

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

NEW PERSPECTIVES ON SOUTH-ASIAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN CONNECTIONS IN THE 20TH CENTURY

9 - 10 MAY 2026

INSTITUT FRANÇAIS D'ARCHÉOLOGIE
ORIENTALE (IFAO)
IN COLLABORATION WITH ORIENT-
INSTITUT BEIRUT

ORGANIZED BY:
ANTOINETTE FERRAND (IFAO) & SIMON CONRAD (OIB)



INSTITUT FRANÇAIS
D'ARCHÉOLOGIE
ORIENTALE

المعهد الفرنسي للأثار الشرقية



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Programme

Day 1: Saturday 9 May 2026

- 09:00-09:15 Welcome coffee
- 09:15-09:30 *Welcome message*
Abbès Zouache (Ifao director of studies)
- 09:30-10:00 *Introduction*
Simon Conrad (OIB) & Antoinette Ferrand (Ifao)



Panel 1: Imperial and anti-Imperial Internationalisms Chair: Olivier Schouteden (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: The Politics of Intellectual Transfer: India as Model and Site

Chair: 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

Day 2: Sunday 10 May 2026

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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