert Roemer Fellows waren ebenfalls zeitweise Teil der Forschergemeinschaft am OIB: Mahmood Makvand und Qodratullah Qorbani von der Kharazmi Universität kamen aus dem Iran zu uns und Sebastian Günther von der Universität Göttingen war im frühen Herbst zu Besuch.

Mit dem Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO), dem MENA Study Center der Maecenata Stiftung und der Katholischen Akademie in Berlin ist beginnend im November 2022 eine intensivere Kooperation geplant. Sie findet jeweils im Herbst in Berlin statt und widmet sich einem aus politik- und religionswissenschaftlicher Sicht interessanten Thema. Das OIB ist 2022 der seit Jahren bestehenden Kooperation beigetreten. Thema des Auftakts im November 2022 war Frauen gegen Gewalt an Frauen: Türkei, Nordafrika, Iran.

Mit der Universität Balamand konnten wir im Dezember zudem eine verstärkte Kooperation im Bereich der Digital Humanities vereinbaren und mit dem IDEO (Institut dominicain d'études orientales) in Kairo wurde eine Kooperation für eine Konferenz zum "Religiös Anderen in der Koranexgese" für Mai 2023 in Angriff genommen und auch schon weitgehend konzipiert. Eine Reise zur Buchmesse in Sharja und zur Mohammed Bin Rashid Bibliothek in Dubai wie auch dem National Heritage Center in Abu Dhabi führte der Leitung des OIB vor Augen, dass sich deutsche Institutionen, die in der arabischen Welt akademisch und publizistisch aktiv sind, stärker am arabisch-persischen Golf engagieren sollten. Die Gewichte des intellektuellen Lebens verschieben sich, durch Universitäts- und Bibliotheksgründungen beflogt, doch eindeutig in diese Region.

Eine sehr praktische neue Entwicklung verdient hier ebenfalls noch Erwähnung. Angesichts der Energiekrise, die auch das OIB betrifft, wurde eine Solaranlage auf dem Dach des Instituts installiert, um gegen eine stets mögliche erneute Verschlechterung der Versorgungslage gewappnet zu sein. Die Installation der Solaranlage und ihr reibungsloses Funktionieren erforderte es dabei, dass zahlreiche Stromleitungen im historischen Gebäude des Instituts erneuert werden mussten.

Alle vergangenen und kommenden Aktivitäten sind ohne die Mitarbeiter und Mitarbeiterinnen am Orient-Institut Beirut nicht denkbar. Ihnen allen möchte ich in Zeiten des Übergangs und Neuanfangs ganz herzlich danken. Zu wirklich besonderem Dank bin ich dabei meinem Stellvertreter in der Übergangszeit, Hans-Peter Pökel, verpflichtet, der das OIB und mich persönlich auf großartige Weise unterstützt hat.

Ich wünsche Ihnen eine ertragreiche und vielseitige Lektüre dieses Jahresberichts, der visuell das Thema Bäume aufgreift und somit nicht zuletzt auf die bleibende, wenn auch bedrängte Schönheit der Natur des Landes verweist. Ihr Grün ist auch ein traditionelles Symbol der Hoffnung, Hoffnung, die der Libanon auch in Zeiten wieder erwachten kulturellen und akademischen Lebens sicher weiterhin braucht.

**THOMAS WÜRTZ** INTERIM DIRECTOR joined the Orient-Institut in May 2021 and became the institute's interim director in October 2022. After studying Islamic Studies, Politics and Philosophy in Bamberg and Cairo, he wrote his doctoral thesis on the history of Islamic theology at the University of Zurich. The thesis is published under the title "Islamic Theology in the 14th Century. Doctrine of Resurrection, Theory of Action and Conceptions of Creation in the Work of Sa'd ad-Din at-Taftâzânî". He was then a research assistant at the universities of Bern and Aarhus. In the process, he completed several research trips in Egypt and Pakistan. In 2015, he taught as a guest lecturer at the Free University of Berlin. For several years, he worked as an academic advisor at the Catholic Academy in Berlin in the fields of Islam and the Middle East as well as Christian-Muslim dialogue. His research interests lie primarily in the areas of the Koran and Koranic exegesis as well as Koranic translations and the history of theology, and in the Muslim view of the Crusades.

#### **PRESENTATIONS**

**Die Bibelzitate im Korankommentar des Ibrahim al-Biqâ'î,**  
Deutscher Orientalistentag (DOT), Berlin // 12–16 SEPTEMBER.  
**Biblisches als Korankommentar – Erzählungen und Erklärungen**  
**im Tafsîr des Ibrâhîm al-Biqâ'î,** Internationale Korankonferenz  
"Sura al-Hadid", online // 30 SEPTEMBER–1 OKTOBER.

#### **MODERATIONS**

**Moderation of two panels on Islamic studies,** at DOT, Berlin // 12–16 SEPTEMBER.

**Introduction of OIB in the cooperation of ZMO (Leibniz-Zentrum**  
**Moderner Orient),** Katholische Akademie in Berlin and Maecenata  
Stiftung to the seminar Frauen gegen Gewalt an Frauen, Berlin // 22 NOVEMBER.

**Opening of the 2nd Conference in the series of "Discussing the**  
**Interdependence between Humans, Religion and Environment",**  
Religion, Religiosity and Society Alexandria // 11–12 DECEMBER.





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# *Islamic Studies*

Islamic studies at OIB pertains to Islamic civilisation, past and present. We are specialised in theology, history and historiography, Qur'an exegesis, Hadith, law, philosophy, ethics and Sufism. Our projects are interdisciplinary and often focus on the cross-cultural transfer of knowledge both within and beyond Islamic civilisation. The interdisciplinarity of our projects can be detected in the ways in which, for instance, we study Islamic law by incorporating exegetical traditions and Hadith, as well as Islamic and Muslim Feminism. The Transfer of knowledge can be demonstrated in the case of Greek philosophy and its reception in the framework of Islamic ethics. Our interest in interreligious and intra religious interdependency is highlighted best in how we study the way humans of different faiths perceive each other as for example how the 'religious other' is described in Qur'anic commentaries.

The intersection between Islamic Studies and the arts is another of our interests, specifically the study of the Qur'an as a material object.

In as much as we focus on the past, we are also interested in how modern Muslim theology tackles the challenges of our age.

With regard to ethics, the interdisciplinary character ranges from Law to Sufism and also spills into gender issues, specifically with regard to Islamic law which claims to be based on the Qur'an and Sunna, and therefore incorporates exegetical traditions, Hadith and literature such as the *Shahnameh* and 1001 Nights. Modern approaches to produce more gender egalitarian readings, as well as more women-friendly interpretations are also incorporated. In this process stereotypical generalised images, especially with regard to role of women, are overturned.

We also look at the environment from a religious perspective, aiming at studying the legal regulations and recommendations impacting the environment. Naturally, this is also tied to ethics, again in terms of use and abuse of resources, treatment of animals, methods of food production (*ḥalāl* versus *ṭayyib*) among other issues. In an upcoming project we plan to work on court documents, dealing with marriage, divorce and child custody. The lived reality can then be reconstructed and compared to the theoretical law books and manuals to determine whether a discrepancy exists between ideals and real-life practices or not. It also investigates the autonomy of judges versus the perceived hegemony of legal theories. Taken together, our projects cover vast geographical area – from Morocco to India – as well as a wide time frame – from early Islam to contemporary times.

After describing what we are doing at OIB, we would like to give you a glimpse of a vision. One of the aims of Islamic studies at OIB is to create bridges between different religions and religious interpretations. An important vision is to offer critical readings and alternative interpretations, by providing different ones from the rich literature of Islamic history.

Therefore deconstruction is accompanied by a reconstruction, using the rich original source materials, as well as modern theories and hermeneutics.

Islamic studies are thus conducted, on the one hand, within an analytical framework that examines the genesis and differentiation of Islamic doctrines. On the other hand, modern Islamic theology and the constructive intellectual accompaniment of its scope for dealing with society and the environment play a major role in our approach to Islamic Studies.

# Abrahamic Interdependence – Relationship of the Islamic to the Jewish in Marital Law // Religious and theological knowledge as a transcultural product of interreligious relations

AHMED ABD-ELSALAM  
RESEARCHER

Through Abrahamic Interdependence project, my aim is to demonstrate that, not very long ago, Jews and Judaism still formed a significant part of the society, culture, and contemporary history of most Arab countries. The project emphasizes the similarities between Judaism and Islam with regard to societal and religious concepts such as marriage and divorce. Through this research, I hope to toss a stone into the still water and thus stimulate interreligious and intercultural Islamic-Jewish dialogue. Therefore, it is essential to establish a network with relevant research institutions in the Arab World. The Abrahamic Interdependence project also explores the influence of social issues in pluralistic communities on the construction and reconstruction of religious norms and knowledge. It examines, as a case study, the relationship between Islamic and Jewish marriage laws in various social and historical contexts. The examination of Islamic law reveals that many Islamic legal norms are consistent with Jewish norms (Bialoblocki 1928). Bialoblocki mentions the influence of Jewish tradition on Islamic norms, continuing in the footsteps of Abraham Geiger (1810–1874). According to him, the older religion, Judaism, influences the younger religion, Islam. However, commonalities in social institutions like marriage in both religions can have transcultural origins. Abrahamic Interdependence consists of two sub-projects, the results of which will be published in two planned publications, respectively.

In 2022, the aim of the project was to examine the statements made by Bialoblocki in his study and to plan the outline of my monograph. The book is scheduled for release in the summer of 2023. The results of my research in 2022 were presented in an international conference organised by the Faculty of Islamic Fundamental Theology at the Abdelmalek Essaadi University in Tetouan, Morocco on 3 November 2022.



AHMED ABD-ELSALAM joined the OIB in October 2021 as a research associate. He received his PhD in Islamic Studies from the Martin-Luther University Halle-Wittenberg with the dissertation "Das Verhältnis des beduinischen zum islamischen Recht in sozialem und historischem Kontext". His research focused on social and legal transformations in Muslim societies in past and modernity. Abd-Elsalam works at the OIB on social, theological issues of Abrahamic interdependence concerning marriage and divorce as human production of theological and religious knowledge. His project "Abrahamic Interdependence: The Relations of Jewish to Islamic concerning Marriage and Divorce" deals with legal issues of marriage and divorce in Theory and Praxis in the Example of the Jewish communities in Egypt and Iraq in the first half of the last century and its relation to other trans-regional and trans-religious communities. Abd-Elsalam worked as a docent and researcher of Islamic Theology at the Centre for Islamic Theology at the University of Muenster (2012–2021) and as a visiting professor for Religious Comparative Studies at the Humboldt University Berlin (2019–2020). He also taught at Al-Azhar University (2011–2012) and the University of Innsbruck (2018–2021).

#### PUBLICATIONS Journal articles

"إِكْوِ-إِسْلَام: مَسَارُ جَدِيدٍ لِلْفَكْرِ الْإِسْلَامِيِّ فِي الْغَربِ" / "Eco-Islam: A new path of Islamic thought in the West". In MJAF, 7, 6, Cairo 2022.



Marriage certificate  
from Cairo around 1940.

# Should Female Humans Be Excluded from Being an *insān kāmil*?

YASMIN AMIN

RESEARCHER (CAIRO OFFICE)

God's "representative" on earth as described in Verse [2:30] generated many discourses, from designating the Prophet the most perfect human, all the way to Sufis who aspired to achieve the perfection of *al-insān al-kāmil*, and the philosophical discourses of '*ilm al-kalām*. However, before political correctness took root even in academia, the term *al-insān al-kāmil* was usually translated to English as "the perfect man", replacing the umbrella term *human* and making 'man' a Synecdoche, thereby side-lining women and excluding half the human race from achieving or aspiring to perfection. Though this is not the case in Arabic, where all three terms – *insān*, *rajul* or *dhakar* and *imra'a* or *unthā* – are different, women were still barred from the discussions around *al-insān al-kāmil*, despite the declaration of the Qur'an in verse [4:1] that both are essentially two halves of one, having been created from a single being or soul. Consequently, the preservation and protection of divine creation on earth, rational reflection and judgment, legislative and scholarly privileges and interactions became exclusive to male humans rather than all humans. This was also reflected in the *Hadīth* corpus and supported by the exegetical tradition in circular arguments, describing female humans as deficient in mind and intellect, the cause of *fitna* needing restraints and keepers, readily provided by the rules of *fiqh* declaring them often as minors requiring guardianship. However, looking at the women described in the Qur'an, a different picture emerges. Women's voices and actions change the course of history many times, some receive divine inspiration, others preserve and protect divine creation and prophets, most serve God in many ways, all are capable of rational reflection and sound judgment, one argues with the Prophet and is vindicated by God and some are the cause of legislations, many of which became the basis for privileges for other women. This project analyses the Qur'anic messages gleaned from the stories and actions of several extraordinary women, and argues that the Qur'an designates them as entitled to claiming perfection and therefore to being among others aspiring to being *al-insān al-kāmil*.



**YASMIN AMIN** is the Representative of the Orient-Institut Beirut (Max-Weber-Stiftung) in Cairo since May 2022. Her duties are split into administrative, logistical and organisational work of the office, and conducting research, as well as assisting researchers and OIB-Staff during their stay in Egypt. She is an Egyptian-German who holds a BA in Business Administration, a PGD and an MA in Islamic Studies, all three from the American University in Cairo. She received her PhD in Islamic Studies from Exeter University's Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies researching 'Humour and Laughter in the Ḥadīth' in 2021. Her research covers various aspects of gender issues, early Muslim society and culture, as well as the original texts of Islamic history, law and Hadith. She is particularly interested in all things related to humour.

#### **PUBLICATIONS Book**

Bernard Schweizer, Lina Molokotos-Liederman with Yasmin Amin (EDS.). **Comedy and Humour in the Muslim World: Contemporary Islamic Contexts.** Bristol: Bristol University Press. Articles, 2022.

#### **Your Wife Enjoys Rights Over You'or Does She?**

**Marriage in the Hadith.** In Ziba Mir-Hosseini, Mulki Al-Sharmani, Jana Rumminger and Sarah Marsso (EDS.). **Justice and Beauty in Muslim Marriages: Between Ethics and Law.** London: Oneworld Publications, 2022.

**Is the application of modern humour theories on historical cases a joke?** In Roald Dijkstra and Paul van der Velde (EDS.).

**Humour in the Beginning.** Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, pp.23–30, 2022.

#### **A Laughing God, between Sunni Approval and Shi'ite**

**Rejection.** In Roald Dijkstra and Paul van der Velde (EDS.).

**Humour in the Beginning.** Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, pp.155–182, 2022.

#### **Uses (or Abuses?) of the Qur'an in Arabic Jocular Literature.**

In Bernard Schweizer, Lina Molokotos-Liederman with Yasmin Amin (EDS.). **Comedy and Humour in the Muslim World: Contemporary Islamic Contexts.** Bristol: Bristol University Press, pp.91–117, 2022.

# The Role of Storytelling in Қınālīzāde's Didactic of Virtues

FATIH ERMİŞ  
RESEARCHER

Қınālīzāde 'Alī Çelebī (1510–1572) examines in his *Aħlāk -i 'Alā'ī* seven qualities of an ideal sultan. The second of these qualities is incisiveness of opinion and thinking.

Қınālīzāde argues that this quality can be acquired in two ways:

The first is being endowed with a high level of intelligence and a pure intellect according to the Qur'anic verse "Such is God's favour. He grants it to whoever He will." [5:54].

The second occurs through trial and experience. Certainly, this way requires more time and presupposes that the person will become old enough to acquire such vast experience. Қınālīzāde assumes that there is a shortcut to achieve this capability.

One can read stories from history books and benefit from the experiences of people who recorded the difficulties they endured. Қınālīzāde argues that, in this way, one can acquire these experiences without paying the price for them. One book he strongly recommends is Ferdawsī's (d. 1020 [?]) *Shāhnāmeh*, the literature of which, according to Қınālīzāde, not only increases the courage of the reader but contains innumerable other useful experiences. By listening to the stories of Sufi masters like Jalāl ad-Dīn Rūmī (1207–1273), Farīd ad-Dīn 'Attār (1145–1221), and Sanāī (d. 1131 [?]), it is hoped that the listener can develop a sense of right action.

Although it is advisable to acquire theoretical wisdom, such wisdom on its own does not guarantee a virtuous life. Ghazālī (1058–1111) emphasises this idea in the introduction of his tract *Ay Farzand*, which he wrote to one of his students who had requested some advice: "O son, (know that) giving advice is easy. The difficulty lies in accepting (applying) the advice". The main idea of the whole tract is the following: True knowledge can only be attained by practicing knowledge that is learned. Ibn Miskawayh (940–1030) too regards wisdom (*ḥikma*) as something that cannot be achieved purely through intellectual pursuit. Rather, one reaches wisdom by linking intellectual pursuit with action. For scholars of ethics, it was inconceivable that someone with bad character traits could be a wise person, or vice versa.

Following this conception of virtues and wisdom, Қınālīzāde highlights the role of listening to stories in developing an inner sense for finding the dynamic and ever-changing middle path. Since the middle path is a very narrow path, it is almost impossible to follow it without deviation. The advice of Қınālīzāde is to at least keep deviations from the middle path within narrow limits and to avoid veering too far off it.

The benefit of reading such stories or attending meetings where such stories are recited lies in the development of an intuition, which enables a person to identify the right (or virtuous) path between two extremes with more precision. When a person acquires such knowledge (*ḥikma*), they can tread even closer to the middle path, and when they tread closer, their knowledge becomes even more accurate and their intuition more precise. The interplay between knowledge of virtues and practicing this knowledge strengthens both knowledge and practice with time. This is how knowledge and practice interact in the field of ethics.



**FATİH ERMİŞ** joined the OIB in 2018. He received a doctorate from the University of Erfurt with a thesis entitled "Ottoman Economic Thinking before the 19th Century". He holds an MA in economic history from Marmara University and a BA in economics from Boğaziçi University, both in Istanbul. Before joining the OIB, he worked as a research assistant for the Chair of History of West Asia at the University of Erfurt and, most recently, as a post-doctoral associate at the Centre for Islamic Theology, University of Tübingen. His main research interest is pre-modern Islamic intellectual history, with a particular focus on intellectual endeavors in Ottoman lands. His work is also concerned with economic, social, religious and literary writing as well as with Sufi thought. His research at the OIB focuses on a famous book of ethics, *Aḥlāk-i 'alā'ī*, written in Damascus by the Ottoman scholar Қınālīzāde 'Alī Çelebī (1510–1572).

**PUBLICATIONS** Chapters in edited volumes

**"Storytelling for Transmission of Ethics: Theoretical versus Practical Wisdom".** In *The Ethics of Quranic Narratives*, Samer Rashwani (ED.). In "Studies in Islamic Ethics" series. Leiden: Brill. [forthcoming 2023]

**LECTURES & MODERATIONS**

**"Typology of Turk in Islamicate Literature and Ethical Works"**, at the 34. Deutscher Orientalistentag, co-organised by Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft (DGM), Freie Universität Berlin // 12–17 SEPTEMBER.

**Moderation of the Panel "Islamic Philosophy"**, at the conference "Labors of Love, Trials of Friendship Challenges of the Modern Social Relation", Orient Institut Beirut // 29–30 SEPTEMBER.

**"Balance as Justice: Deconstruction of Premodern Ethics on the Basis of Қınālīzāde 'Alī Çelebī's Aḥlāk-i 'alā'ī"**, The Mohammad Atallah Chair for Ethics & The Center for Arab & Middle Eastern Studies of the American University of Beirut // 29 NOVEMBER.



Sheikh San'ān and the Christian girl.  
A famous story from Farīd ad-Dīn 'Attār's *Mantiq at-Tayr*.  
The David Collection, Copenhagen, inv. No. 34/2006, fol. 37v, photographed by Pemille Klemp.



# Archiving Absence and Loss //

## 'Āmilī manuscripts in libraries worldwide

FATIMA AL-BAZZAL  
FELLOW

My research tackles an underrepresented and highly dispersed manuscript archive. According to a popular narrative among the people of Jabal Amil Region, today's Southern Lebanon, Ahmad Pasha al-Jazzar, the Ottoman governor of Acre, confiscated all the 'Āmilī manuscripts and ordered them to be burned in the incinerators of Acre. These incinerators remained alight for days.

Though this incident is not proven, the widespread narrative about it hints at the hitherto neglected intellectual history of South Lebanon, a region once known for its schools and madrasas founded by prominent 'Āmilī scholars between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. It thus necessitates further research.

