Annual
Report
2020

ORIENT
INSTITUT
BEIRUT

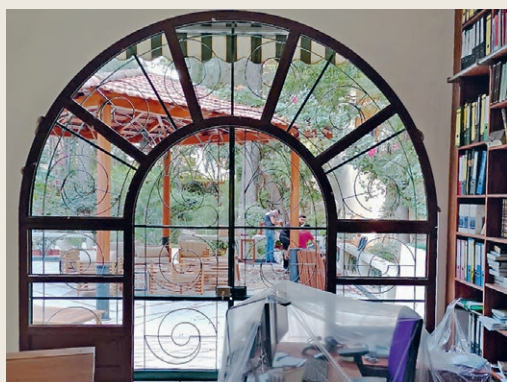المعهــــدُ الألمـانيّ للأبحاثِ الشَرقيّـــة

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.

OIB RENOVATION AFTER BLAST

Contents

OIB in numbers

RESEARCH

30 RESEARCH PROJECTS

SUPPORT

scheduled / **implemented**

9/8 POSTDOCTORAL VISITING FELLOWS

10/8 DOCTORAL VISITING FELLOWS

4/4 RESEARCH RELIEF FELLOWS

6/1 HANS-ROBERT ROEMER FELLOWS

9/5 INTERNS

PUBLICATIONS

3 INSTITUTE   **32** RESEARCHERS

LIBRARY

> 140.000 VOLUMES

EVENTS

scheduled / **implemented**

5/2 CONFERENCES

8/2 WORKSHOPS

2/0 ROUND TABLES / PANEL DISCUSSIONS

1/0 LECTURE SERIES

7 PUBLIC TALKS

17 COLLOQUIA

SOCIAL MEDIA

5.003 FACEBOOK ABBONEMENTS

220 INSTAGRAM ABBONEMENTS

Director's Address

BIRGIT SCHÄBLER

Writing this address and looking back at the year 2020 I find myself thinking back much further in time, back to the year 1991 when I came to Beirut for the very first time. Seven hours of electricity, sometimes less, was the normality back then, and one had to exploit daylight and plan showers accordingly. The city was still in ruins in most places, but everyday life went on as it had during the war, as people recounted. Not far from me, a flower shop, still there today, sold nice bouquets. The OIB's library was open for occasional visitors. Italian director of the library Roncaglia was in and we talked frequently. Madame Kanaan issued my library card. But the OIB director and the researchers had moved to Istanbul, the Institute was still officially closed.

Now, in early spring 2021, electricity cuts are severe, again, with only six to seven hours of electricity in many places. There is the smell of burning tires and garbage in the air, as people get desperate and voice their frustration in the streets. And several of Beirut's oldest and most iconic quarters lie in shambles, destroyed by the third-largest non-nuclear explosion of the last 100 years worldwide, on August 4, 2020. More than 6000 people were wounded, many of them severely, around 200 were killed by the blast, and 300.000 became homeless. The OIB, which had survived the 15 years of civil war with but a few scratches, was heavily damaged, but luckily nobody was harmed. Those living close to the institute had their apartments damaged, too.

So this year started much like the last year ended: in severe crisis mode. While the rest of the world has been and still is suffering under the Corona pandemic, which gained new life through nasty mutants forcing societies into ever new lock-downs the world over, locked-down Lebanon is aching under staggering daily numbers of infections, a high death rate and supply shortages in hospitals, several of which were hit in the explosion — all of this in addition to a multitude of crises. In fact there isn't a single sector of society which is not hit by crisis.

In spring last year, when the country went into a well-heeded first lock-down, the number of deaths, compared to the rest of the world, was record low and the infection curve was close to South-Korea's. Now I know of half a dozen of COVID-19 deaths in my circles alone, and a number of friends contracted the virus. It has come very close to one's life. The situation had changed when in July the airport opened again and thousands of people from all over the world came to visit their families for the summer, as every year, fuelling infection rates, possibly with many strands of the virus. The expatriates' visits were badly needed, though, since half of the Lebanese citizens had fallen below the poverty line already in May 2020, according to the World Bank.

The local currency's value dropped by more than 75 percent in the black market, fuelling inflation. The banks withheld people's savings in Dollars and finally paid them out in Lira for a fraction of their worth. People lost billions in savings and by the beginning of 2021 official estimates say that some 75 percent of Lebanese nationals are in need of aid. They bitterly feel they are joining the more than 1 Million Syrian refugees living in the country, of whom 90 percent require humanitarian and cash assistance, according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. On 30 January, the World Bank signed an agreement with the caretaker government for a loan of $246 million to provide cash assistance to some 800.000 of the poorest Lebanese. The economic situation, in fact a severe debt crisis, which came as a result of years of Ponzi-schemes between the banking sector, the Central Bank and the government, is dramatic and the downward spiral continues unabated. The dollar reserves of the Central Bank are dwindling rapidly and subsidies on gasoline, flour and medical supplies have already been cut down.

There is a severe crisis of political legitimacy in the country. It had led to the unprecedented popular movement of October 2019 which, lasting more than three months, in turn had brought the government of PM Saad al-Hariri down who resigned on 29 October 2019 in response to the movement. The transitional technocratic government under Hasan Diab, which included six women in important ministerial posts, managed the Corona-crisis successfully until summer 2020 but could not deliver the reforms demanded by the popular movement and European states alike. Hasan Diab resigned after the explosion, on August 10, 2020, and transformed from interim PM into caretaker PM. Lebanon's ambassador to Berlin was charged with forming a new government but gave up the daunting task in the face of unrelenting opposition and returned to Berlin. Saad al-Hariri was then, once again, charged with forming a government. On loggerheads with President Aoun, he could not deliver until now. Trust in the state is at an all-time low in Lebanon, and the erosion of state institutions is becoming ever more visible. Inflation devalues salaries severely and notoriously perfunctory services disappear altogether.

With no governance to speak of, policy turns into the policing of people through security forces. They are prone to become the face of the failing state, while their 130.000 individual members share the grievances and sufferings of the people at large. If security deteriorates, the old mechanisms of sectarian clientelism, which were the main target of the popular movement, will be strengthened and the political parties, which themovement had criticized, with their strong men and partisans will step in to fill the gap. Even the army, generally much respected in the country as one of the least partisan and most capable public institutions, has come under stress. Together with all other civil servants and people working in the private sector, if they managed to keep their jobs, soldiers today earn a fraction of what they did a year ago, many as little as the equivalent of $150 per month. At the same the prices of basic food-stuffs are rising continuously and shortages appear.

The burning garbage bins at the beginning of 2021 then might be very different harbingers than the burning tires of October 2019 — signaling the civil strife of old, not an attempt to enforce a general strike to bring forward change. But the popular movement, despite being weakened as large numbers of its bright young people left the country to study or work elsewhere, is still there, protesting peacefully and demanding that the ruling triumvirate of president, speaker of parliament and designate prime minister step down to free the way for a younger generation.

More than half a year after the explosion the political class has proved unwilling and unable to form a new government desperately needed to implement necessary reforms in order to reach an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) — the first steps to unlocking more substantial foreign aid. Despite several European initiatives, spearheaded by France, Lebanese political leaders have failed to satisfy donor conditions for reforms that would help put the economy back on track. French president Macron and his foreign minister le Drian visited the country repeatedly, sternly addressing Lebanon's ruling elite — to no avail.

Germany's foreign minister Heiko Maas also visited Beirut a week after the devastating explosion of 4 August in order to pledge German support and call for a solution to the political deadlock. After visiting the site of the explosion in the harbour and before meeting President Michel Aoun at Baabda, he came to the OIB, where, after a tour of the heavily damaged premises, he met with members of local civil society associations and representatives of German NGO's in Lebanon.

The European Union (EU) and European governments have therefore decided to disburse funds only for humanitarian aid and for projects already underway. Lebanon also failed to move along an independent investigation of the blast. All demands for an international investigation which would be able to operate more independently than a Lebanese national one were turned down. After months of investigation, the chief investigator was dismissed and a new one appointed.

Accountability and responsibility are the demands of the people — and as long as the political class is not delivering the country will tether on the brink of instability. Lebanon's international partners are therefore called upon to redouble their efforts to prevent state collapse and the onset of a severe humanitarian emergency, while at the same time remaining steadfast in their demand for reform.

For the renowned resilience of the Lebanese people is a double-edged sword. It is admirable to see how Beirutis keep up their good spirits even in severe crises and with the state all but absent, as they did after the explosion. Scores of people from all over Lebanon came to the harbor quarters in East Beirut to clean up and support victims of the blast. But on the other hand "muddling through" has been going on for the last 30 years — and serious change is needed.

Throughout this year of catastrophic events the OIB remained steady in its work. The protracted lock-downs led to numerous video-conferences, internal as well as external, and work in home office proved to be successful, thanks to the endeavors of the IT team to keep everybody connected. Before the airport closed on March 19, a good number of research associates and the administration left for Germany, only coming back in July when the airport reopened. They faced the same challenges with internet connectivity as the ones who had remained in Lebanon, but all in all the interior colloquia were held regularly.

During the phases between lock-downs, the OIB had one more reason to be happy to have its terrace and garden, for which it has been envied all the more: For it made it possible throughout the year to hold meetings and events in person, outside, where distancing rules could be observed.

The year started off, though, in "normal" mode and as planned: The sequel to the international Annual Conference of the Max Weber Foundation (Stiftungskonferenz) in December in Cairo took place in Erfurt in February since the theme of neighbourliness had garnered a lot of interest and people from outside the West had not been able to travel to Cairo for visa restrictions.

The next conference, on Relations in the Ideoscape, was our first and successful experiment with an international conference bringing together a wide array of countries and regions. The conference had originally been planned for Moscow.
It was a pity that a workshop on "Reform Islam from Delhi to Istanbul" in Delhi, which was planned by Christopher Bahl and Birgit Schäbler with the India Branch Office of the Max Weber Foundation and ICAS:MP (Martin Fuchs and Indra Sengupta) could not take place.

It had been planned originally, quite fittingly in hindsight for the Corona year 2020, to feature a number of events within the research profile on "relations with the environment". Many of these events had to be postponed. A successful international workshop on "Environmental History of the Ottoman Empire" could take place and was organized by Fatih Ermiş. The video conference brought together an international audience.

The publication department had a fruitful year: The *Bibliotheca Islamica* published Abū Manṣūr 'Abd al-Malik b. Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-Tha'ālibī's *Khāṣṣ al-khāṣṣ fī al-amthāl* edited by Ramzi Baalbaki and Bilal Orfali (BI 61) and *Beiruter Texte und Studien* saw the publication of *Akhbār Khadījah bt. Khuwaylid fī al-maṣādir al-Islāmiyyah: Abniyat as-sard wa-dh-dhākirah wa-t-tārīkh* by Maryam Sa'īd al-'Alī (BTS 139) and *The Damascus Fragments. Towards a History of the Qubbat al-Khazna Corpus of Manuscripts and Documents*, edited by Arianna d'Ottone Rambach, Konrad Hirschler, and Ronny Vollandt (BTS 140). The work on the Frankfort School *An-Naẓariyyah an-naqdiyyah li-madrasat Frānkfūrt* by Zakī 'Abd al-Majīd Zakī, edited by Ḥajjāj Abū Jabr appeared (OIS). Work on the Arabic translation of two important chapters of Max Weber's Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft (Kapitel III "Die Typen der Herrschaft", Kapitel IV "Stände und Klassen"), a translation several years in the making, was finally finished.

Two research initiatives brought life to the OIB during this difficult year. A research project on the Intifada of October 17, organized together with Armin Hasemann of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (who is an Islamic Studies graduate from the University of Jena) assembled a research group of a dozen researchers, all based in Lebanon. After several internal and external workshops and lectures taking place on the OIB's terrace throughout the year the papers have been submitted and a publication is well under way. Besides producing a volume this research project had the added value of making it possible to analyze and discuss history in the making — and the old dictum of "sine ira et studio" applied well here. As one of the participants told a journalist: "Being part of this group was important because it kept me sane and occupied".

The other effort were our relief fellowships. These fellowships were designed to alleviate the financial hardship with which many young scholars have to grapple as they lost jobs and research opportunities in the wake of the financial crises. A very interesting group of young Lebanese and Syrian scholars are joining the OIB research community and continue their projects.

Of our regular international visiting fellows the great majority came and even stayed during 2020, with the exception of the HRR fellows — both our German fellow and a number of Iranian fellows were unable to join the OIB.

Repairs in the OIB after the explosion lasted for 3 months. During this time people migrated from office to office as no lock-downs were ordered during most of this period. Working in flexible, often make-shift offices, either at home or in the institute, was therefore leaving its mark on the entire year of 2020. It is surprising how well this functioned despite the inconvenience. Knowing that the situation at the OIB was so much more stable and secure than in just about all other sectors of Lebanese economy and society surely helped. We wish to thank the Max Weber Foundation for making the needed and considerable funds available quickly and unbureaucratically.

We were also surprised by the overwhelmingly positive response to online-events. General as well as specialist audiences have substantially grown and scholars, who were not able to travel to Beirut in the past, can now present and discuss their work with our research community. As one of the positive results of 2020, these formats will stay with us and will be further developed in the coming years.
2021 is the year of OIB's 60th Jubilee. Hopefully numerous guests and visitors will be able to share in the festivities taking place from 2 to 5 December.

Birgit Schäbler

Research Profile

In 2017/2018 OIB's long-term researchers developed the new broad research profile of "relations" in order to generate innovative research questions and sub-fields within the institute's research community of resident researchers, visiting fellows and other affiliates and partners. While questions of entanglement, connectivity and interrelatedness in the moves of people, goods and ideas have been on the international research agenda for several years now, especially in transnational and transregional frameworks, the nature of the relations established within these moves has been neglected. Yet, broadly speaking, the basic concept of relations lies at the heart of just about any human social activity. We focus on four different fields of relations: between HUMANS themselves, between humans and their PRODUCTIONS, between humans and their ENVIRONMENT, and between humans and the DIVINE.
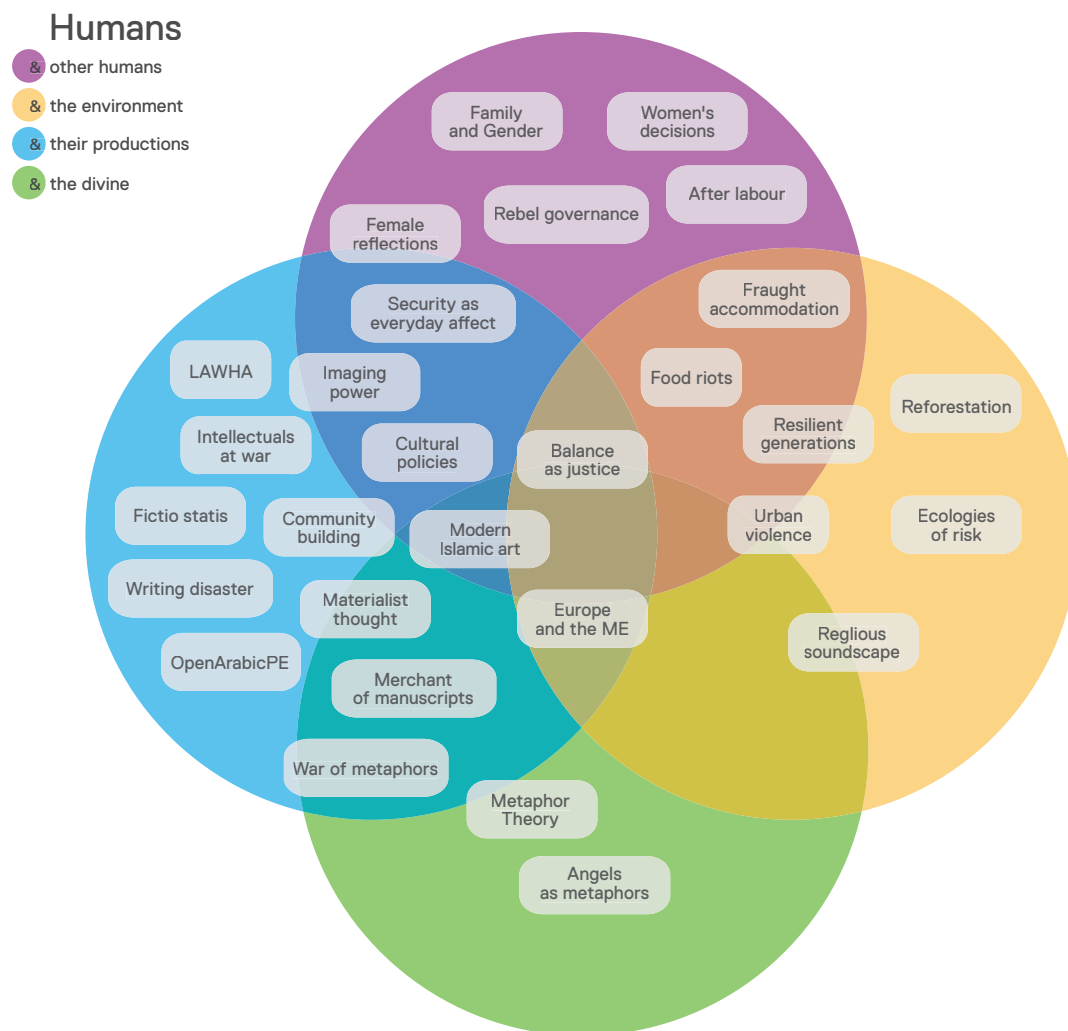
Human-human relations can be inter-personal on the micro-level of analysis, they can be inter-social on the meso-level and they can be inter-national or inter-regional on the macro-level of analysis. On the micro-level relationships of kinship, friendship and neighbourship are in our research focus. How do such relationships work and how can we analyse them? Kinship relations, for example, can no longer be looked at solely through the lens of genetics. Friendship is not solely an emotional relation of pure voluntariness. It can also have an important political side to it. Both are in many ways imagined and constructed. Conversely, neighbourship or neighbourliness is a predominantly spatial form of relations. Neighbourliness has been a successful theme which met with great interest and generated two international conferences and a workshop. Looking at the human connectivity between state and society, and the quality of relations between state actors and society actors as well as intra-society relations (labour relations, gender relations, generational relations) is of particular importance. Therefore, within the theme of relations between humans and their productions, we focus on relations between media and the public, between the wide field of scholarly, artistic and literary production and their reception in different groups and media.

The relations between societies and their natural environments encompass also the anthropogenic changes to it, in nature as well as through architecture and archaeological heritage. Here interdisciplinary environmental and landscape studies can open up new research fields. When looking at relations between humans and the divine, the focus is on the human production of theological and religious knowledge also in its encounter and competition with philosophy.

On the macro-level the relations between the Middle East and other world regions (Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas) raise theoretical questions which can only be answered by consulting the theories and approaches of a number of disciplines (International Relations, History, Sociology, Psychology), but also Islamic Middle Eastern and other Area Studies. This also entails the problematic of disciplinary knowledge and area knowledge.

This broad profile on "relations" and its four sub-fields thus created academically innovative and intellectually productive overlapping webs and conversations within the OIB's research community. A circle of resonating intellectual questions and fields of enquiry provided an integrative framework and a chance for everybody to relate to the new research profile in different degrees of intensity.

The research profile attracted interesting research projects from Western and Middle Eastern scholars. Please see the graphic for an overview of our research projects this year within the thematic subfields. The year 2020 was planned to focus on "humans and the environment", quite fittingly, given the COVID-19 pandemic. For this very reason, however, a number of projects and events from this section had to be postponed. In the year 2021, the Jubilee will feature both "humans and the divine", i.e. Islamic Studies, and "humans and their productions", i.e. Arabic Studies and Literature.

Humans

- & other humans
- & the environment
- & their productions
- & the divine

Family and Gender · Women's decisions · After labour · Rebel governance · Female reflections · Fraught accommodation · Security as everyday affect · Food riots · Reforestation · LAWHA · Imaging power · Resilient generations · Intellectuals at war · Cultural policies · Balance as justice · Urban violence · Ecologies of risk · Fictio statis · Community building · Modern Islamic art · Writing disaster · Materialist thought · Europe and the ME · Reglious soundscape · OpenArabicPE · Merchant of manuscripts · War of metaphors · Metaphor Theory · Angels as metaphors

Research

Humans &
other humans

Europe and the Middle East

BIRGIT SCHÄBLER

NOVEMBER 2017 – OCTOBER 2022

Three research projects were generated within this framework:

First, concerning my book *Moderne Muslime. Ernest Renan und die Geschichte der ersten Islamdebatte 1883*, which brought together the issues of 19th century trans-regional reform movements in the Muslim world/Islam and Orientalist discourses, the English translation of the book is almost finished. A translation into Arabic following the suggestions of colleagues after my inaugural public lecture given at the OIB is almost finished, too. Most of the original texts of the book are not known at all in the Arab world. Apart from these projects, Ernest Renan and his exploits in Lebanon are still on the research agenda, as are global Islamic reform movements.

Second, the topic of neighbourliness/neighbourly relations/neighbourhoods has yielded three conferences and two ensuing conference volumes which are in the making.

Third, a number of sub-projects within the research group Relations in the Ideoscape are taking shape, among them several public history events which will lead into publications of varying kinds.

Research Group
Relations in the Ideoscape // Middle Eastern students in the Eastern Bloc, 1950's–1991

BIRGIT SCHÄBLER

2019 – 2022

Birgit Schäbler and the OIB head the research group "Relations in the Ideoscape: Middle Eastern Students in the Eastern Bloc" within the larger project "Knowledge Unbound", which brings many of the institutes of the Max Weber Foundation into collaboration. The OIB with its branch office in Cairo cooperates in the project with the German Historical Institutes Moscow and Warsaw, as well as external supporting partners.

The Cold War or East-West conflict has so far been mainly studied as a political and potentially military conflict between the USA (leading the "Western Bloc") and the USSR as the leader of the "Eastern Bloc". The manifold relations within the blocs have attracted less attention. This project argues that a good part of these were shaped in a special way as 'relations of knowledge' between (and among) the metropolises of the Bloc and numerous countries of the so-called Third World. In this vein, the Eastern Bloc can be described as a social space which was created through a common ideology which in turn created its own forms of knowledge — a 'knowledge space' marked by the flows and also the tensions and contradictions within the "ideoscape" (Arjun Appadurai).

An international group of researchers thus studies the relationships, actors and fields of knowledge created within the USSR, GDR, People's Republic of Poland (PRP), and Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (CSSR) and the Middle East/North Africa. Research is based on archives and on oral history interviews with former students enrolled in the humanities and the social sciences as well as art and architecture, which were sought after for the study of "communist/socialist modernism". It was "modernism" that the countries of the Middle East had been striving for since the 19th century and after the end of the Second World War it was "available" in a "Western" and a "socialist" form. Knowledge was thus also a commodity on the global market within the competition of ideological systems.

The research projects cover a wide range of inter-related topics. Iraq's Ba'th Party worked with the PR of Poland to carry out its architectural projects in socialist/communist modernism. In art, young men and women from all over the Arab world studied socialist realism, which they combined with anti-colonial, internationalist, Arab-nationalist or traditional Arab style elements.

Palestinian students of social sciences in the GDR noticed the contradiction between the Marxism-Leninism they were taught at university and the real life worlds in the GDR, but the shared language and culture of the ideoscape was a strong bond between Palestinian and German society — a common intellectual-emotional home. These bonds were long-lasting and are still being maintained in Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and other countries through old and even newly created very active alumni organisations. Algerian students, who studied in Kiev and Moscow and became important journalists and intellectuals, discovered the Middle East on the campuses of their host universities.

While Egypt and Algeria maintained official relations in the field of higher education and culture - ballerinas of the first generation Egyptian ballet were trained at the Bolshoi Theatre — Iran and Turkey were Western-oriented. So mostly political activists from the communist/Marxist parties of Iran studied in the Eastern Bloc. An interesting point of friction was the question of women's rights as a "secondary contradiction", more virulent even when the Soviet-backed Tudeh Party turned to "Islamic Marxism". Exiled Iranian intellectuals migrated through the Eastern Bloc to Maoist China creating a complex web of transregional knowledge relations.

