



COSIMENA

Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst  
German Academic Exchange Service

**PROGRAMME**

# **OIB-COSIMENA Research Colloquium III on History as Concepts, Conflicts & Solutions**

“From Ideology to Critique: History in the Thought of the Iraqi  
Philosopher ‘Abd al-Ġabbār al-Rifa’ī (b. 1954)”

**Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2025**



ORIENT INSTITUT  
BEIRUT  
المعهد الألماني  
للأبحاث الشرقية

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# Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2025

5:15– 6:00 p.m.

## Registration

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6:00–6:15 p.m.

## Greeting Words

**Dr Wiebke Bachmann** (*Director, DAAD Regional Office Cairo*)

**Hannah Brandt** (*Head of Science & Protocol, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany to Egypt*)

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6:15–7:00 p.m.

## PRESENTATION

**“From Ideology to Critique: History in the Thought of the Iraqi Philosopher ‘Abd al-Ġabbār al-Rifa‘ī (b. 1954)”**

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**Dr Emmanuel Paisani** (*Dominican Institute for Oriental Studies/IDEO & Catholic Institute of Paris/IPC*)

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7:00–7:30 p.m.

## Q & A Session

MODERATION

**Dr Yasmin Amin** (*Orient-Institut Beirut*)

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7:30–7:40 p.m.

## WRAP-Up & Feedback

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7:40 – 8:30 p.m.

## JOINT NETWORKING RECEPTION

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# Concept Note & Biography of the Speaker

## Concept Note

“From Ideology to Critique: History in the Thought of the Iraqi Philosopher ‘Abd al-Ġabbār al-Rifaī (b. 1954)”

Faced with the observation that the renewal of Islamic thought has failed to materialize since the nineteenth century, the Iraqi philosopher ‘Abd al-Jabbār al-Rifaī examines the history of Muslim theology in order to identify possible causes and develop a discursive and programmatic framework. Our presentation will highlight the way Rifaī approaches history and how he calls for a critical approach as opposed to an ideological one. Drawing on certain contemporary thinkers, he argues that only critical history allows collective memory to avoid becoming burdened with imaginaries of the past that turn it into a “seductive romantic narrative.” Since this ideological history is a source of conflict, only the critical approach can sustain and ground theological renewal in Islam.

## Dr Emmanuel Paisani

Director of the Dominican Institute for Oriental Studies (IDEO) & Vice-Rectorate for Research of the Catholic Institute of Paris (IPC)

French Dominican, Emmanuel Pisani is an Islamologist and has been Director of the Dominican Institute for Oriental Studies (IDEO) in Cairo since June 2020. Holding a doctorate in philosophy and theology, he received the Mohammed Arkoun Prize in 2016 for his dissertation on al-Ghazali. A specialist in the question of otherness in Islam, he is also a professor at the Vice-Rectorate for Research of the Catholic Institute of Paris.

## Participants’ Feedback

Scan and share your feedback with us!



## COSIMENA Network

If you would like to join our COSIMENA network and receive news about upcoming events, please scan this QR code:



If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to email us at: [cosimena@daadcairo.org](mailto:cosimena@daadcairo.org)

## Partners

### **Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD)**

It was in 1960 when the DAAD Regional Office was established on the basis of the German-Egyptian Cultural Agreement. Since then, the academic relations between Egypt and Germany have evolved steadily. The close cooperation has unwrapped new horizons for the scientific bonds of both countries to further develop and flourish. Thousands of Egyptian scholars have benefited ever since from these ties. <https://www.daad.eg/>

### **Clusters of Scientific Innovation in the Middle East and North Africa (COSIMENA)**

In the scope of COSIMENA the DAAD Office Cairo realises interdisciplinary events on current issues in science and innovation, such as workshops, conferences, roundtable discussions, the German Science Day, the COSIMENA Science Night and a Summer School. The several activities aim to bring together various stakeholders from science, business, government, and civil society. Especially scientists are promoted and supported through networking opportunities. [www.daad.eg/cosimena](http://www.daad.eg/cosimena)

### **Orient Institut Beirut**

The Orient-Institut Beirut (OIB) is an independent academic research institute, belonging to the Max Weber Foundation. It is mainly funded through the Federal Ministry of Education and Research in Germany. It conducts interdisciplinary research on the Arab world and the region of West Asia and North Africa at large. Its research community comprises long-term research associates from Germany 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 the Middle East, as well as sociology and political sciences. <https://orient-institut.org>

## OIB-COSIMENA Research Colloquium III

Following the success of the OIB-COSIMENA Colloquium I on New Islamic Ethics & the OIB-COSIMENA Colloquium II on Knowledge Transfer, the Orient Institut Beirut (Cairo Office) is organizing a new series in cooperation with the DAAD Regional Office Cairo in the period between September 2025 to December 2025 on History as Concepts, Conflicts and Solutions.

As is well known, History is the systematic study and documentation of the past that enables the study of continuity and change over time. Historians use all forms and types of evidence to examine, interpret, revisit, and reinterpret the past. These include not just written documents, but also oral communication and objects such as buildings, artifacts, photographs, and paintings to understand the past and also make sense of the present, thereby forming a bridge to other disciplines. The different interpretations of the past allow us to see the present differently and therefore imagine - and work towards - different futures.

Much has been said about history and how it is written. Winston Churchill is quoted as saying that "History will be kind to me, for I intend to write it." In his view, our understanding of history isn't complete or objective but tends to privilege the version of events of those in power. Though Napoleon Bonaparte was in power and was many times victorious; he is quoted as saying, "History is a set of lies, agreed upon." To counter the historical versions of the powerful and victorious, several concepts were developed to include the minorities, vanquished, and marginalized, like for example history from below or history from within. Feminists have also made it a point to argue that history was mainly written by men, which is apparent in the name his-story and have called for her-story as well. Yet most have agreed that ignoring history also affects the future, as the philosopher Santayana said, "Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it." Many problems we face in the present have their roots in the distant past and cannot be solved or eradicated unless we study the reasons for their existence. The German-American historian Hajo Holborn said that "History gives answers only to those who know how to ask questions." Therefore, if we want to understand our today, we have to search for answers in yesterday. This lecture series will present eight lectures on history from different perspectives, divided into three interdisciplinary clusters. The first cluster will discuss history as concepts, meaning history and historiography as such, as well as from below and from within, and the different ways to study history. The second cluster will discuss conflicts in history, as in conflicting narratives, narratives leading to conflict, deconstruction and reconstruction and different ways to deal with smoothing over such conflicts. The final cluster will provide the positive end, namely, solutions in various ways. Solutions to historical problems, solutions to conflicts in historical views, and solutions to mining history's secrets.

The following dates are planned for the events:

**1st Cluster: History as Concepts**

- Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2025
- Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> September 2025

**2nd Cluster: History as Conflicts**

- Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> October 2025
- Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2025
- Wednesday, 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025

**3rd Cluster: History as Solutions**

- Wednesday, 26<sup>th</sup> November 2025
- Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2025
- Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> December 2025

## IMPRINT

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