This cultural memory is monumentally celebrated and documented in highly rated bio-bibliographical encyclopaedias, of which we mention *Amal al-āmil* by al-Hurr al-'Āmilī, produced in the seventeenth century, and *A'yān al-Shī'ah* by Muhsin al-Amīn, issued in late nineteenth century. These two outstanding encyclopaedias document the lives and works of the Shiite scholars of Jabal Amil and confirm the region's intellectual legacy. By contrast, there seems to be a lack of information when searching for an 'Āmilī manuscript within the finding aids available in Lebanon. However, the same search conducted within Western (American and European) finding aids yields more relevant results.

As such, this study is considered foundational in that it attempts, for the first time, to re-construct an absent and dispersed archive of manuscripts and to re-structure the documentary heritage of an intellectually productive region. It aims to document this archive's construction process in light of the political, social, and cultural factors surrounding its emergence and to follow the transmission paths from its first leg of production towards its final leg of preservation.

This intellectual memory will be revisited through the lens of the original manifestations of this intellect, by which I intend to collect the 'Āmilī manuscripts and consider their para-texts as indicators of their creation, transmissions, and usages. By using the manuscript notes as documentary sources, I aim to define the various agents involved in the making of this archive and cluster relationships between the texts, agents, and places relevant to the 'Āmilī intellectual memory.

Throughout the current year, the research will focus constructing the 'Āmilī bio-bibliographical database which would serve as an essential tool for us to trace the material culture of the region and analyse the different connections that lead to forming clustered transmissions. We will use all available online and printed manuscript catalogues, which serve as our primary resources for data collection, followed by visits to 'Āmilī families that have been keeping custody over their heritage, including the Khatun Family in Joayya and the Suleiman Family in al-Bayyad.



**FATIMA AL-BAZZAL** is a trained librarian and researcher who has been working in this field over the last decade. After finishing her undergraduate studies, she joined the Lebanese National Library Rehabilitation Project as a cataloguing. She worked for different Lebanese cultural (Shamaa Arab Educational Database, The Fire horse Archive, Knowledge Workshop – The Feminist Library, and March Lebanon – Virtual Museum of Censorship Project).

Building over my librarianship background and driven by the notions of accessibility and open access, my PhD research project tackles an underrepresented intellectual archive of Amil Mountains Region in Southern Lebanon.



Muhadarāt al-Kaf'amī, aw, Hadīqat al-Nufūs wa Hijlat al-'Arūs. Süleymaniye Library, Reisulkuttab Collection, no. 897. Digitised image of the original, Mohammad Taqi Faqih Personal Collection.

# God Helps Those Who Help Themselves //

## Arab Muslims in desperate times

JOUD ALKORANI

FELLOW JANUARY – JUNE

Since the 1990s, people have been compelled to take charge of their own destinies, a global imperative which materializes locally in distinct ways. Across the Arab World, an upsurge in neoliberal adjustment reforms (from the 1980s onward) coincided with a growing public interest in Islam. Throughout this "Islamic Revival", as Muslims devoted greater attention to honing their ritual practice and ethical behaviour, many asserted the public and sometimes political character of Islam. The "politics of piety" was evidenced during the Arab Spring, when Islam was invoked as a powerful rallying cry by political parties and individuals and a justification for violence in places like Syria and Iraq. But who, and where, is God in the Arab World today? How do people's relations to God and to each other, through God, materialize? How does God bridge between people, and how does God divide? How are these relations colored and complicated by divergent theological understandings of proper ethical practice, divine decree, and the afterlife? These questions lie at the heart of my inquiry.

I broached these questions in my first project, "Dubai Detours: Being Muslim after the Islamic Revival and Arab Spring", an ethnography of divine-human relations set in Dubai. Between 2016 and 2021, I conducted over two years of fieldwork and one hundred interviews with middle-class migrant Muslim women based in the UAE. I explored how these women grappled with Islamic theologies and ethical practices in everyday lives marked by the contingencies of living and labouring in Dubai as noncitizens.

During my time at the OIB, I extended the insights of this prior research beyond its ethnographic context to tell a larger story about God-human relations in an increasingly neoliberal, post-Islamic Revival, post-Arab-Spring world.



**JOUD ALKORANI** is an anthropologist with a background in Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies. She completed her PhD at the University of Toronto, and works as an Assistant Professor of Islam Studies at Radboud University in the Netherlands. Broadly speaking, Jouid's research explores how changing political, economic, and sociohistorical conditions transform Muslims' beliefs and practices. In particular, she is interested in the forms Muslim piety takes after the Islamic Revival and the Arab Spring.

#### PRESENTATIONS & MODERATIONS, PRESS

**"Locating the State"**, guest lecture at Anthropology Department, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, American University of Beirut // 17 MARCH.

**"Millennial Muslims in the UAE: Thinking Critically about Islam after the Revival"**, lecture at Center for Arab and Middle Eastern Studies, American University of Beirut // 16 MARCH.

**"Between Self-Help and Salvation: The Politics of Theology in Dubai"**, presentation at the "Practices of Preaching in the Islamic Context – Text, Performativity, and Materiality" workshop, Berlin Institute for Islamic Theology, Humboldt University, online // 17–19 MARCH.

**"Millennial, Migrant, Muslim: Reflections on Islam after the Revival"**, lecture at ASIL – Anthropology Society in Lebanon, Beirut // 24 MAY.

**"Gendered Migration in the Gulf"**, guest lecture at Gender in the Arab Gulf, Interdisciplinary Gender Studies Program, School of Arts and Sciences, Lebanese American University, Beirut // 4 APRIL.

**"The Qibla of Tolerance": Utopias of coexistence in the UAE**, presentation at the "Utopias in the Middle East" workshop held at the Centre for Islamic and West Asian Studies, Royal Holloway University of London, online / London // 23–24 FEBRUARY / 2–3 JUNE.



God's presence in  
the streets of Hamra,  
Beirut.

©JOUD ALKORANI

# **Qur'ān as Ta'līf //**

## An unorthodox meaning for a key term

MARIAM SAEED EL ALI  
FELLOW

This project was initiated under the broader notion of memory in classical Islamic tradition. I first aimed to examine some of the explicit expressions of memory in different early texts and to explore how those expressions shaped Islamic scriptural, historical, literal, and architectural legacies.

The Qur'ān and the various sources that bear direct relation to its lexica were the primary starting point of the study. Before delving into the Qur'ānic text, and in order to highlight any references to memory in the Islamic Scripture, I started pursuing the question of how the Qur'ān itself is remembered in history. To this end, I closely examined the reports on the collection of the Qur'ān. I primarily focused on *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif* by Ibn Abī Dāwūd al-Sijistānī (d. 316/929), which is one of the standard tomes of classical Islamic scholarship on the history of the text. The first generation of Qur'ān readers (*qurrā'*), recurrently mentioned in *jam'* al-Qur'ān accounts at the opening of *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, stood out for being those who not only excelled in the recitation of the text, but also in memorizing it. This brought under scrutiny how the knowledge of the Qur'ān was disseminated, established, and eventually remembered, individually and collectively, in the nascent Islamic milieu. However, I found that delineating the identity of these celebrated *qurrā'* as a group turned out to be more challenging than it first appeared. In fact, stepping back to investigate the orthodox link between Qur'ān and recitation revealed that the term Qur'ān itself lacks a clear-cut definition. Although "al-Qur'ān" is undeniably the most famous proper name of the "Book of God", the meaning of this name does not seem to be captured in its entirety.

In form, Qur'ān is identical to a verbal noun (*maṣdar*) of *qara'a* according to the not infrequent pattern of *fu'lān*. However, this probable derivation alone neither clarifies the original meaning of the word nor sheds light on its origin. Conventionally, the term is recognised as being a loanword from the Syriac noun *qeryānā*, which has the double meaning of "recitation" and "lectionary", or as being an exclusive Arabic derivation from *qara'a* "to read" or "recitation".

My project aspires to shed light on an alternative, unorthodox understanding of the term, according to which *qur'ān* denotes "compiling" (*jam'*, *ta'līf*). Classical Islamic sources ascribe this distinctly minority view to *Qatāda b. Di'āma* (d. 117/735), a famous *tābi'ī*, and *Abū 'Ubayda Ma'mar b. al-Muthanna* (d. 209/824), the renowned philologist. To highlight this unusual sense of the term, I will principally examine *Majāz al-Qur'ān* by *Abū 'Ubayda*, edited by Fuat Sezgin (two volumes, Cairo edition, 1954–1988), which was criticised as early as the second/eighth and third/ninth centuries. Philologists at the time expressed strong reservations against *Qur'ānic* interpretation by fellow philologists. As put by Ramzi Baalbaki, they were seemingly convinced that *Qur'ānic* interpretation is the realm of the *fuqahā'*.

Employing micro philological assessments, coupled with a sophisticated semantic comparative examination of the *Qur'ānic* occurrences of the word "*Qur'ān*" along with several related expressions, this project will build on *Abū 'Ubayda*'s independent views to place the *Qur'ān* and the Prophet of Islam under a new light. The envisaged analysis seeks to review classical and modern perceptions on many entangled notions that revolve around the denotation of this key term: the divine nature of the *Qur'ān*, the illiteracy of the Prophet, the phenomenon of *wahy*, and the aural/written transmission in early Islam, to name but few. This project hopes to demonstrate that the views of *Abū 'Ubayda*, although controversial to many, past and present, deserve an academic hearing.



**MARIAM SAEED EL ALI** is a postdoctoral fellow at OIB since September 2022. She is also the recipient of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship, Center for the Arts and Humanities at the American University of Beirut (2020–2021). She holds a doctorate in Arabic language and literature from the same university (2017), awarded the Abdul Hadi Al-Debs Award for academic excellence. Mariam has also taught Arabic and History at AUB and USJ, and worked on arabic translations.

#### **PUBLICATIONS**

(TRANS.) *Al-Siḥr al-ḥalāl: Al-Ṣāḥib b. 'Abbād (d. 385/995) wa-rasā'iluhu*. Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq, 2022.



Qur'ān (Landberg  
 822, 194v, line 1  
 featuring Q. 75:17.).  
 ©STAATSBIBLIOTHEK  
 ZU BERLIN, BERLIN

# Ibn Abī 'Awn's *Kitāb al-Tashbīhāt* [The Book of Similes] and its Place in Abbasid Culture

CHIARA FONTANA

FELLOW

Ibn Abī 'Awn's (fl. 9th century) understudied literary explorations of similes, comparisons, and analogies (*tashbīhāt*) gathered in his *Kitāb al-Tashbīhāt* confirm both statements. Still, this work should also invoke a broader reflection on how the processes of Islamic eloquence (*al-balāghah*) evolved during this formative period of the Arabic-Islamic classical culture and how creative thought might respond to increasing urbanisation. The present project argues that the relationship between material culture, crafts, and literary investigations within the pre-modern Arabic urbanised context can be observed according to two areas of research. First, exploring how the significant development of material culture and crafts in Medieval Baghdad arguably influenced, both terminologically and thematically, Abbasid scholars' literary imaginary(ies). Second, how historical moments of urban development linked to cultural enlightenment could have inspired some authors to also develop a craftsmanship-inspired approach to literary writing, a point that is demonstrated in the rhetorical study of Ibn Abi Awn's treatises on *tashbīhāt*.

Thus, acting on the literary space and drawing inspiration from De Certeau and Lynch's study on rhetoric and the urban environment, the study chases this signed, readable, symbolised echo of a silent plethora of locksmiths, goldsmiths, cabinetmakers, calligraphers, and their creativity in some unforeseen places, like the official literary and rhetorical account of Ibn Abī 'Awn. In my view, this process acquires a deeper meaning considering how it attests to the restless liveliness of imageability – i.e. the degree to which a word evokes mental imagery – as the favoured tool in literary creativity, without neglecting its impact on the development of theoretical frameworks. Crucially, this process gradually reached an increasing degree of sophistication from al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 868) and Ibn Abī 'Awn up to 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī (d. 1081) and al-Sakkākī (d. 1229) in the following centuries, identifying theorists and literary canon-makers as trustworthy witnesses of previous and ongoing socio-cultural revolutions.

The research conducted at the Orient-Institut Beirut developed into an entire chapter of a forthcoming monograph on the topic. The chapter contains four sections which lay out the methodology used, the literature review with respect to the complex definition of *sinā'ah* (craft), a socio-historical reading of 9th century Baghdad, and the rhetoricians' pragmatic-oriented approach to the art of doing literature. A case study based on the analysis of some excerpts from *Kitāb al-Tashbīhāt* follows.



**CHIARA FONTANA** is scholar in Arabic Philology and Literature. She was awarded a PhD in Arabic Literature and Linguistics at the Sapienza University of Rome in 2018. Currently, she is assistant professor of Arabic Philology and Literature at the Alma Mater Studiorum University of Bologna, Italy. The fil rouge tying Chiara's research experiences is the focus on the evolution of Arabic literary theory and criticism across time, with a specific emphasis on al-balāghah (Islamic eloquence) as a cognitive framework to understand reality creatively. Since 2014 she has held a number of teaching positions and continued her scholarly work at institutions in Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, Jordan, Qatar, and Italy. Since 2018 Chiara is member of the research boards for some projects at the Universities of Birmingham.

#### **PUBLICATIONS**

**Analytic Exploration of the Rhetoric and Prosody of Contemporary Arabic poetry: Najib Surur's Love Words.**

In Rebecca Ruth Gould and Hany Rashwan (EDS.) *Post-Eurocentric Poetics: New Approaches from Arabic, Persian and Turkic Literary Theory*, Oxford: Proceedings of the British Academy, Oxford University Press, 2022.

#### **CONFERENCES & WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS**

**"al-Balāgha Encounters Pragmatic Linguistics: Debates and perspectives"**, lecture at Alma Mater Studiorum University of Bologna // 24 MARCH.

**"al-Bayān al-'arabī li-Ṭāhā Ḥusayn wa-ta'thīri-hi fī taṭawwur al-dirāsāt al-balāghīyyah wa-intishāri-hā (1930–1950)" [Ṭāhā Ḥusayn's al-Bayān al-'arabī and Its influence on Rhetorical Studies and Their Spread (1930–1950)]**, lecture at Abu Dhabi Book Fair 2022, Abu Dhabi // 26 MAY.

**"A Balāghah of Motives: al-Sakkākī's Metadiscourse, Veridiction and Manipulative Writing in *Miftāh al-'Ulūm*"**, presentation at the international workshop "A Sorcerer's Handbook", University of Exeter, Exeter // 18–20 JULY.

**"The Name of the Key: Al-Sakkākī's Literary Craftsmanship and Pragmatic Poetics in *Miftāh al-'Ulūm*"**, presentation at the international conference, *Thresholds of Arabic Literary Criticism*, Columbia University, New York // 14–16 DECEMBER.



Widad Orfali  
(b. 1929),  
*Dream City*, 1994.  
Acrylic on canvas.

©ORFALI GALLERY  
IN BAGHDAD

# The Social and Political History of Saida, 1958–1975

JAKUB JAJCAY  
FELLOW

In January and February 2022, during my doctoral fellowship at the OIB, I conducted fieldwork for my PhD thesis on radicalisation in the Lebanese city of Saida in the decades leading up to the Lebanese Civil War of 1975–1990. In this stage of my research, I am focusing on conducting semi-structured interviews with people who lived in Saida in the 1958–1975 period and on studying available archival materials, especially those related to the Makassed Islamic High School. The fellowship has enabled me to successfully conduct over fourteen interviews and to prepare the draft of one chapter of my dissertation and the draft of an article, both focusing on the role of educational institutions in the radicalisation process of the youth in Saida in the run-up to the Civil War.

Despite the fact that written sources, as well as many people who were alive at the time, are hesitant to talk about the specificities of politics in pre-war Lebanon, I have been able to identify several key Saidawi individuals and organisations that took part in the process of indoctrinating the youth in the period under study. There seems to be a group of half a dozen individuals who played an outsize role in the political development of the youth in Saida. It also seems that teachers sent to Saida by the Egyptian government, both before and after the Egyptian Revolution, played an important role in spreading pan-Arabism in Saida. This indoctrination later played an important role in the political violence of the Lebanese Civil War in Saida, but also in forming the political opinions of a generation of Saidawis, including future prime ministers.

Although history never repeats itself exactly, my research highlights the contemporary dangers of allowing radical parties to hijack institutions like schools to indoctrinate young people without any oversight. When weapons and military training are added to the mix, an explosive situation, which can quickly escalate out of control, is created. Therefore, understanding the processes that led to radicalisation in the past can help prevent it in the future.



**JAKUB JAJCAY** is a PhD student at the Department of History and Archaeology of the American University of Beirut. His research focuses on the modern history of Lebanon, specifically on the history of the Lebanese city of Saida in the decades leading up to the Lebanese Civil War. In his research, Jakub investigates the causes of the Civil War on the local level with a focus on the processes of politicisation and radicalisation of individuals. Jakub also works as a researcher with Fighters for Peace, a non-governmental organisation that aims to educate young Lebanese about the history of the Civil War and counteract discourses of violence.



Old Town of Saida.

©OPEN SOURCE

# How Dukhan Made Doha // Urban history, labour, and the political economy of post-Protectorate Qatar

JAVIER GUIRADO ALONSO  
FELLOW

"How Dukhan Made Doha" is a social history of the events that led to the independence of Qatar and its aftermath, as well as a spatial history of the country during the Long Sixties. It argues that the present state of affairs in Qatar is mainly the product of the social context of the 1950s and 1960s, during the twilight of the British Protectorate, and was further cemented in the 1970s.

The relationship between Dukhan, a coastal town where oil was first discovered in Qatar, and Doha, the capital, serves as a metaphor for the many modalities in which the country, its social fabric, and its political economy changed during these decades. Some of the urban features examined include the oil camps of the 1950s, the political feuds and protests that took place in the 1960s, and the master plan for Doha in 1970. While most studies of the Gulf focus on the role of the ruler and the government in directing these transformations, this project examines the activism and political-social engagement of Qataris themselves. The rapid transformations in the built environment and the documents produced by Qatari society, media, and government serve as both a source and an object of study.

During 2022 (and 2023), the main focus has been the collection of data, where Beirut plays a central role. Important sources are held at AUB (i.e. the Qatar Petroleum collection), OIB (works of Riad Rayyes, a Syrian-Lebanese journalist who widely reported on the political changes in the Gulf in the late 1960s), and other bookshops and private collections (memoirs of Qataris or people who worked in Qatar that were published in Beirut, like Khalifa Al Kuwari or Lotfi Sumi).



**JAVIER GUIRADO ALONSO** is a PhD candidate at Georgia State University and holds an MA in Contemporary Arab and Islamic Studies by the Autonomous University of Madrid. He is also a fellow at Project SEPAD (Lancaster University) and has previously been a guest researcher at the Nederlands-Vlaams Instituut in Cairo. His research focuses on the historically changing relations between society, built environment and narratives of modernity in the Gulf. His dissertation deals specifically with the social, political, and urban dynamics taking place in Qatar during the Global Sixties. Javier has also written about Oman and the transformation of Greater Muscat during the reign of Sultan Qaboos.

#### **PUBLICATIONS**

**(ED.) Political Economy of Infrastructure in the Middle East and North Africa.** SEPAD Reports, Richardson Institute. Lancaster: Lancaster University, 2022.

**The Omanization of Muscat or the Muscatization of Oman.**

**How Muscat after 1970 came to embody the state of Sultan Qaboos.** In Allen Fromherz and Abdulrahman Al Salimi (EDS.).

Sultan Qaboos and Modern Oman 1970–2020. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, pp.352–368, 2022.

#### **PRESENTATIONS & MODERATIONS, PRESS**

**"An Arab Muscat? Sultan Qaboos, narratives of identity, and the politics of desectarianization",** at the SEPAD Annual Conference, What does it mean to belong, organised by Simon Mabon and the SEPAD team, Lancaster University, Lancaster // 15–16 DECEMBER.



An image of Kahraba street, Doha, c.1950s, the first street in Qatar with public electricity.