Turkish students who had studied in the Eastern Bloc were active in underground radio stations in Turkish language, broadcasting for an audience of illegal movements/parties in Turkey. Radio activists often came from different national-intellectual milieus within the ideoscape which made for interesting dynamics within the editorial staff of the radio stations.

Knowledge relations of the metropolises of the Bloc with the countries of the Middle East/North Africa thus were largely not the "educational-political development aid" the metropolises sought to administer, but were fueled by interests of Middle Eastern governments and of the activists themselves and went far beyond one-sided transfers of ideology.

For a list of researchers and projects see orient-institut.org/research/current-projects/ideoscape.

The Lebanese Popular Movement of 2019 //
Perspectives from Within

BIRGIT SCHÄBLER

SINCE 2020

The Lebanese Popular Movement of 2019: Perspectives from Within is the working title of the publication coming out of the research project on the Intifada of October 17. Together with Armin Hasemann of Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Birgit Schäbler and OIB called for abstracts of research proposals leading to a publication. A dozen researchers from different universities and independent intellectuals formed a research group around the central issues of the movement which at the same time represent urgent problems Lebanon needs to tackle. The research group under the leadership of Birgit Schäbler met, shared and discussed their individual research projects, writings, and evaluations on the Popular Movement in regular fruitful discussions, internal workshops and public conferences during the course of the entire year of 2020. This process resulted in an extensive in-depth analysis which captures the historic events from a position of unique up-close proximity. Central themes are the political system and the question if the consociational system can be reformed, the love-hate relationship between the Dollar and the Lebanese Lira, the role of women in the movement. The volume goes beyond chronicling the protests by providing lively and sensory insights into the various appropriations of public spaces by cultural practitioners, activists and ordinary people alike, be it in the form of art and music productions or performances of public discussions. SALLY FARHAT, CLAUDIA KOZMAN, and JAD MELKI (LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY) explore the participation of women in the Movement and how gender intersects with media usage and media literacy. Adding to the discussion of gender, ZEINA TOHME (LEBANESE UNIVERSITY) writes about how women's participation in protests leveraged emotional force to draw on collective memories and build collective identity. JASMIN DIAB (AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT) contextualizes women's participation within the broader scope of Lebanese history and gender politics.
Banking, corruption, and trust in Lebanese currency is another key topic. JAKUB JAJCAY (AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT) addresses the way in which the Movement turned towards banks and financial engineering shortly after the protests began.

People in front of the central bank, which has been fortified with concrete walls and barbed wire.

RAYAN HAYKAL (SAGESSE UNIVERSITY) investigates how Lebanese citizens perceive the Lira and its uses in contrast to the U.S. dollar. Turning to the nuts and bolts of Lebanese politics, MAXIMILIAN FELSCH (HAIGAZIAN UNIVERSITY) makes several suggestions for how the government might attenuate its problems without completely dismantling its consociational structure. SAMI OFEISH (UNIVERSITY OF BALAMAND) places the Movement within the longer history of protests movements and civil society activism in Lebanon. CHERINE YAZBECK attends to the aesthetic dimensions of the Movement. She describes the way in which artists and arts organizations both contributed to the Movement and also used it as a platform for the development of new artistic networks and practices. SERGE YAZIGI (LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY) draws attention to the manifold stimuli of the senses of Martyr's Square during the Movement, drawing comparisons with the openness of the pre-War souks.

After Labour // Crisis and aspiration among Sudanese migrant workers in Beirut

ANNA SIMONE REUMERT

OCTOBER 2020 – MAY 2021

The dissertation project traces the historical and social life of an intergenerational, transregional and male-gendered migration route that for half a century has brought Sudanese men to work as servants in Lebanon. Based on multi-sited field research and oral history collection in Lebanon and Sudan, I follow three generations of Sudanese male migrants in Beirut and migrant returnees in Sudan. Incorporating their partners and relatives, the project examines how these migrants make kin and political communities in response to Lebanon's illegalisation of migrant labour belonging. As migrants without labour rights in Lebanon and as expat-citizens without labour aspirations in Sudan, Sudanese migrant workers have advocated more for their rights as citizens in Sudan than for their rights as migrant workers in Lebanon. In 2020, this became manifest as Sudanese and other migrant workers who lost their jobs and were evicted from their homes during Lebanon's multiple crises organised protests in front of their embassies, calling for their "right to return" home. My fieldwork with Sudanese migrant protesters in Beirut from July until December 2020 added a new dimension to this project. I argue that Sudanese and other non-regional migrants live and labour in Lebanon on the condition of being non-political subjects. Yet, their protest pushed a new political reckoning among Sudanese migrants which also forced Lebanese society to reckon with the migrant worker as a political subject. The remaining part of my dissertation follows those who returned to Sudan in 2020 and explores how the aspiration for political belonging in post-revolutionary Sudan was foreclosed by the continuous struggle to survive as precarious citizens back home.

Sudanese migrant
workers protesting in
front of the Sudanese
embassy in Beirut,
September 2020.
©ANNA SIMONE REUMERT

Family and Gender Relationships in Contemporary Lebanon

SARAH EL BULBEISI
NOVEMBER 2019 – OCTOBER 2022

I had originally planned to tackle masculine identities in Lebanon and, in particular, to work out connections to systemic experiences of violence. This question arose from my doctoral project, in which I examined the impact of symbolic violence on self-interpretations and parent-child relationships among Palestinians in Germany and Switzerland. I discovered how important gender was in processes of parentification — the reversal of social roles between parents and children — and decided to pay more attention to it in my next research project.

During my observations in Beirut over the past few months, I realised that I could not study masculine identities or identities of men without studying those of women, so I had to broaden the focus to gender identities in general. I also realised that I needed to shift the focus from "identity" towards "relationship", as identity is a fluid concept, is always in motion and is constantly recreated in different relationship contexts. Since the gender identity of actors can only be examined within the framework of relationships, I will not only examine gender identities, but also gender and family relationships in which gender identities manifest and perpetuate themselves. Furthermore, I will not only focus on relationships between women and men, but also between mothers and sons, fathers and sons, fathers and daughters, and mothers and daughters (i.e. different constellations of relationships).

Based on biographical narrative interviews and conversations, the desires, fears, conflicts and self-interpretations of Lebanese urban middle- and working-class individuals as well as people who were born and grew up in Lebanon, but didn't have the luck to obtain a Lebanese citizenship like the Palestinian refugees will be examined; particularly with regard to the question along which axis ruptures and perpetuations of traditional gender roles run; why gender norms persist despite being visibly undermined by the realities of life; how they are passed down within the family and reproduced within gender relations; and the contexts in which their subversion takes place. I will also look into how gender identities relate to other forms of collective identity (e.g. family and confessional identities) and how they serve each other.

Furthermore, I will consider the extent to which structural experiences of violence influence relationships and self-interpretations. How do these experiences shape approaches to emotional and physical intimacy, as well as to agency and self-actualisation in the world? How does civil war influence the transgenerational relations/bonds between the war generation and the post-war generation, and how does this, in turn, influence the gender relations and identities of the post-war generation?

As a result of killings, kidnappings, interrogations, torture or other forms of involvement in the war, men, in particular, were exposed to a great vulnerability, which resulted in precarious male existences suffering from anxiety, guilt, insecurity and a lack of agency and initiative. This conflicted with hegemonic representations of a hypermasculine, omnipotent, fearless and guiltless Arab manhood that men are expected to comply with, and it influenced the way they engaged in relationships. Based on psychoana-lytical attachment theories, we can say that (infantile) parent-child-relationships are shaping the way we connect to others as adults, the way we act in relationships, the way we conceive of and live intimate relationships and the way we realise our desires. It is in intersubjective relationships (as defined by Jessica Benjamin) with our parents that we learn to perceive, to regulate and to enact our needs and wishes.

Theoretically, I would like to contribute to a critical discussion and differentiation of the concept of "patriarchy". In the research literature, Arab societies are commonly referred to as patriarchal. This also applies to Lebanon. The marginalisation of women in law and society usually leads to the reproduction of a one-sided victim/perpetrator discourse in the gender binary of man and woman, which portrays women as victims, not recognising them as a subjects with agency, and portrays men as perpetrators, disregarding the structural violence they are exposed to.

Female Reflections in *Mirrors*

ENRICO BOCCACCINI

OCTOBER 2020 – JUNE 2021

Scholarship on the role of women in pre-modern Islamicate societies hinges both on its focus on the representation of women in normative religious works and its neglect of the Islamic world's embeddedness in the culture and history of the wider region. The proposed research paper addresses both of these blind spots by analysing the representation of women in Arabic, Persian, Carolingian and Spanish texts belonging to the genre of *Mirrors for Princes* — that is, pre-modern advice literature for rulers. Produced in a court context, *Mirrors* are a reflection of the attitudes of a male elite. Written by men, for men and with a focus on what was perceived as an essentially male activity (i.e. ruling), the formulation of gender roles was an inherent function of *Mirrors*. With women playing significant and powerful roles in royal courts, authors of *Mirrors* could hardly avoid including advice on how to deal with female interventions. At first sight, the role allocation in *Mirrors* seems fairly clear. Many *Mirrors* are written as paternal or quasi-paternal advice via surrogates, linking them to notions of paternal authority, wisdom and experience. By contrast, women seem to appear in *Mirrors* exclusively in form of the (sexualised) female body and female subjectivity, which are treated as sources of instability in the realm of male rational politics. In some *Mirrors*, women are even specifically associated with false/harmful advice, as opposed to the valuable, paternal advice that the texts claim to offer. Yet, particularly in light of the extensive narrative material included in *Mirrors*, it is likely that a focused analysis of the representation of women will produce a more nuanced understanding of the texts' gender discourse. A cursory analysis of approximately seventeen Arabic and Persian texts already proposes a more complex image of the representation of women in *Mirrors* than what the initial observations had suggested. Apart from the anticipated warnings of female fickleness, unreliability, lack of reason and dangerous physicality, throughout the texts women are cast in a variety of roles, some of which shall be mentioned here: For instance, authors of *Mirrors* quote a number of female authorities to support their arguments, most prominently 'Ā'isha, Muhammad's favourite wife, who stars as a *ḥadīth* transmitter with intimate access to and knowledge of the Prophet. 'Ā'isha is also invoked for her exemplary generosity, as are other famous women who come to represent various virtues. Looking at the narratives in *Mirrors*, the single largest group to be mentioned are probably the *jawāriya* (sing. *jāriya*), female slaves trained in the arts of poetry and music for the entertainment of their masters.

"The Husband Beats his Wife's Lover", Folio from a Kalila wa Dimna.
©METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Far from appearing only as the object of male desire, *jawāriya* are repeatedly de-scribed as loyal companions to their owners, entrusted with secret missions and assisting them in various ploys. Yet, it is clear that the *jawāriya's* gender — that is, their cunningness and their ability to turn a man's head — plays a significant part in their aptitude for the role of the accomplice. Finally, among the anecdotes of women complaining to and seeking redress from rulers or officials, a recurrent theme throughout *Mirror* texts, emerges the character of the woman who, due to a certain naivety or a failure to recognise the ruler, is not afraid to speak truth to power about grievances in the realm.

Therefore, while the overall attitude towards women in *Mirrors* remains one of objectification, sexualisation and exclusion (from power), these initial observations allow for a more diverse picture of the representation of women in *Mirrors* to emerge which will only gain in nuance the deeper we delve into the texts' narrative material.

Rebel Governance in the Middle East

ABDALHADI ALIJLA

JANUARY – JUNE

How does Ḥamās govern in the Gaza Strip? How do rebels in Syria manage the daily lives of people? How did Ḥizballāh manage the COVID-19 crisis in Lebanon? How do these forms of management impact people's identity, and what mechanisms do these groups use to gain legitimacy? These are all questions that are relevant to both stakeholders in the region as well as to the people living under the rule of these various groups.

This research project comprises several separate yet inter-related papers on the relationship between tribes and de facto authorities in the Gaza Strip under Ḥamās and in Syria under the various rebel groups, such as the Democratic Union Party (PYD) and the Local Administrative Councils (LAC). The project adopts a multidisciplinary approach that uses sociology and political science to answer the novel question: "How do rebels and tribes co-exist, and what different mechanisms/circumstances shape their relations?" To answer this question, a multi-focused analysis is undertaken, through an assessment of the provision of public services, socio-economic changes, the presence of other actors and the informal economy in rebel areas. However, due to COVID-19 restrictions, it became difficult to follow through with the project. As a result, a new paper was prepared to reflect the current reality and the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on rebel governance.

The key differentiating feature of this project is that it focuses on the politics of tribes and kinship in rebel areas, comparing three different cases: Syria, Lebanon and Gaza. The research provides new insight on how local organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), UN agencies, but also regional organisations and donors such as the EU, can use their funds and channel service provision to the benefit of the public in areas where there is limited access. It also suggests that tribes, which are a major actor in these communities, have an important role to play in the governance structure (e.g. by giving legitimacy). Moreover, the research emphasizes the historicity of rebels and non-state actors' activism and service provision to the public, as much as it suggests that existing institutions have an equal say in deciding the future of these societies and regions.

The articles proposed in this project would contribute to the literature on conflict and peace studies, as well as anthropological studies on the Middle East. What sets this project apart is that it attempts to employ heterogenous methodological approaches to address the question of rebel governance in the MENA region using qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. It is also in line with the foundations of research on rebel governance, including the use of inter-disciplinary approaches. The project attempts to break free from the central debate on the national political crisis, by examining sub-national patterns and assessing various factors. It seeks to bring about clear answers on how de facto rulers use tribes and tribal informal institutions to sustain their presence and create a safe social environment. Another advantage that this project offers is that it consists of a collection of essays, which facilitates their publication in peer-reviewed journals, as opposed to large books.
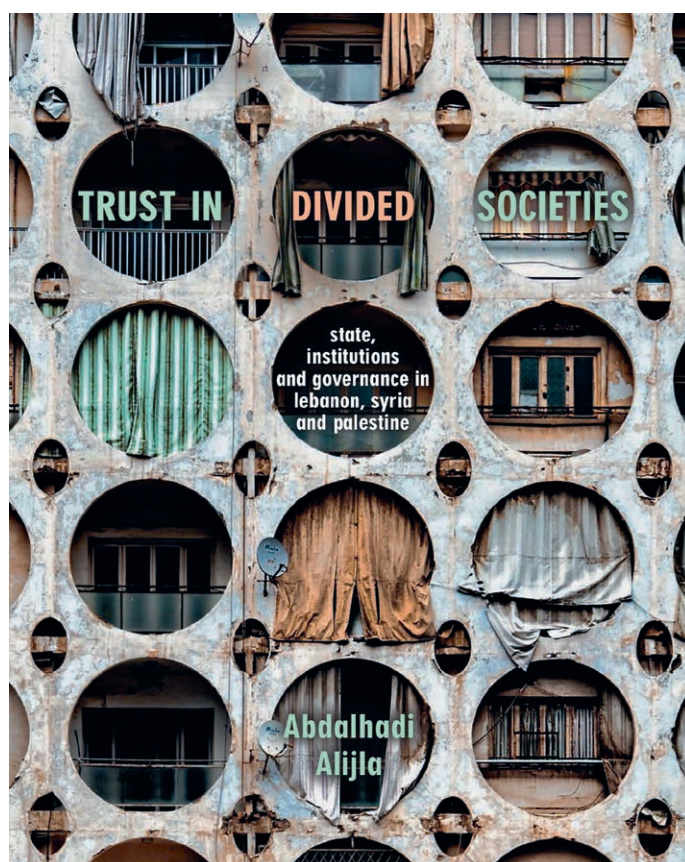
Book cover *Trust in Divided Societies: State, Institutions and Governance in Lebanon, Syria and Palestine*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Security as Everyday Affect // The mediation of militarised bodies on Iranian social media

SARA TAFAKORI
NOVEMBER 2020 – JUNE 2021

My postdoctoral research at the OIB, which will ultimately form part of my first manuscript, brings to bear a transnational and postcolonial feminist perspective in order to examine how the nation is imagined and bordered through gendered bodies, especially in relation to notions of outside threat. The theoretical and empirical orientation of this project addresses the intertwinement of the local and global dimensions and the problematic aspects of this intertwinement in understanding the relation of gender and nation in times of crisis in the Middle East. I explore mediations of gender, the nation and human rights and, specifically, how imaginings of gender and nation shape the ways in which solidarity can be conceived, developed and also how it can be blocked — and why it is so crucial to talk about solidarity. My focus is on popular digital activism in the field of women's rights in Iran, which raises questions such as: What do the emotional mediations around these campaigns do? How do they build or obstruct feelings and narratives around injustice?

My current work concerns Iranian popular culture and Iran's intervention in Syria. I examine the mediation and representations of the war on social media platforms, in popular national TV series, as well as in the form of highway billboards and posters and public painting exhibitions, both online and offline. I ask the following questions: What is the relation between Iran's military involvement and constructions of gender in Iranian national imaginaries? What is the relation between national and transnational/regional domains?

By looking at the impact of key events — especially the deaths and funerals of soldier-martyrs — I focus especially on the work of memorialisation, the idea of national memory as a construction, rather than as an organic process, and how this underpins new narratives of the nation which have implications on the gender roles of men and women. Building on my previous work on women's rights campaigning, I am interested in how these affective borderings will shape the possibilities and limitations of activism and solidarity.

These narratives are mobilised through the production of emotionally powerful images that circulate online, as well as offline, as the two realms are not separate. The images call upon citizens — especially the young — to become attached to the nation in particular ways.

Soldiers in Syria just outside the window of an Iranian cafe where women comfortably drink tea.
©SARA TAFAKORI

What seems crucial to this work of interpellation is the intimacy of the emotion that is so often mediated, in order to communicate one's gendered duty and obligation. With reference to the accompanying image, part of my research considers what *montage* as a visual device does and does not do in online and offline contexts. Montage, a technique classically associated with modernism and avant-garde movements, was celebrated by Walter Benjamin as bringing two realities into clashing juxtaposition, its function being to shock the viewer into wakefulness, freeing them from what Debord would later call the media "spectacle" (Benjamin 1936, Debord 1967). Here, one might argue, the shift in consciousness that is proposed only makes more vivid the hetero-patriarchal nation as dream-work.

In a piece I wrote as part of my current fellowship, entitled "Haunting Juxtapositions: Gender, COVID-19 and the conservative modern", I focus on the theme of montage as a modernist technique repurposed in order to re-imagine the nation in highly normative terms.

What my research suggests is that there are spatial politics to the ways in which our emotions attach to bodies and that discourses materialise in ways that impact bodies unequally. I argue that discourses of national security are increasingly interwoven with emotions. As such, they may frame particular lives as grievable via collective processes of memorialisation, while others' lives are rendered invisible and thereby excluded as ungrievable. As I have argued in another recent article for "Jadaliyya", also written during my fellowship, constructions of gender are central to the way affective discourses of security divide national from non-national bodies, and to how emotions are organised around and (as Sara Ahmed would put it) "stick" to those bodies.

The Construction of Male Homosexuality in Lebanese Films

**RITA BAROTTA**

DECEMBER 2020 – AUGUST 2021

My research project examines the portrayal and framing of alternative gender and sexual identity constructions in Lebanese films. My aim is to challenge societal views of such identities as being homogenous and stable through a study of their cinematic representations. Being openly homosexual in Lebanon goes hand in hand with being an activist. The local politico-social struggle of LBGTI+ communities — i.e. people identifying as non-binary, queer, homosexual etc. — is linked to a worldwide change in the status of "non-normative" individuals. Gender, with its emphasis on the social construction of identities, is a relatively novel concept in the Lebanese context.
It is used as a vector to link the struggles of the LBGTI+ communities with the more established feminist struggle.

This project has two main starting points. The first was how film production could contribute to achieving social justice: The paper assumes that visual productions on the subject aim to correct injustice, raise awareness and inspire activism for the cause of LGBTI+ communities. But films that tackle sexual minorities in Lebanon are rare, if not censored.

The project's second starting point is the representation of male homosexuality itself and its roots. The choice to analyse films that only dealt with male representation stems from the fact that the majority of productions were about male homosexuals, and that those protagonists reflect, in some ways, the society they live in, and challenge it in others. By studying these films, my aim is to be able to shed light on the society in which these films were produced.

Given that film analysis by itself hardly provides us with sufficient tools to delve into the matter, I resorted to the approach of discourse analysis to analyse the "representation" of homosexual male characters in films in a "discursive" light. The discursive approach of Stuart Hall (1997) appears to be the most practical, given the complexity of the study. Hall's constructivist theory, in particular, is the most adequate since it recognises the public and social character of language. By favouring Hall's approach, I will be able to work on the three dimensions that make up a film's discourse: the message, the author's point of view and the institutional context.

The corpus comprises nine films, including the first detected "film d'auteur", *Cinema Fouad* (Mohammed Soueid, 1993), the only film classified as Queer, *Still Burning* (Georges Hashem, 2016), and the four films produced in 2017, *Eccomi...eccoti* (Raed Rifai), *Room for a man* (Anthony Chidiak), *Chronic* (Mouhammed Sabbah) and *Martyr* (Mazen Hassan Khaled), which is the highest number of films produced in a single year.
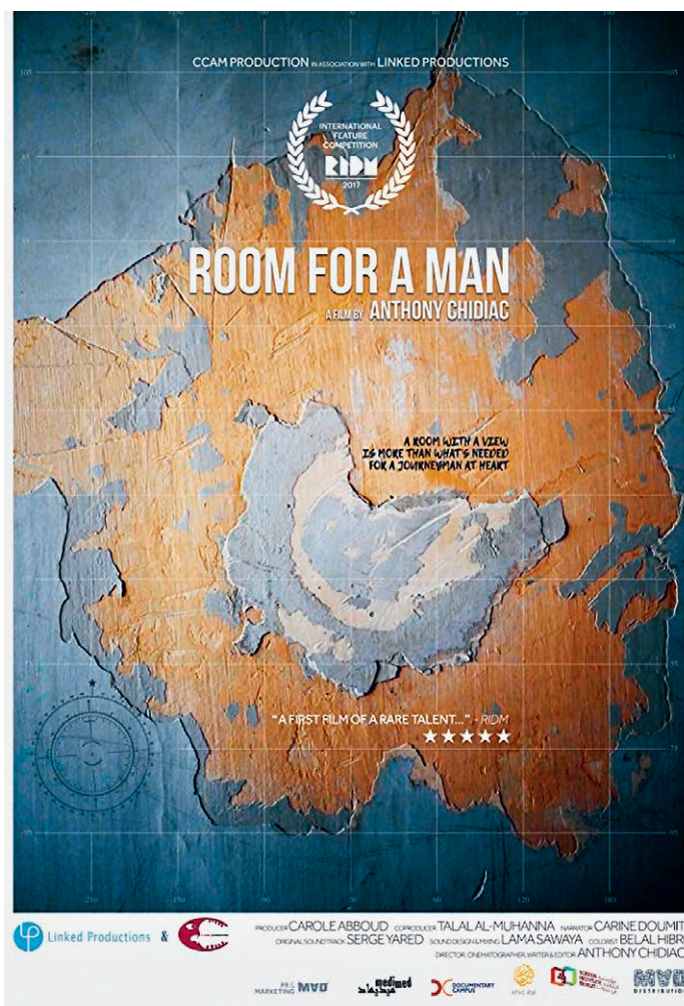
Movie poster for Anthony Chidiak's "Room for a man" (2017).

