

International Conference New Perspectives on South-Asian and Middle Eastern Connections in the 20th Century

9-10 May 2026

French Institute of Oriental Archaeology (Ifao), Cairo, With the support of the Orient-Institut Beirut and the Max Weber Stiftung

Each participant will have 20 minutes to present their work, followed by a Q&A session every two papers.

Saturday 9 May

09:00-09:15	Welcome coffee
09:15-09:30	Welcome message Abbès Zouache (Ifao director)
09:30-10:00	Introduction Simon Conrad (OIB) & Antoinette Ferrand (Ifao)
Panel 1: Chair:	Imperial and anti-Imperial Internationalisms Olivier Schoutedden (American University in Cairo)
10:00-10:20	Forbidden fruit: Printing Indo-Egyptian solidarities in exile, 1905-1914 - Poorvi Bellur (Princeton University)
10:20-10:40	Disappearing and Double-Crossing: Espionage and the Slippage of Self in Interwar West, Central, and South Asia - Sunaina Danziger (Princeton University)
10:40-11:10	Q&A
11:10-11:40	Coffee break
11:40-12:00	"The spirit of Arabia is the spirit of Islam": Britain's religious propaganda campaign in East Africa, South Asia and Southeast Asia during the Second World War - Omar Nasr (London School of Economics)
12:00-12:20	The Internationalist Debate on the Muslim Women Question - Razak Khan (Freie Universität, Berlin)
12:20-12:50	Q&A
13:00-14:00	Lunch
Panel 2: Chair:	The Politics of Intellectual Transfer: India as Model and Site Mostafa Abdelaal (Cairo University)
14:00-14:20	Louis Cheikho, World Philologist: Curating Catholic Arabic Literature in Bombay - Allison Gibeily (Northwestern University)
14:20-14:40	India as a Model? Craft Education Reform in Egypt Under British Occupation (1907-1934) Aurélie Petiot (Paris-Nanterre)
14:40-15:10	Q&A
15:10-15:30	Coffee break
15:30-15:50	Learning from India: Egyptian Living Standards Statistics in the 1950s Antoinette Ferrand (French Institute of Oriental Archaeology, Cairo)
15:50-16:10	Nostalgic Diplomacies: India, Egypt, and the Cultural Politics of Third World Memory Ada Petiwala (American University of Beirut)
16:10-16:40	Q&A
17:30	Falukka Ride
19:00	Dinner for the participants

Sunday 10 May

09:30-10:00 Welcome coffee

Panel 3: Aspiring for a New Horizon: Arab Writers and India Amid Decolonisation

Chair: Zeina Halabi (Orient-Institut Beirut)

10:00-10:20 "The Poet of Islam": The Reception of Muhammad Iqbal in Egypt
Ahmed Elbenni (Princeton University)

10:20-10:40 Malek Bennabi Reading Gandhi: On the Duty of Anticolonialism
Mahmoud Al Zayed (Freie Universität, Berlin)

10:40-11:10 Q&A

11:10-11:30 Coffee break

11:30-11:50 Selfhood, Secularism, and Nationalism Between the Arab World and South Asia: The Intellectual Encounter with Tagore in Damascus of the United Arab Republic, 1961
Spenser Rapone (University of Chicago)

11:50-12:10 "And nevertheless I find in Delhi the taste of Khartoum": Sudanese Writers and India after Independence
Simon Conrad (Orient-Institut Beirut)

12:10-12:40 Q&A

12:40-14:00 Lunch

Panel 4: On the Move: South Asian Routes to the Middle East after Empire

Chair: Ifdal El Saket (Leiden University)

14:00-14:20 From Fantastical to Anticolonial: Imagining the Middle East in South Asian Cinema
Shehram Mokhtar (Northwestern University, Qatar)

14:20-14:40 The Political Mobilisation of South Asians in the 20th Century Gulf
Hessa Alnuaimi (Sharjah University)

14:40-15:00 Crossing the Arabian Sea: South Asia-Arab World Connections through Mappila Migration
Aiswarya Sanath (Motilal Nehru National Institute of Technology, Allahabad)

15:00-15:30 Q&A

17:00 Proposed visit to the Museum of Modern Art (Zamalek)

19:00 Dinner for the participants



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