50 YEARS OF ORIENT INSTITUT BEIRUT
1961 - 2011

FIVE DECADES OF GERMAN RESEARCH IN/ON THE NEAR EAST
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FOREWORD BY STEFAN LEDER, DIRECTOR

50 years of the Orient-Institut Beirut (OIB)’s history represents five decades of interaction with this vibrant city, its academic and cultural institutions, as well as the multi-faceted communities with their dynamic social environments in Lebanon. Beirut has generously offered throughout that period of time the liberty as well as the intellectual receptivity and inspiration that have protected and supported the institute’s work. Research, publication and academic activities have greatly benefitted from this supportive surrounding. Moreover, the hospitality and friendship of the local communities, which has not waned during past troubled periods, has been an added incentive for the institute’s personnel and for the institution’s organizers in Germany. Firm faith in Lebanon’s good fortunes and important cultural mission have been, and still are, a raison d’être of the OIB.

Beirut’s appearances and character have profoundly changed during these decades. Moreover, today, in the summer of 2011, it seems that a strong pull towards change, politically, socially and perhaps culturally, has taken a grip on many countries in the Middle East and North Africa. Many of our perceptions and research agendas have also changed in reaction to an altered world and new conditions, and due to academic dynamics, which have brought about new disciplines, approaches and actors interested in Middle East Studies. As such, it seems worthwhile on this occasion to look back at our heritage.

The institute looks back on five decades of well-documented research on matters related to Lebanon and the region, past and present. This research is conducted by its many dedicated research associates, librarians, affiliates, fellows and authors. In order to convey insight into the research agendas of the past, and with the intention of honoring the scholars who have contributed to transforming the Institute into what it now is, this anniversary brochure gives a brief summary of their academic work, fields of research and careers. For practical purposes, however, we have had to confine this survey, with few exceptions only, to those who have joined the Orient-Institut as employed associates and were thus charged, besides their research, with various added responsibilities. Working in Beirut at the Institute has served as a reliable prelude to subsequent academic careers which have often led to professorships at universities in Germany and elsewhere. Our catalog lists more than one hundred scholars associated with the Institute, and it reads, especially for the period before the nineties, like a Who Is Who of Oriental Studies in Germany.

When the institute was founded in 1961 at the initiative of the Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft, studies on the Near and Middle East in Germany were in great need for better access to the expanding publication activity in the region. Particular care was given to building an up-to-date research library, which is now considered one of the Institute’s assets. As a consequence of World War II and the holocaust, Oriental Studies in Germany were also striving to re-establish international networks and to reaffirm their reputation, which had suffered from the emigration of German Jewish scholars formerly active in this field in Germany. Beirut’s international academic institutions, such as the American University Beirut, l’Université Saint-Joseph, the emergent Lebanese University, as well as other institutions and universities, have been arenas of exchange with
academics from Lebanon and the Arab East, as well as with colleagues from Europe and the United States. Beirut, the Arab center of independent publishers and authors at that time, simultaneously connected German researchers with Arab intellectuals and international academia.

Over the years, the Ottoman style villa and its historical garden, where the institute has been housed since 1963, has become a feature of its local identity. Known today as “The Orient” among the participants of monthly garden meetings for doctoral students in Beirut, it is not only an impressive venue for academic events, and does not only host the library and public reading rooms and accommodate researchers in its guest rooms, but it also represents a substantial contribution to the preservation of historical architecture in Zokak al-Blat, one of the few remaining traditional quarters of Beirut.

The Orient-Institut gradually evolved into the OIB and Orient-Institut Istanbul after German citizens had to leave Beirut temporarily in 1987, and a branch of the institute was established in Istanbul in 1989. For more than twenty years, its bifurcated existence at two locations has weighed heavily upon resources, but has also enriched and expanded research horizons, as German research in Ottoman Studies, Turkish and Turkic Studies could unfold in Istanbul in cooperation with universities in Turkey. One year ago, after the foundation of the Orient-Institut Istanbul as an independent institution, and with the installation of a new directorate there, the terminal phase of the hijra to Istanbul ended for the OIB. In consequence of this history, research associates from both locations, Beirut and Istanbul, are listed in the anniversary brochure.