# (Re-)Aristotelising Knowledge // Epistemology in Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's (d. 672/1274) practical philosophy

HUSSEIN IBRAHIM  
FELLOW

While research on the history of philosophy and science in the postclassical Islamic East is still in its early stages of development, it is quite clear that Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274) was one of the most prominent philosophers and scientists in the Islamic civilisation and wrote some of the most influential works of practical philosophy, philosophical theology, and mathematical sciences in the postclassical Eastern tradition. Over the centuries, al-Ṭūsī's works on practical philosophy stimulated an outpouring of summaries, commentaries, popular imitations and adaptations, none of which can compare to the works themselves. The reasons for al-Ṭūsī's success have not yet been properly understood: Why can al-Ṭūsī's contribution to practical philosophy, especially in his *Akhlaq-i Naṣīrī* (Nasirean Ethics), be regarded as an innovative presentation of this discipline in the Islamic world, and what makes his *Akhlaq-i Naṣīrī* of foundational character to postclassical philosophy? My research project aims to reconstruct the philosophical agenda scattered among al-Ṭūsī's works. It rebuilds the central components of the epistemology and practical philosophy of al-Ṭūsī, identifying parallels between the three main areas of practical philosophy – namely, ethics, household management, and politics. In situating al-Ṭūsī's philosophy methodologically and epistemologically, I aim to understand the development of his practical philosophy from a non-linear model of development, where several epistemic sources collaborate to form a hybrid yet coherent system of practical philosophy.

Over the span of my fellowship at OIB, I investigated al-Ṭūsī's epistemology, especially that which is related to his practical philosophy. I studied the organisation of al-Ṭūsī's philosophical programme and argued that it is based on an approach that aims at preserving and developing the standard ordering of the Aristotelian classification of sciences. I further examined the extent to which al-Ṭūsī was able to reformulate Avicennism and subordinate it to a full Aristotelian scientific scheme. This helped reveal how al-Ṭūsī's unique philosophical system is at once a methodological reflection of a modified Aristotelian philosophical project and a conception of the world in which the rational reigns supreme. This further clarified the epistemic relativism of al-Ṭūsī, noting how he was able to use different epistemologies (philosophical and religious) interchangeably within the framework of practical philosophy.



**HUSSEIN IBRAHIM** is a PhD candidate and doctoral researcher in Philosophy at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München. His dissertation project concerns practical philosophy and epistemology in the Islamic East. Hussein is a DAAD doctoral scholar, holding an MA in Islamic Studies from McGill, and an MA in Philosophy from the American University of Beirut (AUB). He previously worked as a translator/research assistant for the project entitled "Women's War Stories: Building an archive of women and the Lebanese Civil War" at McGill University, among other research projects. For the past five years, Hussein has served as an academic advisor for some schools and institutions. His professional experience spans philosophy of education and educational fields in the Islamic East and North America.

#### PRESENTATIONS

**"Religious Discourse as a Methodological Tool in Islamic Practical Philosophy: The Case of Religious Typologies in Philosophical Ethics"**, Typologies in the Islamic Ethical Discourse, Orient-Institut Beirut & American University of Beirut, Beirut // MARCH.



From Naṣîr al-Dîn al-Tûsî's masterpiece *Akhlâq-i nâṣîrî* (The Nasirean Ethics). School courtyard with boys reading and writing. Mughal period, circa 1595 CE.

©MANUSCRIPT ATELIER,  
AKHLÂQ-I NAṢIRÎ, LAHORE,  
PICTURE: TFOlio

# Lasting Knowledge Relations and Continuing Influences? // Arab Students of Sociology in the GDR

STELLA KNEIFEL  
FELLOW

During the Cold War, numerous agreements were concluded for the education of students from the "Third World" in the Eastern Bloc. The purpose behind this educational support was to establish relations with these countries and to train an intelligentsia sympathetic to the Eastern Bloc. While there is some research on Latin American and African students in the Eastern Bloc, Arab students have only been marginally studied in this context. My research project, therefore, examines Arab sociology students in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). I explore three main research questions: (1) Who were the Middle Eastern students, and why did they come to the GDR? (2) What did they learn and study in sociology? and (3) How did they operationalize the knowledge and relationships they were able to build during and after their studies?

In 2022, my research focus was primarily on the question of what Arab students did with the knowledge they gained through their studies in sociology. The literature review of textbooks showed what knowledge the Middle Eastern students acquired during their stay in the host country. Sociology in the GDR was characterised by restrictions on Special Sociologies and Empirical Social Research, as well as the abandonment of comprehensive theoretical designs. Despite these restrictions, the Middle Eastern students applied their acquired knowledge in diverse and creative ways, as their dissertations show.

The dissertations of Arab students are an effective tool for exploring the practicality of their knowledge. They can be used to investigate whether students applied the knowledge they learned to their home context, whether they denied such applicability, or whether they produced hybrid forms of knowledge by studying in a socialist country.



**STELLA KNEIFEL** holds degrees in Sociology and Education from the University of Jena (BA) and in Middle Eastern Sociology and History from the University of Erfurt (MA). She joined the University of Erfurt as a PhD student in history in 2018. Stella Kneifel is currently writing her dissertation on "Lasting knowledge relations and continuing influences? Arab Students of Sociology in the GDR". In her thesis she examines the complex relationships between the GDR and the countries of the Middle East, which could be established by allocation of scholarships to students of social science and teacher exchanges. She is especially interested in the emerging discipline of sociology and the students and teachers active in it. Her main object of investigation are relationships that could arise through the exchange of knowledge, which under certain circumstances still have an effect today. From March 2019 to February 2022 she was part of the research project "Relations in the Ideoscape: Middle Eastern Students in the Eastern Bloc: 1950's to 1991" at the Orient-Institute Beirut. After that she was fellow of the German Historical Institute Moscow (June–August 2022). Since September 2022, she has been a fellow of the Orient-Institut Beirut.

#### **PUBLICATIONS**

With Tim Bausch. **Reconciliation through the Visual and Pop-Culture. A Case Study of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon.**

In Tacchini, Davide et. al.: Reconciliation and Refugees. The Academic Alliance for Reconciliation Studies in the Middle East and North Afrika I: Böhlau Verlag, pp.127–144, 2022.

#### **PRESENTATIONS**

**"Differing Perspectives within the Ideoscape: Middle Eastern Students in the GDR between Endorsement and Critique of Marxism-Leninism"**, Relations in the Workshop, Central European University // 24–26 FEBRUARY.

**"Between Consent and Critique: Middle Eastern Students in the GDR and their Views on Marxism-Leninism"**, Relations in the Ideoscape Workshop (2), EUME // 5–9 JULY.

# Catholicism in Ottoman Mardin, c. 1662–1783

ROSIE MAXTON  
FELLOW

Against the backdrop of the global expansion of the Catholic Church in the early modern period, my doctoral project investigates the spread of Catholicism among Eastern Christian communities living in the Ottoman Empire. To analyse this phenomenon, it takes the city of Mardin (present-day southeast Turkey) from the mid-seventeenth to the late eighteenth century as a case study. Mardin was not only a strategically important city within the eastern Ottoman territories, but it was also home to a religiously and culturally diverse population, including Christians from several Eastern denominations (namely, Armenian Orthodox, Syriac Orthodox and East Syriac).

Despite being largely overlooked in recent scholarship on Ottoman Catholicism, Mardin produced prominent Catholic converts during this period, and, even more compellingly, its churches and monasteries testify to a rich scribal tradition among local Christian communities. My research focuses on a corpus of Arabic, Syriac, and Karshuni (Arabic in Syriac letters) manuscripts produced and/or circulated by Mardin's Christian communities between 1662 and 1783. While many are still situated in Mardin, others are scattered across locations such as Aleppo, Mosul, Beirut, Paris, and the Vatican. By analysing the manuscripts for both quantitative features (e.g. date, language, script, genre, and title) and qualitative features (e.g. text and paratextual notes), this project seeks to understand how Catholicism filtered into Christian scribal culture in Mardin, thereby highlighting the local dimensions of early Catholicism in the Ottoman Empire.

During my fellowship at OIB this year, I was able to consult some key manuscripts relating to the history of Catholicism in Mardin, particularly at the libraries of Charfet Monastery in Daroun-Harissa and Université Saint-Joseph in Beirut. One such manuscript contains a remarkable first-person account of a Catholic convert in eighteenth-century Mardin, entitled the *Life of Eliya*, which has become the subject of an extensive literary and historical analysis within my thesis.



**ROSIE MAXTON** was a Visiting Doctoral Fellow at the OIB from March to June 2022. She holds an MA in Arabic and Medieval History from St Andrews University, and an MPhil in Middle Eastern Studies from Cambridge University. She is currently pursuing a doctorate in History at Oxford University. Her research explores the spread of the Catholic faith in the early modern Ottoman Empire, focusing specifically on the Eastern Christian communities of Mardin (a city in present-day southeast Turkey) and their manuscript culture in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Her research is funded by the Leverhulme Trust Doctoral Centre and the Somerville College Vanessa Brand Scholarship. Before embarking on her PhD, she taught Arabic language at the universities of St Andrews and Edinburgh.

#### **PUBLICATIONS**

With Lucy Parker. **Archiving Faith: Record-Keeping and Catholic Community Formation in Eighteenth-Century Mesopotamia.**

*Past & Present*, 2022.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtab037>

# Arab Students of Journalism in the Soviet Union, 1960s–1980s

EKATERINA VASILEVA  
FELLOW

In my PhD project, I explore and describe the history of the progressive approach to international media and communications relations, and I focus on the theoretical contribution of Arab students and Soviet scholars in the sphere of Arab-Soviet educational, cultural, and intellectual exchange. In the period of the late Soviet socialism, Arab scholars visited the USSR in search of concepts different from the dominant Western media theory of the free flow of information, which was later reworked into a concept of "synthesis of cultures" and "universal civilisation". Scholars from the so-called developing countries strived to conceptualize an anti-imperialist, anti-colonial theoretical framework for the international and national media spheres and sought relevant ideas in the Soviet media scholarship, which would offer an alternative to Western epistemologies.

This year, I managed to complete the drafts of my four chapters. I described the general trend of evolution from the orthodox Marxist-Leninist approach to the public sphere and journalism as a profession to a more postcolonial understanding that was introduced by Arab students. I focused on three main case studies: three generations of Iraqi students of print journalism, a Syrian student of Soviet sociology, and a French student of Soviet documentary studies. The introduction of a postcolonial outlook helped Soviet academia to adapt to the changes in the global context, while at the same time subverting the canonical structure of socialist scholarship in the USSR.



**EKATERINA VASILEVA** was a doctoral fellow at the OIB. She received her double Master's degree from University of Erfurt, Germany, and University of Saint Joseph, Lebanon, in history and sociology of Arab world in 2018. Her expertise includes Arab history, Soviet history, history of ideas. She is interested in ideas and imagery that were used in the intellectual exchange between the so-called "Second" and "Third" worlds and attempts to show how these exchanges were different from similar exchanges in the West, happening in a perceived "periphery" of the world. She works on a PhD project "Arab Students of Journalism in the Soviet Union, 1960s–1980s".

#### PRESENTATIONS

**Press as a Bridge Between "Orientals": the Role of Islam in Soviet Diplomacy, 1960–1980",** ESPRit Conference, Central European Research Institute for Art History (KEMKI) // 7–10 SEPTEMBER.

**"Aesthetics of Anticolonial Movement: Algerian documentary television",** Insaniyyat Tunis // 20–24 SEPTEMBER.

#### PODCAST

**Wissen entgrenzen - Der Podcast der Max Weber Stiftung**

**Episode #4: Transnationaler Wissensaustausch:**

**Arabische Studierende in der Sowjetunion und der DDR,** topic "Arab journalism students at Moscow State University in the USSR, 1960–1980s" // FEBRUARY.



Egyptian Students  
in the USSR, Mara  
Sufitiya, 1975, Vol. 6.

# *Social Sciences*

Drawing on a variety of approaches (quantitative and qualitative), using different ways of collecting material (oral history, discourse analysis, digital humanities, participant observation, ethnographic fieldwork, etc.), the social sciences cluster is engaged with the social as a contested field of relations.

Conceiving social sciences as a reconstructive approach, we try to understand the epistemologies of those participating in these relations, their specific practices, representations, and the structures they are embedded in.

We explore among others the social mobilisations underlying them, societal co-operation, conflicts, hermeneutics, but also transnational dimensions, that allow us to engage with comparative approaches and theoretical conceptualisations.

Our interdisciplinary background includes among others: Middle-East studies, political science, sociology, economy, political sociology, social and cultural anthropology, social and economic history, oral history, cultural studies, gender studies, critical race studies, psychoanalysis, urban studies, geography.

Studying the Middle East with the Middle East and not just in it, we aim for social science as a non-asymmetric practice, reinforcing the ties with the local research community. This includes critical scholarly self-reflection.

# Living in Liminality

SARAH EL BULBEISI  
RESEARCHER

The expulsion and war experiences of Lebanon's (post-) Civil War generations have left visible traces. People's attitude towards life is still characterised by distrust, alienation and uncertainty. I examine how these experiences affect identities and relationships, be they intimate or transgenerational.

The 15-year-long Lebanese Civil War was, among other things, a legacy of European colonial policy. During the war, various denominations fought each other bitterly with the support of foreign states. People were expelled and killed because of their religious affiliation or their political beliefs. The war has left a deeply divided society in Lebanon. At the same time, its story has not been elaborated, and prominent militia leaders have not been held accountable. On the contrary, they occupy important political positions and control large segments of the population through a finely meshed patronage and clientelist system. Confessional identity and the fear of the "Other" play an important role. In addition, various wars with Israel followed the Civil War. Consequently, the Lebanese people have had multiple expulsion and war experiences and have developed an attitude of constant uncertainty in their lives. This has been compounded since the financial crisis and the port explosion of 2020.

My project focuses on the experiences and stories of the Lebanese Civil War and post-Civil War generation. Both generations share a sense of alienation from home and face the challenge of making sense of an unresolved past. The post-war generation in particular seems to be deprived of a present or a future in Lebanon. Life only begins, so to speak, with emigration. For many of them, the October 2019 protests were their first opportunity to feel a sense of belonging to their country. The Civil War past and its legacy in public discourse and in families were suddenly discussed more intensively. The denominational "Other" was replaced by the state as the new rival, which opened up the possibility of recognizing and evaluating social differences from a clean slate. This new narrative was reinforced by the August 2020 port explosion.

Based on the desires, fears, conflicts, and self-conceptions of Lebanese people, my project explores the traces left not only by the multiple experiences of war and displacement, but also by political violence in general and the dominant role of confessional identities in the lives of the Lebanese war and post-war generation. How do they shape parent-child and intimate relationships and the relationship to the denominational group to which one belongs? How do they influence self-images, the perception of the "Other",

access to agency, and self-realisation in the world? How do different forms of collective identity, such as family, gender, denominational, and class identities, relate to each other? My project not only examines constructions of collective identities, but it also breaks with them and with ways of self-realisation. Based on life stories and conversations, I examine why identity norms persist despite being visibly undermined by the realities of life and how identity norms are passed on within the family. I also explore the contexts in which these identity norms are subverted, as well as the role of role multiple experiences of war and the continuous experience of political violence.



**SARAH EL BULBEISI** joined the OIB in November 2019 after completing her PhD at the Institute for Near and Middle East Studies at the Ludwig-Maximilians University in Munich (LMU Munich), Germany. Before joining the OIB, she lead the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) project "Violence, Forced Migration and Exile: Trauma in the Arab World and in Germany". This was a Higher Education Dialogue between seven Palestinian and Lebanese universities as well as with the LMU Munich, a project she had initiated and purchased the third party funding for. Prior to that, she worked several years as a lecturer and research associate at the Institute for Near and Middle East Studies at the LMU Munich. Her PhD thesis was published at transcript in 2020: "Taboo, Trauma and Identity: Subject Constructions of Palestinians in Germany and Switzerland, 1960 to 2015" is an oral history of first and second generation Palestinians in Germany and Switzerland and explores the repercussions of the stifling of Palestinian history and identity on Palestinian lives, selves and intergenerational relationships. Sarah El Bulbeisi's postdoc research at the OIB revolves around the interrelations between systemic violence and family & intimate relations in contemporary Lebanon.



©SARAH EL BULBEISI

**PUBLICATIONS** Chapters in edited volumes

**From Self-Denial to Politics of Visibility: Palestinians in Germany and Switzerland from the 1960s to 2015.** In Leonardo Schiocchet and Christine Nölle-Karimi (ED.). *Forced Migration Studies. Current Interventions.* ROR-n Plattform Series 1(3). Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences, pp.235–246, 2022.

**Articles in magazines**

**Das Tabu der Nakba in der europäischen Geschichtsschreibung Erinnerung und ihre Folgen für PalästinenserInnen in Deutschland und der Schweiz.** *Widerspruch* 79 (41/2), pp.51–58, 2022.

**Die Katastrophe wirkt fort.** *Aufbruch – Unabhängige Zeitschrift für Religionen und Gesellschaft: Palästinensische Perspektiven*, 255 (34), pp.6–9, 2022.

**Von Generation zu Generation. Kollektives Trauma von PalästinenserInnen.** *FAMA feministisch politisch theologisch* 38 (1), pp.12–13, 2022.

**LECTURES**

**"Zum Verhältnis von Trauma und Identität: PalästinenserInnen in Deutschland und der Schweiz",** AK Nahost Bremen, online // 27 JANUARY.

**"Zum Verhältnis von Trauma und Identität: PalästinenserInnen in Deutschland und der Schweiz",** at the conference "Generations" – Jüdischer Lerntag Jom Ijun, Zurich // 15 MAY.

**"The Taboo of the Nakba and its Consequences for Palestinians in Germany and Switzerland"** and discussion round at the conference "Anti-Zionism as Taboo" organised by the JudeobolscheWienerinnen, online // 16 OCTOBER / 6 NOVEMBER.

**"Trauma und Tabu: PalästinenserInnen in Deutschland und der Schweiz"**, lecture at the Institute for Cultural Inquiry (ICI) as part of the Psychoanalytical Cultural Studies Lecture Series 2022–23, Berlin // 15 NOVEMBER.

**MODERATIONS**

**Chair of panel "Minorities and vulnerable in Sharia Courts: A new perspective",** at the international conference Discussing the Interdependence between Humans, Religion and Environment, OIB, Cairo // 11–12 DECEMBER.

**PRESS & INTERVIEWS**

**In Berlin, a fight for Palestinian identity – and a place to call home,** +972 Magazine.

**BIP-Gespräch #29, BIP (Bündnis für Gerechtigkeit zwischen Israelis und Palästinensern e.v.)** // 14 FEBRUARY.

**1972 – Münchens Schwarzer September**, documentary // 18 MAY.

# **Fictio Statis // Unreliable numbers, private statistics, and experts' careers in Lebanon (1950–2020)**

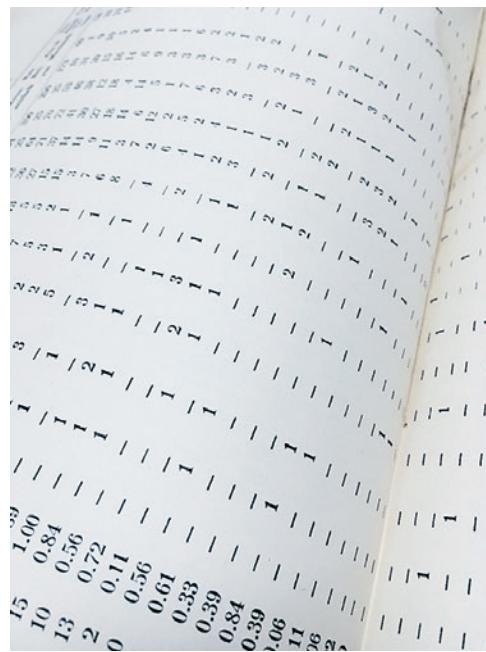
PIERRE FRANCE  
RESEARCHER

In Lebanon, the issue of statistics is often reduced to an observation that has remained unchanged over time, based on a seemingly fundamental and well-known choice: the absence of a general population census since 1932. Other cases since then, such as the conflicts in the 1990–2000 period around the calculation of the GDP, price index, inflation, the absence of a reliable count of the demonstrators during the 2019 revolution, or even that of the victims of the 4 August explosion, serve as regular reminders of the supposedly constant difficulty of quantifying social or economic phenomena in Lebanon. However, it is easy to reverse the situation: many figures do appear in reports, official publications, and press articles. These are produced by professionals, statisticians, economists, journalists, or, nowadays, data-scientists. They also published by institutions and companies, including the National Statistics, private consulting firms, banks, polling and marketing agencies, NGOs, and international organisations. Rather than seeking to re-assess the gaps and unreliable figures, or those too politicised to be public, this project raises a new set of questions: How can we work with existing numbers in Lebanon? How are they being aggregated or disseminated? How can one conduct research to collect them? Aside from being the first political and social history of statistics in Lebanon, this project takes stock of recent debates on the African continent (notably the works of Boris Samuel or Morten Jerven). By doing so, it attempts to make a contribution at the regional level from a comparative perspective, notably through my participation in the European Research Council's (ERC) EGYCLASS and the French National Research Agency's (ANR) Sublime project.