Women's decisions, Experiences and Access to Safe Abortion Care //
Accounts from women in Lebanon

ZEINA FATHALLAH

DECEMBER 2020 – APRIL 2021

The Lebanese Penal Code, promulgated in 1943, prohibits abortion under all circumstances and bans the selling of substances used to induce abortion (Articles 539–546 thereof). Under Article 541, a woman who undergoes an abortion is subject to imprisonment for six months to three years, and the person performing the abortion is subject to imprisonment for one year. Nonetheless, Article 545 stipulates that a woman who has an abortion to "preserve her honour" would benefit from attenuating circumstances. Although the circumstances under which an abortion is considered a means to preserve one's honour are not stated in the Penal Code, they include pregnancy in unmarried women and pregnancy resulting from rape. These attenuating circumstances also apply to the person contributing to an abortion in order to preserve the honour of a family member or relative, with or without the woman's consent. Presidential Decree No. 13187 of October 20, 1969, reaffirmed the prohibition on abortion but amended the Penal Code by permitting abortion in cases where it is necessary to save the pregnant woman's life (therapeutic abortion).

Lebanon's criminalisation of abortion is not an insurmountable obstacle for women who want to safely terminate their pregnancy under medical supervision. However, the ability to obtain a safe abortion becomes a privilege in the restrictive Lebanese context, where access to services hinges on a woman's social capital, networks, and ability to negotiate with partners and physicians. Single women from lower socio-economic backgrounds are particularly vulnerable in these negotiations. Thus, marital status and socioeconomic background determine women's access to safe abortion care and the experiences they have.

The purpose of this study is to explore the intersectional effects of criminalisation on women's access to safe abortion in Lebanon, particularly within the context of the economic crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic. The study will explore, first, how women experience abortion depending on their marital status, religion, and socioeconomic status; and, second, the decision-making process of whether or not to have an abortion and access to safe abortion care.

The proposed study employs semi-structured, face to-face interviews with women who have had an abortion in the last three years. The expected sample size is 15–20 interviews. My interview guide for women will focus on the following themes: (1) the context in which they discovered their pregnancy; (2) their decision to have an abortion; (3) the support they received from others; (4) their search for a physician; (5) their interactions with physicians; (6) accessibility to medical care; (7) secrecy management; and (8) their personal experiences with abortion.

I will recruit participants through personal networks as well as through snowballing. This is both a strength and a limitation of my study: While close relationships of trust will give me unique access in a clandestine context, they will also result in a biased sample that will not allow me to generalise my findings across the entire Lebanese population.I will analyse the data using the grounded theory, whereby data collection and data analysis are conducted in parallel. I will draw concepts out of each interview and then categorise them, and I will perform a comparative analysis and axial coding, with the purpose of producing an article based on the outcomes of this study.

Humans &
the environment

Ecologies of Risk // Mapping the colonial entanglement of racialisation and techno-natures in the Mediterranean Sea

MONIKA HALKORT

SEPTEMBER 2019 – JUNE 2020

This research interrogates how the ever-more pervasive wiring of the Mediterranean Sea with environmental sensors and tracking devices affects the ways in which risks of death and extinction are anticipated and imagined, potentially undermining ethical commitments and obligations towards bodies in need. The first part of the research, conducted in 2019, was centred on the use of real-time tracking technologies by political activists and border security agencies in the struggle over migration and showed how these platforms have become a key battleground for negotiating conflicting notions of risk and security. The second part of the research extends the line of inquiry to the wider environment of ocean sensors and scientific tracking devices to unpack how the increasing convergence of military and scientific communication networks modulate the ways risks of death become knowable, sensible and intelligible at sea. Chief among the aspired outcomes of both case studies is to develop a set of propositions for de-colonizing the Mediterranean as a frontier and laboratory for new techno-scientific knowledge, as well as to unpack how technical innovations affect the ways in which "natural" and "premature" death are imagined, negotiated and operationalised. Remote sensing technologies and Earth Observation systems have introduced ever-more refined ways for measuring and mapping bio/geological processes and activity that would otherwise be imperceptible, opening up modes of knowing and engaging with domains of experience that fundamentally alter how life, death and non-life are modelled and understood. I am interested in how this extended field of sensibilities affects the ways in which different forms of life are validated and valued in relation to risks shared across human and non-human bodies. How do the cognitive and perceptual affordances of remote sensing recalibrate the calculus of life and death in the biopolitical management of trans-species relations? And how does that feed into the ways ethical substance is configured in policy making and scientific research?

I am engaging these questions in their broader historical context to unpack how contemporary infrastructure of environmental sensing and observation articulate to modern colonial warfare, marine science and climate research. The construction of the Suez Canal (1859) marks a critical turning point in this regard. It not only solidified the intimate link between military and scientific interests and desires, but also opened the sea to multiple processes of colonisation and enclosure, spreading the deadly logic of competition and conquest deep into marine habitats and multispecies life.

1 Jessica Lehman, "A Sea of Potential: The Politics of Global Ocean Observations", Political Geography 55 (2016): 121, doi:10.1016/j.polgeo.2016.09.006; David Chandler, "Mapping and the Governance of Effects", in *Mapping and Politics in the Digital Age* (Routledge Global Cooperation Series), ed. Bargués-Pedreny, Pol Chandler, David Simon, Elena, Kindle (Taylor and Francis, 2019).

Floating sensors CC BY 4.0.
POLITICALBEAUTY.DE /
ALEXANDERLEHMANN.NET.

The toxic afterlife of these technical incursions, as evidenced in the rampant destruction of marine habitats and dying species, challenges the ontological assumption and framings on which modern biopolitical governance depends. Drawing on critical infrastructure studies and feminist science and technology studies (STS), the research shows how the increasing recognition of environmental harms as being fundamentally political and economic problems ushered in a new onto-logics of "post-human governance" built around the real-time collection of environmental data, which is only selectively mobilized to prevent "premature" death. It created a situation where environmental data has, on the one hand, become an integral part of border security and surveillance to become increasingly weaponised, while, on the other hand, their critical potential for detecting and identifying migrant vessels in distress are by and large left unattended or unrecognised. The selective reading of the sea at the level of data textures allows for a calculus of life in which some deaths can be naturalised, while nature is historicised into a material witness for evidencing and anticipating threats stretched across geo/biological timeframes and scales. Instead of fostering a more inclusive ethics of knowing and care, the "post-human governance"[1] of the Mediterranean flexibly (re)distributes logics of racialisation and de-humanization within and across species, while at the same time reinstating inherited hierarchies and distinctions between humans and non-humans, while their inseparability has become central to notions of security and protection in humanitarian assistance and environmental policy and research.

Navigating Scylla and Charybdis //
Co-governance & reforestation in post-war Lebanon

PAUL ESBER

JANUARY – OCTOBER

My postdoctoral project investigates the politics of reforestation in contemporary Lebanon. Cutting edge research on environmentalism in Lebanon written in English consists of islands of studies, and, while there are very few socially-oriented works published on reforestation. This reality extends to individual organisations within the environmental movement, such as the Lebanon Reforestation Initiative (*jam'iyyat al-taḥrīj fi Lubnān*, LRI); which became the central focus of the project.

The project was initially thought of as a year-long ethnography with the purpose of discerning the potential for engagement in reforestation to produce new/different modes, conceptions and understandings of citizenship. However, due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, a redesign of the project was necessary. Examining the historical development of the environmental movement in Lebanon, with particular focus on efforts to increase the country's cedar forest footprint, my research moved from the individual (citizen) level to the organisational/institutional level of analysis in order to ascertain where the LRI is situated in a complicated matrix of local and external actors, and how it positions and manoeuvres itself.

In Homer's epic, Odysseus and his crew navigate between the monsters Scylla and Charybdis, each occupying different sides of the same narrow strait. To be between Scylla and Charybdis is to navigate between two simultaneous dangers. As Odysseus learnt, this is not without cost: He lost six crewmen to Scylla. My research adapts this as a metaphor for the environmental movement in post-war Lebanon, particularly with regard to reforestation.

The LRI is akin to Odysseus, having to manoeuvre in the difficult socio-political environment of contemporary Lebanon. Charybdis, known in the Odyssey for its ability to tear ships apart, I take to refer to the fragmented socio-political body of post-war Lebanon, elaborated on insightfully by Samir Khalaf and Andrew Arsan, among others. Scylla, meanwhile, is taken here to refer to costs. As an NGO, the LRI relies on local good will from stakeholders and political officials at the municipal, district and national levels. Concurrently, to ensure it survival, it must pursue funding from external and internal sources. Both of these realities entail potential costs in the form of limitations on the ability of the of LRI to maintain its agenda without pragmatic compromises.

Seedlings being grown in a Bcharre nursery in preparation for the next planting season.
©PAUL ESPER

The LRI and other environmental organisations must negotiate this environment on a daily basis. I argue that this navigation is undertaken conceptually through co-governance, understood in the literature as a set of arrangements in which decision-making is exercised collaboratively between government, non-government and local actors. There is an assumption of balance between the actors involved which does not stack-up in the real world of politics; so, naturally, the concept's theoretical essence needs to be tempered with application if it is to have any real value to social scientists. Therefore, my research project evolved into a conceptual study as well as a study about the struggle of reforestation endeavours.

The research uncovered opportunities and obstacles. A reliance on the United States Agency for International Development, for example, brings the LRI into the sphere of US foreign policy in Lebanon, especially in relation to Ḥizballāh. While this is not too great of a burden in terms of the LRI's role in organising the north planting corridor, it does present some difficulties for reforestation initiatives in the south.

Yet, the political architecture of Lebanon offers opportunities for well-organised and funded environmental organisations such as the LRI to influence policy and legislation, as the example of an ongoing project to preserve populations in the Ammiq Wetlands attests. However, this same political environment also makes co-governance difficult to implement when actors are unsure of who is responsible for what. This was manifested during a meeting in Bcharre between local stakeholders, municipal officials and members of the Civil Defence facilitated by the LRI in February 2020. Members of the municipal council expressed frustration at the lack of clear guidelines from the state and the Civil Defence as to the appropriate protocols to undertake in the event of forest fires.

Overall, LRI seeks to empower the communities in which it operates, utilising and developing local knowledge and skill-sets, which can be understood as a form of co-governance in terms of forest management and sustainable use.

Resilient Generations //
Infrastructure and independence in the dance music scenes of post-war Lebanon

JOSHUA HUDELSON
OCTOBER 2019 – JUNE 2020

During my one-year tenure as a Postdoctoral Fellow at OIB, I researched dance music culture in Lebanon as part of a book project entitled *Resilient Generations: Infrastructure and independence in the dance music scenes of post-war Lebanon*. My aim is to show how the theoretical frameworks commonly applied to American and European dance music scenes fail to account for those of Lebanon, and particularly Beirut. In offering a corrective, I focus on the nexus of state-run infrastructure, sectarian corruption and neoliberal entrepreneurship within and against which the Lebanese dance music culture struggles to define itself.

Dance music scholarship tends to split into two theoretical camps. Scholars such as Tim Lawrence and Micah Salkind have shown how the genre has created protected spaces in which racial and sexual minorities can build communities. Steve Goodman and Tavia Nyong'o, on the other hand, have focused on how the music's corporeal and affective qualities can be weapons against statist subjectification. Naturally, the dance music scenes in Lebanon are not isolated from global dance music culture, nor do the aforementioned theories fail to address at least some of their salient features. But if we wish to understand dance music culture in Lebanon, we need to examine how it is involved in a unique field of material and discursive culture on the ground. The latest outcome of this project — a chapter entitled "Places that Don't Close; Spaces that Don't Exist" — focuses on how nightclubs and underground dance parties are plugged into the high-voltage, alternating currents of state and sectarian electrical power generation. In Lebanon, decades of corruption within the electricity sector have resulted in a barely adequate but highly flexible symbiosis of state-controlled power plants and privately-owned generators operating at a range of scales, from entire neighbourhoods to single buildings. Officially illegal, these generators have become so deeply imbricated with the Lebanese grid that their owners now constitute a substantial political force. They also provide the reassurance of systemic redundancy in a country that continually sees war on the horizon. As anthropologist Brian Larkin has noted, power cuts do not have a uniform cultural meaning. In Lebanon, they are reminders of the subterranean networks of power that bring the lights back on but also make various forms of social cohesion impossible.

A rave inside the "Egg" building.
©JOSHUA HUDELSON

In contrast, the dance music experience hinges on an uninterrupted supply of electrical power — consumed in the form of music, lights, strobe machines, ventilation and video screens — that is sharply at odds with the experience of daily power cuts. Within this fictive continuity — "a space that doesn't close", as one of my informants described it — dancers briefly feel that they have escaped the web of corrupt, sect-divided interests that control space and stymie collectivism. The music, too, is perceived as a free and open space, cosmopolitan and unfractured — "You can fit anything within it", another informant told me.

But to create this unencumbered and continuous space, nightclubs rely heavily on black-market power providers, while smaller party organisers become producers of power themselves through the rental or purchase of mobile diesel generators. In both cases, the isolationist and entrepreneurial dynamics of the dance music scene begin to mimic some of the corralling and stifling practices of sectarianisation. This is not to say that dance music scenes are, internally, riven across sect. But in contradistinction to their purported neutrality, openness and transparency, club owners and party organisers often find themselves recapitulating the structures — if not the specific ideological content — that had initially spurred them to create alternative spaces and events. In other words, a form of social grid-lock is inextricable from the tangle of a corrupt grid.

The Religious Soundscape of the Maronites

ALEX RODRIGUEZ SUAREZ

FEBRUARY – AUGUST

My research project looks at the religious soundscape of Mount Lebanon from the Crusader period until the establishment of the French Mandate. The arrival of the Crusaders to the Levant at the end of the eleventh century was accompanied by the introduction of the use of bell ringing for religious purposes. Until then, the local Christian communities had employed the *nāqūs*, an elongated piece of wood that was struck with a wooden mallet, to call the faithful to service. The end of the Crusader States witnessed the vanishing of church bells, and the practice was strictly forbidden until the mid-nineteenth century, when the Ottoman authorities slowly allowed the religious use of bell ringing across their empire. Nonetheless, written sources inform us that the pealing of bells resumed in Mount Lebanon long before that date. During my stay at the OIB, I have looked at a wide range of textual sources — both local and foreign — in search of references on the use of bell ringing in Mount Lebanon. Already in the sixteenth century Western pilgrims and diplomats claimed that the only place in the Levant where the pealing of church bells could be heard was Mount Lebanon. While in this early date these only seem to have been found in one location — the seat of the Maronite Patriarch — with the passing of time, bell ringing became more common. The mountainous geography of the region and its unique (predominantly Christian) religious composition played a key role in the expansion of bell ringing. Indeed, because of this the area was considered by some Europeans as a Christian haven in a Muslim empire. Another important factor that promoted the use of bell ringing in Mount Lebanon was the relationship between the Maronite Church and the Papacy. The latter imposed its own practices, one of which was the use of bells. Finally, the political status quo of Mount Lebanon encouraged the use of church bells. While Mount Lebanon was, in theory, under the rule of the Ottoman sultans, it was in reality governed by local emirs that had to interact with their Christian subjects. My research activities also included the study of actual bells. Whenever lockdown measures permitted me to do so, I undertook field trips to churches and monasteries to examine the artefacts that they ring. Recording their inscriptions and decoration was a significant task since most of these bells have not been studied.

Detail of the eighteenth-century
bell at the Monastery of the Holy
Saviour, Ghosta (Keserwan).
©ALEX RODRIGUEZ SUAREZ

Among the bells that I inspected were two eighteenth-century artefacts, so far the
oldest bells in Lebanon. While these two were imported from Europe, most bells used
in the locations that I visited were cast in Beit Chabab.
The production of bells in this village, located twenty-four kilometres north of Beirut,
is already referenced in the nineteenth century. The particular religious soundscape
of Mount Lebanon led to the emergence of bell founding, one of the oldest crafts in
the region.
The results of my investigation will be published in the form of an article devoted to
the religious soundscape of the Christian communities of Mount Lebanon during the
Ottoman period — that is, from the early sixteenth century until the First World War.
These four centuries concentrate most of the evidence that I have gathered during
my months-long stay in Beirut. The goal is to present the Ottoman history of Mount
Lebanon from a novel perspective: that of the acoustic environment.

The *SpaceTime* of Urban Violence and Policing in Belfast and Jerusalem During the Era of the British Empire

MARA ALBRECHT

APRIL 2019 – MARCH 2020

The riots in Ireland in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and in Palestine during the Mandate era are among those cases of disturbances of the peace that were most damaging to the prestige of the British Empire. The cities of Belfast and Jerusalem played a significant role in these struggles for national identity, political power and spatial hegemony. Practices of urban violence and policing in the empire's territories were shaped by imperial policies based on a paternalistic and orientalist worldview that was not only applied to "Orientals" but also to the "fighting Irish".
 A main approach within British policies was to differentiate the local population spatially and temporally according to religious categories. In my study, I analyse the riots in Belfast and Jerusalem against the backdrop of how urban violence and its policing were interconnected with British notions of religious identities, urban space and time. By adopting a spatiotemporal perspective, new insights can be gained about the impact of changing perceptions and imaginations of spatialities and temporalities on the production and shaping of urban violence and how violence in turn transformed the SpaceTime of both cities. The British imperial conception of their "colonial subjects" significantly influenced their urban planning strategies and changed urban rhythms and the spatiotemporal practices of the local actors. However, these actors also had their own agency and operated in a field of tension between cooperation with and resistance to imperial rule on the basis of their own spatiotemporal perceptions and ultimately also through the use of violence.
The representatives of the British Empire on the ground and in London documented and discussed instances of collective violence and the success of measures of policing in-depth, in an attempt to understand their inner workings and to avoid further riots. The Royal Commissions of Inquiry, which convened in the fashion of a court of law, were an important instrument in this regard, calling witnesses from all religious groups and social classes and collecting evidence. Their reports considerably contributed to the knowledge about violence and policing that was accumulated and circulated within the empire. Debates on the Commissions' findings in Parliament often led to a readjustment of British imperial policies and to the formulation of new strategies. Together with the transfer of officers, troops and administrative personnel, knowledge about violence and policing was circulated within the empire.

Jerusalem, spice market. Bazaars are closed during a general strike displaying black flags in protest against the British. Balfour day, 2 November 1929.

LC-DIG-MATPC-15745. COURTESY OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

The connection between Ireland and Palestine is of particular significance in this regard: Not only did the Royal Irish Constabulary serve as a role model for other police forces within the empire, but, in addition, the ill-famed paramilitary units "Black and Tans" and "Auxiliaries" were transferred to Palestine after the Irish War of Independence.

My research is based on Commission reports and other archival records, as well as historical maps, newspaper articles and private documents from key actors. The spatiotemporal perspective allows not only for an analysis of strategies of policing and knowledge circulation in a larger, imperial context, but also for the study of violence on the meso level of the city. The project thereby generates new impulses for interdisciplinary research on urban violence and can contribute to a new under-standing of empires, especially with regard to their policies of governance in situations of crisis and change. Belfast and Jerusalem are both cities that still experience episodes of collective violence on a regular basis, the roots of which can be traced back to the era of the British Empire. Hence, a study of past violence, its historical development of specific forms and practices and its cultural coding can also be of relevance in understanding current conflicts in both cities.

Humans &
the divine

Angels as Metaphors // Representation and function of angels in the Qur'ān and Classical Sufi Literature

LOUISE GALLORINI

OCTOBER 2020 – APRIL 2021

My dissertation explores the functions and representations of angels in the Qur'ān and their evolution in Sufi texts of the pre-Mongol era (Qur'ānic commentaries, *mi'rāj* literature and the works of Ibn 'Arabī). There has been recently a small number of important works on angels in Islam (such as those of Stephen Burge, and the contributions to *The Intermediate Worlds of Angels* published by the OIB), and my dissertation aims at enriching the conversation by focusing on a body of works in Arabic from the pre-Mongol time period.

The drafts of the last two chapters of my PhD dissertation were submitted in 2020: One chapter on Sufi mi'rāj literature, based the account attributed to al-Bisṭāmī (d. 874) and the account by Ibn 'Arabī (d. 1240); and the last chapter of the dissertation on "The Openings Revealed in Mecca" (*al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*) by Ibn 'Arabī. The main contribution of these chapters is the increasing use of angels as a locus of a multiplicity of meanings: Aside from descriptions of angels as ontological beings with different roles and functions, such as they are presented in the *Qur'ānic* text and in non-Sufi theological works, they are also used by Sufi authors as metaphors both in the text and outside of the text. These metaphors provide the Sufi seeker with different signs to help him/her or challenge him/her on the Sufi spiritual journey. This tendency was already discreetly visible in the Qur'ānic commentaries written by Sufi authors in the first centuries of Islam, which is the object of my second chapter, and this gains a particular complexity within the writings of Ibn 'Arabī by the thirteenth century. This multi-form metaphorical function of angels is possibly what distinguishes Sufi writings from other works, while other functions attributed to angels and the different descriptions pertaining to their nature and essence is similar in Sufi and non-Sufi works.

Louise Gallorini,
Angel.

Balance as Justice // An analysis of premodern ethics based on Qinālīzāde 'Alī Çelebī's Akhlāq-i 'Alā'ī

FATIH ERMIŞ

JULY 2018 – JUNE 2021

Qinālīzāde 'Alī Çelebī (1510–1572), arguably the most influential moral philosopher in the history of the Ottoman Empire, authored a famous work in the field of practical philosophy: *Akhlāq-i 'Alā'ī*. It was the most popular and widely discussed ethical work in the Ottoman Empire, and it served as the basis for almost all textbooks on ethics until modern times. In this book, Qinālīzāde strictly follows the tradition of the Persian philosophers Naṣīr ad-Dīn Ṭūsī, Jalāl ad-Dīn Dawwānī and Ḥusein Vā'iẓ Kāshifī. In fact, Qinālīzāde's book represents the final instalment of this series. He describes his own contribution to this literature as follows:

> *Ḥāja Naṣīr and Fāḍil Dawwānī wrote extensively about true love and the love of God. I, as a poor man, added honourable instructions and pleasing expressions and quotations to them. If the reader compares their books and my writing, he can thereupon recognise and appreciate the value of my efforts.*

Qinālīzāde describes the previous literature as obsolete and states that he intention-ally writes his own book in Turkish (*Türkī-i Rūm*) in order to create an Ottoman book of ethics. This was the key to success for his book. Although the general principles of ethics are universal in the classical understanding of ethics, Qinālīzāde demonstrates how the implementation of these general principles in praxis needs interpretation in different contexts. He provides many examples from earlier and contemporary Otto-man practices while discussing ethical concepts and problematiques, thus rendering *Akhlāq-i 'Alā'ī* an expression of Ottoman ideals of governance and social order. For example, when discussing the concept of the errant city (*medīne-i ḍālle*), Qinālīzāde, unlike his predecessors, draws a distinction between the infidel errant (*ḍālle-i kāfire*) and the heretical errant (*ḍālle-i gayri kāfire*). The examples of the former are Euro-peans (*Efrenc*) and Russians (*Rūs*), whereas the example of the latter is the *sorḫser ṭāyifesī* (the group of Red-Heads), by which Qinālīzāde means the newly established Safavids. For Qinālīzāde, the only virtuous state is the Ottoman state.

The second aspect in which Qinālīzāde's book remarkably differs from its predecessors is that the dry style of Ṭūsī and Dawwānī is replaced in *Akhlāq-i 'Alā'ī* with a literary style that ornaments the practical philosophy with poetry in Turkish, Persian and Arabic to make it more appealing to the taste of the Ottoman elite.

There is plenty of evidence that this endeavour was greatly appreciated by his audience. Qinālīzāde's contemporary Beyānī stated in his anthology of poets that *Akhlāq-i 'Alā'ī* turned the books of Ṭūsī and Dawwānī into old garments. A century later, Kātib Çelebi stated that *Akhlāq-i 'Alā'ī* was superior to all other works of ethics that had been written before.