The return to Beirut in the form of a full-sized institute was made possible thanks to the continued support of the Foundation of German Humanities Institutes Abroad (DGIA) to which the Orient-Institut has adhered since 2003. With that date, a period of more than forty years ended during which the German Oriental Society (DMG) had administered the institute’s affairs and supervised its activities under often difficult circumstances. This turn in the institute’s history has not had any effects on its mission, but rather has broadened its horizons. The great scholarly tradition of German Oriental Studies, which had been cherished and nurtured under most of its directors, is not likely to disappear from the institute.

Today, the academic research center OIB is dedicated to conducting and supporting regional studies of historical and contemporary matters, mainly of the Arab world. Its multi-disciplinary structure includes, inter alia, history, literary studies, Islamic studies, studies of the Christian Near East, social sciences, political studies, linguistics and geography. Cooperation with institutions and scholars in the region, the instigation and hosting of local working groups, the organization of workshops and conferences as well as the publication of research results produced in Beirut and elsewhere constitute main aspects of the institute’s work. In order to intensify its presence in Arab countries and to deepen its contacts with young academics, the Cairo Bureau of the OIB was opened in 2009.

Conducting research work on the region and in the region today involves challenges quite different from the obstacles encountered fifty years ago, when intercontinental transport and communication was costly and tiresome – and the impact of colonial rule still a firm reality. The Near East, its people, ideas and agendas, are much more part of a globalized world today than one would have imagined a few decades ago. This does not diminish complexities and misunderstandings. Whichever way one tends to design research work, whether it is historically oriented or focused on contemporary matters, it remains a crucial task to foster understanding between Europe and the Near East through professional and serious commitment to an adequate treatment of the voices and views prevalent in the region.

From its beginnings, the OIB has received its funds mainly from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research and obtained additional sponsoring for its equipment, housing and activities from German foundations, such as Fritz Thyssen Stiftung, VolkswagenStiftung, as well as by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs via its embassies in Beirut, Istanbul and Cairo. Many academic events were planned in cooperation with political foundations active in the region, with universities in Lebanon, and with the Institut Français du Proche Orient. In grateful recognition of the funding received from its donors, and in acknowledgement of the loyalty of its many partners in the region, the OIB looks forward to carrying on its work in a region which will certainly preserve its dynamics in the near future.
SHORT BIOGRAPHIES
ANNA AYŞE AKASOY, DR.


PETER BACHMANN, PROF. EM. DR.


GERTRUD BAUER, DR.


MARCEL BEHRENS, DR.


HANS HINRICH BIESTERFELDT, PROF. EM. DR.

**SARA BINAY, DR.**


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**CHRISTOPH CORRELL, PROF. EM. DR.**


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**RALPH BODENSTEIN, DR.-ING. DES.**


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**STEPHAN DÄHNE, DR.**


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**HERIBERT BUSSE, PROF. EM. DR.**


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**HANS DAIBER, PROF. EM. DR.**

Rainer Degen, Prof. Em. Dr. (1941-2010)


Sabine Dorpmüller, Dr.


Andreas Drechsler, Dr.


Werner Diem, Prof. Em. Dr.


Birgit Embaló, Née Seekamp, Dr.

(BTS 64, 1999). – Since 2003 senior researcher and project manager, National Historical Archives and Public Library at INEP, National Institute of Studies and Research, Guinea-Bissau.

**WERNER ENDE, PROF. EM. DR.**


**JOSEF VAN ESS, PROF. EM. DR. DR. H.C. MULT.**


**OLAF FARSCHD, DR.**


**IRENE FELLMANN, DR.**


**BERT FRAGNER, PROF. EM. DR.**

OIB research associate 1976-1977. Discipline: Iranian Studies. Main research areas: Persian linguistics, social, cultural, and economic history of Iran, Afghanistan, Central Asia and Muslim India from the late middle ages to modern times.

**RAINER FREITAG-WIRMINGHAUS, DR.**


**ALBRECHT FUESS, PROF. DR.**


**HEINZ GAUBE, PROF. EM. DR.**


*Group photo of the OIB team in 1986. First Row (f.l.t.r.): Irene Fellmann, Rowa Itani Balaa, Dina Banna; second row (f.l.t.r.): Marguerite Kanaan, Andreas Rieck, Jessy Rieck, director Anton Heinen and German Ambassador Antonius Eitel.*
ERIKA GLASSEN, PROF. EM. DR.


FRANK GRIFFEL, PROF. DR.


HEINZ GROTZFELD, PROF. EM. DR.