Who handles and produces statistics in Lebanon? This is the thorny question that I tackled in my research during the 2021–2022 period, starting from a very explicit initial observation: the scarcity of professional statisticians. To answer this question, I interviewed statisticians, economic journalists, economists, professionals from NGOs and international institutions, senior civil servants, and pollsters. These interviewees were questioned about their professional careers, how they view their practice, and, finally, their vision of statistics in general, both in Lebanon and in the Arab World. This part of the research was based on recommendations from person to person, in the form of snowball sampling technique, but also on a systematic search of online documents and profiles – especially on LinkedIn.

This technique of searching for interlocutors also helped in building a database of professionals, institutions, and companies involved in this issue, which, in turn, contributed to the outlining and mapping of data related to this field in Lebanon.

A second aspect that I explored during these two years was archival documents, in order to give historical depth to this research and reconstitute the history of statistics in Lebanon. By doing so, the project intersects with another reflection on archiving in Lebanon. While resorting to interviews as a research tool – especially when it comes to interviewing actors in this small world of statistics for years – this part of the project has revealed the extreme fragmentation of old statistical data. Most of the time, only a single copy of this data is available, either in public collections at university libraries, personal copies kept at home, private collections, or even Beirut's antique shops – where they come at a price. Such fragmentation of data is both representative of the centrifugal logic of data production, both past and present, and the logic of archiving in Lebanon. Just as national statistics bodies in Lebanon are far from having a monopoly in their field of activity, national archives are also controlled by a multitude of different actors. In 2022, I primarily focused on one sector to which I had access during the course of my fieldwork: agriculture. I will be pursuing further research on this topic through "Fertile Liban", a newly funded programme by the Partenariat Hubert Curien (PHC)-CEDRE for 2023–4 on agriculture in Lebanon, of which I am one of the core researchers. I also developed a side-project on the market of archives in Lebanon.



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**PIERRE FRANCE** joined the Orient Institut in 2020 as a Research Associate. A PhD candidate (defense in waiting) in Political Science at Aix-Marseille University his doctoral research focuses on the process of the Lebanese state survival throughout the Lebanese war (1975–1990). It led him to study the Lebanese state in its material and human forms, with a specific attention to several public institutions' and their civil servants' histories. This research resulted also in a broad revisit of the Lebanese war based on comparative and historical sociology. Aside of his PhD, Pierre co-wrote a book with Prof. Antoine Vauchez in 2017, to be published in a revised English edition in 2021 (Cornell) on the phenomenon of top French civil servants becoming lawyers, a contribution to the study of the blurry-ing lines between public and private social spheres in contemporary France. He has been also a full time Junior Lecturer in Political Science at Sciences Po Aix (2016–2018), and a Core Fellow at Camargo Foundation (2020).

**JOURNAL ARTICLE** Chapters in edited volumes

**L'anti-playlist de la révolution: sons apolitiques et chansons partisanes.** Moyen-Orient, n°56, pp. 66–72, 2022.

With Antoine Vauchez, **Lawyers, Revolving Doors and the Public-Private Foundations of the French Regulatory State.** In Emilia Korkea-aho, Päivi Leino-Sandberg. Law, Legal Expertise and EU Polity-Making. Cambridge University Press, pp. 55–71, 2022.

**PRESENTATIONS**

**Public sphere and private precedence Lebanon 1980–2020**, seminar "Les affaires de l'État. Savoirs et professionnels aux frontières public-privé : droit, économie et finance", CESSP-EHESS, Paris // 22 APRIL.

**Takrim, Interviews, and Mudhakirât: the statging of social capital among Lebanese elites (1950–2020)**, Summer School "Moving Biographies", American University of Beirut, OIB, Beirut // 6 MAY.

**Conspiracism and scientism. Incidental conservative ideas in technoscientific professions**, AFSP – French Association for Political Science, Panel Social History of Conservative Ideas // 7 JUNE.

**On the margins of archives. Negotiations, social capital and the phantasm of the archive in Lebanon, Insaniyât** // 22 SEPTEMBER.

**Neglected state and abandoned employees – The case of railways in Lebanon, Insaniyât** // 22 SEPTEMBER.

**From Ordinary Leftists to Conspiracy Militancy, and Back Again – The Case of 9/11 'Alternative Theories' in France**, conference Conspiracy Theories and Leftwing Populism, Tübingen // 3 NOVEMBER.

**PRESS**

**Interview, Le Figaro** // 12 JULY.

# Future Spaces //

## Concepts of political order in Iraq since 2003

CHRISTIAN THUSELT  
RESEARCHER

The research project aims to bring together two research paradigms that have hardly been connected so far: the study of spatially bound identity patterns in political geography and a political science perspective on the constitution of political orders. Using an interpretative-constructivist approach on statehood, borrowing from political philosophy and philosophical anthropology, the research argues that three dimensions of political-territorial orders can be analytically distinguished: (1) sociocultural differentiations separate an "us" from the "others" (identity) and (2) in many cases naturalise this differentiation with, among other things, the delimitation of spaces through a location of supposedly pre-existent spaces based on these practices. Finally, they connect these two dimensions with the conception of a "polity" (3), understood as the formal constitution of societies.

By focusing on "polity", we avoid limiting research to formal statehood without losing sight of the importance of polity. Empirically, we focus on the designs of "future spaces" that have been produced and disseminated by key actors in the region since 2003. The aim of this project is to offer a comparative and systematic overview of the orders that have been designed by central actors in the region since 2003, against the background of the destabilisation or "dislocation" of nation-state orders in Iraq. On this basis, we contribute to the debate on possible post-war orders in the region.

Since the question now obviously arises in the Middle East whether, similar to sub-Saharan Africa, a "post-Westphalian" order beyond legalistic statehood could also be a relevant vision of the future in the Middle East, the selection of cases must be oriented to the positioning of relevant actors in relation to the existing statehood of the region, i.e. Iraq as an internationally recognised subject of international law. First and foremost, we will focus on the communication of political orders, which is to be understood as a hegemonic practice and seeks to attain hegemony in the sense of an unquestioned validity of the order.

The first group includes actors who exercise governmental power in Iraq or who at least are most outspoken about such power. They thus strive for the re-establishment of a centralised polity. Within this framework, we will mainly analyze Muqtada al-Sadr's discourse. The second group includes actors who strive for a new polity based on an ethnic "us"-identity, such as the Iraqi Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP). The third group consists of actors who initially define their identity in a way – often dubbed "sectarianisation" – which seems to be oriented primarily against the discursive hegemony of just another actor. In their apparent retreat into the lifeworld of the "microstructure", they seem at first glance like prototypes of a "denationalisation" of the Middle East, although that seems to be rather doubtful.

In 2022, we analysed Muqtada al-Sadr's discourse with the help of Atlas.ti. His discourse revolves around the reestablishment of a capable Iraqi statehood. It oscillates between various paradoxes that al-Sadr does not resolve at all. This underscores the need to understand statehood primarily as the result of ascribing a distinctive meaning to it. The tensions of representation vs. untouchable resources and secularity vs. a religious polity are a central theme that requires further analysis.





**CHRISTIAN THUSELT** joined the OIB in October 2021 as a research associate and is responsible for the in-house production of the "Beiruter Texte und Studien" (BTS). He holds a MA from Tübingen University and received his PhD in Social Sciences from Roskilde University with a study on Lebanese political parties as expressions of a global modernity. His research interests have focused on modernity as a global asymmetric reference and, in relation to that, political self-locations as part of legitimating strategies. From 2009 till 2021 he worked at Erlangen University, most recently as an assistant professor at the Institute of Political Science. His research at the OIB focusses on Iraqi statehood as part of a discourse on legitimacy.

#### **SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS**

**Libanon: Politökonomische Kurzanalyse (PÖK) für das Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Entwicklung und Entwicklung (BMZ), 2022.**

**Lebanese Phalangism and fascism: history of a symbolic appropriation.** Middle Eastern Studies, Vol. 59, No. 2, pp.281–297, 2023.

**Revolutionary Utopia in the Middle East as Steely Romanticism: the Case of the al-Ba'th Party.** British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, Vol. 50, No. 1, pp.50–66, 2023.

#### **CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PRESS**

**"Warum die Wende im Libanon ausbleibt"**, zenith online, 19 MAY.

**"Die vielen Leben des Michel Aoun"**, zenith online, 7 NOVEMBER.

#### **INVITED PARTICIPATION**

**"Islams and Modernities with 'Aziz al-'Azmeh"**, workshop organised by the "Akademie für Islam in Wissenschaft und Gesellschaft" (AIWG) at Erlangen (as Discussant) // 14–15 MAY.

# Obligation and Relationality in the Wake of Critical Events in Lebanon

JOWEL CHOUFANI  
FELLOW

My dissertation project investigates how people's sense of obligation to others comes to be defined, experienced, and materialised across a historical timescape marked by the layering of critical events. This project traces two modes of response – assistance and documentation – that people connected to Lebanon have drawn on to respond to the 4 August 2020 Beirut Port explosion. Since my arrival at OIB, I have conducted a multi-sited ethnography that encompasses residents of Lebanon and its diaspora. I incorporate a combination of semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and oral life history interviews to explore the factors that guide people's responses to events, how sociality and community boundaries become (re)configured as a result of these responses, and how meanings of critical events change as they accrue over time. In doing so, this project theorizes how critical events present opportunities and impediments for dynamism in people's sense and enactments of obligation towards others.



**JOWEL CHOUFANI** is a PhD candidate in the Department of Anthropology at the George Washington University. Jowel was formerly trained as a nutritionist and dietitian and worked for several years in food security research in Lebanon and the United States. She has an MS in Public Health Nutrition from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and an MPhil in Anthropology from George Washington University. Jowel will be spending the 2022–2023 academic year conducting ethnographic research in Lebanon. Her dissertation examines how people's sense of obligation to others comes to be defined, experienced, and materialized across a historical time scape marked by the layering of critical events.

# **Watershed Lives // An ethnography of river infrastructure and ruination in Lebanon**

CYNTHIA KREICHTI

FELLOW

My doctoral dissertation is an ethnography of the legacies of large public infrastructure in the developing world and a study of the conspicuous contradictions of modernisation projects. Based on eighteen months of remote and in-person fieldwork, it examines the social and ecological transformations which have affected the upper Litani river watershed following the implementation of the Litani Hydropower and Irrigation Project during the 1950s – a project initially conceived as Lebanon's most important investment in technological modernity since its independence. Combining ethnographic and archival research, my dissertation explores how the Litani, once envisioned as an economically efficient project for Lebanon's modern prosperity and its urban elites, has become something more than a mere form of production for "economic expansion". Taking the river as its starting point, my research probes the politics of infrastructure and its role in the production of socioecological inequalities. It also examines how such inequalities are reflected in neighboring communities' relationships to the river, as well as in the socio-cultural practices of everyday life. The ethnography documents how state power, technology, market forces, and imagination drive the re-composition of connections between humans and their environments. Whilst also shaping riparian communities' use of the Litani waters to produce their lives. During my fellowship at the Orient-Institut Beirut in 2022, I conducted archival research in Beirut and life history interviews in West Bekaa to document how villagers there derive and consume electric power, how they dispose of sewage, or how fishermen, farmers, and Litani River Authority workers are coping with the socioecological degradation. In investigating the contested relationships between technology, society, politics, and the environment, my project seeks to contribute to the re-conceptualisation of politics at a time of capitalist ruination, national confusion, and financial collapse.



**CYNTHIA KREICHTI** is a doctoral candidate in Anthropology at McGill University. She holds a Master of Arts in Sociology from the American University (2017) in Beirut and a Doctorate of Practice in Pharmacy from the Université Saint Joseph in Lebanon (2003). Focusing on the Litani project for hydropower and irrigation, her dissertation interrogates the legacies of large infrastructural projects of development. As a researcher and a practitioner, Cynthia is concerned with the relationships between politics, practices, the environment, and health. She has held positions in various private, public, and non-governmental institutions in research and health-related fields. Prior to joining McGill, she was Head of Mission Advisor with Médecins Sans Frontières in Lebanon. Her research has been supported by the Fonds de Recherche du Québec, the McGill Sustainability Systems Initiative, the Local Engagement Refugee Research Network at Carleton University, and the Orient-Institut Beirut. Some of her work has been published in Bidayat magazine, Sifr, ArteEast, Mitra Magazine Culturel, and Bahithat.

#### **PUBLICATIONS**

**Wound Stories from the Archive.** In Arab Girls and Women in Times of War Bahithat – The Lebanese Women Researchers' Association Annual Book Volume, 2022.

#### **LECTURES**

**"The Gift of Electricity"**, guest lecture with the Anthropological Society in Lebanon (ASIL), Mansion Blatt, Beirut // 22 SEPTEMBER.

#### **PAPERS AT CONFERENCES**

**"Politics of health in pre-1948 Palestine"**, at the Reassessing the British Mandate in Palestine conference organised by the Institute for Palestine Studies. Virtual participation at Birzeit University // 31 OCTOBER.

# Role of Courts in Consociational Systems of Power-Sharing

SOPHIA SCHROEDER  
FELLOW

This research project examines the role of domestic courts in consociational systems of power-sharing. Consociational settlements are often negotiated after violent conflicts to accommodate the demands of various communities. Cooperation between political elites is an essential characteristic of consociational theory – necessary to both the establishment of a stable political system as well as its persistence (Lijphart 1977). Courts in consociations play a crucial but delicate role in the regulation of identity-based conflicts. In light of this, the role of courts within the political set-up deserves closer examination, especially because they too are subject to consociational design.

With the aim of discerning how courts function and what role they play in consociational systems, the research adopts a socio-legal approach and goes beyond the traditional legal doctrinal analysis. It also uses the comparative approach, which is deemed as the most effective way of studying systematically common patterns and challenges of the courts' ability to regulate conflict and analyzing the effect of variations in consociational design. Hence, the project examines two deeply divided societies that have adopted a consociational system: Northern Ireland and Lebanon.

The research also seeks to illuminate how judges perceive their role of conflict resolution and how they and their judgments are perceived by other actors. Therefore, in-depth, semi-structured elite interviews have been conducted with judges and other key actors to shed light on their attitudes with respect to the judicialisation of politics in consociations. The OIB doctoral fellowship enabled me to conduct this fieldwork in Lebanon.

I consulted specialist literature by Lebanese scholars at the Institute's library which is not available in Germany and the United Kingdom. I also accessed judgements from courts and other local institutions and attended various conferences to build up a local network for my research project.



**SOPHIA SCHROEDER** is a PhD Candidate in Law at University College London (UCL). Her research focuses on the role of domestic courts for consociational systems of power-sharing. She seeks to understand how courts react to consociations and the implications of their judgments for the broader political set-up. Sophia is a member of the Judicial Institute at UCL. Before coming to the OIB, she was a Visiting Doctoral Researcher at the Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice (Queen's University Belfast). Sophia holds an LLM as well as an MA in Conflict Resolution in Divided Societies from King's College London, a Maîtrise en Droit in International Law from Panthéon-Assas University/Paris II, and the German First State Examination in Law (Humboldt University of Berlin).

# Iranian Motherhood through Generations

MOHADDESEH ZIYACHI  
FELLOW

This research builds on and extends my PhD thesis on "the problematic status of motherhood among young middle-class women living in Iran". In my PhD research, I was not able to develop my historical approach to the problematicity of motherhood. Therefore, working at the OIB, I advanced my investigation by examining the changes that occurred in motherhood through generations, with a particular focus on the process of Iranian modernity.

I demonstrate that the cultural model of motherhood among young middle-class Iranian women is not constructed based on consistent underlying concepts – instead, three competing cultural schemas of familism, sociality, and individualism influence and direct motherhood. These schemas are evident in several domains of Iranian society. However, in this project, I exclusively focused on the characteristics of these schemas related to motherhood, from which I assert that the conflict between these three schemas has heightened the problematicity and controversy around motherhood, seen as a cultural model composed of pre-modern, modern, and late modern cultural schemas. Thus, unlike in pre-modern times, motherhood is not merely a straightforward familial affair but also a social and individual one. In Iranian society, while traditionalist conservative groups still propagate familial values, modernist groups such as feminists advocate for individualism. Simultaneously, politicians interpret motherhood in terms of political benefits and macro policies. Competition amongst these schemas has also resulted in controversies and conflicts for individuals.

After this analysis, I discuss that since roughly 150 years ago, substantial political, social, economic, and cultural changes in Iran have challenged the conventional cultural notion of motherhood, resulting in the emergence of a more differentiated heterogeneous perception, particularly among the middle-class. I posit that this emergent cultural understanding has been constructed during Iran's modern history in tandem with massive transformations in all aspects of family life. In other words, this cultural model arose as a result of the Iranian Tajaddod process (the term Tajaddod, which means becoming new and up to date in Farsi, refers to how Iranian society has experienced modernity).



**MOHADDESEH ZIYACHI'S** educational and research background is in the social sciences, with a specific interest in interdisciplinary approaches. She obtained her BA in social sciences and her MA in sociology at Allameh Tabataba'i University, Iran. Her master's dissertation was concerned with the problem of gender and the city, focusing on the concept of "the women-friendly city". Being interested in gender issues as well as interdisciplinary studies, she completed her PhD at the Institute of Cognition and Culture at the Queen's University of Belfast, UK. Her thesis was concerned with the problem of motherhood in Iran from a cognitive anthropological, evolutionary, and historical perspective. From February to April 2022, she worked at the OIB as a doctoral fellow developing the historical chapter of her thesis. Now she is an assistant professor (research) at the sociology department of Durham University, England. Her current research project is focused on immigration and mental health. She also works as a teaching assistant at the Queen's University of Belfast.

#### **PAPERS AT CONFERENCES & WORKSHOPS**

**"An epidemiological approach to cultural models".** Paper presented. Workshop: Cultural Model Theory: Shaping a New Anthropology. Northern Illinois University // 21 MAY.

#### **MODERATION & DISCUSSANT/CHAIR**

**Co-organizing the InSPIRE conference** (with Brian Castellani), Durham University // 9–10 NOVEMBER.

# *Art & Material Culture*

Our cluster 'Art & Material Culture' is occupied with the ways in which artistic and material production is narrated in the writings of history. Our research projects are concerned with bringing to the fore social, religious, political and economic aspects of arts and material culture, and reinstate the people – the maker, the craftsman, the artist and the user – at the center of our studies, including their production and reception of ideas. We strongly believe that our studies become meaningful when we are able to locate artistic and cultural productions in their wider socio-political and economic contexts. Medieval manuscripts, modern artworks and films, for instance, are brought to life when we see them as mirrors of their contexts as much as agents in shaping collective thinking and practices.

In our cluster, we are interested in the materiality of the works of art. As such, we approach them not only as social constructs but also as objects formed by specific elements, such as ink. Our bottom-top approach encourages us to study the object itself, including its circulation during its life and in its afterlife, and to trace people's trajectories and ideas. This facilitates the reconstruction of forgotten archives and of networks of people and movement that often reveal exciting aspects about our world. Our approach is not only characterised by work on the archives but also on counter-archives. Databases are our repositories, they form the basis of our research and become tools to help us identify stylistic trends and aesthetic patterns, as well as trace cross-cultural connections.

Taken together, our projects cover a wide time frame – spanning from the medieval to contemporary times – and geographically covering the whole region of the mashriq. We deal with an array of materials and media from modern paintings and periodicals to medieval Islamic manuscripts. While being rooted in (art) historical methods, our work's interdisciplinary nature benefits from neighboring fields such as anthropology. And it is by contextualizing our subjects and objects of study that we hope to bridge between material culture, art history, and various systems of beliefs.

One of our aims is to explore the institutionalisation of (art) history and to question threads that have side-lined regions or marginalized under-represented communities. As such, we reflect on various modern established categories, such as fixed identities, challenge prevailing paradigms and canons in writing history to contest stark dichotomies, such as the purported tensions between center/periphery, local/global, public/private, East/West, or arts/crafts. It is by exposing art systems, power dynamics, educational practices, and hegemonic cultural infrastructures that we aim to build a critical transnational history with wider implications on our present.