Qinālīzāde's contribution to practical philosophy owes its success more to the way he expresses his ideas than to a new theoretical approach. Qinālīzāde's *Akhlāq-i 'Alā'ī* is not only twice the size of Ṭūsī and Dawwānī's works, but it also contains richer content including poetry, pleasing anecdotes, contextualisation of ethics in the praxis of his time, etc. He also quotes Qur'ānic verses and prophetic traditions more often. The mystical dimension that exists implicitly in the books of Ṭūsī and Dawwānī becomes explicit with direct quotations from Sufi works in Qinālīzāde's book.

The gravestone of Qinālīzāde in the city of Edirne in the district Nazır Çeşmesi.
The Persian script on the gravestone can be translated into English as follows: *The unique of his time 'Alī Çelebī / May his precious soul be in the eternal paradise / Passed away in the year nine hundred seventy nine / In the city of Edirne, 5th of the month of Ramaḍān / Who was known as Ḥannālīzāde.*
©FATIH ERMIŞ

The Construction of Metaphor Theory in Islam and the Emergence of a New "Common Sense"

ABDALLAH SOUFAN
SEPTEMBER 2019 – AUGUST 2022

My work this year focused on what the construction of the theory of metaphor in Islam in the ninth and tenth centuries reveals about the historical emergence of a new "common sense" that is quite different from that which was dominant in early Islam. I started my work by studying the explicit and implicit assumptions about language which were involved in constructing the theory of metaphor in Islam. My work reveals six main assumptions: (1) That words signify by way of assignment, where meanings are thought of as separate entities that are attached to separate linguistic expressions by acts of assignment; (2) that usage is an extralinguistic element. In other words, language is complete and sufficient before usage. Usage is considered a linguistic phenomenon only when it affects the original assignment; (3) that language is context-free. This explains why metonymy is thought of as belonging to the realm of the literal; (4) that signification is arbitrary; (5) that interpretation (*ta'wīl*) is an act of decontextualisation that is done by liberating the speech from all traces of context; (6) and, finally, that speech is the act of contextualising the pre-existing language. I argue that at the time when the theory of metaphor was constructed by 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, these assumptions were taken for granted. In that sense, they formed a certain "common sense" or *'uqalā'iyyah* (defined here as the set of propositions that reasonable people, in a certain time and place, would consider to be true *despite* time and place).

But what was quite significant in my research is that I showed that none of these assumptions was taken for granted in early Islam. To the contrary, it seems that early Muslims, as well as Arabs in the pre-Islamic era, had a quite different idea about how language functions. It seems here that the world is believed to be constantly talking to us. Everything in the world is a signifier and a signified at the same time. In such a model, we can dispense with all the six assumptions mentioned above. If this is true, then early Islam, in the pre-theoretical age, did not share the same "common sense" that came to be dominant.
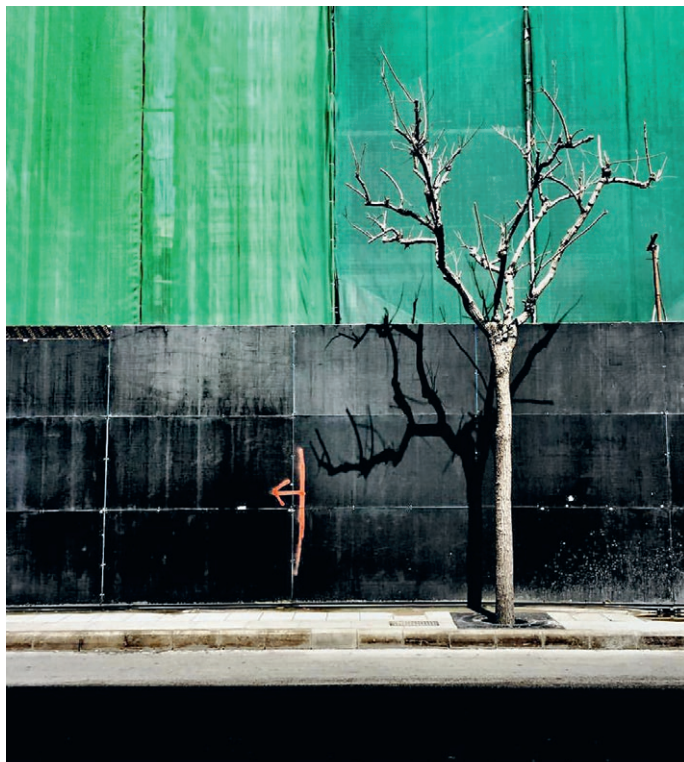
©RABIH EL-AMINE

Being aware of this transformation in the "common sense" could help us account for many other transformations that took place in the same period, and which scholars of early Islam have noted and studied. This year, I focused on the transformation in poetics. Students and scholars of early Arabic literary tradition are fully aware of the poetic rupture that took place in the eighth century.

This is usually associated with the rise of new urban sensibilities that could be easily contrasted with Bedouin sensibilities of the earlier tradition. While this is true, it is not enough, as I tried to show, to account for the emergence of the *muḥdath* poetry.

In my account, the earlier poets attempted at reading the world as it is revealing itself to them. The signs are there from the beginning, and the poet's job is to help us interpret these signs by focusing our lens. Later poets saw themselves as the creators of their poetic world. A metaphor is a construction in the mind of the poet and is expressed linguistically. For earlier poets, nothing is metaphorical, because nothing is lateral. The transformation in poetics can be seen then as a move from creating wonder through the eyes of the poet to creating wonder through her words.

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The Formation of the Manuscripts of Patriarch Ignatios Ni'matullah (1515–1587) in the Ottoman Empire // An overview

HAZIM ALABDULLAH

SEPTEMBER 2019 – MARCH 2020

The third chapter of my dissertation constitutes an important juncture for my on-going work on the biography of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch Ignatios Ni'matullah (Patr. 1557–1576). This section locates the Patriarch's collection of manuscripts, which is one of the ambitious goals of the dissertation. It also reveals Ni'matullah's interest in collecting manuscripts in different fields, especially in medicine, astronomy, grammar and mathematics. This investigation will situate Ni'matullah the context of the cultural and intellectual interest of manuscript collecting in Ṭūr 'Abdin (south-eastern Turkey) in the sixteenth century. The chapter examines the practices of Patriarch Ni'matullah in the formation of his collection over the span of forty years. The results of this chapter demonstrate that Ni'matullah's collection came from different backgrounds and contexts.

The manuscripts that were obtained from his family members constitute the first part of his collection. Other manuscripts were purchased by the Patriarch in Amid and Mardin or during his trips. The largest category of manuscripts includes those that were copied for Ni'matullah by monk Farrūkh and deacon 'Abd al-Nūr. As for the last part of the Patriarch's collection, it includes the manuscripts that were taken from the patriarchate library, before moving them to Italy in 1576. Through accurate examination of this collection, I shed light on Ni'matullah's intellectual interest in manuscripts. Ni'matullah possessed old Syriac and Arabic canonical manuscripts that were produced mainly during the Abbasid reign and the two subsequent centuries. The Canons of Medicine by Ibn Sīna (980–1037), *Kitāb Nuzhat al-Mushtāq* by al-Idrīsi (1100-1166), the edition of Euclid's *Elements* by Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭusī (1201–1247) and *al-Ajurrumiyya* by Ibn Ajrrūm (1273–1323) are just a few examples that form an essential part of Ni'matullah's collection. These manuscripts of Ni'matullah's were used as samples for printing projects in "Typographia Medicea" (1584–1616), and Patriarch Ignatios Ni'matullah played an essential role in the process of printing, along with Giovanni Battista Raimondi, the director of the Medici Oriental Press.

Humans &
their productions

Alternative Political Actors and Spaces (1600–1800)

CHRISTOPHER BAHL

OCTOBER 2018 – AUGUST 2021

My postdoctoral project departs from a political history focused on courts to study forms of community building in early modern South and West Asia. I interpret community building as a political idiom and trace its impact through textual productions that derive from learned group cultures. Such decentralised political histories of South and West Asia focus on the relationships and networks of competing elites, religious movements, and professional groups beyond the imperial centres. I study the intellectual histories of the impact of their textual traditions based on their manuscripts and reading notes. This dialogical analysis sheds light on previously disregarded social groups and their political cultures.

In two different case studies, I intend to explore the nexus of community building and knowledge formation. The first takes place in the sixteenth century, when interactions between large empires and small polities reshaped alliances, and individuals set sail to search for new social options across the sea. The ability to connect with new people reshaped forms of knowledge transmission and the sense of social and political belonging. In the second half of the sixteenth century, Sayyid Ḥasan al-Naqīb, known as Ibn Shadqam, left his post as Custodian at the Prophet's Mosque in Medina to make his living as a migrant scholar abroad. He spent the rest of his life traveling between the Ḥijāz, the Deccan in South Asia, and Iran. His trips included visits to the shrines of Najaf, Karbalā', and Mashhad, where he built his scholarly networks (the photograph shows the famous shrine of Imam Reza in Mashhad). But he also entered the Safavid and Deccani courts, married a Deccani princess, and received royal patronage. Ibn Shadqam's descent as a Sayyid – a lineage traced to Prophet Muhammad – provided him with cultural mobility, which enabled his elite pursuit of intellectual sea voyages. These movements would reshape his social world. As he travelled from shrine to shrine and court to court, he penned several works in Arabic, including biographical compilations and genealogical texts. He began putting together his "own community" consisting of fellow poets, scholars, and sultans. This community-building project complicates the political map of that era by revealing the entanglements of courts with scholarly communities in shrine cities and elsewhere. Mobile Shī'ī groups, politically unsuccessful "at home", were able to carve out their own socio-political spaces at the fringes of early modern empires.

The Imam Reza shrine,
Mashhad, Iran.
WIKIPEDIA.

The second case study examines the intellectual output and transregional political networking of Murād al-Bukhārī, towards an intellectual history of reformist political Islam in the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries from Delhi to Damascus and Istanbul. The Muslim reforms of the nineteenth century are often considered exceptional, while early modern understandings of Muslim reform are treated as mere reincarnations of the previous ages. However, colonial modernity is part of a longer history of political encounters and cultural exchanges that shaped Muslim polities during the early modern period, for which the life of Murād al-Bukhārī is revealing. Born in Bukhāra, he studied in Delhi and was initiated into the Naqshbandī Sufi order by the intellectual heirs of Aḥmad Sirhindī. He travelled widely, established connections with the Ottoman court in Istanbul, and finally founded a madrasa in Damascus, which became a hub of learned activity. A range of texts, preserved as manuscripts in Damascus today, chart a transregional history of political ideas in the intertextual spaces created by al-Bukhārī's works and the marginalia of his students and readers. Such debates pluralise the political impact of learned communities during that period.

Art Intermediaries' Mobilisation towards the Development of Cultural Policies in Lebanon //
A Necessary redefinition of the place of art in society?

CELIA HASSANI
SEPTEMBER 2019 – FEBRUARY 2020

My research project focuses on several groups of art intermediaries that play a major role in the development of cultural policies in Lebanon as a form of social mobilisation. It is clear that these initiatives are part of a continuing process — a long-term reflection that with a more and more enabling environment. The dynamism of the contemporary Arab scenes over the past twenty years could be linked to the the proliferation of multi-faceted initiatives supported by the increased sharing of skills. The issue of funding, especially from Europe and the Gulf, as well as the relationship with the international art market since the 1990s, are also important factors to consider in this empower-ment process of the art scenes. Cultural actors and artists have been given more opportunities to create and disseminate their work. More recently, over the past ten years, new regional foundations or European development programmes have been established, which underlines the growing interest in Arab productions. These various changes contribute to a greater structuring of the artistic environment and collabo-rative networks at the regional and international levels. The cultural practices of the art scenes are more connected to globalised flows that transcend geographical boundaries. Nonetheless, these intensified cultural exchanges raise the question of the power relations, which have an impact on the constitution and definition of con-temporary artistic scenes and values. Moreover, these changes are consistent with the diversification of artistic productions but also reflect the transformation in the content of discourses and aesthetic languages conveyed by artists and their works. Quite a few academic studies have sought to interrogate, define and explore the role of art in Lebanese society both from an aesthetic and socio-political perspective, especially in the post-civil war context. It is generally established that art and culture played a fundamental role in processes of reconciliation, political distancing, collec-tive and individual memory and the issue of public space. These transformations and the political discourses they are connected to pursue new horizons and open new perspectives, especially with regard to cultural democratisation and mediation and in terms of access to arts and culture.

Fictio Statis // Unreliable numbers, private statistics and experts' careers in Lebanon (1950–1990)

PIERRE FRANCE
OCTOBER 2020 – SEPTEMBER 2023

Although many research papers have dealt with the political economy of Lebanon, rarely have they tackled the way statistics and economic information are gathered and constructed in the first instance, despite being in a country notoriously known for having few capacities in this regard. Relying on both a French-inspired body of works on statistics (Alain Desrosières) and the recent debate on poor numbers (Morten Jerven), I intend to adopt a different approach and to unfold problems that are widely known among Lebanese economists as part of a daily routine but rarely addressed per se, despite their wide-ranging implications. This research does not focus on the Lebanese economy and does not draw on economy as a discipline; rather, it deals with economy as a form of knowledge, economic indicators as professional practice, with economics as a profession and with statistics as a policy.

The first common assumption that this work will question is related to the construction of an institutional vacuum, that of statistical services in the Arab world, and what it involves at a broader political level. The rise of national statistics services from the 1920s to the 1960s had symbolic value as a way for newly formed nations to assert their independence from former colonial powers and to overcome the colonial imagination with numbers. How, then, did the data become so scarce? The case of Lebanon might seem to stand out at first sight, because the Statistics Bureau was one of the only public institutions that were directly targeted at the very beginning of the conflict in 1975. Yet, at the same time, in other Arab countries where no civil war was taking place, data collection services also crumbled. Today, in most Arab countries, the question is not to have "open" or "big" data, but rather to have reliable data.

The second, lesser-known phenomenon that the research sheds light on is that data scarcity has created a new market for statistics, which in turns makes it even more difficult for State actors to produce data. In Lebanon, many economists and statisticians have established their own consulting firms, and banks also set up private research teams. They took the initiative to compile, aggregate and publish data in place of the State, creating an interplay between data providers, the State, but also international institutions (these private entities are still, to this day, the main data providers international institutions turn to for reliable figures about the country). On the whole, the point of this post-doc project is not so much to prove the existence of "poor numbers" or the absence of reliable institutions in the Arab world by examining

the case of Lebanon, but rather to shed light on the social construction of this absence, as well as its substitute, i.e. the network of data providers. Lastly, what is at stake is also the depiction of how the information they handle is being used. In doing so, I will first look at the chain of supply and demand for data about Lebanon — thereby mapping out an arena of providers, consumers, experts and offices. Secondly, I will analyse how key stakeholders use those numbers on a daily basis.

In terms of methodology, I will resort to a combination of archival work and individual interviews with key stakeholders, who will provide valuable insight on how they produced and/or used these documents and figures. I will meet economists and experts who worked under their own name or on behalf of the EU, OECD, IMF and World Bank, in and on Arab countries from the 1970's until present. I will also conduct in-depth biographical and informative interviews with Lebanese and Arab economists whom I have already started to meet in the past years. These economists typically possess extensive archives that I hope to have access to, as I have done in several instances during my thesis. As such, the frontier between the search for archives and interviews is thin and stands as an interesting methodological challenge.

Industrial Census of 1955, AUB Jafet Library & Archives.
©PIERRE FRANCE

Imaging Power // Planning visualisations and the co-construction of spatio-visual injustice. Cairo as a glocal case

MENNATULLAH HENDAWY
NOVEMBER 2020 – JANUARY 2021

This project begins with my observation that, in today's mediatised world, the image of cities portrayed in popular media hardly represents the everyday experiences of the majority of their citizens or the latter's perceptions of their cities' futures. I argue that this misrepresentation creates visibilities and invisibilities that involve not only the general public, but also the urban planners enrolled in producing these cities (images). At the same time, it facilitates marginalisation, disempowerment and socio-spatial injustices, which exclude vulnerable groups from accessing necessary services and infrastructure. In Cairo and elsewhere, these vulnerable groups form the majority of the population. This project studies Cairo as a local yet global (glocal) context in the mediatised world, with a view to bridging the gap in our understanding of the ways in which planning visualisations becomes a question of social and spatial justice in the mediatised world.

Over the span three years, I have worked on five research papers to trace the many intersections of planning visualisations and issues of social and spatial justice via urbanisation. By so doing, my goal was to explore how visual communications of urban schemes shape and are shaped by planning networks and the communicative situations that are entwined with the political economy of cities. This journey highlighted a theoretical gap with regard to the entanglement of planning visualisations and justice in planning and in cities. Therefore, during my stay at the OIB, I am working on developing a mid-range interdisciplinary planning theory that is empirically informed by my previous findings. Adapting retroductive reasoning and the analytic techniques of the grounded theory method, I propose a cumulative theory-building process that makes use of my earlier papers as data to construct a mid-range theory of Spatio-Visual Injustice.
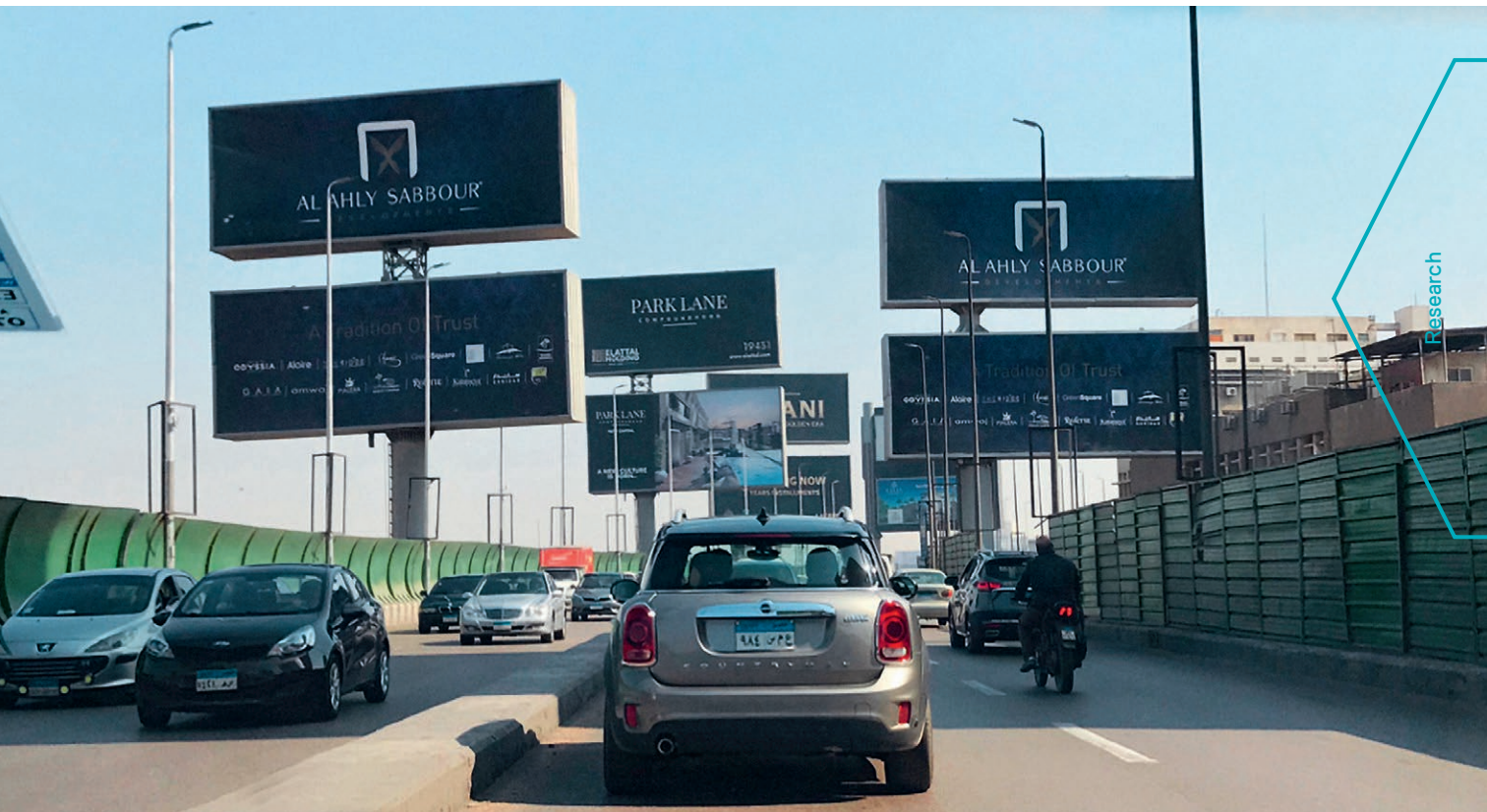
Street billboards in Cairo,
March 2019.
©MENNATULLAH HENDAWY

Intellectuals at War //
The revival of Christian conservatism in wartime Lebanon (1975–1982)

CHLOE KATTAR

SEPTEMBER 2020 – APRIL 2021

My thesis examines the writings and activities of right-wing Christian intellectuals during the Lebanese Civil War (1975–1982). Previous scholars have focused on secular and leftist political forces as a way to counter radicalised narratives about the Arab world. Instead, I shift our attention to a neglected tradition of conservative thought in the region by providing a new account of Christian political thought in the first stages of the civil war. The thesis makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the conflict by focusing on neglected figures such as philosopher and diplomat Charles Malik, as the existing scholarship has mainly focused on politicians and military events. These thinkers, I argue, are examples of a little-understood strand of Christian conservatism, which shaped the actions of the Lebanese Front, the coalition of Christian parties during the war. At the same time, I weave together this intellectual history with the international history of the conflict, showing how these thinkers engaged in cultural diplomacy in Paris and Washington, hoping to secure Western support. The research is based on previously inaccessible sources, as well as on exclusive interviews with some of these intellectuals. But more than just a contribution to the scholarship on Lebanon, the thesis will be of interest to researchers outside the Middle East: to political scientists interested in the evolution of conservatism as a political philosophy, to sociologists who study the social relations of intellectual life and to postcolonial studies of the Global South, as it reflects upon the ways non-Western actors sought to manipulate the material forces of the Cold War. This latter aspect of the research was made more evident in the past months through a closer examination of Charles Malik's wartime writings. Malik echoed the discourse of Western conservatives when he dwelled on the trope of Western decline.

West has been forcefully thrust upon us, with events in Iran, in Israel, and Egypt. Perhaps never in recent years has it been brought home to us how important is this area, often described as "the cradle of civilization."

Dr. Malik, in his address to a prestige audience at the Cosmos Club, emphasizes how our material concerns for the fuel to drive our economies paradoxically has made us aware of the need to understand our spiritual roots—both of which are springing from the same region.

Mr. President, this is quite a remarkable address, by a man who has the insight to penetrate to the heart of our problems.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the address of Dr. Charles Malik be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

There being no objection, the address was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

THE PROBLEM OF THE WEST
(By Charles Malik)

I

Five recent events help to reveal the state of the spirit of the West: the normalizing of relations with China, the revolution in Iran, the themes put forward by Pope John Paul II, the unprecedented trip of the President of the United States to Cairo and Jerusalem and the results it yielded, and the fateful energy crisis. What are these events saying to the Western world in terms of destiny and essence? And how is the Western world reacting to them?

II

The normalizing of relations with China was an historic event. Only good can accrue to both peoples from normal intercourse on all levels of existence. Also China plays an indispensable role in the global equation.

It reveals a spirit in the West that is not quite sure that it knows and believes in a distinctive intellectual-spiritual-human message, and that may not have the will to share it with others. Surely, Marx does not exhaust the meaning of the West to the soul of China.

III

I take the Iranian upheaval, the trip of President Carter to the Near East and the energy crisis together, because they do go together.