SEBASTIAN GÜNTER, PROF. DR.


STEPHAN GUTH, PROF. DR.


ULRICH HAARMANN, PROF. DR. (1942-1999)

Short Biographies

JENS HANSSEN, PROF. DR.


WOLFHART HEINRICH, PROF. DR.


SYRINX VON HEES, DR.


ARNIM HEINEMANN, DR.


CHRISTOPH HERZOG, PROF. DR.


ANTON HEINEN SJ, PROF. DR. (1939-1998)


BERNHARD HILLENKAMP

MUHAMMAD AL-HUJAIRI


MICHEL JIHA, PROF. EM. DR.


BENJAMIN JOKISCH, DR. HABIL.


BARBARA KELLNER-HEINKELE, PROF. EM. DR.


AS˙AD E. KHAIRALLAH, PROF. DR.


FILIZ KIRAL, DR.

URSULA KLAES (1958-1999)


VERENA KLEMM, PROF. DR.


STEFAN KNOST, DR.


WOLFGANG KÖHLER, DR.


MANFRED KROPP, PROF. DR.


STEFAN LEDER, PROF. DR.

WOLF-DIETER LEMKE, DR.


ASTRID MENZ, DR.


ULRICH MARZOLPH, PROF. DR.


ALBRECHT METZGER


JOSEPH MATUZ, PROF. DR. (1925-1992)


ALBRECHT METZGER


KATHRIN MÜLLER, DR.


FELIX NEUGART


CHRISTOPH K. NEUMANN, PROF. DR.

OIB research associate in Istanbul 1993-1996. Discipline: Turkish Studies. Research areas: Ottoman history and Turkish literature. Wrote Kleine Geschichte der Türkei; co-edited Das Osmanische Reich in seinen Archivalien und Chroniken (BTS 65, 1997); The Illuminated Table, the Prosperous Home (BTS 73, 2003). 1996 acting deputy director of the Orient-Institut in Istanbul; since 2008 professor of Turkish Studies (Turkologie), Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München.

ANGELIKA NEUWIRTH, PROF. DR.


RAINER OßWALD, PROF. DR.


MECHTHILD PANTKE, DR. HABIL.


REGINA PASCUAL-HEINECKE, DR. (1946-2005)


JÜRGEN PAUL, PROF. DR.

ESTHER PESKES, PD DR.


JUDITH PFEIFFER, DR.


ANDREAS PFLITSCH, DR.

BARBARA PUSCH, DR.


BERNAD RADTKÉ, PROF. EM. DR.


BENEDIKT REINERT, PROF. EM. DR.


MAURUS REINKOWSKI, PROF. DR.


ANDREAS RIECK, DR.


FUAD RIFKA, PROF. EM. DR. (1930-2011)

OI B friend and supporter of the first hour and ever since his return from the University of Tübingen to Lebanon (1965). Discipline: Philosophy, Lyrics. Wrote Poems of a Read Indian (in Arabic 1993), Lamps/jellyfish in the Sea (in Arabic, 2005) and more than 10 other collections of poetry, many of which were translated into German and other European languages; wrote prose works like Poetry and the Death (in Arabic, 1973); poetry collections in Arabic and German like Tagebuch eines Holzsammlers (1990); translations form Trakl, Hölderlin, Rilke, Novalis, Celan and other poets, as well as contemporary poetry from German into Arabic. – 1966-2005 professor of Philosophy at the Lebanese American University; honoured with the Goethe-Medaille 2010; member of the Deutsche Akademie für Sprache und Dichtung.
HANS ROBERT ROEMER, PROF. DR. DR. H.C. (1915-1997)


KLAUS RÖHRBORN, PROF. EM. DR.


MARTINIANO PELLEGRINO RONCAGLIA, PROF. DR. (1923-2008)


GERNOT ROTTER, PROF. DR. (1941-2010)


**BIRGITTA RYBERG, DR.**


**BÖRTE SAGASTER, DR.**


**RIDWAN AL-SAYYID, PROF. DR.**


**THOMAS SCHEFFLER, DR.**


**RENA TE SCHIMKOREIT, DR.**

**ALFRED SCHLICHT, DR.**


**GREGOR SCHOELER, PROF. DR.**


**CLAUSSCHÖNIG, PROF. DR.**


**GÖTZ SCHREGLE, DR.**


**CHRISTOPH SCHUMANN, PROF. DR.**


**GÜNTER SEUFERT, DR.**


**MANFRED SING, DR.**

**Fritz Steppat, Prof. Dr. (1923-2006)**


**Johann Strauss, Dr.**


**Martin Strohmeier, Prof. Dr.**


**Harald Suermann, Apl. Prof. Dr.**


**Leslie Tramontini, Dr.**

GERHARD VÄTH, DR.