# From Copying to Burning the Qur'an //

## Creating models and transposing sacrality

ALYA KARAME  
RESEARCHER

The Qur'an has been copied and mechanically reproduced for fourteen centuries across three continents. Its history, as a book, has been narrated through the lens of the politically powerful cultural capitals that once ruled the Islamic world and through their hegemonic aesthetic trends presenting the Qur'an as invariable. My project narrates an alternative history of the Qur'an by looking at the manuscript models that counter aesthetic and non-aesthetic established paradigms. Whether commissioned in the "periphery" or as "forgery", conceived as a notebook or amulet, gifted, treated in the museum, or burned on the streets, these neglected Qur'an manuscripts reflect a process of selection and rejection from already existing traditions. By studying their modelling practices, the project understands the re-production of the Qur'an as a continuous shaping of the relation between the divine and the earthly. While new aesthetic rules, modes of thought, and conventions develop, sacrality is redefined in the material realm, adding new roles to the manuscript, reflecting beliefs, and articulating ideologies. This year, I focused on one group of previously unidentified Qur'ans from medieval eastern Iran (at the centre of which is present-day Afghanistan) as they attest to the shaping of new Qur'anic visual trends that developed in the so-called peripheries, the lands of provincial rule. They will be the subject of my monograph, to be published in 2023 with Edinburgh University Press, entitled "The Forgotten Qur'ans of the Medieval Eastern Islamic World: The Ghaznavid and Ghurid Dynasties". The book presents the study of this group of Qur'ans and questions the pre-dominant view on the relationship of the "centre" (the lands of dominant dynastic rule) with the "periphery" (provincial rule). It places the history of the Qur'an at the intersection of local and global histories and aims to reveal how objects and practices that are deemed "peripheral" were, in fact, models that challenge established paradigms by uncovering patterns of cross-fertilisation between Indic and Turkic-Persianate cultural productions. As such, the book decentralizes the artistic agency of traditional political capitals from which artistic excellency and a purportedly pure visual language are said to have spread and reclaims the frontiers as centres of cultural production.

Methodologically, my project is grounded in art history but crosses disciplinary boundaries to borrow from anthropology, Islamic philosophy, and visual and material culture to study the Qur'an's materiality. My aim is to dissolve dichotomies and categorizations established in modern Western scholarship – such as secular/religious, centre/periphery, or original/copy – that have been engraved in the history of Islamic art and material culture in general. My project contributes to the emerging body of scholarship concerned with the study of manuscripts and books beyond stylistic taxonomies. It engages with the Qur'an as an object embedded in multiple practices, investigates its relation to other contemporaneous artistic productions, such as architecture and ceramics, and explores its shifting roles and uses across time and space, long after its initial production.



ALYA KARAME has been a research associate at the OIB since May 2022. She specializes in the history of Islamic art and material culture, and specifically in manuscripts. Her book project on a forgotten corpus of medieval Qur'ans has been supported by numerous grants and is due for publication in 2023. In 2022, she has been invited to talk about her research at various institutions such as the University of Zurich, the Collège de France and Princeton University among others. In that same year she has received numerous grants in support of her research such as from the Barakat Publication Grant, the Arab Funds for Arts and Culture & Arab Council for the Social Sciences and the Historians of Islamic Art Association. Alya is part of two ongoing projects, namely: Calligraphies at the Frontiers of the Islamicate World, at the Sorbonne Université in Paris; and Bāb Ibn al-Bawwāb, at the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin. Before joining the OIB Alya was at the American University of Beirut (AUB), holding the Mellon Postdoctoral fellowship, where she had also taught. In 2018–2019 she was at the University of Oxford, the recipient of the Barakat Trust award and prior to that she had joined the Kunsthistorisches Institut research program in Florence for the project Connecting Art Histories in the Museum and was based for two years at the Museum of Islamic Art in Berlin. Alya obtained her PhD in 2018 in Islamic Art History from the University of Edinburgh and her MA in History of Art & Archaeology from the School of Oriental and African Studies.

**PUBLICATIONS [FORTHCOMING]**

**The Forgotten Qur'ans of the Medieval Eastern Islamic World:**

**The Ghaznavid and Ghurid Dynasties.** Edinburgh Studies in Islamic Art, Edinburgh University Press.

**"Ghaznavid Imperial Qur'an Manuscripts: The Shaping of a Local Style" The Word Illuminated: Form and Function of Qur'anic**

**Manuscripts.** Sana Mirza and Simon Rettig (EDS.). Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press, 2023.

<https://doi.org/10.5479/si.21948098>

**"Les manuscrits coraniques à Nishapur au début du XIe siècle".**

Proceedings of the College de France Colloquium "Recherches actuelles sur les manuscrits coraniques".

**PAPERS AT CONFERENCES & WORKSHOPS**

**"Calligraphies at the Frontiers of the Islamicate World"**, the first meeting in a series of workshops, as part of a long term project led by Eloïse Brac de la Perrière, Sorbonne Université // 9–11 MARCH.

**"Les manuscrits du Coran à Nishapur au début du XIe siècle"**, invited to Chaire Histoire du Coran, Texte et Transmission, Collège de France // 2 JUNE.

**"To Dust to Ashes: Transposing the Qur'an's Sacrality"**, invited to the conference organised by the Arab Council for Social Sciences // 20 JUNE.

**"To Distract or Engage? The Ornamented Qur'an in the Hands of Its Beholder"**, Book Ornament & Luxury Critique as part of Textures and Sacred Scripture, University of Zurich // 15–17 SEPTEMBER.



Qur'anic folio, Islamic Art  
Museum Berlin (76596).

©ALYA KARAME

# The Forgotten //

## Bridging worlds through knowledge and people

ROSY BEYHOM  
FELLOW

Ibn Aybak aş-Şafadī wrote *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt* over the course of many years and produced a magnificent biographical dictionary. This monumental work holds secrets still unknown, especially with regard to the history of Arabian music. During my postdoctoral research, my goal was to read the entire biographical collection as a book, not as a dictionary, and to find the people who were unknown, lost, or forgotten, but who can be traced to form the link between the eleventh and the thirteenth centuries, considered by the scholars of the history of Arabian music to be the "empty" period.

The exploration of *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt* was a voyage in time. To read about teaching and education, about lost traditions and cities of culture, and to understand what felt right or wrong in society during aş-Şafadī's times was a very thrilling experience.

The people I learned about in this musical universe enabled me to construct a bridge between the old Arab world and the old Latin world. Scholars admit that the translation activity between the Arab and Latin world was quite active; in fact, many sciences found their way to present-day Europe through this intellectual boom that started before the eleventh century. However, in terms of music, many treatises were lost or perhaps translated into Latin before getting lost in their Arabic version, hence the "empty" centuries.

I am now pursuing my efforts to repopulate this time gap with the corresponding individuals and their musical legacy, be it written, sung, or composed.

*Al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt* is only the beginning, as the information it holds is selected subjectively and follows its author's taste and appreciation. During my fellowship at the OIB, I completed a first study and a full reading of all the volumes of *Al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt* and retrieved, in this first phase, a survey on the musical knowledge as well as a musical glossary. While continuing the repopulation of the "empty" centuries from other sources, I am also working on cross-checking this information with *Kitāb al-'aghānī*, which appears to be among the main sources for the musical entries by aş-Şafadī.



**ROSY BEYHOM** was a visiting post-doctoral fellow at the OIB from October 2021 till June 2022. She holds a PhD in musicology (the sciences of music) from the WWU Münster and is an active member of the CERMAA research centre, an international musicology hub based in Lebanon that promotes awareness via non-biased approaches to the analysis of music. She is a permanent co-editor of the NEMO-Online (<http://nemo-online.org/academic-board>) peer-reviewed journal. Her current post-doctoral research emanates from many observations of lacunae in the history of Arabian music, noticed during the research undertaken for her doctoral dissertation. During her stay at the OIB, she focused mainly on *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt* by Ibn Aybak aş-Şafadī as an underestimated repository for musical matters and issues directly related to the history of music in the Arab world. She is now widening her research to include more disciplines in the Arab world, related to music and its actors.

#### PUBLICATIONS

With Richard Dumbrill (EDS.). **A contribution to the Liber Amicorum volume**, an initiative by Nemo-Online in the memory of Katy Romanou (Kaitē Rōmanou), 2022.



Fatimid Musician  
Playing Lute, 11th-century  
plate, Museum of Islamic  
Art, Cairo.

# The Making of Arab Alternative Cinema and its Audiences

ANAÏS FARINE  
FELLOW

"Arab Alternative Cinema" is a cinematic movement that emerged in Damascus in 1972. It was characterised by an innovative approach to film forms and narratives and contributed to the political struggles of the global 1968 movement. Several important books have explored this movement, such as those by Rasha Salti, Khadijah Habashneh and Nadia Yaqub. Nevertheless, these works did not thoroughly examine how and where these films were screened and discussed.

Many Arab Alternative Cinema productions were screened at the Arab Ciné-Club in Beirut. This film club was established in 1973 "for the purpose of engaging in conversations in Arabic, but also to better discover Arab cinema" (Walid Chmait). This cultural and political initiative plays a central role in my current research on the history of film clubs in Beirut. It was one of the only places that screened films affiliated with the alternative cinema movement at that time in Lebanon.

This photo, taken in 1974, encapsulates the spirit of my research project, which aims to document in situ practices in the context of this alternative cinema movement and, more specifically, this film club. The picture was published in *Al-Muḥarrir* journal, which published articles by Jordanian film critic and filmmaker Adnan Madanat, who graduated from the VGIK in Moscow in 1970. Along with Ibrahim al-Ariss, Adnan Madanat became one of the main organisers of the Arab Ciné-Club in Beirut in 1976 and 1977, a community led by a group of young film critics and filmmakers. In 2022, I conducted interviews with former members of the Arab Ciné-Club. I also focused on reading *Al-Balaāgh*, *Al-Muḥarrir*, and *Akhbār*, journals in which former members of the Arab film club Georges El Rassi, Adnan Madanat, and Kassem Hawal were writing at that time. For a better understanding of these relationships, audiences have to see their filmic productions. I have also developed a special interest in the transnational aspects of the subject, which is why I began gathering papers from journals such as *Al-Hadaf* and *Film* which include testimonies of filmmakers or articles dedicated to the Arab Alternative Cinema movement. These pieces highlight the importance of the Babelsberg School and offer detailed reports of the Leipzig Film Festival for Documentary and Animated Film. Finally, in October 2022, I conducted research in the private archive of Georges El Rassi. This archive enables us to document the trajectories of some of these members before and after their participation in the film club.



**ANAÏS FARINE** is a postdoctoral fellow at the OIB since October 2022. She is a cinema studies researcher and a film curator. She holds a PhD from the University of La Sorbonne Nouvelle – Paris III since 2019, and she is affiliated to the Institut de recherche sur le cinéma et l'audiovisuel (IRCAV). Her PhD thesis focused on the so-called "Euro-Mediterranean dialogue" and its Filmic Imaginary since the 1995 Barcelona Declaration and the ensuing Neighborhood Policies. She is a member of the research project "Community building at the cinema: towards a decentered and entangled history of cinema-going" (EUR ArTeC). Her recent publications include "A new online cinema audience? An interview on aflamuna with Jad Abi Khalil", in *Cinema in the Arab World: New Histories, New Approaches*, edited by Ifdal Elsaket, Daniel Biltreyest and Philippe Meers (Bloomsbury Publishing) and "Vers un troisième cinéma / نحو سينما ثوريّة. Une introduction à la traduction par *Dirâsât 'arabiyya* du manifeste de Fernando Solanas et Octavio Getino" published by the *Cinematheque Beirut Project*.

#### PUBLICATIONS

**A new online cinema audience?** An interview on aflamuna with Jad Abi Khalil. In Ifdal Elsaket, Daniel Biltreyest and Philippe Meers (EDS.), *Cinema in the Arab World: New Histories, New Approaches*. London: Bloomsbury, pp.211–219.



After the screening  
of *The Leopard* (Nabil  
Maleh) at the Arab  
Ciné-club in Beirut.  
Al-Muharrir, 23/03/74

©CINÉMATHÈQUE  
NATIONALE DU LIBAN

# Arts and Crafts in Late Ottoman Beirut (ca. 1860–1914)

SARAH SABBAN  
FELLOW

My doctoral project explores the history of arts and crafts in late Ottoman Beirut (ca. 1860–1914). Through this study, I aim to document an aspect of material culture which has generally been dismissed from scholarship on Islamic art history in the nineteenth century and Arab social and intellectual history in the late Ottoman period. Positing the crafts as local artistic traditions embodying accumulated technical skills and shared aesthetic qualities, my work investigates the formation of modern categories representing artisanal products in the context of the Ottoman Empire's integration into the world-economy and the dissemination of the modern Western episteme, both having defined the standards of cultural and material production.

The historical analysis I propose traces the representation of the crafts within a particular constellation of concepts and examines practical initiatives to reform and redress artisanal production in Ottoman Beirut. Instead of evaluating the nineteenth-century local crafts according to the requisites of modern Western art or industry, I aim to understand modernization processes and discourses from the "periphery" as well as East-West entanglements by asking questions centred on the crafts. I thus focus on specific late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Arabic periodicals and Beirut-based associations, schools, and shops to examine the formation of categories and practices that eventually polarised modern understandings of material culture, progress, and civilization.

During the first few months of the OIB fellowship, I focused on identifying personal and institutional archival collections of documents and objects (some being in a critical condition). Thanks to this first phase of research, I found new sources with the potential to shed light on the regional and international market dynamics of "Oriental" artifacts, the movement of objects, and the creation of commercial and cultural values.



**SARAH SABBAN** is a doctoral candidate in the Arab and Middle Eastern History program at the American University of Beirut (AUB). Before that, she earned a Master of Studies in Islamic art and archaeology (University of Oxford) and a Master of Arts in anthropology (AUB). Sarah's research examines the history of arts and crafts and their representation in changing historical spaces from late Ottoman Syria to modern Lebanon. In the process, her work has addressed the formation of the Lebanese artisanat and the role of women in creating a national heritage during the French mandate. She also wrote about the first exhibition of Islamic art in Lebanon, which took place at the Sursock Museum in 1974, on the eve of the Lebanese Civil War.

#### PUBLICATIONS

**Imagining Lebanon with Islamic Art: The 1974 Exhibition at the Nicolas Sursock Museum.** Regards – Revue Des Arts Du Spectacle, (28), pp. 51–87, 2022.



"Salon of a princely Oriental Home, Beyrouth, Syria". Photographed by the author at the exhibition "Beirut 1840–1914: Photographs and Maps", Nabu Museum, May 2023.

# ERC LAWHA

LAWHA – LEBANON'S ART WORLD AT HOME AND ABROAD  
TRAJECTORIES OF ARTISTS AND ARTWORKS IN/FROM LEBANON SINCE 1943  
OCTOBER 2020 – SEPTEMBER 2025

LAWHA examines the forces that have shaped the emergence of a professional field of art in Lebanon within its local, regional and global context, against the background that Lebanon is regularly portrayed as a country with weak public institutions but vibrant cultural sector. The project proposes a shift of perspective in approaching Lebanon's art world by focusing on the multi-dimensionality of artists' individual trajectories. LAWHA aims to identify new methods on how to interrelate context and artistic production, to serve as a model for revisiting art histories in contexts where institutionalised local art histories have largely been absent. It investigates (1) the forces that have shaped the emergence of a professional field of art in their local, regional and global contexts; (2) how to rethink the impact of the political, social and economic environment on the art world and its protagonists, including war and migration; (3) how artists are represented in relation to the nation and inscribed into systems of reference, both locally and globally, and (4) how the trajectories of individuals shape the field. The focus is on artists in and from Lebanon using the forms of painting (Arabic: *lawha*/لوحة) and sculpture.

This year started with the completion of the initial ontology of the database and digital platform (DDP), developed during the first year of the project and installed on the open source Omeka-S software adapted by the University of Bologna's Dh.arc. Monique Bellan gives insights into the database and its knowledge structure in her recent publication "Modern art from the Arab region – Digitization as a chance? The research and database project LAWHA as a case study". *magazén*. Vol. 3–No. 2, December 2022. The DDP has thus moved into a testing phase. The whole LAWHA team is participating in this endeavour. The team has expanded this year to include Ashraf Osman (PhD Candidate, focusing on canon formation and minority representation) and Çiğdem İvren (researcher, focusing on artistic production during the Civil War) – next to Nadia von Maltzahn (PI), Monique Bellan (senior researcher, in charge of the DDP and focusing on exhibition practices and critique) and Flavia Elena Malusardi (PhD Candidate, focusing on Dar el Fan). In October and November, Elisa Nobel-Dilaty joined LAWHA as an intern, supporting the team in their research and getting an insight into the DDP.

In partnership with the American University of Beirut and the Global (De)Centre, LAWHA co-organised a summer school exploring the topic of biography/sīra in June 2022, entitled Moving Biography. The team grew together in two international conferences in which LAWHA had proposed panels that were very well received. At the Deutscher Orientalistentag in Berlin in September, LAWHA presented papers in a panel exploring some of the cultural infrastructures that have contributed to the making of Lebanon's art world in the twentieth century, focusing in particular on the period between early independence and the end of the civil war. In a conference organised by the University of North Texas, al Mawrid Arab Center for the Study of Art, NYU Abu Dhabi and the Association for Modern and Contemporary Art of the Arab World, Iran, and Turkey (AMCA), LAWHA's panel analysed the nuances of artistic production and its reception throughout the 1980s in Lebanon by inter-relating context and artistic production. Whereas the so-called post-war generation of artists engaged extensively with the aftermath and memory of the civil war, in the midst of war artists had different approaches in their engagement.

# Lebanon's Art World at Home and Abroad

NADIA VON MALTZAHN

OCTOBER 2020 – SEPTEMBER 2025

(ON PARENTAL LEAVE MAY 2021 – MAY)

My long-term research within LAWHA revolves around the project's main research questions. It is divided into three parts, namely education, group exhibitions and the impact of the political, social and economic environment on the art world and its protagonists. It starts by looking at education at home, both formally in post-independent Lebanon's newly formed art departments such as the Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts, AUB's art department or the Institute of Fine Arts at the Lebanese University, and informally in artist studios such as those of Georges Cyr (1881–1964) or Guvder (1923–2016), to examine the shaping of a profession in terms of artistic education. Many artists completed at least part of their education abroad, often in Paris, Rome and Florence, or elsewhere in Europe and North America, but also in the Soviet Union and Egypt. What role these artistic and intellectual exchanges played within the wider trajectory of the artists' careers will be investigated.

In the second part, group exhibitions will be analysed in their context to allow us to reflect on global networks, the relationship between art and politics, and what image of Lebanon various cultural actors wanted to portray. I will look at group exhibitions between the 1950s and 1990s. At home these include the salons of the Ministry of National Education and Fine Arts, the Sursock Museum salons as well as a selection of exhibitions such as the 1977 exhibition organised by Dar el Fan or the "Friends of Charbel" exhibition at Galerie DAMO and in Rome in 1977. Abroad, further exhibitions include the 1957 exhibition of contemporary art of Lebanon organised by the Soviet artists' union in Moscow, the 1974 exhibition organised by the Lebanese Cenacle in Damascus, and the 1989 exhibition "Lebanon – the artist's view" in London. Looking at the history of Lebanon in the period under study through seminal art exhibitions each with their own agenda lets us understand the dynamics of local, regional and global politics through a new prism. This leads me to the third part, which focuses on the interplay between context and artistic production. Here, questions around the impact of war and experiences of exile and migration come into play, but also time. The conventional periodisation of the so-called "golden era" up to the outbreak of the civil war, the civil war and the post-war period will be questioned by looking at how the political, social and economic environment impacted day-to-day artistic production. I am also working on a number of papers looking at specific aspects of the overarching questions, such as the use of archives and ephemera in writing art history, or what role friendships and networks play in Lebanon's art world.



**NADIA VON MALTZAHN** is the Principal Investigator of the European Research Council-funded project Lebanon's Art World at Home and Abroad (LAWHA), which started in October 2020. She joined the OIB in 2013, first as a research associate (2013–2018) before being appointed deputy director (2018–2020, partly on parental leave). She holds a DPhil and an MSt in Modern Middle Eastern Studies from St Antony's College, Oxford, and a BA Honours in Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies from King's College, Cambridge. Her research interests include cultural policies, artistic practices and the circulation of knowledge. Nadia is the author of "The Syria-Iran Axis: Cultural diplomacy and international relations in the Middle East" (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013/2015), and a number of edited volumes such as "The Art Salon in the Arab Region: Politics of taste-making" (Beirut: Orient-Institut Beirut, 2018), co-edited with Monique Bellan. Her works have been published in a number of journals including "Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East", "Quaderni storici", "Manazir", "Middle East Topics & Arguments", and the "Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication".

#### PUBLICATIONS

**"Dear Tutu: A Letter by Palestinian Artist Vladimir Tamari on Exile, Friendship and Globalisation".** Static: Thoughts and Research from Global dis:Connect 2 (1). München [FORTHCOMING].