The greatest thing that happened to America since the Second World War, the thing that shook America to its foundations, is the upheaval in Iran. Korea, Viet Nam, even the Berlin Blockade in 1948, did not touch your vital interests as has the Iranian revolution. The reasons for this are obvious and everybody knows them. It is enough to contemplate the supreme strategic importance of the Strait of Hormuz. As measured by the solemnly declared policy of the United States for fifteen to twenty years, the Viet Nam war can only be understood as a war you lost; nevertheless, it did not affect you mortally. Nor can it be said that you won the Korean war; but even had you lost it in the fifties, you would not have been affected mortally. Cuba on your doorsteps became Marxist-Leninist-communist while you were looking on, but that, too, has not so far affected you mortally; although Cuba's apparent determination to continue playing a role in events in Africa, Latin America and the Middle East is big with destiny. England, France and the other West European nations lost their centuries-old empires and yet they survived, and some of them after getting disencumbered of their empires fared better. But should you lose the sources of your energy in the Middle East, or even should these sources fall into hands that could blackmail you through them, the whole free world as we have known it, as Secretary Schlesinger warned the other day, would be finished.

The Iranian revolution is the Pearl Harbor

exclaimed, 'we will serve the Lord'—the Lord as we know Him. Where did we Moslems humanly receive our revelation save from the Judaeo-Christian tradition which is at the base of your civilization? Do you still believe in it? For our part, we will go back to the spiritual roots and sources of our life. You want to establish a spiritual community with us on the basis of what you call 'modernization'; this we reject, because you seem to forget that 'modernization,' worshiped as a god, is a denial of the much deeper existing community between you and us—the community of the only true God of Abraham. Your cynics make fun of us; they make fun even of the faithful among you. Your cynics say there is no going back—there is only going forward. But I tell you and your cynics: you are only deceiving yourselves if you think you are really going forward while turning your back on your spiritual roots and origins; you are not going forward but backward; for the only way to move securely forward is to return penitently backward."

This is what I hear Khomeini telling the world, especially the Western world. Instead of hearing what he is saying, although he is not saying it, the West judges him anachronistic. That is part of its problem.

I may remind you Persia is a great culture. It adopted Islam but it developed its own distinctive version of Islam—Shi'ism. Nor is this the first time God has raised a man from Persia to use him as a rod with which to chastise the nations. I remind you of Darius, Cyrus, Artaxerxes, Ahasuerus. The Bible paints them as instruments of God. The Persians are a people of genius. Long before their oil they always had a role in the oikonomia of destiny.

IV

The uninterrupted flow of oil from the Middle East is a matter of life or death to the West and to Japan. Therefore, the implicit necessity to guarantee this uninterrupted flow has now after Iran become explicit. It is not a joke when we say it is a matter of life

Excerpt from Malik's speech "The problem of the West".

LAWHA — Lebanon's Art World at Home and Abroad // Trajectories of artists and artworks in/from Lebanon since 1943

NADIA VON MALTZAHN

OCTOBER 2020 – SEPTEMBER 2025

The global art canon and its history are very much centred on Europe. LAWHA aims to change this by identifying new methods on how to interrelate context and artistic production to serve as a model for revisiting art histories in post-colonial contexts. This new research project, funded by the European Research Council under grant agreement 850760, investigates the trajectories of Lebanon's artists and their works since the country's independence from France in 1943. In the absence of an institution-alised local art history, artists are often stereotyped according to the agendas of label-ling institutions. The project proposes a shift of perspective in approaching Lebanon's art world by placing emphasis on the multi-dimensionality of artists' individual trajec-tories. 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, (3) how artists are represented in relation to the nation, and (4) how the trajectories of individuals shape the field. The focus will be on artists in and from Lebanon using the forms of painting, sculpture and new media art.

The specificity of Lebanon's history after gaining independence from France in 1943 makes it particularly worthwhile to study the power-relations between artists and institutions, both at home and abroad. The country is regularly portrayed as having weak public institutions but a vibrant cultural sector, which represents an excellent case study to analyse the driving forces behind its artistic creation. Lebanon has been characterised with its high level of cultural production since its independence, Beirut being the cultural capital of the Arab region from the late 1950s onwards. There is a high degree of circulation and mobility both to and from the country, which is strongly connected to regional and international arenas. In this context, how are artists inscribed into systems of reference, both locally and globally? Etel Adnan (see image) for instance, born in Beirut to a Syrian father and Greek mother and having spent her life between Lebanon, the USA and France, is generally counted as part of Lebanon's canon. Another question looks at how we can re-evaluate the impact of war and forced or voluntary migration on a country's artistic production by placing war and migration not at the centre of analysis, but within the larger context of artistic production.

Etel Adnan, Untitled, 2010, Oil on Canvas, 20 × 25 cm.

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND SFEIR-SEMLER GALLERY BEIRUT / HAMBURG.

My previous research on Lebanon's art salons showed that two groups of artists are highly visible in Lebanon's art world: women artists and artists of Armenian origin. One aim of the project is to understand why these two status groups, which can otherwise be considered marginalised, are so well represented. This special focus is part of the general focus of the project, which examines individual artists' trajectories across three arenas in Lebanon's art world: artistic education, exhibitions and the art market. The project will gather and analyse material related to these three arenas, but this material is scattered and at danger of being lost, often only preserved in private collections and homes. By making the sources available, LAWHA will provide an important research tool and foster future knowledge production about art and artists from the Arab region. Everything will be compiled in a database and digital platform (DDP). This platform will include the artists' dossiers, video and audio interviews and will link up to initiatives that are currently being developed. The aim is to create an open-access repository and develop a new tool for revisiting art histories. This tool will allow us to trace patterns and networks and can be used to answer questions about how discourses, ideas, encounters and the socio-political environment impact artistic production.

Materialist Thought and Conceptual Critique post-1967 //
Global capital, Arab society and social abstraction

ZIAD KIBLAWI
OCTOBER 2020 – APRIL 2021

My project is an intellectual history of critical thought in the Arabic language that draws on European theoretical and philosophical traditions during the second half of the twentieth century. The 1967 defeat has been historicized as a nodal point in the recommencement of critical theoretical practices, where the theoretical necessity to understand modern Arab societal contradictions usurped the political burden to address them. My research interests concern a problematic that is logically prior to the historiographical narration of social positions, party relations and debates, and mediations of theory and politics through notions of commitment, practice, and disenchantment. I examine the historical conditions that necessitated the conceptual transformations of materialist thought.

I am interested in the mechanisms by which thinkers sought to refashion their analytic tools to grapple with the problematics of an 'Arab' modernity, based on theorizations of abstract social relations, specifically, in their post-1967 readings, appropriations, and critique of historical and dialectical materialism, structuralism and psychoanalysis, and post-structuralism and critical theory. I argue that before analysing the aesthetic or pragmatic character of discursive enunciations, grounding the conceptual terrains in relation to their abstract object of thought provides a more productive illustration of the historical and epistemological status of these 'travelling' theories. Since October, I have been investigating the development and critique of the post-1967 notion of "*takhalluf*" (underdevelopment of 'Arab society', backwardness of an 'Arab mind'). This project builds on my MA research on Mahdi Amil's prescriptive writings on questions of thought, knowledge, and society, where I explicated his symptomatic reading and immanent critique of various thinkers, his self-espoused call for a "Kantian revolution" in thought and subsequent interventions into several critical debates, and his historical materialist re-reading of classical Arabic thought. The OIB's research relief fellowship has made it possible to advance the methodological framework and enhance the historical scope of this project.
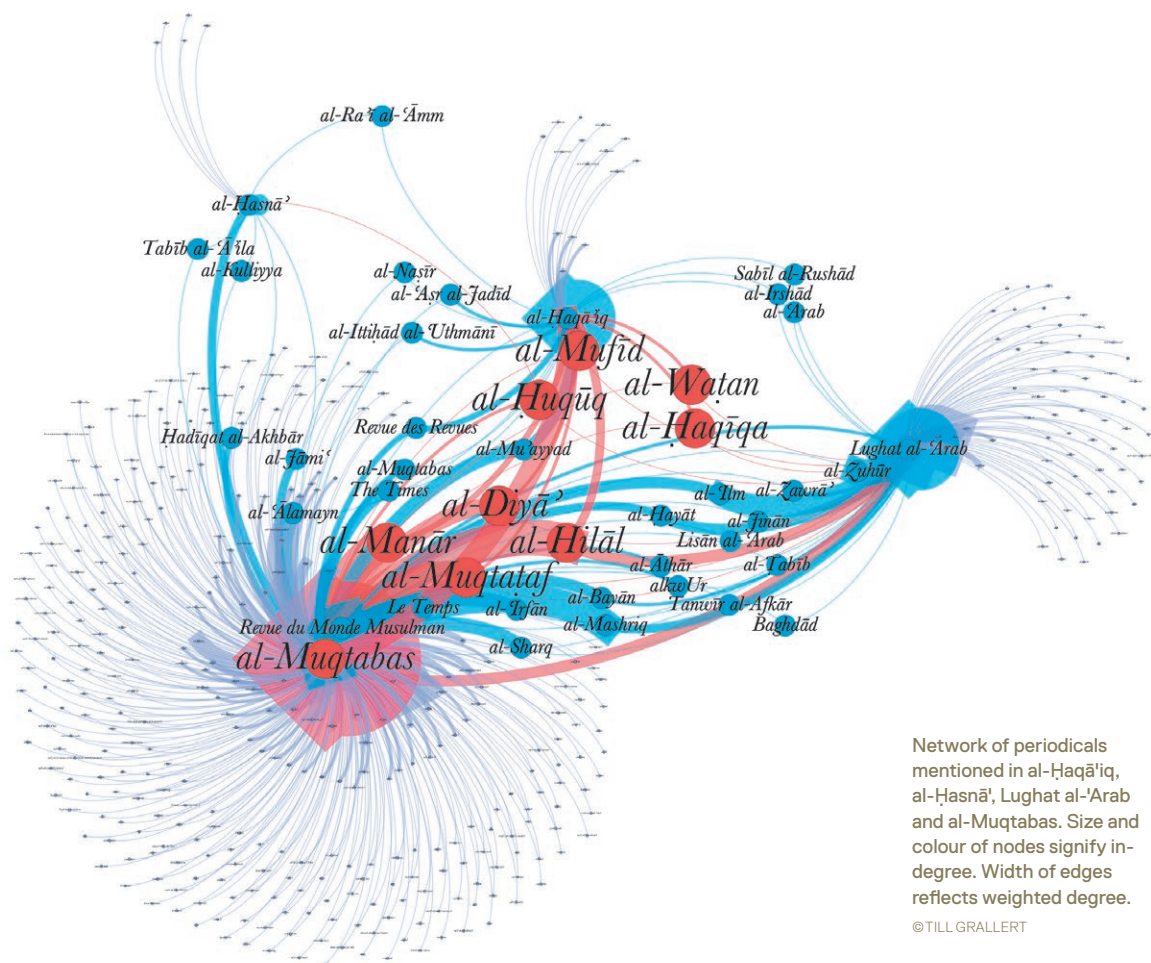
Open Arabic Periodical Editions
(OpenArabicPE)

TILL GRALLERT

AUGUST 2015 – APRIL 2021

The work on digital scholarly editions (DSE) of late Ottoman Arabic periodicals continued within the framework of OPENARABICPE (openarabicpe.github.io / see annual report 2017) but — due to the multiple crises that hit Lebanon — on a much reduced scale. The focus was mainly shifted towards improving existing editions, authority files and workflows, as well as towards publishing two peer-reviewed articles, one of which was for a special issue of *Digital Humanities Quarterly on minimal computing*. The article presented the project within the framework of the principles and the socio-technological stack adopted to address the various layers of inaccessibility that hamper the digitisation of cultural heritage from the Global South. This trope was further developed in a contribution to a special issue on *digital history* that will be published in *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*. Here, I questioned hyperbolic promises of ubiquitous digitised knowledge from the marginal position of Middle Eastern intellectual history and by outlining the techno-infrastructural challenges faced by a "digital history" of societies outside the Global North. I showed how a digital episteme deeply rooted in twentieth-century, English-speaking capitalism requires mitigation strategies at every level of the digital workflow. These are often the responsibility of the individual scholar and involve significant investments in the making of corpora, resources and tools if we were to reap the promised fruits of the digital humanities. I also suggested that one of the consequences of this episteme is a neo-colonial silencing of the material heritage of societies in the Eastern Mediterranean. Beyond problematising such a digital divide between the Global North and the Global South, the essay turns to the computer-aided analysis of the OPENARABICPE corpus. Here, I presented the initial results of (social) network analysis, focusing on the connections between periodicals and between authors.
The modelling of a network of references to other periodicals between 1906 and 1918 confirms established knowledge on the precedence of certain journals over others. The Cairene journals of *al-Manār*, *al-Muqtaṭaf* and *al-Hilāl* were indeed central (in the sense of being frequently mentioned by multiple journals in our corpus) to the late Ottoman Arabic discursive field, even though they were published outside the Ottoman Empire. But there is also a number of surprising core nodes, such as *al-Mufīd*, *al-Waṭan* or *al-Ḥuqūq* — periodicals that do not figure prominently in scholarly literature. The network's core comprises further surprises: Ibrāhīm al-Yazījī's *al-Diyā'* (Cairo, 1898–1906) and the al-Bustānīs *al-Jinān* (Beirut, 1876–86) were mentioned long after their demise.

Network of periodicals mentioned in al-Ḥaqā'iq, al-Ḥasnā', Lughat al-'Arab and al-Muqtabas. Size and colour of nodes signify in-degree. Width of edges reflects weighted degree.
©TILL GRALLERT

This would mean that either *al-Diyā'* and *al-Jinān* were still relevant to certain discourses even decades (in the case of *al-Jinān*) after their publication or that our corpus contains a number of historiographic texts mentioning important journals of the past (the third option, which is that these were references to another journal of the same name, can be ruled out). Another observation of the network is that *al-Muqtabas* accounts for the vast majority of references to other periodicals by several orders of magnitude even after we account for *al-Muqtabas* being more voluminous than other journals in our corpus. If we assume that no significant number of references was missed, then *al-Muqtabas* was more outward-looking and more involved in larger discourses of the day. A future systematic exploration of periodicals will have to digitise the core nodes of this network and compare them to *al-Muqtabas* in an attempt to establish an taxonomy of transregional, regional and local periodicals.
If applications for funding from the EU and the DFG are successful, these questions and methods will be further developed in a subsequent project.

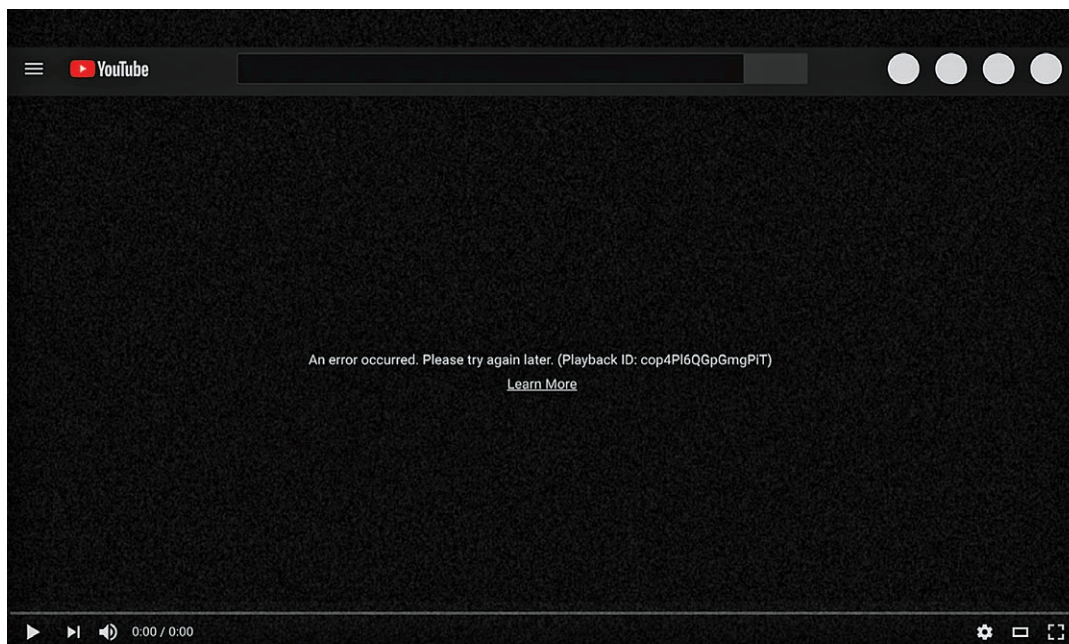# Syria // Revolution, dignity, technology

STEFAN TARNOWSKI

SEPTEMBER 2019 – MAY 2020

My dissertation tackles the 2011 Syrian Revolution. The first section focusses on media activism. Last year, I completed an opening section that details my fieldwork in a number of different media outlets and humanitarian organisations, including Enab Baladi, the White Helmets, SY+, Verify SY and the Aleppo Media Center. This section makes two main interventions in the literature on media activism. The first is a discussion of the centrality of what scholars refer to as "humanitarian reason" or "human rights discourse" as a hegemonic justification for Western state support or intervention. My research found that an adjacent set of logics referred to as "stabilisation" has played a more central role in support for media activism, which is justified through the logics of security and the dangers of "failed states", even when supporting humanitarian organisations.

The second intervention is related to how Syrian activists invest their hopes in the adoption of new media technologies — whether the ironclad visual evidence of the GoPro camera by the White Helmets, the promise of the deliberative public sphere by the Enab Baladi newspaper or the forensic methods of open-source evidence production by the Syrian Archive — despite conceding that their revolutionary aims will probably not come to fruition. Instead of considering this to be the result of a misguided ideological investment in the power of technological devices, I try to explain this form of investment through the notion of tragedy, in which activists act on the basis of good reasons, to the best of their abilities, while also being aware that actions always give rise to unknowable contingencies, and that their actions can and often do end in failure. However, their range of options is tragically limited, and they must persevere regardless.

Currently, I am finalising a second section of the dissertation on three of my paper's keywords: revolution, regime, and dignity. Despite the fact that those terms were ubiquitous in my fieldwork and are used insistently by Syrians, they are treated largely with ambivalence or unease by most scholars on Syria. Instead of revolution, for example, scholars prefer less charged or normatively demanding terms such as uprising, rebellion or even war and civil war; when regime is adopted, it is generally used an ambiguous and untheorised synonym for the State; and despite the fact that Syrians regularly state that their revolution is for freedom and dignity, many scholars treat it as a (failed) revolution for democracy.

I try to explain the reasons for the unease and ambivalence with which those terms are treated by examining the particular temporality of the Syrian Revolution, focussing on the experience of siege. The section is less an analytical account of the three concepts and more an attempt to understand their historical and ethnographic emergence, tracing the discursive shifts they have undergone from Syria's independence until 2011, and the reciprocal relationship between these terms and the world they hope to overcome, as well as the worlds they hope to engender.

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Learn More

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A broken link on YouTube after a video from Syria has been removed. (TOP)
Graffiti in Deraa, Syria from March 2011. It reads: *You're next, doctor.* (BOTTOM)
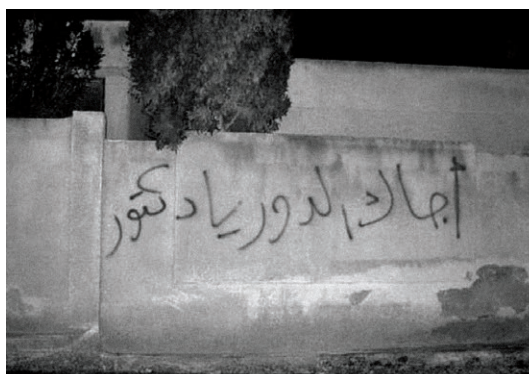
The Formation of Modern Islamic Art //
The construction of the Middle Eastern narrative under cultural and political discourses

MOHAMMAD REZA MORIDII

FEBRUARY – APRIL

In modern and contemporary contexts, we must re-evaluate the meaning of Islamic art and ask: Do Islamic arts still display tradition and religion? Is modern Islamic art able to represent the collective memory of Muslims? The use of the term "contemporary and modern Islamic art" has recently been increasing in frequency; but what is contemporary and modern Islamic art? To answer these questions, I examine the formation of modern Islamic art and study how modern Islamic art was constructed by cultural and political discourses. In fact, modern and contemporary Islamic art must be studied not only as an artistic style but also as a social construct.

In this research, six discourses have been studied as common historical situations or common structures in the Islamic world, including: Orientalism, Nationalism, Revivalism, Returnism, Globalism and the Middle East. These common structures have led to common and complex experience in contemporary Middle Eastern art and modern Islamic art.

The "Middle Eastern narrative" is the heir of intertwined discourses and complex structures that must be studied in their historical context. In this study, we split Middle Eastern art into post-modern and trans-modern narratives and showed the features of modern Islamic art not as post-modern art but as trans-modern art.

Post-modernism has a playful and deconstructive encounter with tradition. In the post-modern approach, Islamic geometry and motifs find a form of wear and tear. The motifs cause disruption, congestion and compaction instead of being orderly and formative, and, eventually, they become the limiting and deterrent factor. The consequence of this process is not continuity of tradition but the deconstruction of Islamic art. This deconstruction exposes the interior disorder. The outcome is a kind of confusing, paradoxical and contradictory meaning that usually produces heterogeneous combinations and fantastic and ironic images; it is playful with religious signs and eclectic combinations with local culture. Islamic art in a post-modern approach explains the tension and incompatibility in Muslims life. Contemporary artworks in Islamicate societies are usually paradoxical, grotesque and ironic.

Trans-modernism is more tolerant of tradition and religion than modernism. In fact, trans-modernism and tradition are not two opposing worldviews, but rather a new synthesis of both elements. Traditional societies use their ability to change and become trans-modern while remaining the same.

Traditional societies can also be trans-modern and can shape other modernities based on their own norms, values and worldviews. Trans-modernism introduces new ways of listening to non-Western cultures. Accordingly, nowadays a new movement for the integration of Islamic and modern art has emerged; many artists try to embody Islamic concepts in contemporary works of art. For example, the reconstruction of Islamic geometric patterns by light and shadow has become an important part of the new experiences of trans-regional art.
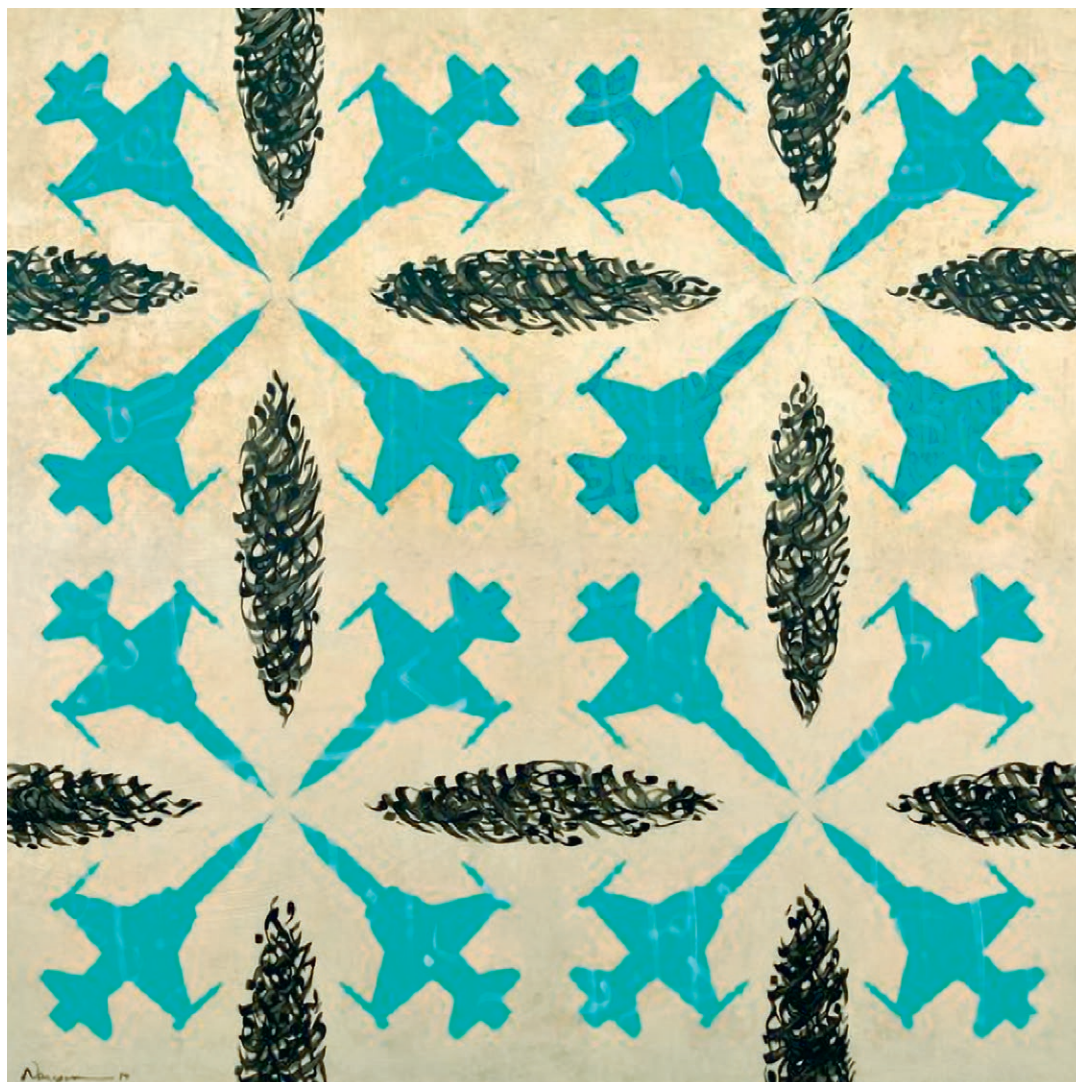
Sasan Nasernia,
Iranian artist,
*Cypresses and
Tombs*, 2014.