CARSTEN WALBINER, DR.


KLAUS-DETLEV WANNIG, DR.

**STEFAN WEBER, DR.**


**INES WEINRICH, DR.**


**OTFRIED WEINTRITT, PD DR.**


**REINHARD WEIPERT, PROF. DR.**


**PETRA WEYLAND, DR.**


**ROTRAUD WIELANDT, PROF. EM. DR. DR. H.C.**


**PETER WIEN, PROF. DR.**

STEFAN WILD, PROF. EM. DR.


HEIKO WIMMEN, M.A.


STEFAN WINTER, PROF. DR.

FRIEDRICH WILHELM ZIMMERMANN, DR.

1961

**Hans Robert Roemer (1915-1997)**
OIB director, 1961-1963

**Events**

May 1, 1961: Funded by the German Ministry of the Interior, the Orient-Institut opens in a 9-room flat in Rue Marie Curie, Immeuble Samadi, near the Bristol Hotel.

August 1, 1961: The Assembly of the German Oriental Association promulgates OIB constitution and elects H.R. Roemer as first director.

December 9: Lebanese government approves of establishment of OIB.

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1963

**Fritz Steppat (1923-2006)**
OIB director, 1963-1968

**Events**

Funded by the Thyssen Foundation, the OIB acquires a city house in Zokak al-Blat.

Presidential Decree No. 14103 of October 16, 1963, officially legalizes the establishment of a branch of the DMG in Lebanon.

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1964

**Events**

June 1964: The OIB moves to its renovated premises in Zokak al-Blat in Beirut.

December 1964: Funded by the Volkswagen Foundation, the OIB acquires a summer residence in ‘Aynab, caza Aleyh.

Vol. 1 of the new BTS series is published.
1968

Stefan Wild
OIB director 1968-1973

1973

Events
Funded by the Thyssen Foundation, a new wing is added to the eastern side of the OIB building to create new space for guest rooms, offices, and the library.

1973

Events
Farewell of Fritz Steppat and welcome of Stefan Wild (to the left), with Gertraud Steppat and Gerlind Wild.

1974

Peter Bachmann,
OIB director, 1974-1978

1978

Events
The OIB rents a flat in Amman for emergency cases.
1979

Ulrich Haarmann (1941-1999)
OIB director 1979-1980

1981

Gernot Rotter (1941-2010). OIB director, 1981-1984

1982

OIB summer residence in ‘Aynab damaged by bombardments, but partly renovated.

1984

Anton Heinen, SJ (1939-1998)
OIB director, 1984-1989
1987

Events
February/March 1987: Due to increasing kidnappings of foreigners in Lebanon, the German OIB staff is evacuated to Istanbul.

Development of an Istanbul branch of the OI.

1988

Events

1989

Erika Glassen
OIB director 1989-1994

1993

Events
Istanbul branch of OI gains official status in Turkey.

1994

Angelika Neuwirth
OIB director, 1994-1999

Events
The Director and part of the German staff return from Istanbul to Beirut.

1997

Events
Vol. 1 of the new series Türkische Welten is published as an Istanbul-based subseries of BTS.

1998

Events
In agreement with the Volkswagen Foundation, the Institute’s former summer residence in ‘Aynab is sold.
1999

Manfred Kropp
OIB director, 1999-2007

2003

Events
July 1, 2003: OIB becomes part of the Foundation for German Humanities Institutes Abroad (DGIA).
Vol. 1 of the new ITS series (Istanbuler Texte und Studien) is published.

2006

Events
Summer war 2006: The stockrooms of the OIB’s Bibliotheca Islamica series in the southern suburbs of Beirut are destroyed by bombings.
2007

Stefan Leder
OIB director, 2007 - Present

2009

Events
January 2009: Istanbul branch of the Orient-Institut becomes independent Institute (OII).
May 2009: OIB opens liaison office at the premises of the DAAD in Cairo.
Orient Institut Beirut

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