**"Kunstgeschichtliche Forschungspraxis in globalen Kontexten".** Peter Krieger, Zeynep Kuban, Nadia von Maltzahn and Burcu Dogramaci. Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte, vol. 85, no. 1, pp.3–12, 2022.

<https://doi.org/10.1515/ZKG-2022-1002>

**ALL IS NOT GLITTER Review of "Beirut and the Golden Sixties: A Manifesto of Fragility".** Berlin, Gropius-Bau, 25 March–12 June 2022. Lyon, 14 September–31 December 2022.

Regards – Revue Des Arts Du Spectacle, (28), pp.177–190.

<https://journals.usj.edu.lb/regards/article/view/789>

**Review of Zeina Maasri: Cosmopolitan Radicalism. The Visual Politics of Beirut's Global Sixties.** Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2020. H-Soz-u-Kult (29 July).

<http://dx.doi.org/10.25673/101539>

# Art Galleries in Beirut during the 1960s and 1970s // Shaping identity

MONIQUE BELLAN

MARCH 2021 – MARCH 2025

When Gallery One opened in Beirut in 1963, private art galleries were still rare and exhibitions mostly taking place in hotels, cultural centres, and other spaces that were not primarily dedicated to art display. Founded by Helen and Yusuf al-Khal, Gallery One was the first permanent art gallery that not only introduced the public to emerging Lebanese artists, but also to Iraqi, Syrian, Egyptian and other Arab artists. The exhibition of paintings by Iraqi artist Saleh Jumaie (FIGURE) that took place at the gallery in 1968 is only one example of numerous exhibitions showcasing avant-garde art from the region. In Saleh Jumaie's works shown at the gallery, the ancient and archaic meet a modernist, abstract rendering, or as Jabra Ibrahim Jabra writes in the exhibition catalogue: "Jumaie cannot be entirely 'decorative': his expressionism is vital".

Both Helen and Yusuf al-Khal stood for modernist approaches in art (and poetry) and a particular interest in Arab artists. This was at a time when Beirut was the acclaimed cultural centre of the region with artists, writers and intellectuals from neighboring Arab countries being actively involved in the many aesthetic, literary, and political debates and initiatives. As such, they contributed to Beirut's image as a cosmopolitan city that was – at least theoretically – open to whoever aspired to become part of it.

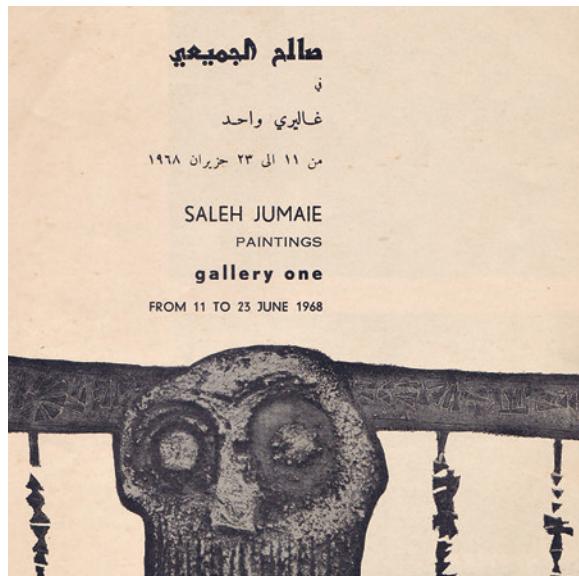
Another gallery operating in a similar spirit was Contact Gallery, founded in 1972 by Waddah Faris, César Nammour, and Mireille Tabet. The featured artists were mainly Lebanese and Arab, but included a considerable number of international artists as well. Both spaces offered a platform for exchange among artists, writers, and intellectuals. While Gallery One demarcates the beginning of a new era of galleries in Lebanon, Contact Gallery continues these efforts by highlighting "contact" as its driving force. The two galleries succeeded in broadening the local and regional artistic canon and shaping an identity that was both Arab and Lebanese. These efforts were underpinned by a shared modernist perspective. They also played a role in promoting certain art forms and techniques such as lithography, graphics and print and contributed in enhancing an aesthetic and art historical consciousness through exchanges among artists, art critics and the public.



**MONIQUE BELLAN** is senior researcher in LAWHA since 2021. She previously worked as a research associate at the Orient-Institut Beirut (2013–2019) before joining the Arab-German Young Academy in Berlin. She also worked at the collaborative research centre Aesthetic Experience and the Dissolution of Artistic Limits at Freie Universität Berlin and the Performing Arts Section of the Academy of Arts in Berlin. She holds a PhD in Arabic Studies from Freie Universität Berlin, an MA in Islamic Studies, Sociology and Political Science from the University of Bonn, and an MA in Library and Information Science from Humboldt Universität zu Berlin. Within LAWHA she focuses in particular on exhibition practices, art critique and the database and digital platform (DDP). Monique is the author of *dismember remember: Das anatomische Theater von Lina Saneh und Rabih Mroué* (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag 2013), and has co-edited *The Art Salon in the Arab Region: Politics of taste-making* (Beirut: Orient-Institut Beirut 2018), together with Nadia von Maltzahn, and the volume *Surrealism in North Africa and Western Asia: Crossings and Encounters* (Beirut: Orient-Institut Beirut 2021), together with Julia Drost.

#### PUBLICATIONS

"Modern art from the Arab region – Digitization as a chance? The research and database project LAWHA as a case study".  
magazén. Vol. 3–No. 2, December 2022.



Title page of exhibition catalogue. Saleh Jumaie at Gallery One, 11–23 June 1968.

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# The Golden Age of Janine The Red //

## The shaping of a Lebanese identity at Dar el Fan in Beirut

FLAVIA ELENA MALUSARDI

SEPTEMBER 2021 – AUGUST 2024

My doctoral research investigates the role of culture in shaping identities in the context of postcolonial Lebanon. Founded by Janine Rubeiz in 1967 and active until 1975, Dar el Fan w-el Adab (House of Arts and Literature) was a non-profit, polyvalent cultural space in Beirut where artists, journalists, thinkers, and politicians could meet, socialize and discuss their work. Often considered to be the first effective Lebanese cultural centre in what is labelled as the Golden Age of the Lebanese capital, Dar el Fan held a wide array of events such as conferences, exhibitions, movie screenings and musical concerts. I aim at understanding the role of Dar el Fan within the local cultural scene as well as at reading the cultural programme of the space and its reception against the backdrop of deep historical and political transformations happening in the region as well as globally.

In 2022, I gathered information on Dar el Fan through previously published literature, archival material and oral history. The OIB library has provided useful volumes on the history of the arts in Lebanon and in the Arab world. The Sursock Museum opened its archives to me, as did MACAM up in Aalita. Here, I was able to collect press cuts, photos of exhibition openings and artworks, invitation cards and unpublished articles. Artists Fadi Ziadeh, Nicole Harfouche and Jamil Molaeb shared with me their memories of Dar el Fan, recalling their involvement and activities at the space. These interviews could establish an important vantage point from which to reconstruct and understand the life of Dar el Fan in a context as fragile as the Lebanese one.

Throughout the research I became particularly interested in the figure of Janine Rubeiz and in her biography as key in understanding the birth and the development of the cultural programme of Dar el Fan. Her daughter Nadine Begdache, now owner of Janine Rubeiz Gallery, told me how her mother, a well-educated, middle-class lady, was not only passionate about art, poetry and theatre but also a staunch leftist and an active member of associations for women's rights and of the Progressive Socialist Party of Kamal Jumblatt. In her career as an advocate of the arts, Rubeiz fostered relations and collaborations with other cultural spaces and foreign centres in Beirut to present a diverse cultural offer with the hope of shaping a Levantine identity where Nasserism, decolonisation and cultural openness could meet in a cosmopolitan environment.



**FLAVIA ELENA MALUSARDI** is a PhD candidate in History of Art as part of the LAWHA project, with an international position between Università Cà Foscari (Venice) and OIB Orient-Institut Beirut (Beirut). Her project investigates the role of gallerist Janine Rubeiz and her informal space Dar Al Fann (1967–1976) within the Lebanese cultural panorama. She holds a Master's degree in History of Art and Architecture of the Islamic Middle East from SOAS School of Oriental and African Studies (London) and an MFA in Visual Cultures and Curatorial Practice from Accademia di Brera (Milan). Her work focuses on the modern and contemporary arts and visual culture of the Middle East and North Africa, with an interest in archival and collecting practices within post-colonial contexts.



Sketch of Dar el Fan  
by Jad Tabet,  
June 2023. Gifted  
by Jad Tabet to  
Flavia Malusardi.

# Life Otherwise //

## The (hi)story of art in (spite of) Lebanon

ASHRAF OSMAN

SEPTEMBER – AUGUST 2025

The Lebanese arts scene, as emblematic as it is of the many fault lines that the country grapples with, seems to have escaped the rigid patriarchy that permeates Lebanon's legal framework; that is to say that women are well represented, both as artists and curators, in it. In "The Museum as an Egalitarian Space? Women artists in Beirut's Sursock Museum in the 1960s and 1970s", Nadia von Maltzahn argues that "Lebanon seems to provide a useful case-study for the claim that strong institutions can prevent women (and other groups who do not hold power) from creating great art". The essay concludes, "that the Salon d'Automne provided an egalitarian space, meaning that gender played no role in the selection of artists".

While it is laudable that women artists and some minority artists (such as those of Armenian origin) were given appropriate recognition there, they were relatively advantaged "sub-clusters". My research will examine the representation of women and minorities (ethnic, sectarian, sexual, etc.) in the Sursock Museum mainly during the pre-War and War era (1960s–1980s), guided by two main questions: (1) What was the dominant identitarian narrative of the pre-War Lebanese state? (2) Viewed through the lens of canon-formation, was the Sursock Museum a significant institutional departure from that narrative?

This research will consider the Sursock Museum as a case in point due to the canon-making status that the museum has historically had in Lebanon's arts scene. Sursock may not exactly have been a governmental institution, but it arguably acted as a de facto establishment, given the lack of strong art institutions in Lebanon. It is instructive to conduct this exercise due to the intricate nexus connecting art, identity, and politics.



**ASHRAF OSMAN** is a PhD candidate in History of Art as part of the LAWHA project, with an international position between Università Cà Foscari (Venice) and Orient-Institut Beirut (OIB). He holds a Master of Advanced Studies in Curating from the Zurich University of the Arts (Switzerland) and a Master of Architecture from Syracuse University (New York). His diverse background and practice encompass olfactory art, socially-engaged art, and the architectural and urbanistic memory of the Lebanese War. Ashraf has curated several scent art projects at international biennales and museums, and lectured on the cultural history of smell at universities in Europe. He is also a registered architect in the US, where he practiced architecture at award-winning firms, and taught design at Philadelphia University. He is on the scientific committee of experts for an upcoming exhibition at the Institut du monde arabe in Paris.



Exhibition view  
"Beyond Ruptures, a Tentative Chronology"  
(2023), curated by  
Karina El Helou,  
research and timeline  
by Ashraf Osman.  
Photo Walid Rashid.

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NICOLAS IBRAHIM  
SURSOCK MUSEUM

# The Art Production of Lebanon's Civil War Period

ÇİĞDEM İVREN

OCTOBER – JUNE 2023

My research topic investigates how the civil war (1975–1990) restricted, re-shaped and nurtured art production in Lebanon. It aims to fill a gap in art historical accounts on Lebanese art. Despite a growing body of literature in this field, the civil war period is almost exclusively bypassed. The public is more familiar with artworks from the so-called "Golden Age" of Beirut's artistic landscape through museum or gallery exhibitions, in line with surveys of modern Lebanese art that only cover the period up to 1975.

Also treated extensively are contemporary art practices since the years following the civil war, produced by artists who lived in exile or returned to Lebanon in the early 1990s.

Breaking with this canonised periodisation of pre-war, war and post-war art, I am exploring the missing links in the development of Lebanese art and the formation of new art styles, particularly in the 1980s. These connections enable a new evaluation of post-war art as well, which must be considered in continuity with works of the wartime period.

My approach hereby is the reconstruction of the cultural infrastructure and the exhibition landscape. Including a biographical perspective, I examine the ways in which the artist's background, social networks and personal experiences influenced their work and approaches towards art within the wider context of the civil war. During this process, I identified the civil strife as a trajectory for the formation of local conceptual art in the context of absent war discourses. Within the LAWHA project I have been focusing on other artistic media such as print making and watercolor renderings, as they provide an intriguing juxtaposition in terms of style, motives, and quantity of exhibitions. This medium based approach allowed for identifying various trends on the art market and the further exploration of the taste-making and canon shaping structures in Beirut's art circuits. My findings are based on archival material and sources of oral history that I conduct during my study trips in Lebanon. By the end of my research position at LAWHA the contribution of an article and the co-organisation of a workshop in Beirut are intended.



ÇİĞDEM İVREN joined LAWHA in October 2022 and is a PhD candidate at the Free University Berlin. She is also a research assistant at the chair of Islamic Art and Archaeology at the Otto-Friedrich University, Bamberg, where she obtained her Master's degree. Her dissertation investigates the cultural infrastructure and art production during the Lebanese Civil War (1975–90) with a focus on artists and institutions outside established narratives. Within the LAWHA project she is focusing on certain artistic media in the context of their exhibition locations and platforms. Further, she is assisting the maintenance of the database and digital platform. İvren has taught courses in Islamic art, modern and contemporary Middle Eastern art as well as representation and curatorial practices of art from the MENA region.



Jamil Molaeb, Büşala  
Beyrüt, 1981, woodcut  
print, 56 x 76 cm.

# *Activities of LAWHA*

25 FEBRUARY "**A Thoughtful Exaggeration: Lebanon's early independent period through the eyes of Diran**" (NADIA VON MALTZAHN), invited speaker to the Templeton Colloquium in Art History "Of Satire and Bigotry: Press culture, women's rights, and liminal modernity in West Asia", UC DAVIS, CA.

30 MARCH / 21 APRIL / 1–8 JUNE **Moving Biography Summer School** (SEE ENTRY UNDER SUMMER SCHOOL).

29 APRIL "**Boycotting the Museum: Power relations and canon-building in Lebanon**" (NADIA VON MALTZAHN), invited speaker to the session "The Construction of Art Canons in and around the Nicolas Sursock Museum" as part of the cycle "Visiting (In)visible Museums", Sursock Museum Beirut.

15 JUNE "**Ein Brief des Künstlers Vladimir Tamari: Exil, Freundschaft und die Rolle von Ephemera in der Kunstgeschichtsschreibung**" (NADIA VON MALTZAHN), invited speaker to the Workshop "dis:connected objects", organised by the Kate Hamburger Research Centre global dis:connect, München.

2–5 AUGUST "**Shaping women's identities between postcolonialism and cosmopolitanism. The case of Dar el Fan in Beirut**" (FLAVIA MALUSARDI), participation at the international summer school "Postcolonial interruptions? Decolonisation and global dis:connectivity", organised by the Kate Hamburger Research Centre global dis:connect, München.

13 SEPTEMBER "Cultural Infrastructures in Lebanon's Art World", Panel as part of the Deutscher Orientalistentag DOT 2022, Freie Universität Berlin.

PRESENTATIONS

**Artist Studios as Places of Encounter: Georges Cyr and Guvder's studios in pre-war Beirut** (NADIA VON MALTZAHN)

**Art Galleries in Beirut during the 1960s and 1970s: Shaping identity** (MONIQUE BELLAN)

**Between Cultural Activism and Commerce: The cultural infrastructure of Beirut during the Lebanese Civil War** (ÇİĞDEM İVREN)

16 SEPTEMBER "Lebanon's Art World at Home and Abroad (LAWHA) – Database and Digital Platform", Workshop session as part of the Deutscher Orientalistentag DOT 2022, Freie Universität Berlin.

3–5 NOVEMBER "Lebanon's Art World at Home and Abroad in the 1980s: Artistic production and reception in times of war", Panel as part of the AMCA conference "1980s: Representational Pressures, Departures, and Beginnings", University of North Texas, Denton.

PRESENTATIONS

**Continuity and Beginnings? Reading Lebanon's 1980s art exhibitions through the press** (MONIQUE BELLAN)

**Off the Mainstream: War motifs and the medium of printmaking** (ÇİĞDEM İVREN)  
**"When the Wood is Fragrant, the Bond is Stronger": Tapestry and Lebanon (late 1970s–1980s)** (JESSICA GERSCHULTZ)

**Fadi Barrage: "To think things out in painting"** (NADIA VON MALTZAHN)

# *Affiliated Researchers & their Projects*

**AGNES RAMEDER** University of Zurich

*The 'Martyr' (Šahīd) in Contemporary Iranian Artphotography: Writing Alternative Historiographies* //

SEPTEMBER 2019 – JULY

**ARKADIUSZ PLONKA** The Jagiellonian University

*Unknown traces of literary heritage in Lebanese dialects* // NOVEMBER – DECEMBER

**CAMILLO STUBENBERG** Cornell University

*Energy transition as last resort: The adoption of decentralised renewable energy technologies in the wake of state absence and fossil fuel shortages in Lebanon* // NOVEMBER – JUNE 2023

**ROSY AZAR BEYHOM** Westfälische Wilhelms Universität

*From Arab to Latin: Moving sciences of music around the Mediterranean* // NOVEMBER – NOVEMBER 2023

**SANA BOU ANTOUN** Sorbonne University

*The conceptual and methodological foundations of Quranic Studies* // OCTOBER – OCTOBER 2023

# *Cooperations & Third-party Funding*

INTERNATIONAL WORKING GROUP // 2019–2022 "Relations in the Ideoscape: Middle Eastern Students in the Eastern Bloc, 1950's–1991", within the sub-project, "Areas, Actors, and Knowledge Relationships" of the three-year research project "Knowledge Unbound: Internationalisation, networking, innovation in and by the Max Weber Stiftung", funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and in collaboration with the German Historical Institute (GHI) Warsaw and the GHI Moscow.

INTERNATIONAL STANDING WORKING GROUP // 2019–2022 "Medialization and Empowerment", part of the three-year research project "Knowledge Unbound: Internationalisation, networking, innovation in and by the Max Weber Stiftung", funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), led by German Historical Institute (GHI) London and in collaboration with the MWS India Branch Office, the OIB, and the GHI Washington.

RESEARCH PROJECT // 2020–2025 "Lebanon's Art World at Home and Abroad: Trajectories of artists and artworks in/from Lebanon since 1943" (LAWHA), funded by an ERC Starting Grant under agreement 850760 and hosted at the OIB. Ca' Foscari University of Venice is an additional beneficiary of LAWHA.

ATHAR CENTER // SINCE 2021 Athar Center is a cultural heritage preservation center that was founded in Tyre in 2021 by "athar – preservation & archiving project". The project aims to collect, preserve, digitize and make accessible photographs and documents related to the history of Tyre and the wider Jabal Amel region in South Lebanon. Establishing the center was made possible with the generous support of the Gerda Henkel Foundation, and the creation of the website was made possible thanks to the Arab-German Young Academy of Sciences and Humanities (AGYA).





# Publications

**Bibliotheca Islamica** 104

**Beiruter Texte und Studien** 106

**Orient-Institut Studies** 109



# Bibliotheca Islamica



*Bibliotheca Islamica* (BI) is the OIB's platform for the critical edition of mainly Arabic (but also Persian and Turkish) manuscripts. The series dates back to 1929 when Hellmut Ritter edited the *Kitāb maqālāt al-islamiyyīn wa-ihtilāf al-muṣallīn* of Abū I-Ḥasan 'Alī al-Āš'arī, a seminal text on dogmatic positions in the early Islamic period. Since then, the OIB has published close to sixty titles in this series. Among the most prominent are the thirty-volume biographical lexicon *Kitāb al-wāfi bi-l-wafayāt* (BI 6) by Ṣalāh al-Dīn Ḥalīl b. Aibak al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363) and the monumental history of Egypt and the Syrian lands entitled *Badā'i' al-zuhūr fī waqā'i' al-duhūr* by Ibn Iyās (d. 1448/1524) (BI 5). Both editions have recently been completed with the publication of extensive and detailed indexes.

The OIB is adopting an open-access policy. New publications of the BI series are made available in electronic format (PDF), without an embargo period.

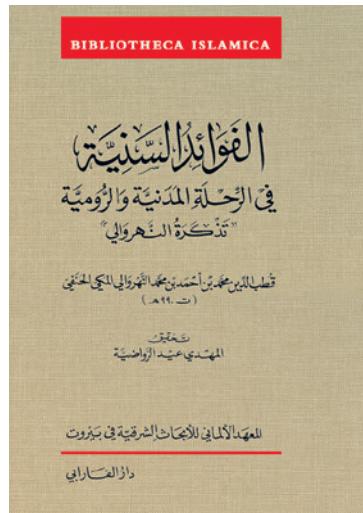
All published titles of the series (even those that are out of print) can be displayed page per page or downloaded in their entirety in PDF format from the OIB's website via the links to the MENAdoc repository, hosted by the Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt in Halle.