The War of Metaphors from the Perspective of the War-Metaphor //
Context, ma'nā and innovation in old Arabic poetry

ALFRED EL-KHOURY
OCTOBER 2020 – JUNE 2021

The main question that motivates this doctoral project is: What can the investigation of the war-metaphor in corpora of old Arabic poetry teach us about specific turning points in the development of this poetry? The backdrop of this question is the divide within Arabic literary historiography between *muḥdath* (new) and *qadīm* (old, ancient). This divide has gained special momentum at the turn of the third/ninth century with the advent of a group of poets referred to by their contemporary philologists as *muḥdathūn* or *muwalladūn*. These poets were also associated with a new poetic style, the *badīʻ*. Through the gesture of pitting the new against the old, tradition was reconstructed in retrospect — that is, coherence was instituted into a corpus of texts, i.e. the "old poetry", which is otherwise diverse and variegated. This has led to effervescent discussions and oppositions revolving around a wide array of problems such as innovation, imagination, aesthetics, legitimacy and intertextuality, to mention only a few. The project keeps with this divide between *muḥdath* and "pre-*muḥdath*" and proposes to shed light on it from the perspective of metaphor. To this effect, it takes the war-metaphor as case study and proceeds by looking at its patterns and configurations in various circumscribed poetry corpora belonging to the two aforementioned periods. In this framework, the study of metaphor takes place at two distinct but interrelated levels: first, as a conceptual notion, the metaphor helps us re-examine Arabic critical notions such as *istiʻāra*, *majāz*, *sariqa*, *ma'nā* and *badīʻ*; and, second, the metaphor provides us with a critical toolbox to study texts and shed light on the interpretation practices, editorial endeavours and literary agendas of the Arabic philologists between the third/ninth and fifth/eleventh centuries. Special attention is accorded to the problem of novel metaphors and to the role of context in the production of meaning.

The stay at OIB will facilitate my access to a number of relevant primary sources. It will also be helpful for me to finalise the writing of the dissertation.

'When to write or not to write makes no difference, then writing changes; it is the writing of the disaster' // Maurice Blanchot, The writing of the disaster

JAMAL ARIDI
OCTOBER 2020 – APRIL 2021

My current research considers the work of Maurice Blanchot within its historical context, as well its possible broader implications and resonances under the current conditions. Although Blanchot's texts are often considered difficult to categorise (be it his critical or literary texts), they offer a way out of rigid, systemic thinking, at once as a critique of "structuralism" and architectonics and of dominant traditions of Western thought. Certain recurrent concerns in Blanchot's writings call for a further examination of key questions in the context of French intellectual history (structuralism, post-structuralism, etc.), as well as the possibility of re-examining these concerns in a global perspective.

The project's starting point was reading Blanchot's texts not only in their broad philosophical, literary and psychoanalytic context, but also alongside Jacques Lacan in order to attempt to shift the already examined, however rarely, relation between psychoanalysis and deconstruction as disseminated by Jacques Derrida. An "other" deconstruction that addresses writing, the unconscious, normativity and difference, as can be read in Blanchot's writings, more crucially addresses the question of politics and the political, as well as its relation to intellectual engagement.

A consistent concern, albeit to varying degrees, can be found in several key texts by Blanchot throughout the span of his writing life: that of the possibility of language and writing. Although such a question was shaped in a specific historical context and addressed a specific concern (the possibility of literature in post-war Europe), Blanchot's politics — not unlike his writing — carry a certain futurity as well as retroactivity, if not universality, that might allow us to reformulate this question. The question on writing may address the possibility of critical writing/theory that takes into account geographies where the historical unfolding of thought has traveled along different fault-lines and historical traumas.

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), lead 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 grant agreement 850760 and hosted at the OIB. Ca'Foscari University of Venice is an additional beneficiary of LAWHA. cordis.europa.eu/project/id/850760

RESEARCH PROJECT // SINCE 2020 **"The Lebanese Intifada of October 17: Perspectives from Within"**, OIB with Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung.

Research

Researchers

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Jamal Aridi

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Rita Barotta

Enrico Boccaccini

Sarah El Bulbeisi

Alfred el-Khoury

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Till Grallert

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Mennatullah Hendawy

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Alex Rodriguez Suarez

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Abdallah Soufan

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Doctoral Fellow

Mara Albrecht
Interim Deputy Director

HAZIM ALABDULLAH is a PhD candidate in the Department of History at the University of Erfurt. He is preparing a biography of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch Ignatios Ni'matullah entitled: "The Merchant of Manuscripts: Patriarch Ignatios Ni'matullah (ca 1515–1587) and the knowledge of his day", supervised by Prof. Dr. Birgit Schäbler. Hazim Alabdullah holds a BA in English Language and Literature (University of Aleppo) and an MA degree in Literary Studies (University of Erfurt). In 2013, he received a DAAD scholarship. Between 2015 and 2018, he worked as research assistant at Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz (Max-Planck-Institut) within the framework of the DFG project *Typographia Medicea*, under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Eckhard Leuschner (University of Würzburg) and Prof. Dr. Gerhard Wolf (KHI-Florenz). Hazim Alabdullah was a visiting fellow at the OIB between September 2019 and March 2020.

MARA ALBRECHT was interim deputy director of the OIB between April 2019 and March 2020. During this time, she was on administrative leave from her position as research associate for the Chair of History of West Asia at the University of Erfurt, Germany, where she received her doctorate in 2014. Her thesis "War of Symbols: Political parties and political culture in Lebanon (1975–2013)" (in German) tackles political narratives and symbolic forms and practices relevant to the creation of political culture in contemporary Lebanon. She is currently working on her habilitation project concerning spatiotemporal practices of violence and policing during the riots in Belfast and Jerusalem in the era of the British Empire. It argues that knowledge about urban violence was accumulated and circulated within the empire and particularly focuses on the transfer of knowledge from Ireland to Palestine in the context of relocating officers, troops and administrative personnel. Her research interests include urban violence, spatial history, contested histories and memories and political cultures in the Middle East.

Abdalhadi Alijla
Postdoctoral Fellow

Jamal Aridi
Doctoral Fellow
Research Relief Fellow

ABDALHADI ALIJLA is a Palestinian-Swedish social and political scientist. He is the Co-Leader of Global Migration and Human Rights at Global Young Academy. He is a co-founder of Palestine Young Academy in 2020. He is also an Associate Researcher and the Regional Manager of the Varieties of Democracy Institute (Gothenburg University) for Gulf countries. Since April 2018, he has been an associate fellow at the Post-Conflict Research Center in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Abdalhadi holds a PhD in political studies from the State University of Milan and an MA degree in Public Policy and Governance from Zeppelin University, Friedrichshafen, Germany. He has been granted several awards and scholarships, including DAAD (2009), RLC Junior Scientist (2010), UNIMI (2012), ICCROM (2010) and Saud Al-Babtain (2002) among others. In 2016, he was a fellow at the Royal Society of Art and Science, UK. He worked for many NGOs, such as Transparency International, the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ), EU Madad Fund for the Syrian crisis and UNV, among others. He has published articles in OpenDemocracy, Mondoweiss, Huffpost, Qantara, Your Middle East, Jaddaliya and other media outlets. His main research interests include divided societies, rebel governance, democracy, social capital, Middle East studies and comparative politics. Abdalhadi is the author of the forthcoming book "Trust in Divided Societies" by Bloomsbury Academics and I.B. Tauris UK.

JAMAL ARIDI has been a Visiting Doctoral Fellow (RRF) at the OIB since November 2020. He completed his postgraduate degree at the Institute of Philosophy, KU Leuven in 2018, and previously in Cultural Studies at Goldsmiths, University of London. His current research focuses on the broad context of twentieth-century French intellectual history and specifically the work of Maurice Blanchot in its afterlives. His research interests include twentieth-century Continental philosophy, psychoanalysis, cinema and literary studies, linguistic theory and semiotics, and critical pedagogy.

Researchers

Christopher Bahl

Research Associate

Rita Barotta

Doctoral Fellow
Research Relief Fellow

CHRISTOPHER BAHL is assistant professor of South Asian History at Durham University. He was a research associate at the OIB between October 2018 and August 2020. He received his PhD in History from SOAS, University of London in 2018. Christopher holds an MA in Historical Research Methods from SOAS and a Magister Artium in Islamic Studies and South Asian History from the University of Heidelberg. He also studied at the University of Damascus and the Central University in Hyderabad, India. Christopher is interested in the social and cultural histories of the wider early modern Indian Ocean region, manuscript cultures and their circulation, scholarly cultures and practices of history writing. An article on "Transoceanic Arabic Historiography – Sharing the Past of the Sixteenth Century Western Indian Ocean" is forthcoming in the *Journal of Global History* in 2020. His current postdoctoral project focuses on histories of community building beyond the courts of South and West Asia, linking shrine cities and scholarly centres at the fringes of early modern empires.

RITA BAROTTA is a PhD candidate at St. Joseph University, Beirut (USJ), majoring in Humanities (option: Communication and Information). Her PhD focuses on the representations of male homosexuality in Lebanese cinema. Rita holds a master's degree in journalism from Panthéon-Assas (Paris 2, France). Her master's dissertation tackled Lebanese photojournalists during the 2006 war. She has been a coordinator and an advisor for the communication art department at the Lebanese International University (LIU) for the last 10 years. Rita has been writing for Lebanese media outlets (online/print) for over a decade, with a keen interest in women, sexuality and gender. She is also a poet, and some of her works have been translated into German for "Die Welt in unseren Augen, Libanesische Frauenanthologie", 2018.

Enrico Boccaccini
Postdoctoral Fellow

Sarah El Bulbeisi
Research Associate

ENRICO BOCCACCINI received his PhD in Arabic and Islamic Studies from the University of Göttingen. His thesis tackles transcultural comparisons of Mirrors for Princes from Europe and the Middle East, for which he was awarded the Christian-Gottlob-Heyne-prize for the best dissertation submitted at the Faculty of Humanities and the Faculty of Theology. He holds an MA degree in Persian Studies from the University of Leiden and a BA degree in Arabic and Persian Studies from the University of Cambridge. His current research focuses on the representation of women in pre-modern advice literature for rulers. His publications include articles on recurring themes in Mirrors for Princes (in "Knowledge and Education in Classical Islam", ed. S. Günther, Brill: Leiden, 2020) and a commentary on Ibn al-Farid's Khamriyya (in "Khamriyya as a World Poetic Genre: Comparative Perspectives on Wine Poetry in Near and Middle Eastern Literatures", ed. K. Dmitriev, Ergon Verlag: Würzburg, forthcoming).

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 Maximilian University of Munich (LMU), Germany. Before joining the OIB, she coordinated the DAAD project *Violence, Forced Migration and Exile: Trauma in the Arab World and in Germany*, a Higher Education Dialogue between Palestinian and Lebanese universities, as well as with the LMU Munich. Prior to that, she worked as a lecturer and research associate at the Institute for Near and Middle East Studies at the LMU Munich. Her PhD thesis "Taboo, Trauma and Identity: Subject Constructions of Palestinians in Germany and Switzerland, 1960 to 2015" was published in September 2020. It explores the tension between the (family) histories of first- and second-generation Palestinians, which are characterised by the experience of expulsion and dispossession, and the reshaping of this experience in the Western European representation of the so-called Middle East conflict. El Bulbeisi's postdoc research at the OIB revolves around family and gender relationships in contemporary Lebanon.

Researchers

Alfred el-Khoury
Doctoral Fellow

Fatih Ermiş
Interim Deputy Director

ALFRED EL-KHOURY is a PhD candidate in the Department of Arabic Studies at the Otto-Friedrich-University Bamberg. He holds degrees from the Lebanese University (BA, 2013) and the American University of Beirut (MA, 2015). His research focuses mainly on Arabic poetry, both modern and premodern, with a particular interest in questions of innovation, canonisation, interpretation and context. Some of his other research interests include literary theory and its applicability across literary and critical traditions, Arabic surrealism and avant-gardist trends in Arabic literature. El-Khoury taught courses on Arabic poetry and literature, as well as Arabic as a foreign language, at the American University of Beirut, the Otto-Friedrich-University Bamberg and the Friedrich-Alexander-University of Erlangen-Nürnberg. He was editorial assistant for "Al-Abhath" journal (2015–2018) and translator at the Arabic edition of "Le Monde Diplomatique" (2010–2013).

FATIH ERMIŞ joined the OIB as research associate in 2018 and is responsible for the in-house production of Bibliotheca Islamica (BI). Since September 2020 he is the interim deputy director of the OIB. 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 endeavours 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, A'lāq-i 'Alā'ī, written in Damascus by the Ottoman scholar Qinālīzāde 'Alī Çelebī (1510–1572).

Paul Esber
Postdoctoral Fellow

Zeina Fathallah
Postdoctoral Fellow
Research Relief Fellow

PAUL ESBER is a sessional lecturer and tutor at the University of Sydney since 2015. He holds a PhD with a thesis entitled "Who are the Jordanians? The Citizen-Subjects of Abdallah II". Paul's research interests include the practice and theory of citizenship in the Arab World. The politics of reforestation in Lebanon forms the locus of his project at OIB: *Navigating Scylla and Charybdis: Co-governance & reforestation in post-war Lebanon*. His most recent publications include: "Between Claims, Residence and Recognition: the Conceptual unity of jinsiyya and muwatana", In Meijer, Roel, Sater, James. N. and Babar, Zahra. R (eds.). (2021) "Routledge Handbook of Citizenship in the Middle East and North Africa", London: Routledge, pp. 103–115; and a forthcoming special issue on Arab parliaments: co-edited with Völkel, Jan. C (Eds.). (forthcoming) "Parliaments in the Middle East and North Africa: A Struggle for Relevance?" (Special Issue). "Middle East Law and Governance".

ZEINA FATHALLAH completed her Ph.D in Sociology in 2011 at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) in Paris. Her research focused on gender and sexuality in Lebanon. Her dissertation, "Moral Work and Construction of Abortion Networks: Health and sexuality of women in Lebanon", explored, using both sociological and ethnographic approaches, how women who seek an abortion live this experience and create a space of autonomy in a clandestine context. She also examined the experiences of other actors (partners, physicians, mid-wives, pharmacists, and allies) and their moral role in situations of conflict.
Zeina holds a "Diplôme d'Etudes Supérieures Spécialisées" (DESS) in Economics and Health Systems Management from the University of Paris I and a Master of Public Health, concentration in Health Education from San Jose State University, USA. Zeina has worked as a Social Specialist in several development projects (UNDP and World Bank assisted projects) and taught as a lecturer at the American University of Beirut.

Pierre France
Research Associate

Louise Gallorini
Doctoral Fellow
Research Relief Fellow

PIERRE FRANCE joined the OIB in 2020 as a research associate. His doctoral research at Paris 1 Sorbonne University focuses on the process of the Lebanese State's survival throughout the Lebanese war (1975–1990). It led him to study the Lebanese State in its material and human forms, with particular focus on the histories of several public institutions and their civil servants. This research resulted in a broad revisit of the Lebanese war based on comparative and historical sociology. Apart from his PhD, Pierre co-authored 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. This book will constitute a significant contribution to the study of the blurring lines between public and private social spheres in contemporary France. He has also worked as a full-time junior lecturer in political science at Sciences Po Aix (2016–2018).

LOUISE GALLORINI is a PhD candidate at the Arabic and Near Eastern Languages Department of the American University of Beirut, Lebanon. She holds a double BA in Cultural Anthropology and Arabic Literature from the University Lumière Lyon 2 (France), and an MA in modern Arabic literature from INALCO in Paris, focusing on contemporary Arabic literature from Lebanon and the Arabian Peninsula. During her studies, she spent a year at the University of Yarmouk (Jordan) and received intensive linguistic training at the Institut Français du Proche Orient in Beirut. The subject of her master's dissertation was the symbolic dimension of the characters in Lebanese author Rasha el-Ameer's novel "Judgment Day" (*yawm al-dīn*). The subject of her PhD thesis is angels and their representation in classical Sufi literature.

Till Grallert
Research Associate

Monika Halkort
Postdoctoral Fellow

TILL GRALLERT joined the OIB in August 2014. His research and teaching focus on the social and spatial history of late Ottoman cities, the socio-linguistics of early Arabic newspapers and digital humanities (DH) outside the global north. He completed his PhD at the Berlin Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies in 2014 with a thesis entitled "To Whom Belong the Streets? Property, Propriety, and Appropriation: The Production of public dpace in late Ottoman Damascus, 1875–1914". He is a co-organiser at the *Digital Humanities Institute, Beirut* and a developer and a core contributor to Project *Jarā'id*, an online chronology of Arabic periodicals before 1930. In the framework of his research project *Open Arabic Periodical Editions* (OPENARABICPE), Till works on open, collaborative and scholarly digital editions of early Arabic periodicals such as al-Muqtabas, al-Ḥaqā'iq, Lughat al-'Arab or al-Ḥasnā'. In his digital work, Till utilises social network analysis and stylo-metrics for authorship attribution and works on machine-learning algorithms for the text recognition of Arabic periodicals.

MONIKA HALKORT holds a PhD in sociology from Queens University in Belfast. She wrote her thesis "Reconstructing the Insurgent City" as part of the interdisciplinary research framework *Conflict in Cities*, conducted at the Universities of Cambridge, Exeter and Queens. Until recently, Monika has been teaching digital media and social communication at the Lebanese American University in Beirut (2013–2020). Her research interests include the intersectional dynamics of racialisation, de-humanisation and enclosure in digital communication and culture, focusing on the historically-specific context of the Mediterranean Sea. Her of most recent work unpacks the new regimes of bio-legitimacy emerging from the ever-denser convergence of social, biological and machine intelligences in environmental data and assesses how they recalibrate "zones of non-being" that Franz Fanon identified as key locus of ontological displacement and alienation which is characteristic of modern coloniality.

Researchers

Celia Hassani
Doctoral Fellow

Mennatullah Hendawy
Doctoral Fellow

CÉLIA HASSANI is a doctoral researcher at Aix-Marseille Université, focusing on the role of cultural intermediaries in relation to cultural policy in Lebanon. Her professional experience spans cultural fields in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, particularly in cultural policy, as a consultant on capacity-building and in designing activities for cultural actors. At the OIB she was writing up the findings of her doctoral research. Her recent research engagements include a forthcoming report on the mechanisms and trajectories of public funding for the arts in Lebanon (in collaboration with the OIB and *al-Mawrid al-Thaqāfī*), in addition to a book chapter on artistic practices in Beirut's public spaces, published by Hildesheimer Universitätsschriften. Her previous research training includes social anthropological work on the modalities of inclusion of Palestinian artists in the Lebanese context, first in a professional MSc from Université de la Sorbonne-Nouvelle in 2010 and second in a master's degree in postgraduate research from the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in 2012.

MENNATULLAH HENDAWY is a PhD Candidate at the Chair of Urban Design, TU Berlin. She is also a visiting researcher at the Leibniz Institute for Research on Society and Space in Erkner, Germany and an affiliated Assistant Lecturer at the Department of Urban Planning and Design in Ain Shams University in Cairo, Egypt. Mennatullah works on the intersection of urban planning, mediatisation and justice, and she is fascinated by how knowledge, power and agency are manifested in and co-construct cities and the public sphere. She is currently Cairo's Chapter leader at Viz for Social Good.

Joshua Hudelson
Postdoctoral Fellow

Chloe Kattar
Doctoral Fellow

JOSHUA HUDELSON received his PhD in ethnomusicology from New York University in 2018. His research interests include the history of electronic dance music, digital culture, science and technology studies, and musical culture in the MENA region. His dissertation, "Spectral Sound: A cultural history of the frequency domain", received a Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Completion Fellowship. He has taught at the American University of Beirut, New York University and the New School.

CHLOE KATTAR is a final year PhD student at the University of Cambridge working on the revival of intellectual conservatism in Wartime Lebanon (1975–1982). She holds an MA from Saint-Joseph University in Beirut, where her dissertation focused on the intellectual history of Lebanon in the pre-civil war era. Her PhD investigates the rise of Christian conservatism during the Lebanese Civil War by looking at the activities and writings of right-wing Christian intellectuals. She particularly examines the circulation and evolution of right-wing ideologies in Christian milieus and the counter-propaganda campaign aimed at rival leftist parties. The thesis, however, combines intellectual, social and diplomatic histories as it follows the movement of intellectuals within and outside a divided territory: Christian intellectuals collaborated closely with the Maronite clergy and Christian diplomats to devise the wartime strategy, in a bid to secure increasing Western support for Christian forces. Chloe is a three-time recipient of the Lightfoot Prize for Ecclesiastical History, awarded by the Faculty of History, University of Cambridge, for essays inspired by her PhD.

Ziad Kiblawi

Doctoral Fellow
Research Relief Fellow

Nadia von Maltzahn

Research Associate

ZIAD KIBLAWI holds degrees in sociology and anthropology from the American University of Beirut. His extended MA thesis entitled "Reading, Repeating, and Working Through: On Mahdi Amil's theoretical practice" examined modernist intellectual modes of critique and systematic conceptual and theoretical formulations during the second half of the twentieth century. To date, his dissertation marks the most extensive academic engagement with Mahdi Amil's conceptual thought and political writings, which largely remain untranslated. Parts of this research project have been presented in seminars and conferences, including the *Arab Council for the Social Sciences, Eximacies: Critical Theory from the Global South, and Historical Materialism Athens*. His most recent publications are a five-chapter translation of Mahdi Amil's *Hal al-qalb li-l-sharq wa-l-'aql li-l-gharb? Marx fī istishrāq Edward Said* and an article on the question of real abstraction the knowledge-effect in Amil's writings, both forthcoming in "Critical Times". His research interests include the historiography of modern intellectual thought and modern art in the Middle East, symptomatic readings and immanent critique practices in the Arabic-speaking world and translations of philosophical systems into Arabic.

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".

Mohammad Reza Moridi

Hans-Robert Roemer Fellow

Anna Simone Reumert

Doctoral Fellow

MOHAMMAD REZA MORIDI is an assistant professor at the Tehran University of Art. His main discipline is the sociology of art, and his research is centred on the complex relationships between art and society in the Middle East. During his stay at OIB, he will explore Modern Islamic art, with special focus on the cultural discourses on modern and contemporary Islamic art. In this research, he pursues questions such as: How was modern Islamic art constructed by cultural and political discourses? How have Iranian and Arab artists tried to shape modern Islamic contemporary art? He is the author of "Cultural Discourses and Artistic Styles in Iranian Contemporary Art" (2018; published by Tehran University of Art & Aban publisher, Tehran, Iran). He has also published articles on Iranian contemporary art and regional studies of Islamic art, such as "A Comparative Study on Iranian and Turkish Art in the Modern Social Transformation Context" (2018), "Local-Global Discourse in Islamic Art: Discourse analyses of art in the geopolitics of the Islamic world" (2013) and "Discourse Analysis of Middle East Art" (2010).

ANNA SIMONE REUMERT is a PhD candidate in the Department of Anthropology at Columbia University. Her doctoral project examines histories of transregional labour mobility that connect Lebanon and Sudan and studies racialised and gendered dynamics of migrant labour in contemporary Lebanon. Reumert holds an MA degree in Near Eastern Studies from New York University and BA degrees in Global Studies and in Social Anthropology from the School of Global Studies, University of Gothenburg. Her work has been published in "Mashriq & Mahjar", "MERIP", "Jadaliyya", "Warscapes", "Ajam Media Collective" and "Borderlines-CSSAAME". Reumert has been involved with migrant rights activism in Lebanon, New York and Denmark, including as a volunteer with the Anti-Racism Movement and with International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP).

Researchers

Alex Rodriguez Suarez

Postdoctoral Fellow

Birgit Schäbler

Director

ALEX RODRIGUEZ SUAREZ is an independent scholar researching the religious soundscapes of the Eastern Mediterranean. He received his PhD from the Centre for Hellenic Studies, King's College London, in 2014. His thesis looked at the interaction and cultural exchange between Byzantium and the West in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. He has conducted research in Turkey (ANAMED, 2015–16; AKMED, 2019–20), Bulgaria (CAS Sofia, 2017), Greece (American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 2019) and Italy (Vittore Branca Center, 2019). In 2018, he was Summer Fellow at Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington DC. He co-edited a volume on the Byzantine Emperor John II Komnenos (Routledge, 2016). He is currently working on his first monograph, which will focus on the religious soundscape of the Byzantine Empire.

BIRGIT SCHÄBLER has been director of the Orient-Institut since October 2017. Since 2002 she holds the (only) Chair of Middle East History in Germany, at Erfurt University from which she is on leave. Between 1996 and 2002 she held fellowships and positions at Duke and Harvard Universities and was a professor of Middle East History in Georgia. She studied History, Islamic Studies and Political Science at the universities of Wurzburg, Berkeley and Erlangen where she received her PhD. She founded the first trans-regional research platform in Germany in 2008 and was a fellow at Max-Weber-Kolleg. She served on various scientific boards and as evaluator for numerous academic funding agencies, as well as internationally with accreditation agencies. Her research interests combine history and anthropology, focusing on the modern history of the Levant (Bilād al-Shām). Her last book analyzes nineteenth century reform movements in Islam in their entanglement with Europe. Her research interests currently include the relations between Area History and Global History, between the Middle East, Islam, and Europe, as well as the history of Orientalism and Oriental Studies.

Abdallah Soufan
Research Associate

Sara Tafakori
Postdoctoral Fellow

ABDALLAH SOUFAN joined the OIB as a research associate in September 2019. He received his PhD in Arabic and Islamic Studies from Georgetown University with a thesis entitled "Tradition and its Boundaries: A diachronic study of the concept of *Bid'ah* in early Islam". He holds a BS in Mathematics and a BA and MA in Arabic from the American University of Beirut, where he worked for several years as an Instructor of Arabic and Islamic Thought. His research investigates dichotomies in classical Islamic thought, including the dichotomies of *sunna-bid'ah*, veridicality-tropicality, reason-tradition, word-meaning and exoteric-esoteric. His current project focuses on the dichotomy between the literal and the metaphorical (veridicality-tropicality = *ḥaqīqah-majāz*), which is highly essential to Islamic thought. His main argument is that this dichotomy is not self-evident. It was constructed as a theoretical framework that would facilitate an ongoing process of disenchantment in Islam. His publications include a critical edition and a translation of Epistle 48 of the "Epistles" of the Brethren of Purity (jointly with Abbas Hamdani; Oxford University Press, 2019).

SARA TAFAKORI prior to joining the OIB, Sara held a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Edinburgh, UK, and taught at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), the University of Buckingham and the University of Manchester, where she also received her PhD in 2018. She is also a visiting fellow and guest teacher in the Media and Communication Centre at the London School of Economics (LSE). Sara won the biannual 2021 Catharine Stimpson Prize for her article "Affective Territories of Recognition: Iranian feminist activism and the (de-)authentication of suffering" ("Signs", forthcoming), which examines the problematics and (im)possibilities of feminist solidarity in transnational debates around women's rights in Iran. She is a co-convenor of the British International Studies Association (BISA) working group on Emotions in Politics and International Relations (EPIR). She tweets as @TafakoriSara.

Researchers

Stefan Tarnowski

Doctoral Fellow

STEFAN TARNOWSKI is a PhD candidate at the Anthropology Department and the Institute of Comparative Literature at Columbia University. His research has been supported by the Wenner-Gren Foundation and the OIB. He completed his undergraduate training in Oriental Studies at Oxford University and worked for three years as assistant director of the Beirut Art Center. He participated in the inaugural Sharjah Architecture Triennial in 2019, translated Dork Zabunyan's "The Insistence of Struggle" (IF Publications, 2019) and wrote the introduction for it. He writes regularly for "Art Asia Pacific" and has also worked as a researcher and translator for several artists and filmmakers.

Affiliated Researchers and their Projects

ANNA SIMONE REUMERT Columbia University
The Etiquette of Migration: Sudanese Labor Practices in Lebanon // SEPTEMBER 2019 – JUNE 2020

LAMA TAWAKKOL Queen's University
Sustainable Urban Governance:
Vulnerable Populations' Access to Housing and Water in Beirut and Amman // JANUARY – MARCH

AGNES RAMEDER University of Zurich, Ibero-Romance Literature
The "Martyr" (Šahīd) in Contemporary Iranian Artphotography:
Writing Alternative Historiographies // SEPTEMBER 2020 – AUGUST 2021

NAY EL RAHI Independent researcher
Sexual Harassment against Women in Lebanon // DECEMBER 2020 – JUNE 2021

Publications

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-ikhtilāf al-muṣallīn* of Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī al-Ash'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 30-volume biographical lexicon *Kitāb al-Wāfī bi-l-wafayāt* (BI 6) by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl 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 2020 we published *Khāṣṣ al-khāṣṣ fī al-amthāl* by Abū Manṣūr al-Tha'ālibī (BI 61). The publication team (academic editor Barraq Zakariya, publication consultant Bettina Fischer-Genz and research associates Fatih Ermiş and Abdallah Soufan) also worked on the notes of the sixteenth-century Aleppan weaver Kamāl al-Dīn al-Hā'ik (BI 59), the *Kitāb sukkardan al-sulṭān* by Ibn Abī Ḥajala al-Maghribī al-Tilimsānī (BI 48), *Maqāmāt al-barbīr* by Aḥmad al-Barbīr (BI 50) and *Al-fawāid al-saniyya fī al-riḥla al-madaniyya wa-l-rūmiyya* by al-Nahrawālī.
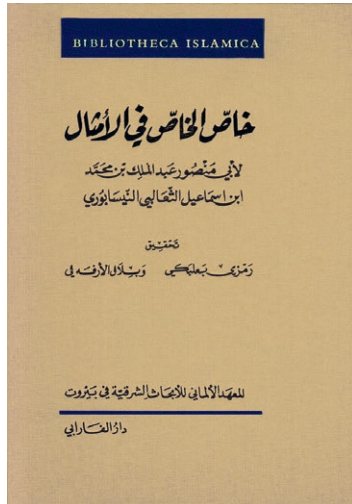
BI 61
Khāṣṣ al-khāṣṣ fī al-amthāl

Abū Manṣur al-Thaʿālibī
Edited by Ramzi Baalbaki / Bilal Orfali

Abū Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Malik b. Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl al-Thaʿālibī was an *adīb*, poet, critic, lexicographer, historian of literature, prolific scholar and one of the most important literary figures in the fourth-fifth/tenth-eleventh centuries. This work of his, entitled *Khāṣṣ al-khāṣṣ fī al-amthāl*, was edited for the first time based on MS Aya Sofya 6824. The 51 folios of this unique manuscript were copied by a certain Muḥammad b. ʿUmar b. Aḥmad in 523/1128. The work is divided into three parts: (1) Qurʾānic proverbs and their equivalents in a number of cultures, (2) proverbs related to various professions and (3) select proverbs following the pattern of afʿal and not included in the book of Abū ʿAbd Allāh Ḥamza b. al-Ḥasan al-Iṣbahānī dedicated to this subject.

The author of the work is ABŪ MANṢŪR ʿABD AL-MALIK B. MUḤAMMAD B. ISMĀʿĪL AL-THAʿĀLIBĪ AL-NĪSĀBŪRĪ (d. 429/ 1038), a well-known writer of anthologies and collector of epigrams. He is famous for his anthology of biographies of poets titled *Kitāb yatīmat al-dahr*, his lexicographical dictionary *Kitāb fiqh al-lugha* and an anthology titled *Laṭāʾif al-maʿārif*. *Khāṣṣ al-khāṣṣ* fī al-amthāl is edited by RAMZI BAALBAKI and BILAL ORFALI.

RAMZI BAALBAKI is professor of Arabic language and BILAL ORFALI is professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies, both at the American University of Beirut.

Publications

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, the Levant and the provinces of the Ottoman Empire, BTS comprises 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.

Akhbār Khadīja bt. Khuwaylid in the Islamic Sources.
Frames of narration, memory and history (in Arabic)

Maryām al-'Alī
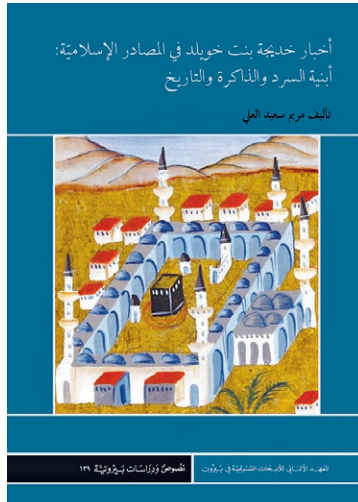
Akhbār Khadīja bt. Khuwaylid in the Islamic sources:
Frames of narration, memory and history is an exten-
sive philological study of the reports (*akhbār*) featuring
Khadīja bt. Khuwaylid (d. 3 B. H./619 A. D.) in Arabic
Islamic sources of various genres. Following a narrato-
logical literal approach, this book treats the collected
reports as narrative units recurrently narrativised,
conveyed and employed in different plots, across sīra,
biographical dictionaries, canonical *ḥadīth* collections,
tafsīr compilations and *adab* literature. It reveals how
the images, shadows and roles of Khadīja were formed
in the course of transmitting those reports and adapt-
ing them to the variant structures of early sources.
It also shows how Khadīja was idealised as later com-
pilers penned her reports and appended them with
commentary and elucidations, mirroring their cultural
perceptions and intellectual inclinations.

BTS 140
The Damascus Fragments. Towards a history of the Qubbat al-Khazna corpus of manuscripts and documents

Edited by Arianna D'Ottone Rambach / Konrad Hirschler / Ronny Vollandt
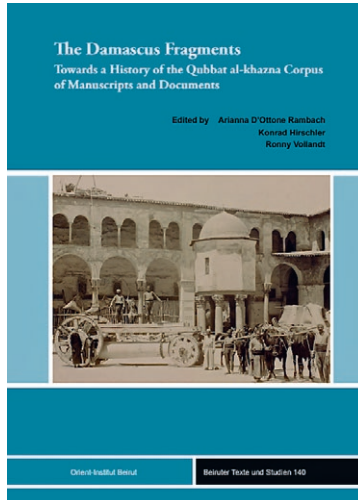
This is the first volume aimed at placing the enormous set of fragments from the Qubbat al-Khazna on the map of Middle Eastern history as a corpus. As much as its famous sibling, the Geniza of Cairo, the Qubba was "discovered" in the nineteenth century, but its over 200.000 fragments have remained on the margins of scholarship so far. An international and interdisciplinary team of scholars has now come together to sketch the fascinating history of this collection and to map the extraordinarily varied multilingual, multireligious and multiscriptural written artefacts it contains.
This book is an essential read for those interested in manuscript studies as well as in philology and Middle Eastern history.

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. The digital format facilitates the integration of images and diverse audio-visual material. Its open-access policy makes OIS particularly accessible. An edited volume on different aspects of cultural policies in Lebanon is produced in collaboration with Al Mawred Al Thaqafy, a regional NGO.

Other Publications (Extra Series)

OIB ORIENT INSTITUT BEIRUT
معهد الألماني للأبحاث الشرقية

Extra Series

The OIB also supports the publication of academic works connected with the institute's research objectives outside its established series. It supports the publication of monographs, conference proceedings and other manuscripts in Arabic, German, English and French in cooperation with other academic and scientific institutions or publishing houses. In 2020, the OIB published a volume by Zaki Abd al-Majid Zaki, discussing the relevance of the critical theory of the Frankfurt School for a better understanding of Egyptian society.

النظرية النقدية لمدرسة فرانكفورت

Zaki Abd al-Majid Zaki
Edited by Ḥajjaj Abu Jabr

This book analyses the impact of the critical theory developed by the pioneers of the Frankfurt School since 1923 on Near Eastern Scholars, namely in Egypt. When the Institute for Social Research was founded in Frankfurt after the First World War, the founders and members of the institute sought to know and understand social life, and to uncover the contradictions between the abundance of resources and the enormous size of misery and suffering, between technological capabilities and the widespread of exploitation and destruction, and between the supposed freedom of the human being and the prevailing authoritarian tendencies. Thus, members of the school were interested in theorizing the new forms of monopolistic state capitalism, the cultural industry, the authoritarian personality, and the oppressive patterns of social control, within the framework of social criticism that aims at radical and comprehensive change.

The book is an engaged attempt to understand the relevance of the critical theory of the Frankfurt School to a better understanding of Egyptian society and has two major questions: What are the basic issues brought up by the critical theory of the Frankfurt School? How efficient this critical theory in interpreting the economic, social, and cultural structures in the Third World, particularly the Egyptian society?

The late author, ZAKI ABD AL-MAJID ZAKI (1952–2019), received his PhD in the mid-1990s with a dissertation on the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School. Dr. Zaki taught sociology at Suez Canal University in El Arish at the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Arts, as well as the Faculty of Arts in Suez Canal University in Ismailia.

The editor, ḤAJJAJ ABU JABR, is professor of comparative critical theory at the Academy of Arts in Egypt.

Publications
of the Researchers

OIB
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المعهد الألماني للأبحاث الشرقية

Researchers

MARA ALBRECHT

Clash of Memories: Commemorating the Civil War in Lebanon. *Public History Weekly* 8(6).
Available at: public-history-weekly.de-gruyter.com/8-2020-6/civil-war-lebanon/

ABDALHADI ALIJLA

Trust in Divided Societies: State, Institutions and Governance in Lebanon, Syria and Palestine.
London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Leopardi, Francesco Saverio. The Palestinian Left and its Decline: Loyal opposition
London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020.
Majallat al-Dirāsāt al-Filasṭīniyya, (125), pp. 213–215. [review]

Do Religious People Dislike Others: Evidence from the Middle East.
[submitted]

Ḥamās In Power: Governance, clans, mosque and legitimacy.[submitted]

We are in Battle with the Virus: Ḥamās, Hezbollah and COVID-19. [submitted]

ENRICO BOCCACCINI

A Ruler's Curriculum: Transcultural comparisons of Mirrors for Princes.
In: Günther, Sebastian (ED.). *Knowledge and Education in Classical Islam: Religious Learning between Continuity and Change.*
Leiden: Brill, pp. 684–712.

SARAH EL BULBEISI

Tabu, Trauma und Identität: Subjekt-konstruktionen von PalästinenserInnen in Deutschland und in der Schweiz, 1960–2015. Bielefeld: Transcript.

Palestine in the imagination of the imperial German self: a glimpse into the evidence of military and religious representatives of the German Empire.
Journal of Palestine Studies, (82), pp. 77–86.

FATIH ERMIŞ

Osmanlı'da İktisadi Düşünce Tarihi.
Istanbul: Albaraka Yayınları.

Gülşen-i Râz: Metin, Tercüme, Şerh.
Istanbul: Ketebe Yayınları. [in print]

Environmental History of the Ottoman Empire – Interview with Fatih Ermiş.
TRAFO–Blog for Transregional Research.
Available at: trafo.hypotheses.org/22385

Exchange Rate Increases, Prices Follow.
OIB_upclose.
Available at: oib.hypotheses.org/1144.

LOUISE GALLORINI

Navigating the Heavens: Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī's Mi'râj in Early Sufi Literature.
In: *Proceedings of the conference "Story-telling, Travel Writing and Seafaring from Cross-Cultural Perspectives", American University of Sharjah, 2018.* Sharjah.
[submitted]

TILL GRALLERT

Catch Me if You Can! Computational approaches to the Arabic press of the late Ottoman Eastern Mediterranean. *Geschichte und Gesellschaft, Special Issue Digital History*. [in print]

Open Arabic Periodical Editions: A Framework for Bootstrapped Digital Scholarly Editions outside the Global North. *Digital Humanities Quarterly, Special Issue Minimal Computing*. [under review]

Open Arabic Periodical Editions (OpenArabicPE). TEI XML, a web display and bibliographic metadata on the article level (MODS, BibTeX). openarabicpe.github.io

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MENNATULLAH HENDAWY

WITH AHMED SAEED
Beauty and the Beast: The ordinary city versus the Mediatised City: The case of Cairo. *Urbanisation*, 4(2), pp. 126–134.

WITH JÖRG STOLLMANN
The Entanglement of Class, Marriage and Real Estate: The Visual Culture of Egypt's Urbanisation. *Urban Planning*, 5(2), pp. 44–58.

JOSHUA HUDELSON

Wages for Soundwork: ASMR as Reproductive Labor. *Resonance: The Journal of Sound and Culture*, 1(2), pp. 191–210.

NADIA VON MALTZAHN

Heritage, tourism, and the politics of national pride. The Baalbeck International Festival in Lebanon. *Quaderni storici*, 54(2), pp. 371–389.

(ED.) WITH HANANE HAJJ ALI
Insights into Cultural Policies in Lebanon. Beirut: Orient-Institut Beirut. [in print]

WITH HANANE HAJJ ALI
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ANNA SIMONE REUMERT

Good Guys, Mad City: Etiquettes of migration among Sudanese men in Beirut. *Mashriq & Mahjar: Journal of Middle East and North African Migration Studies*, 7(2), pp. 48–69.

BIRGIT SCHÄBLER

Wissensbewegungen und Wissensbeziehungen im Kalten Krieg: Transregionale Forschungen zu ideologischen Wissensräumen. *Weltweit vor Ort: Das Magazin der Max Weber Stiftung*, 20(1), pp. 9–11

Ten contributions to news media after the explosion on 4 August. *ORF, ZDF, DLF, Stern.de, NDR, SWR, SRF, MDR, TLZ, TA.*

ABDALLAH SOUFAN

On the Interpretation of Qur'ān 57:27.
[submitted to Journal of Qur'anic Studies]

On the Meaning of *Ḥadaṯ* and *Iḥdāṯ*.
[submitted to Journal of the American
Oriental Society]

**Tradition and Its Boundaries: A Diachronic
Study of the Concept of *Bid'ah* (Religious
Innovation) in Early Islam.** [submitted]

SARA TAFAKORI

(EDS.) WITH GILDA SEDDIGHI
**Postcolonialism, Ross, Karen et al.
International Encyclopedia of Gender,
Media and Communication**

**Affective territories of Recognition:
Iranian feminist activism and the
de-authentication of suffering.**
*Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and
Society.* [in print]

**Haunting Juxtapositions: Gender,
COVID-19 and the conservative modern.**
Feminist Media Studies. [in print]

Publications

Events

Visit of foreign minister Heiko Maas

Germany's foreign minister Heiko Maas visited Beirut one week after the devastating explosion of 4 August in order to pledge German support and call for a solution to the political deadlock. After visiting the site of the explosion in the harbour and before meeting President Michel Aoun at Baabda, Maas came to the OIB, where, after a tour of the heavily damaged premisses, he met with members of local civil society associations and representatives of German NGO's in Lebanon.

Conference Reports

Relations in the Ideoscape //
Middle Eastern students in the Eastern Bloc, 1950's–1991

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP
ONLINE
2–5 June
Convenors: Birgit Schäbler / Ala al-Hamarneh

The international workshop took place in the form of an online video conference, since the original research meeting, which was planned and organised for March 2020 in Moscow, had to be canceled unexpectedly due to COVID-19 travel restrictions. The four-day workshop was organised by the OIB in partnership with the German Historical Institute in Moscow (GHIM) and the German Historical Institute in Warsaw (GHIW). Members of the research team and associate researchers from Germany, Azerbaijan, Czech Republic, Greece, Iran, Lebanon, Poland, and Russia presented intermediate results of individual research papers and contributed to the theoretical, methodological, and field discussions within the research project. The research group is part of the larger research project "Unbound Knowledge" of the Max Weber Foundation and is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). The "Relations in the Ideoscape" research project tackles the history of knowledge relations and movements and the circulation of knowledge between the Middle East and the Eastern Bloc in the context of the Cold War, when numerous students from the region studied at universities in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and other countries of the Eastern Bloc, a space created by a common ideology, an ideoscape (Appadurai).

After a short opening session by Prof. Dr. Birgit Schäbler, head of the research team and director of the OIB, and by Dr. Sandra Dahlke, director of the GHIM, the first panel of the workshop focused on theoretical, practical, and perceived contradictions of studying within a "Marxist" ideoscape. Based on interviews and archive materials, Stella Kneifel discussed the ambivalent resonances between students from Arab countries and the official ideology of the GDR as demonstrated in curricula and social practices; Ekaterina Vasileva highlighted the media production by Arab journalism students in the USSR and their contribution to the formation of a ideoscape.

The second session focused on knowledge relations and knowledge circulation within the aesthetic norms of "socialist realism". Dr. Olga Nefedova discussed the ideological framing of students enrolled in art colleges in the USSR and the impacts of "socialist realism" on their art production.

The omnipresence of video conferences.
Meeting with the project members.

Dr. Mustafa Sweitat approached the topic by discussing the interactions between the Polish People's Republic and Syria in fine art college education. The third session was devoted to issues of propaganda and knowledge. Elmin Aliyev demonstrated the interaction between political activism, higher education, and exile by exemplifying the case of the Turkish communist radio "Bizim Radyo", broadcasting from Leipzig, German Democratic Republic (GDR), and run by exiled communists and leftist students from Turkey. Dr. Constantin Katsakioris discussed the limits of propaganda and ideological transfer in educational exchange by looking at the cultural productions of Algerian students of theatre and cinema colleges in the GDR and USSR.
The multi-faceted experiences of knowledge interactions were discussed in the fourth session. Parang Niakan debated aspects of the socialisation of Iranian communist women during their studies in the GDR and their experiences within leftist Iranian groups. Dr. Dorota Woroniecka analysed the experiences of sixteen Polish lecturers from Wroclaw University of Technology who worked in the Department of Architecture at Mosul University throughout the 1980s. The fifth session discussed the various relations between soft power, knowledge, and ideoscape. Dr. Zaur Gazimov presented a paper on the biography of Kaweh Pur Rahnama, an Iranian communist intellectual exiled in Poland who was actively involved in developing Iranian Studies at the University of Warsaw in the 1970s and 1980s. Dr. Ala Al-Hamarneh focused on the emergence of Soviet Alumni Associations in Jordan and Lebanon in the 1970s.
The last session was devoted to discussing the concepts and approaches of "knowledge" within the research project. Prof. Birgit Schäbler delivered a theoretical intervention on concepts of understanding and approaching knowledge in the projects discussed, with a special focus on the interpretations of knowledge within the concepts of ideoscape and relations. A rich discussion involving all the participants of the workshop ensued before the workshop ended in good spirits.