In 2021 we published *Sukkardān as-Sultān* by Ibn Abī Ḥaḡala ala (BI 48), the notebook (*Ayyām*) of the Aleppan weaver Kamāl ad-Dīn (BI 59), and *Šuđūr ad-dahab* by Ibn Arfa' Ra's (BI 62).

The publication team (academic editor Barraq Zakariya, publication consultant Bettina Fischer-Genz and research associates Fatih Ermış and Abdallah Soufan) and the Institute's Director Birgit Schäbler also worked on an Arabic edition of her book *Moderne Muslime. Ernest Renan und die Geschichte der ersten Islamdebatte 1883* with the Arabic title *Muslimūn ḥidātūn: al-Afġānī wa-Kamāl Nāmiq wa-Bāyazituf yaruddūn'alā Rīnān* which was published in 2022.

**An-Nahrawālī's al-Fawā'id as-Saniyyah fī Rihlah al-Madaniyyah  
wa ar-Rūmiyyah**

Edited by Mahdī Rawādiyyah



Al-Fawā'id as-Saniyyah saniyyah is a kind of personal memoirs. It contains accounts of six journeys that an-Nahrawālī (born in Mecca in 917/1511, of Indian origin and died in 990/1582) made between Mecca and Medina, as well as a journey he made to Istanbul. The book is very useful for all historians of the period, as it contains a vast amount of information about places and people an-Nahrawālī encountered on his travels.

Beirut, Dār al-Farābī, 2022  
ISBN: 9786144851890

# *Beiruter Texte und Studien*

BTS

*Beiruter Texte und Studien* (BTS) is the OIB's peer-reviewed book series for research on the historic and contemporary Middle East. Since its inception in 1964, the series has published around 140 books and has served as a platform for innovative studies. With an established focus on Arabic language and literature, history, society and geography of the Levant, and the provinces of the Ottoman Empire, BTS covers a broad spectrum of themes, methods and periods within the wider region.

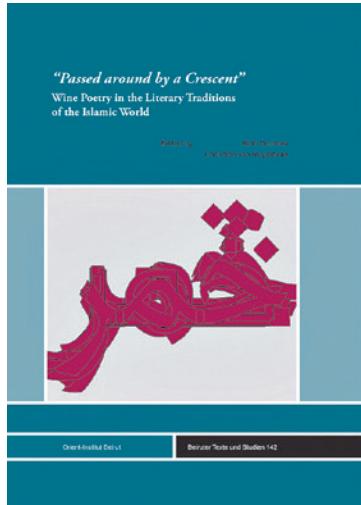
It documents the rich and diverse history of Middle Eastern Studies and encourages advancements in the field. The series publishes monograph studies, OIB conference proceedings, and other collective volumes in German, English, Arabic and French.

BTS 142

**"Passed around by a Crescent"**

Wine poetry in the literary traditions of the Islamic world

Edited by Kirill Dmitriev / Christine van Ruymbeke



Würzburg, Ergon Verlag, 2022  
ISBN: 9783956509087

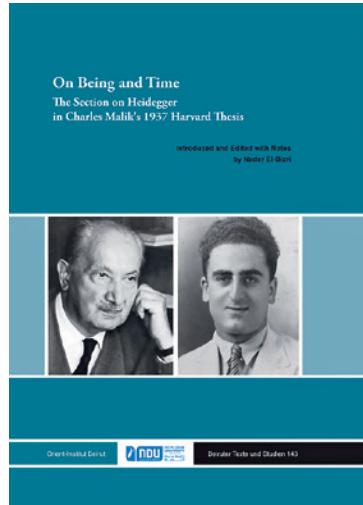
This publication explores the presence of the shared heritage and interdependence of poetry composed around the theme of wine in diverse literary traditions of the Islamic world. The specialist contributions discuss multiple aspects of the literary polyphony of wine in the pre-modern Arabic, Persian, Hebrew, Ottoman Turkish, and Urdu literatures during the first millennium of the Islamic era. Presenting these together and in dialogue with one another, the volume offers a comparative perspective on a long, varied, but singularly mutual tradition. It traces how this poetry develops, flourishes and matures across linguistic and geographic, confessional and social, aesthetic and artistic boundaries within the regions of the religiously and culturally diverse Islamic world, from al-Andalüs to India.

## BTS 143

### On Being and Time

The Section on Heidegger in Charles Malik's 1937 Harvard Thesis

Edited by Nader El-Bizri



Würzburg, Ergon Verlag, 2022  
ISBN: 978395650

This volume, which was published in cooperation with the Notre Dame University Louaize, contains the first printed edition with notes and commentaries of the section on Martin Heidegger's 'Sein und Zeit' from Charles Malik's 1937 philosophy doctoral thesis at Harvard University. Malik's pioneering text stands as one of the earliest Anglophone analytic, phenomenological, and hermeneutic engagements with Heidegger's first major work. Its historical significance is furthermore accentuated in terms of being composed in a critical period during the development of Heidegger's thought and praxis at the time when Malik studied under him in Freiburg. These aspects are moreover enriched by Malik's own interpretation of 'Sein und Zeit' through theological perspectives, which also reflect the depths of his commitments to manifold civilisational confluences that underpinned his existential moods and cultural values as a modern Lebanese Christian thinker.

# *Orient-Institut Studies*

## OIS

*Orient-Institut Studies* (OIS) combines regional and transregional perspectives in Middle Eastern and other Area and Global Studies. OIS is a digital-only publication hosted by [perspectivia.net](http://perspectivia.net). The digital format facilitates the integration of images and diverse audio-visual material. Its open-access policy makes OIS particularly accessible.





# Events

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# *Workshops & Conferences*

# Relations in the Ideoscope // Middle Eastern students in the Eastern Bloc (1950s to 1991)

24–26 FEBRUARY, BUDAPEST (CEU DEMOCRACY INSTITUTE)  
5–9 JULY, BERLIN (EUME)

These three-days conferences, organised in cooperation by the OIB in cooperation with the CEU Democracy Institute and EUME - Forum Transregionale Studien, provided three to five Sessions each day regarding Middle eastern students in the eastern bloc (1950s to 1991) with an afterward discussion. Taking an actor-centric viewpoint this workshop discusses a specific group of mobile actors from the Middle East in Eastern Europe and the whole so-called Eastern Bloc at large, looking at the experiences and life trajectories of students, former students, professors, public intellectuals and artists who lived and studied in the metropolises of the Eastern Bloc, and vice versa. It brings together various disciplines (history, sociology, anthropology, Islamic studies) and different case studies in a number of socialist and Middle Eastern countries and micro-historical settings which all analyze how Middle Easterners and Eastern Europeans built up lives and careers by dealing with each other personally and intellectually in various and complex ways. The unique methodological angle of oral histories and analysis of productions from dissertations to films, paintings, dictionaries, teaching materials, features and journal articles give insights into the inner workings of knowledge production and consumption in hybrid settings. The personal relationships and intellectual inter-relations between Soviet socialist teachings and realities, and Arab, Turkish, Iranian or Kurdish national and modernist aspirations engender a fascinating and complex ideological space, characterised by contradictions and tensions yet also infusing an oftentimes strong and long-lasting sense of familiarity and belonging.



# Typologies in the Islamic Ethical Discourse

10–12 MARCH, BEIRUT

The Orient-Institut Beirut and the American University of Beirut jointly organised a workshop on "Typologies in the Islamic Ethical Discourse". Various typologies from the pre-modern texts of ethics including ethnic, religious, societal, gendered and historical typologies have been extensively discussed in five panels for three days in hybrid form. Eleven out of fifteen speakers were physically present in Beirut. All panels have been livestreamed to achieve a wide audience worldwide. The workshop has been organised by Fatih Ermiş (OIB), Bilal Orfali (AUB) and Enrico Boccaccini (OIB). The spectrum of the speakers ranged from Canada and USA to Germany, UK, the Netherlands, Turkey and Lebanon.

In this pioneering endeavor for the first time the wider ethics discourse has been reevaluated from the perspective of typologies. The workshop was not limited to the sources, which are formally defined as ethics books but extended its scope to include philosophical, literary and mystical sources like *Ikhwān al-Safā'*, *Mathnawī*, *Gulistān* or *Dīwān-i Hāfiẓ*. The relation between the use of typologies and the understanding of time and history have been discussed through how exemplary and stereotypical characters are used, modified and redefined in pre-modern Islamic texts. It has been ascertained that the typological characters do not need to correspond to reality, and they are rather stereotypes dominating Islamic literature as well as philosophical texts.

Pre-modern Islamic writings on ethics are populated by a host of exemplary and stereotypical characters who function as shorthand for certain models of behaviors. Playing well-defined roles in narratives and aphorisms, these types come with sets of traits that were commonly recognised and anticipated by the contemporary audience. While the presence of typologies in Islamic texts is frequently acknowledged, they remain a largely untapped source for the understanding of the Islamic ethical discourse. Referring to the relationship between recurring elements that define each other by partaking in the same continuum of meaning, typologies shed light on a variety of issues, such as the discursive mechanisms that governed the writing and reading processes of texts on ethics, the pedagogical theories and practices that underlie them and the writings' literary nature. Through discussions on how exemplary and stereotypical characters are used, modified and redefined in pre-modern Islamic texts, the workshop investigated a range of typologies in the ethical discourse in light of its historical and intellectual developments across all relevant genres.

# Revolt in(g) Collapse // Protest and Everyday Adjustments in Contemporary Lebanon

20–21 JUNE, BEIRUT

Since the social movements in the fall of 2019, Lebanon has experienced many crises and is still in the process of the downfall of its economy – what scientific questions can we address about this situation? How can grounded and comprehensive social sciences unfold the many layers of events, responses, tries and shifts since then, especially at the level the personal and collective experiences, the mundane and the everyday – leaving aside (geo)political considerations and elite-centred analysis? How can academia intersect with militant and expert knowledge, and contribute to the drawing of new interpretations, comparisons and imaginings?

This event, convened jointly by ERC Dream and at OIB through our researcher Pierre France, articulated the presentation of new materials and fieldworks on contentious and subversive practices, revolutionary identities in Lebanon, and a critical and reflexive re-appraisal of some ideas about this crisis, without giving in to the temptation of despair and defeat: it tackled its roots and sequences, the particular role of some social very vocal categories (youth, women), the apparent silence of some others (sects), the dynamics between Beirut and other cities, or between urban and rural, among many. Through roundtables and open discussions – at the OIB, Mansion and the AUB – it tackled the various ways of writing through and about the uprising, then and now, in and outside of academia; whether they be films, personal diaries, academic or journalistic writing, music, performances, or arts.

# Reckoning with God //

## Divine-human relations after the Arab Spring

30 JUNE – 1 JULY, BEIRUT

By some recollections, the Arab Spring was characterised by God's presence. "God is with us", chanted some as they protested in the streets. "God is great", proclaimed others as blood was shed. Remembered differently, the events of 2010–11 could only be the product of God's absence. Where was God when an impoverished Tunisian street vendor, overcome by the injustices of his life, set himself on fire? Which images of God were backgrounded when Egyptians united in their demand for "bread, freedom, justice?" It would seem that, in presence as much as absence, God was a force to contend with during the Arab Spring. Islamist movements, populist uprisings, entrenched regimes, rebellious youth, desperate breadwinners, and secular intellectuals were among those who found themselves – in some form or fashion – reckoning with God in these tumultuous times. At this closed workshop, coordinated by Joud Alkorani, a group of established and early-career scholars met at the OIB to explore the aftermath of this human reckoning with the divine, asking how we as scholars might reckon with these exchanges in our own analyses.



# Avicennism(s) in Context // The Formation of Post-Classical Philosophy in Islam

22–23 JULY, BEIRUT / MÜNCHEN

The Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München and the OIB jointly hosted a workshop to examine various themes of post-classical philosophy in Islam with a focus on the Avicennan tradition and the reception of Ibn Sīnā in post-classical Islamic world. An increasing number of contributions by researchers and historians of philosophy have challenged the so-called conventional position that considered the post-classical Islamic era as a sort of dark age, in which Islamic thought entered a long decline. However, post-classical period of philosophy in the Islamic world still needs to receive further attention from scholars, of the sort that was included in this LMU-OIB Workshop. An essential question arised here of how to understand the post-Avicennan intertwined scheme of *falsafa*, *kalām* and *ḥikma*. What makes the post-classical Islamicate philosophers and theologians' engagement with the tradition of Greek philosophy unique and what differentiates them from their predecessors of classical Islam in this sense? Through the study, contextualisation, and treatment of major figures like Abū al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī (d. 1165), Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1210), Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (d. 1191), and Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 1274), in addition to others, the workshop presented an opportunity for discussing the nature of philosophy in the post-classical Islam.

By giving room for upcoming findings on metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and philosophical theology, the workshop aimed at a new assessment of the prevailing understanding of the relationship between philosophy and theology in the post-Avicennan period, while both challenging and taming the innovative debates on Islamicate intellectual history. This LMU-OIB Workshop was organised by Hussein Ibrahim, a doctoral researcher in Philosophy at LMU München and currently a visiting doctoral fellow at the Orient-Institut Beirut, and Hanif Amin Beidokhti, a postdoctoral research fellow in the ERC project "Animals in the Philosophy of the Islamic World" at LMU München.

# Coexistence Theology //

## Various Methods and Theoretical Approaches

26-27 JULY, CAIRO (OIB CAIRO OFFICE)

Religions with their norms and value systems cannot and must not be viewed in isolation because they are always within the dynamics of the relationship between humans and their environment, i.e., the environment and the social context. Humans, religion, and environment are interconnected triad in which they are interdependent and influence each other. The same applies to interreligious relationships in pluralistic societies. We invited papers that investigate interdependent relationships between people, religions and the environment from the perspective of social and political science, history, theology, anthropology and comparative religion, considering the temporal and spatial contexts to study the phenomenon from a historical perspective. In this regard, themes that were discussed included: coexistence of the supporters of different religions and cultures, various methods and theoretical approaches, social and religious visions of living together, marriage, education, conservation initiatives and local and regional historiography. This workshop was jointly organised by Ahmed M. F. Abd-Elsalam and Yasmin Amin.



# Labors of Love, Trials of Friendship //

## Challenges of the Modern Social Relation

29 SEPTEMBER – 1 OCTOBER, BEIRUT

Together with the American University of Beirut, and under the coordination of PhD Candidate and former OIB fellow Rita Barotta, the OIB hosted a three-days conference regarding a wide spectrum of fields, such as Psychoanalysis, History, Political Science/ International Relations, Theology, Sociology, European Philosophy and Islamic Philosophy. Relations and relationships lie at the heart of the personal, the social and the political. Yet, they are rarely research topics themselves – except in psycho-analysis, and the field of psychology at large. Love relationships, presumed to be the base of personal happiness are rarely a topic in the humanities and social sciences – yet, self-help literature on the topic abounds. It is not often considered that the common good of a given society, the rationale of good governance, may hinge on relationships of love and friendship.

While love relationships have been much relegated to the private sphere of individuals, we would like to argue that they are always already the work of the social on the individual and their successes and failures cannot be simply attributed to the individual psychological personalities of the subjects involved. Simply put, when relations don't work the blame is placed on mal-adapted individuals who are solely responsible for their unhappiness.

We argue that the question of relationships of love and friendship implies that they are always already social ones and hinge on conditions in the world that are conducive and not hindering to the establishment of 'successful' ('gelingende') relationships.

This conference concentrated on the concrete relationships of love and friendship – including the differences between them – which we think lie at the core of society. Bringing sociology, history, psychoanalysis and political thought together the event gathered contributions which thematize love and friendship relationships (and the difference between them) as social and political relationships in societies in East and West.





# Religious Pluralism in Lebanon and Germany

19 OCTOBER, BEIRUT

Lebanon and Germany are exceptions from a confessional point of view. Lebanon, in contrast to all other Middle Eastern countries, is characterised by a great diversity of similarly large religious, i.e. Christian and Muslim, and also confessional communities. Germany, unlike many other European countries, has had a high number of Protestant as well as Catholic Christians as citizens since the Reformation. Almost all other European countries have a clear Catholic or Protestant majority. While Lebanon is re-discussing the legally established confessional proportional representation based on religious diversity against the backdrop of a state crisis, the landscape in Germany has changed due to the growing number of Muslim fellow citizens.

Ziad Fahed (Notre Dame University – Louaize), Aydin Süer (Berlin Institute for Islamic Theology, Humboldt University of Berlin) and Elie al-Hindy (Adyan Foundation) discussed religious plurality in Lebanon and Germany with two Lebanese and one German speaker and also reflected on possible scenarios for the future. It came to the fore that in confessionally very different countries there are more occasions for communication and references to the others, but at the same time the question of belonging to the country is probably more pressing than in other states. The possibilities of discussing Germany and Lebanon together here brought many interesting research perspectives to light.

# Women against Violence against Women

22 NOVEMBER, BERLIN

For the fifth time, the Katholische Akademie in Berlin, the Society of Friends of the Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO), and the MENA Study Center of the Mae- cenata Foundation invited to a joint event on November 22nd. For the first time, the Orient-Institut Beirut figured as a cooperation partner as well. Sonja Hegasy (ZMO) moderated the evening. After a thematic introduction by Prof Udo Steinbach, three keynote speeches on the situation and the resistance of women in Iran, Turkey and in the Maghreb formed the cornerstone of the event.

Dr Azadeh Zamirirad (Deputy Research Group Leader Africa and Middle East Research Group, Stiftung für Wissenschaft und Politik) said about the situation in Iran: Women have been resisting on a daily basis for over four decades. Today's protests are merely an intensification of this resistance. The aim is to overthrow the current political and legal order and to create a new order. Although there is a strong civil society, there are no organisations or trade unions to mobilise and give impetus to the women's movement. Dr Hürcan Aslı Aksoy (Deputy Head of the Research Group Centre for Applied Turkish Studies/CATS, Stiftung für Wissenschaft und Politik) reported on the situation in Turkey: The situation in Turkey is characterised by a gap between the legal situation and reality. There are laws to protect women, but they are not always implemented, especially since the judiciary is dominated by men. There is also an increase in murders of women. In 2022 alone, 50% more murders of women were reported. The cases were not even brought to court because they were declared as suicides by the police. In Turkey, the women's movement is well organised and institutionalised. The increasingly authoritarian AKP government hinders activists in their work. In addition, the women's movement is co-opted by the authoritarian government through the establishment of its own pro-government women's organisations.

Dr Raja Sakrani (research coordinator at the Käte Hamburger Center for Advanced Study in the Humanities "Law as Culture" and jurist) added in general terms that women in the Arab-Islamic world embody the symbolic boundary between private and public space in a sacredly interpreted umma. During the event, similarities and differences between the countries were identified, and women were examined as civil society actors driving change.

# Religion, Religiosity and Society

11-12 DECEMBER, ALEXANDRIA / EGYPT

In the second conference of the research program "Discussing the interdependence between Humans, Religion and Environment" participants discussed the mutual influences between religion, religiosity, and society/environment through four main areas: (1) the Interdependence between the community of revelation to the initial form of Sharia, (2) societal transformations and their effects on reshaping religious laws (3) the jurisprudence (fiqh) of the current controversial issues regarding minorities, and the purposes (maqāṣid) towards a re-reading of Sharia (4) the contributions of religion to contemporary societal transformations. This workshop was jointly organised by Ahmed M.F. Abd-Elsalam and Yasmin Amin.



# The Qur'an Manuscript in its Artistic Context

16 DECEMBER, BEIRUT

This workshop brought together scholars working on the Qur'an and specifically interested in examining the relationship of the Qur'an manuscript to its artistic milieu of production. It was organised by Alya Karame. The speakers were invited to rethink the visual language of the Qur'an vis-a-vis other artistic modes of production. More specifically, the echoes of Qur'anic calligraphy and illumination with other crafts such as ceramics, metalwork, textiles, coins and architecture that suggest local aesthetic preferences but that also shed light on the production of the Qur'an, its artistic patronage and on the agency of its artists. By investigating the process of circulation and translation of Qur'anic motifs across media, the workshop moved the study of these artefacts beyond its codicological foundations towards a broader spatial and social anchoring of the book as object. The main questions that were asked were the following: Can we talk about the Qur'an manuscript influencing other arts or the opposite? Was the Qur'an manuscript an aesthetic reference? In other words, was it a transmitter or a receiver? Techniques across media were thoroughly explored, with a focus on the use of one motif across media. Issues of patronage, craftsmen relationships were among the subjects addressed.