Events

Neighborliness from a Global Perspective (II)

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
Erfurt
12–14 February
Convenor: Birgit Schäbler

In December 2019, the OIB hosted the annual conference of the Max Weber Foundation under the theme of neighbourliness in Cairo. The call for papers yielded a large number of promising submissions that could either not be included due to time restrictions or whose authors were unable to travel to Cairo for a variety of reasons. Therefore, the OIB organised a follow-up conference at the Augustinian Monastery in Erfurt, Germany, once the home of reformer Martin Luther.

Within the triad of "neighbourship, friendship, kinship", the neighbourly relation is the most contingent phenomenon. As a form of non-voluntary spatial closeness, it provides fertile ground to explore aspects of interaction ranging from sympathy to aggression — both of which are features that might inhabit the same relationship in ambivalent ways. Neighbourliness could also be seen as a prism through which to consider the constantly established, renegotiated, and reformulated boundaries of proximity and distance, categories inherent to spaces of human interaction, power, and violence.

The ethic of neighbourliness, ranging from everyday neighbourly assistance (Ger. *Nachbarschaftshilfe*) to love of one's neighbour (*Nächstenliebe* — the neighbour is also "*der Nächste*"), has roots in various religions. It is of great importance also in Islam, but woefully understudied. This renders the concept more deeply and concretely than the competing ideas of cosmopolitanism and coexistence.

The conference in Erfurt gathered junior and senior scholars from around the globe: Algeria, Egypt, Germany, India, Italy, Lebanon, Pakistan, Poland, and Turkey. Participants explored the possibilities of neighbourliness as an analytical concept, focusing on its characteristic as a spatial form of relationship with specific dispositions and practices, and its adaptability to the realms of micro-, meso-, and macro-level relations (i.e. interpersonal, inter-group, and international frameworks). Neighbourly relations in various contexts were analysed through different disciplinary angles and evoked fruitful trans-disciplinary conversations.

Neighbourhood relationships in individual parts of the city of Rostock are being revived through the nationwide digital network nebenan.de.
NEBENAN.DE.

The conference comprised seven panels and kicked off with ontological questions exploring the tensions between theological approaches, based on the Old Testament (THOMAS HIEKE). Two further panels focussed on the tension between unity and diversity in five urban case studies from around the globe: Khartoum (MARGRET OTTO), Istanbul (DERYA ÖZKAYA), Beirut (THOM SICKING), Edirne (YUNUS UGUR), and Lahore (WAQAS HALIM / ASAD AHMAD KHAN). Another set of panels engaged in discussions of neighbourliness and media; from German pre-war media debates on antisemitism (SIMON UNGER-ALVI) to the role of social media in promoting neighbourhood (FOUED DJEDDOU), and from social media interactions between Iranian and Saudi Arabian communities around the annual pilgrimage *ḥajj* to Mecca (MARYAM VAZIRI) to Pakistani affection for Indian cinema (KAVERI MISHRA). Finally, the third panel explored neighbourliness across and within heavily fortified borders and during times of war; from the Cold War and the era of decolonisation (CHRISTIAN METHFESSEL) to Israeli self-perceptions (JOHANN NICOLAI) and the displacement of Syrians to neighbouring countries (ZEBA KHAN).

The proceedings are currently being arranged and will be published by Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. A digital Open-Access version will be published through perspectivia.net.

Events

Women, Banks and Politics //
Making Sense of the Intifada

"Women, Banks, and Politics: Making Sense of the Intifada" was the first of two consecutive events, at which the works and results of the new research group *The Lebanese Intifada of October 17: Perspectives from Within* were shown in public. The research group is a cooperation between the Orient-Institut Beirut (OIB) and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) under the leadership of OIB director Prof. Birgit Schäbler. It documents and analyses the mass protests of autumn 2019 and will publish its findings soon in a book under the title "The Social Movement of October 17th, 2019".

In the workshop "Women, Banks and Politics", the participants of the research group shared their insights with their fellow researchers and the audience. Among others, such topical issues like the political-social system, constitutional and systemic issues, gender roles, the participation of women in the Movement, the banking business as well as corruption and trust in the Lebanese currency were discussed.

The first panel made *Gender Aspects of the Intifada* subject of discussion. Jasmin Diab, a researcher at the AUB Global Health Institute and consultant in the areas of Conflict, Migration, Refugee and Gender Studies, depicted the participation of women in the protests as extremely visible and their contribution as crucial. Illustratively, she referred to Mallak Alawye, the woman who become famous overnight and an icon of the uprising through a youtube video which showed her vigorously kicking a minister's bodyguard, armed with a Kalashnikov, into his torso. Zeina Tohme, professor of communication at the Lebanese University and researcher of post-conflict peace building as well as cultural and religious diversity, explored the roles of women as actors who promoted dialogue and co-existence in the framework of the protests. She focused exemplarily on the Ain Al-Rumaneh women's march where Lebanese women from Christian and Shiite neighbourhoods, once bitterly opposed to each other in the civil war, called unitedly for non-violent ways of protesting.

Sally Farhat, a researcher on Multimedia Journalism at the Lebanese University, on the contrary, critically reflected on the question of whether the media did not over-interpret the women's contribution, as many — international and national — portals had written of a "women's uprising".

The second panel *Banking and Political Aspects of the Intifada* started with the presentation of Maximilian Felsch, Associate Professor and head of the political science department at Haigazian University. Felsch analyzed the Lebanese consociational system and demonstrated how a system, originally initiated to include and serve all confessions and ethnic groups, had been steadily transformed into a system exploiting political confessionalism through corruption by the powerful parties. He strongly underlined the danger of a complete system change and an elimination of the whole system which could lead to civil unrest emerging from social groups feeling marginalized or not enough involved. As a solution, he promoted instead corrective measures, although difficult to introduce and implement. Jakub Jajcay, a Ph.D. candidate at the Department of History and Archaeology of AUB, supplemented Felsch's political analysis by an examination of the origins of the Lebanese economic crisis that caused the uprising and the role of the banks therein. He claimed that the Lebanese neglected their responsibility as citizens by not seeing through the mechanisms of the financial sector, while showing their trust by putting their money in Lebanese accounts and benefiting from the very high interest rates. By exposing the links between private banks and political leaders which rendered the economic crisis a debt crisis, he made evident how difficult structural reforms were despite of a change of consciousness happening in the population at large. Rayan Haykal, Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration at the University of La Sagesse, dealt with the love-hate relationship Lebanese have with their currency, the lira, which has now lost over 80 percent of its value. He showed how the dollar was increasingly replacing the lira after the civil war. To understand this process, he attested, as well, a lack of "economic education" to the Lebanese society. Nevertheless, the workshop concluded on a positive note: Sami Ofeish, Chairperson of the Department of Political Science and International Affairs, stated that the popular uprising had clearly achieved a paradigm shift, first and foremost by advancing the concept of citizenship (muwāṭana).

A graffiti in Beirut
playing on the
similarities bet-
ween the Arabic
words for 'the
people' (al-sha'b)
and 'the riots'
(al-shaghab).

Environmental History of the Ottoman Empire

Environmental history within Ottoman studies is an emerging, dynamic field that is attracting an increasing number of young researchers. Not only does the history of the Ottoman Empire provide many rich and previously undiscovered sources concerning environmental history, but the geographic diversity of the empire also has much to offer with regard to environmental issues. Situated in Beirut, the workshop embraced this geographic diversity by featuring papers on areas ranging from Bosnia to Mount Lebanon.

From a humanities perspective, environmental issues can be analysed through an overarching dynamic of relations, which can be divided into four categories: humans and the divine, humans and other humans, humans and their production and, lastly, humans and their environment.

In the Ottoman context, the prevailing holistic worldview leads us to analyse the relations of the human being to his/her environment within a broader spectrum of relations, such as those with forests, climate, use of water, environmental conflicts, epidemics, natural disasters, fisheries, rivers and seas, etc. The totality of this network of relations provides us with a useful analytical instrument to understand this emerging field.

Comprising five panels, the workshop covered a range of aspects of Ottoman environmental history.

The first panel was dedicated to the sources of Ottoman environmental history. FATIH ÇALIŞIR (KIRKLARELI UNIVERSITY) gave a panorama of the types of books related to environmental issues from *Kashf al-ẓunūn'an*, the famous bibliographical encyclopedia of Kātib Çelebi.

The second panel dealt with agriculture and climate. MEHMET KURU (SABANCI UNIVERSITY) investigated the Little Ice Age argument concerning seventeenth-century socio-economic transformations and the large-scale depopulation of Anatolia.

In the second paper of this panel, based on complaint petitions and the relevant bureaucratic correspondence letters, ELÇIN ARABACI (INDEPENDENT RESEARCHER) discussed the acute clash of interests between commoner Bursans and major land-owners who wanted to invest in the commercial production of rice, as well as the clashes between native Bursans and immigrants who brought rice cultivation experience from their native lands.

The third panel examined natural resources and ecology. GEORGIOS LIAKOPOULOS (MAX PLANCK INSTITUTE FOR THE SCIENCE OF HUMAN HISTORY, JENA) explored how early modern environmental history can benefit from the statistical analysis of the plethora of quantitative data recorded in Ottoman taxation cadastres. His paper presented new evidence acquired from the first Ottoman detailed register of the Peloponnese (TT10–1/14662), compiled immediately after the conquest of the province ca. 1460–63. The paper focused on the province's Greek and Albanian population and their taxable economic activities. The second speaker, GRAHAM AUMAN PITTS (GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY), shed light on the environmental history of late-Ottoman Mount Lebanon. He argued that silk had a transformational impact on land use, water and soil resources, as well as on Lebanon's demographics.

The fourth panel dealt with gardens and parks as constructed environments. Using archival research, AYŞE NUR AKDAL (BOĞAZIÇI UNIVERSITY) revisited urban-rural relationships in Ottoman Istanbul during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries through an exploration of market gardens and gardeners in the city, whereby she also challenged the "consumption giant" image of the city of Istanbul.

The fifth and final panel was dedicated to the issue of epidemics and plague, which is currently a burning issue globally, and featured three speakers. MUHAMED VALJEVAC (MARMARA UNIVERSITY) dealt with the Bosnian great plague 1729–1739. His paper explored the measures introduced to fight the outbreak of plague and how they impacted the Bosnian urban and rural environmental history. NÜKHET VARLIK'S (UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA) talk was on climate, migration and plague in Ottoman Anatolia. She discussed climate fluctuations, human migrations and plague pandemics of the early modern era, with a view to exploring the connections between them. Her ultimate goal was to use the early modern Ottoman Empire as a case study to provide insight on the complex relationships between climate, migration and plague — perennial problems of the past and present. In the third presentation, BENAN GRAMS (GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY) shed light on water supply and public health in Damascus in the first decade of the twentieth century. Her paper explored the scientific, political and economic conditions under which the Fijeh water project was executed.

The workshop was wrapped up with a fruitful discussion on the following question: How can environmental history contribute to Ottoman studies?

Public Research Seminars

7 FEBRUARY Cécile Boëx (EHESS, PARIS) / Stefan Tarnowski (OIB DOCTORAL FELLOW, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY): *Testimony, Subjectivity and Technology: Video practices in Syria since 2011*

27 FEBRUARY Souad Slim (DIRECTOR AT THE INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY AND NEAR EASTERN STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BALAMAND): *The Importance of Russian Schools in the Middle East 1882–1915*

5 MARCH Florian Zemmin (SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW AT THE HUMANITIES CENTER FOR ADVANCED STUDY, UNIVERSITÄT LEIPZIG): *Mapping Arabic Sociologies of Religion*

10 MARCH Eckart Woertz (DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE OF MIDDLE EAST STUDIES (IMES) AT THE GERMAN INSTITUTE OF GLOBAL AND AREA STUDIES (GIGA) IN HAMBURG AND PROFESSOR OF CONTEMPORARY HISTORY AND POLITICS OF THE MIDDLE EAST AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HAMBURG): *The Geopolitics of Energy Transitions in the Middle East*

21 JULY Nicolas Chikhani (BANKER AND ECONOMIST, AMP HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL): *Whither Lebanon? Crises and (re)solutions*

28 OCTOBER Cherine Yazbeck / Serge Yazigi: *Beirut's Public Spaces after October 17*

5 NOVEMBER Abdallah Soufan (RESEARCH ASSOCIATE AT OIB): *The (Un-)literal World: How the construction of metaphor theory in Islam created a new "common sense" ('uqalā'iyah) and perpetually reshaped the Muslim weltanschauung*

Events

Internal Colloquia

30 JANUARY Abdalhadi Alijla (OIB VISITING POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW): *Corruption and Generalised Trust in the MENA region*

27 FEBRUARY Paul Esber (OIB VISITING DOCTORAL FELLOW): *Entangled Roots — the Politics of reforestation and muwātanah al-Lubnāniyah*

5 MARCH Mohammad Reza Moridi (HANS-ROBERT ROEMER FELLOW): *Modern Islamic Art: The construction of the Middle Eastern narrative under cultural and political discourses*

2 APRIL Hazim Alabdullah (OIB VISITING DOCTORAL FELLOW): *The Manuscripts of Patriarch Ignatios Ni'matullah in the Ottoman Empire and Italy: An overview*

16 APRIL Alex Rodriguez Suarez (OIB VISITING POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW): *The Religious Soundscape of the Maronites*

30 APRIL Abdalhadi Alijla (OIB VISITING POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW): *Ḥamās In Power: Governance, clans, mosque and legitimacy*

21 MAY Monika Halkort (OIB VISITING POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW): *Ecologies of Transmission. Reading solidarity transversally in the Mediterranean Sea*

4 JUNE Joshua Hudelson (OIB VISITING POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW): *Places that Don't Close; Spaces that Don't Exist: Power in the electronic dance music scenes of twenty-first-century Lebanon*

18 JUNE Abdallah Soufan (OIB RESEARCH ASSOCIATE): *Theory of Tropicality in Classical Arabic Thought*

2 JULY Abdalhadi Alijla (OIB VISITING POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW)*: Rebel Governance and Identity in North-east Syria 2020: Survey results*

9 JULY Stefan Tarnowski (OIB VISITING DOCTORAL FELLOW): *Keywords — Regime, Revolution, Dignity: The state of siege*

29 SEPTEMBER Abdalhadi Alijla (OIB VISITING POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW): *"We are in Battle with the Virus": Ḥamās, Hezbollah and COVID-19*

Events

5 NOVEMBER Enrico Boccaccini (OIB VISITING POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW): *Female Reflections in Mirrors*

13 NOVEMBER Rima Merhi (OIB VISITING POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW): *The Framing of the Druze in the Media and Political Archives of the British Empire, 1840–1860*

26 NOVEMBER Alfred el-Khoury (OIB VISITING DOCTORAL FELLOW): *Innovation, Context and Ma'nā in Old Arabic Poetry*

3 DECEMBER Anna Simone Reumert (OIB VISITING DOCTORAL FELLOW): *The Custodians of Beirut: Towards a history of Sudanese migrant labor*

9 DECEMBER Sara Tafakori (OIB VISITING POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW): *Affective Territories of Recognition: Iranian feminist activism and the (de-)authentication of suffering*

Events

Presentations & Moderations

SARAH EL BULBEISI

Organisation of the workshop **"Collective Action, Social Movements, and Civil Society in the Arab Region"**, DAAD Higher Education Dialogue with the Muslim World, BERLIN // 13–15 FEBRUARY.

"Taboo, Trauma, and Identity: Subject constructions of Palestinians in Germany and Switzerland", book presentation at the Summer School "Palästina Spricht", BERLIN // 1–2 AUGUST.

Moderation of the panel **"Gender Aspects of the Intifada"** at the workshop "Women, Banks and Politics: Making Sense of the Intifada", OIB, BEIRUT // 15 OCTOBER.

FATIH ERMIŞ

"Storytelling for the Transmission of Ethics: Theoretical versus practical wisdom" at the "Narrative and Ethics: The morals of the Qur'anic stories and beyond" conference, CILE, Hamad bin Khalifa University, DOHA // 27–29 JANUARY.

"Current Economic Crises in Lebanon", internal colloquium, OIB, 27 February.

Convenor of the workshop "Environmental History of the Ottoman Empire", OIB, BEIRUT // 10–11 DECEMBER.

Welcome and introduction at the "Environmental History of the Ottoman Empire" workshop, OIB, BEIRUT // 10 DECEMBER.

PIERRE FRANCE

"Bootleg Heritage of Arab Music: Amateurs' digitisation websites and practices (2000–2019)" at the "Recollecting a Shared Polyphony: Popular culture, media technologies and heritagisation of music across the Mediterranean" conference, Forum Transregionale Studien, BERLIN // 23–24 JANUARY.

"The Lebanese Central Bank during the Civil War", meeting of the IFPO, BEIRUT // 19 FEBRUARY.

"How to Re-think the Lebanese Civil War", IFPO, BEIRUT // 21 FEBRUARY.

"State at Work: A sociology" (thesis presentation) at the IREMAM research seminar, AIX-EN-PROVENCE // 17 SEPTEMBER.

LOUISE GALLORINI

"A Mystical Function: Angels in the Sufi commentaries on the Qur'ān" at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion, BOSTON // 29 NOVEMBER– 10 DECEMBER (ONLINE).

Events

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TILL GRALLERT

Seminar session: **"Streets: Remodelling public places between Paris and Beirut"**, American University of Beirut (AUB), "Assembling the Middle East: Infrastructure and materiality" course (Dr. Elizabeth Saleh), BEIRUT // 12 FEBRUARY.
"Catch Me if You Can! Tracing the late Ottoman ideosphere through network analysis and stylometry of the Arabic periodical press", Third Islamicate Digital Humanities Network (IDHN) Conference, 3 APRIL (ONLINE ONLY).
"Open Arabic Periodical Editions: A framework for bootstrapped scholarly editions outside the Global North" at the "L'interopérabilité des données de la recherche: textes, images, bases de données" (Interoperability of Research Data: Texts, images, databases) online workshop, IFAO, CAIRO // 2 JUNE.
Discussant: **"Panel 2: Feminist Archival Practices"** at the "Archiving, Recording and Representing Feminism: The global history of women's emancipation in the twentieth century" online workshop, German Historical Institute, LONDON // 10–12 DECEMBER.
"Global DH and Minimal Computing" at the "Digitising the Humanities, the Digital in the Humanities: An introduction to digital humanities in the Indian context" online workshop, Jamia Millia Islamia, NEW DELHI, INDIA // 18 DECEMBER.

NADIA VON MALTZAHN

"Entangled trajectories of artists in and from Lebanon" as part of the "Art as Method and Lens for Middle East Studies"** roundtable at the Annual Meeting of the Middle East Studies Association (MESA), 7 OCTOBER (ONLINE).

ANNA SIMONE REUMERT

"Black Portraiture", seminar respondent in the Ifriqiya seminar with Professor Eve Powell, MESAAS, Columbia University, NEW YORK // FEBRUARY 2020.
"Wither the Migrant Worker in Lebanon's Crisis?" panellist and panel co-organiser of Black and Arab Across the Red Sea, Middle East Studies Association (MESA), OCTOBER 2020.
"Migrants and Workers: Sudanese Labor Struggles in Beirut", Khayrallah Center for Lebanese Diaspora Studies' New Perspectives on Middle East Migrations Conference, RALEIGH, NC, USA // SEPTEMBER 2020 (POSTPONED).

BIRGIT SCHÄBLER

Welcome and introduction at the "Neighborliness in Global Perspective (II)" conference, ERFURT // 12–14 FEBRUARY.
"Knowledge and Transregional History" at the "Relations in the Ideoscape: Middle Eastern Students in the Eastern Block 1950s–1990" workshop, 2–5 JUNE (ONLINE).
Welcome at the "Women, Banks and Politics: Making Sense of the Intifada" workshop, OIB, BEIRUT // 15 OCTOBER.

ABDALLAH SOUFAN

Convenor for a workshop on **Theories of Language in Islam**, OIB, BEIRUT // MAY (CANCELLED).
Public research seminar **"The (Un-)literal World: How the construction of metaphor theory in Islam created a new 'common sense' ('uqalā'iyyah) and perpetually reshaped the Muslim Weltanschauung"**, OIB, BEIRUT // 5 NOVEMBER.

STEFAN TARNOWSKI

"Stabilisation Infrastructures and Unstable Images" at the "Témoignages, sub-jectivités, technologies: Pratiques de la video en Syrie depuis 2011" (Testimonies, Subjectivities, Technologies: Video practices in Syria since 2011) seminar, co-organised with Nibras Chehayed (IFPO), OIB, BEIRUT // 7 FEBRUARY.

Events

Library

The Library of the OIB is a specialized research and reference library in the fields of Near and Middle Eastern studies that primarily serves the research needs of the OIB. It provides researchers with research materials and is in addition upon registration open to a broader community of international visiting fellows 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 largest sections of the library are in the field of Arabic studies and literature as well as the history of the Arabic and Islamic world followed by Islamic theology. The holdings of the library include a collection about Lebanon and the Levant and a growing section of Armenian culture in the Middle East. Arabic literature, history, history of religions, cultural history, history of Arabic and Islamic science, 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 as well as printed Levantine journals and newspapers. 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. 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 holds as well some treatises in Ottoman and Persian language. A collection of more than five hundred maps and several architectural and topographical plans from Beirut and Lebanon as a whole are also a part of the library's holdings.

The library has reading rooms that are equipped with wireless access to the internet as well as a high-end book and a microfilm reader and a book scanner. We offer study desks to our readers with daylight reading lamps and electric outlets. Our reading rooms and its entrance offer an inviting atmosphere for our scholarly events and support on these occasions the exchange of scholars and researchers.

The library acquires approximately 2.000 books annually and subscribes to the most important specialized journals in our fields of research. The predominant language of our acquisitions is Arabic followed by English, French and German as well as other European languages. On behalf of the Max Weber Foundation we advance to build up a shared Digital Library and optimise the range of electronic material. We provide onsite access to the Encyclopaedia of Islam online as well as an increasing number of additional relevant databases. In this field we collaborate with the German Special information Service (FID) Near East in Halle/Germany to offer access to the MENALIB Middle East Virtual Library.

The OIB completed in February 2020 an inventory project of its holdings with a great support from all colleagues and employees in the institute. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the disastrous blast in Beirut's harbour on August 4 which has hit the institute and the library heavily the library was nearly completely closed for external users during the year. Library staff was however active in home office and continued much of its regular work and increased its digital holdings. The library also operated for the requests of internal researchers and fulfilled numerous external scan requests as far as possible.

TO THE LIBRARY
→
الى المكتبة

OIB LIBRARY AFTER BLAST

Team

OIB Team 2020.

Interns

7 JANUARY – 31 MARCH*

Jasper Bernhofer
Freie Universität Berlin

1 FEBRUARY – 24 APRIL*

Ineke Schlüter
Universität Tübingen

8 FEBRUARY – 9 APRIL*

Robin Schmahl
Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München

21 FEBRUARY – 19 APRIL*

Anna-Lena Denzler
Universität Bamberg

15 OCTOBER – 15 DECEMBER

Jakob Koppermann
Universität Hamburg

* Left the country before the first national lockdown and closure of the airport on 19 March.

Scientific Board

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PROF. DR. SONJA MEJCHER-ATASSI Faculty of Arts and Sciences, American University of Beirut

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Rebuilt main
reception hall
after the
renovations.

Imprint

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 Morgen-ländische 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).