# *Film Screening & Concert*

# Mastering the Oud a Tribute to Albert Mansour

28 JUNE, BEIRUT

From oud making to oud playing, this evening featured a screening of the film "Albert Mansour, the Oud Maker", directed by Fadi Yeni Turk & an audio listening session with Oussama Abd El Fattah. Some original records dating back to the first half of the 20th century pulled from the AMAR archives were enacted on the spot with an oud – whereas the film paid tribute to Albert Mansour, one of the most prominent contemporary oud makers in Lebanon and in the region, filming him throughout the process of oud-making from raw wood to the tuning of the strings in the final stage.

The co-host of this event – AMAR – is committed to the preservation and dissemination of traditional Arab music. Its archive currently consists of 300 wax cylinders and 1.000 78-rpm shellac records of rare music. They feature key musicians and their performance practices representative of the "Nahda" era before widespread commercialisation of Arab music substantially changed and marginalised these music traditions.



# *The German-Lebanese History Prize*



# Launch of the German-Lebanese History Prize

3 JUNE, BEIRUT

The German-Lebanese History Prize was launched on June 3rd at the OIB, in the presence of the Deputy Head of Mission of the German Embassy, Ms Katharina Lack. The award, initiated by OIB director Prof. Dr Birgit Schäbler, is sponsored by Rotary Club Bad Homburg, Germany, and Rotary Club Cedars, Beirut. The amount of 500 US dollars is to be granted to the best BA student paper (6000–8000 words) and the best MA student paper (8000–10 000 words), by students of history of Lebanese Universities in "Early modern to Current History of Lebanon and/or the Middle East", for the next three academic years. Professors of several universities, who will serve in the prize committee, as well as the presidents and members of both Rotary Clubs and further guests attended the launching ceremony. The Cello performance of Mounir Malahat and a reception in the OIB garden rounded out the evening in a pleasant atmosphere.



# *Photo Exhibition & Film Screening*

# Relations in the Ideoscape //

## Photo Exhibition and Film Screening at the OIB

7–8 FEBRUARY, BEIRUT

In the framework of the research project "Relations in the Ideoscape: Middle Eastern Students in the Eastern Bloc (1950's to 1991)", we exhibited photographs taken by the Palestinian photographer Mahmoud Dabdoub who came as a student from Lebanon to the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in 1981. After graduating in 1987, Dabdoub stayed in the GDR as a freelance photographer and focused on observing everyday situations. He captured his Arab and German friends and fellow students, coal carriers, truck drivers, road workers, cyclists, passers-by, neighbors, sales clerks or consumers with his camera. His pictures figure as visual testimonies which give insights into the life worlds of Arab migrant communities and Germans in the GDR equally. The opening of the photo exhibition was concluded by a screening of three short films made by Sudanese film directors trained in the Eastern Bloc on February 8.



# *Summer School*

# Moving Biography

KEYNOTE 1: 30 MARCH, BEIRUT (OIB) / KEYNOTE 2: 21 APRIL, BEIRUT (AUB)

SUMMER SCHOOL: 1–8 JUNE, BEIRUT (OIB, AUB, Sursock Museum, Beirut Art Center)

Organisers: Nadia von Maltzahn (LAWHA/OIB) / Sonja Mejcher-Atassi (AUB) / Kirsten Scheid (AUB)

Peggy Levitt (Wellesley College, Global (De)Centre)

Funded by the Volkswagen Stiftung

Moving Biography, a one-week international Summer School convened by LAWHA/Orient-Institut Beirut, the American University of Beirut (AUB) and the Global (De)Centre with the generous support of the Volkswagen-Stiftung, took place in Beirut/Lebanon from 1 to 8 June 2022. It brought together different perspectives to question disciplinary assumptions and decentre life writing. It focused on three main themes: (1) questions of data (2) the act of creation, and (3) the importance of the social and historical context of biographies. Moving Biography kicked off in March and April with two keynote events in the run up to the actual school in June.

Tarif Khalidi, Shaykh Zayed Professor Emeritus of Arabic and Islamic Studies at AUB, examined the biographical tradition in pre-Modern Arabic Literature from approximately the eight to the fifteenth centuries in the broadest term. In an engaging lecture at the OIB's library on 30 March, he sketched a short history of its evolution – including that of its technical terms such as *sira*, *sunna*, *tarjama* and more – and highlighted a number of important distinctions between biography, autobiography and hagiography.

The second keynote event, held on 21 April at AUB's Issam Fares Institute under the title of *Contemporary Innovations of Arab Biography*, was a conversation between the writer Jean Said Makdisi and the artist Lina Majdalani. Each reflected on her approaches to biographies, with special reference to their works *Teta, Mother, and Me* and *Biokhraphia*. The actual summer school that brought together 18 doctoral and post-doctoral researchers from Hong Kong to Buenos Aires and many places in-between, local and international faculty and the organizing committee in Beirut, turned out to be a real hub for rethinking the meaning and relevance of biography today. Organised around a combination of theoretical sessions, plenary talks, working sessions and field visits, it offered a platform for the participants to take stock of perceptions of biographies in 2022, absences, afterlives, receptions and deconstruction of biographies, the relationship of subjects/objects to materiality, questions of labeling and archives.



Summer School  
participants  
at the OIB.



# *Public Research Seminars*

# Vaccination in the Late Ottoman Empire

YEŞİM İŞİL ÜLMAN  
17 MARCH, BEIRUT

The nineteenth century was a period of reformation for the Ottoman Society as a whole; the determined efforts for modernisation beginning in the first decades had its reflections in the field of education, as well, with the establishment of many institutions to this effect. Among them an old palace school in Galata Saray at Pera (Istanbul) was modified and rebuilt to that aim, and the institution began to serve as the Imperial School of Medicine (Mekteb-i Tibbiye-i Adliye-i Şahane) (1838), named in honour of the Sultan Mahmud II, Adli, the Just and Equitable.

Even though it is originally a military medical school, this institution initiated public health services movement. The School not only produced but administered vaccination against contagious diseases such as smallpox on children and adults both muslim and non-muslim. They were vaccinated for free against smallpox every year by trained vaccinators. For instance, the number of vaccinated children (Turks, Armenians, Greeks, Jews, foreigners) in 1843 was 2295. The number rose to 12.000 three years later. Likewise the School encouraged the endorsement and participation of the Sultan in the promotion of the vaccination programme. Department of Pharmacology developed and distributed free medication.

The success of Galatasaray Medical School was mainly based on the State policy to support modernisation in the Ottoman Empire together with endorsing reformation in the education system that subserved revolutionary steps in medical education.

Reorganised and reformed to satisfy the needs of the society for covering the techniques and knowledge of contemporary medicine and the allied sciences, the School drastically increased its rate of providing qualified healthcare providers and addressing public health needs. Yearly reports allow us to follow this advancement quite clearly and learn more about this period of the School's history. Despite changing venues over the subsequent years, medical education continued until present time. This presentation will specifically deal with the story of vaccines and vaccination over the years during the late Ottoman Empire, particularly focusing the institutions and contributions to this healthcare facility.

# Politics and Music in the 20th and 21st Centuries in Lebanon

ROSY BEYHOM  
15 JUNE, BEIRUT

Music is a way of expression given only to the human being; animals may react to music but cannot produce it to enjoy it. This special expression may be a vehicle of ideas, ideologies, and words as elements of a designated language carried by songs. We often consider songs and appreciate them for how they make us feel, thus we may have a favourite music, favourite singer, favourite song, favourite style. All these elements and others make the whole experience of music very subjective. What I like and admire can be disliked by someone else and vice-versa. One can like the song but dislike the artist or like the music but dislike the lyrics. All possibilities are acceptable when talking about musical taste.

In Lebanon, the popular musical taste is influenced by the media, the politics and the marketing. Strangely, some songs are perceived as religious or "liturgical" more than others but are people really listening? On the example of widespread songs from renowned Lebanese singers, I will show the influence of politics, times and media on the perception of the public; hence a normal song by a good singer can become a hymn motivating the fight against the occupying enemy while another familiar song from a musical play can become a symbol of survival after the explosion of the 4th of August 2020.

# Mere Desolation? On Daesh's Iconoclasm

CHRISTOPH GÜNTHER  
27 OCTOBER, BEIRUT

The lecture dealt with the destruction of cultural property by Daesh in Iraq and Syria. It is argued that many of these acts of violence can only insufficiently be described using the term iconoclasm, as they were not aimed at destroying effigies, but rather eliminated places and objects that were of outstanding importance for the social fabric of the affected communities. The mediatisation of such socioclasm through images and sound thus becomes conceivable not as simple documentation, but rather as a reminder of the destruction of socially significant artefacts.



# **Negotiating Diverse Identities in Late Mamluk Court Culture // Law, Gender and Exegesis in the Majalis of Sultan Qanisawh Al-Ghawri (R. 1501–1516)**

CHRISTIAN MAUDER  
30 NOVEMBER, BEIRUT

This talk analysed the texture, richness, and complexity of intellectual life at the late Mamluk court. By focusing on how members of the court voiced, affirmed, and negotiated various identities in the areas of law, gender, and Quranic exegesis, the talk demonstrates that late Mamluk court culture was characterised by a much higher level of internal diversity and intellectual activity than heretofore assumed. This analysis of Mamluk court culture is based on a close reading of accounts of the majālis or learned salons that the penultimate Mamluk ruler Qāniṣawh al-Ghawrī convened at the Cairo Citadel during most of his reign, which lasted from 1501 to 1516. The accounts of these events allow unique insights into how members of al-Ghawrī's court developed novel intellectual strategies that addressed the legal, political, and theological challenges of the day and contributed to a vibrant scholarly life during a period that is still all too often associated with an alleged cultural decline of the Islamic world.



# Sunni City

TINE GADE

14–15 DECEMBER, TRIPOLI (LEVANTINE INSTITUTE)

Tripoli, Lebanon's 'Sunni City' is often presented as an Islamist or even Jihadi city. However, this misleading label conceals a much deeper history of resistance and collaboration with the state and the wider region. Based on more than a decade of fieldwork and using a broad array of primary sources, Tine Gade analyses the modern history of Tripoli, exploring the city's contentious politics, its fluid political identity, and the relations between Islamist and sectarian groups. Offering an alternative explanation for Tripoli's decades of political troubles – rather than emphasizing Islamic radicalism as the principal explanation – she argues that it is Lebanese clientelism and the decay of the state that produced the rise of violent Islamist movements in Tripoli. By providing a corrective to previous assumptions, this book not only expands our understanding of Lebanese politics, but of the wider religious and political dynamics in the Middle East. The lecture of Tine Gade was doubled, with another joint event in Tripoli.



**YEŞİM İŞİL ÜLMAN** is Professor of medical history and ethics at Acıbadem University School of Medicine (Istanbul Turkey). She has studied humanities, political science, history of medicine and ethics. The subjects of her MA, MSc and PhD on the history of modernisation in science and medicine (1986–1999). She became Associate Professor in 2005 and has been Full Professor since 2013.

**ROSY BEYHOM** (PhD 2021, Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster) was a fellow at the OIB and a trained musicologist whose research is focused on Arabian music and the written heritage around it. She is an active member of the CERMAA research center and co-editor of the NEMO-Online Journal.

**CHRISTOPH GÜNTHER** leads the junior research group Jihadism on the Internet: Images and Videos, their Dissemination and Appropriation at the Department of Anthropology and African Studies at Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz. Having a background in Islamic Studies, his research interests include religio-political movements in the modern Middle East, visual cultures and iconography, and the sociology of religion. His book *Entrepreneurs of Identity: The Islamic State's Symbolic Repertoire* has been published in spring 2022 with Berghahn Books.

**CHRISTIAN MAUDER** is an intellectual, religious, and social historian of the Islamic world, with a focus on the late middle and early modern periods. Since 2020, he serves as associate professor in the study of religions at the University of Bergen. Before coming to Bergen, he completed postdoctoral appointments at Yale University, the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New York University Abu Dhabi, and the University of Bonn.

**TINE GADE** is a Senior Research Fellow at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs and part of the Research Group on Peace, Conflict and Development. She holds a PhD in political science from Sciences Po in Paris and works predominantly issues related to contentious politics and state-society relationships in the Middle East. Gade has previously worked as a Max Weber postdoctoral fellow at the European University Institute in Florence, and as a senior lecturer at the Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages.

# *Internal Colloquia*

20 JANUARY Abdallah Ayache (OIB VISITING DOCTORAL FELLOW): *Crisis and Translation in Contemporary Arab Thought*

7 FEBRUARY Rosy Beyhom (OIB VISITING POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW): *"The Forgotten": Bridging worlds through knowledge and people*

10 FEBRUARY Joud Alkorani (OIB VISITING POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW): *Becoming through God: Relating to the Divine in Dubai*

17 MARCH Ennio Napolitano (OIB VISITING POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW): *Islamic epigraphic patterns in European material culture during the Middle Ages: a path of cultural hybridisation*

24 MARCH Pierre France (OIB RESEARCH ASSOCIATE): *Living memories and state archives: a false absence: Top civil servants & scotomisation of public archives in Lebanon*

31 MARCH Mohaddeseh Ziyachi (OIB VISITING DOCTORAL FELLOW): *Historical analysis as the missing chain of cognitive anthropology: The case of motherhood's cultural model in Iran*

7 APRIL Katrin Köster (OIB AFFILIATED RESEARCHER): *The Alawite Awakening (Yaqṣat al-'alawīyīn). The Alawite Reform Movement during the early twentieth century in the context of the nahḍa*

5 MAY Wissam Lahham (GUEST SPEAKER): *Lebanon: The Nature of the Civil State and the Sectarian Personal Status Laws*

19 MAY Rosemary Maxton (OIB VISITING DOCTORAL FELLOW): *Narrating conversion: Catholicism in Ottoman Mardin and the Life of Eliya ibn al-Kuzayr*

9 JUNE Cynthia Kreichati (OIB VISITING DOCTORAL FELLOW): *Watershed Lives: An Ethnography of River Infrastructure and Ruination in Lebanon*

23 JUNE Qodratullah Qorbani (OIB HANS-ROBERT ROEMER FELLOW): *Gradual and Hierarchical Rationality of Religious Beliefs' System in Islamic and Christian Traditions*

7 JULY Mahmood Makvand (OIB HANS-ROBERT ROEMER FELLOW): *The creation of woman from the rib of man in the Torah and its semantic relation with the first verse of Surah An-Nisa'*

29 SEPTEMBER Mariam El Ali (OIB VISITING POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW): *Memory at Work in Medieval Islamic Scholarship: Shaping Knowledge, Tradition, and Identities*

6 OCTOBER Sophia Schröder (OIB VISITING DOCTORAL FELLOW): *The Role of Lebanon's Civil Judiciary in Reproducing Political Sectarianism – Using the Example of Family Law*

20 OCTOBER Fatima Albazzal (OIB VISITING DOCTORAL FELLOW): *Archiving Absence and Loss: Amili Manuscripts in Libraries Worldwide*

27 OCTOBER Sarah Sabban (OIB VISITING DOCTORAL FELLOW): *A History of Arts and Crafts in Late Ottoman Beirut*

10 NOVEMBER Jowel Choufani (OIB VISITING DOCTORAL FELLOW): *Obligation and Relationality in the Wake of Critical Events in Lebanon*

24 NOVEMBER Chiara Fontana (OIB VISITING POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW): *The Literary Experience of Urban life and Material Culture in Ibn Abī 'Awn's (d. 934) Kitāb al-Tashbīhāt*

1 DECEMBER Javier Guirado (OIB VISITING POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW): *How Dukhan made Doha. Environmental history, transnational networks, and the political economy of Qatar*

6 DECEMBER Sana Bou Antoun (OIB AFFILIATED RESEARCHER): *Epistemology of the "genesis of the Qur'an" between the 19th and 20th centuries: the contributions of German, French, and English Qur'anic Studies*

# Library



The library of the OIB is a specialised research and reference library for Near and Middle Eastern Studies and serves primarily the research needs of the OIB. The library provides researchers with research materials and is, in addition upon registration, open to a broader community of visiting international and Lebanese scholars.

The rich collections of the library cover mainly the scholarly disciplines in the broad field of Near and Middle Eastern Studies particularly the history, culture, geography, anthropology, sociology, and the lingual and religious pluralism of the region. The predominant language of our acquisitions is Arabic, followed by English, French and German, as well as other European languages.

The holdings of the library include a special collection about Lebanon and the Levant, as well as a growing section of Armenian culture in the Middle East. Arabic literature, history of the Near and Middle East, history of religions, cultural history, Arabic and Islamic intellectual history, particularly theology and philosophy as well as Eastern Christianity, Christian Arabic literature and Semitic philology, are special foci of the library since its foundation in 1961.

In response to the cultural, lingual and religious pluralism of the region, the institute cultivates a collection policy that pays particular attention to this unique diversity. A large part of the library collection are printed Levantine and regional journals from the broader MENA region. In tradition and support of the OIB publication series *Bibliotheca Islamica*, the library continues to enrich its substantial collection of critical editions of classical Arabic literature and also holds some treatises in Persian, Hebrew and Syriac. A collection of more than five hundred maps and several architectural and topographical plans from Beirut, Lebanon and the Levant as a whole are also a part of the library's holdings.

The library provides three reading rooms that are equipped with wireless access to the internet and offers a microfilm reader and a book scanner. 21 study desks are available and are equipped with daylight reading lamps and electric outlets. Our reading rooms and its entrance beside the OIBs garden offer an inviting atmosphere for our scholarly events and support the exchange of scholars and researchers on these occasions. The library reopened for the public after the COVID 19-pandemic in 2022 and reinitiated former and new cooperations in the region and abroad.

The library acquires approximately 2000 books per year, among them an increasing number of electronic resources. On behalf of the Max Weber Foundation, we also advance to build up a shared digital library and to optimise the range of electronic material that includes journals and databases. In this field, the library closely collaborates with the German Special information Service Middle East, North Africa and Islamic Studies (FID) in Halle, Germany, to offer access to the MENALIB Middle East Virtual Library.

**HANS-PETER PÖKEL** VICE  
DIRECTOR & HEAD OF LIBRARY  
is since 2019 Head Librarian at  
the OIB. He joined the OIB already  
in 2014 as research associate.  
He studied Semitic philology,  
Religious Studies and Ancient  
Near Eastern Studies in Marburg/  
Germany. He received his PhD  
from Jena/Germany with a thesis  
on al-Jahiz and was research as-  
sociate at the Seminar for Semitic  
and Arabic Studies in Berlin until  
2014. He also studied Library and  
Information Science and received  
his MA LIS from Berlin/Germany  
with a thesis on National Libraries  
in the Arab World.

# Team

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## DIRECTORATE

Interim director	<b>Dr Thomas Würtz</b> (since October)	<b>Dr Ahmed Abd-Elsalam</b>
Director	<b>Prof Dr Birgit Schäbler</b> (until October)	<b>Dr Sarah El Bulbeisi</b>
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14 FEBRUARY – 31 MARCH	<b>Vincent Engelhardt</b> Freie Universität Berlin
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*The Orient-Institut (OIB) is an academic hub in central Beirut. It was designed to foster German research on and throughout the region. The OIB has come to benefit from the advantages of Lebanon's unique position as an intellectual centre in the Arab world. As the only German research institute devoted to Arabic and Islamic Studies based in the Arab Middle East, the OIB has helped to train generations of German scholars who specialised in the region. Since 2010 the OIB maintains an office in Cairo to strengthen academic collaboration and research across the MENA region.*

*In 1961 the German Oriental Society (Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft), an academic association founded in 1845 to promote the study of the languages and cultures of the 'Orient', established the OIB as a base for German oriental studies abroad. The institute gained legal recognition from the Lebanese government in 1963 and moved to its present premises in the former Villa Maud Farajallah, in the Zokak al-Blat quarter, near downtown Beirut. Even during the most turbulent periods of Lebanese history academic activities at the institute continued, although in 1987 the German staff were evacuated to Istanbul temporarily. The directorate and some of the research staff returned to Beirut in 1994, but as a result of the evacuation the institute developed into a bilocal entity, with branches in both Istanbul (OII) and Beirut (OIB).*

*The Istanbul branch became an independent institute in 2009. In 2003 the OIB joined the other German Humanities Institutes Abroad in a foundation named Max Weber Foundation in 2012. The Max Weber Foundation is a publicly regulated body funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)..*

# Max Weber Stiftung

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Orient-Institut Beirut

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