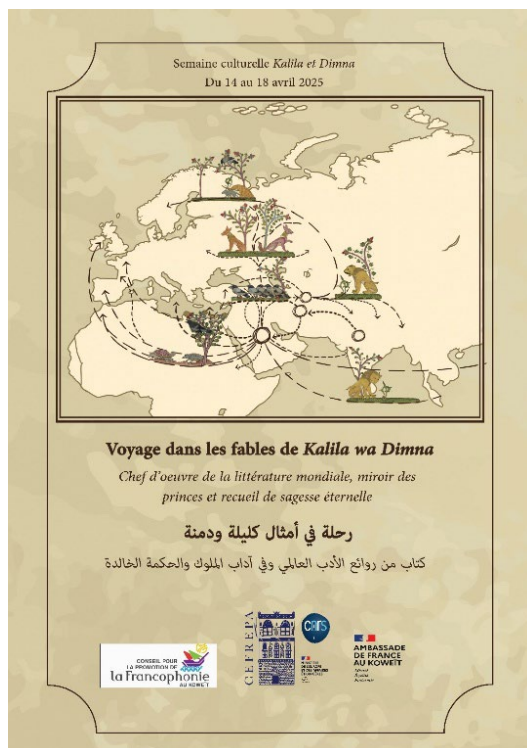




## CEFREPA Newsletter March/April 2025

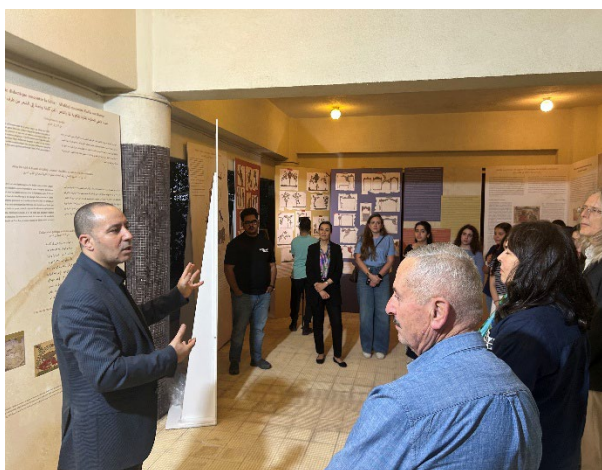
### CULTURAL WEEK KALILA & DIMNA

From 14 to 18 April 2025



On the occasion of the celebrations of the Month of Francophonie and «Kuwait, Arab Capital of Culture 2025» CEFREPA organized from April 14 to 18, 2025, several events around the fables of Kalila and Dimna: conferences, workshops, exhibitions, cinema, theater, puppet show...

## EXHIBITION



**Inauguration of the exhibition "Journey into the Fables of Kalila wa Dimna.**

**A masterpiece of world literature, a Mirror of princes and a Collection of eternal wisdom"**

**April 16, 2025 at Kuwait**

As part of the celebrations of the Month of Francophonie and «Kuwait, Arab Capital of Culture 2025» CEFREPA organized an exhibition "Journey into the Fables of Kalila wa Dimna on April 16, 2025 at CEFREPA.

## READ MORE

Kalila wa Dimna is much more than a collection of fables: it is a traveling work, shaped by centuries of translations, adaptations, and cultural appropriations. Since its first version by Bidpai in Sanskrit, the text has circulated in spaces as diverse as Iran, Irak, Egypt, and Syria before arriving in Europe, traversing dynamics of power, language, and culture. At each passage, translation has not only served as a linguistic relay, but has acted as a filter, a profound reconfiguration of meaning, integrating norms, sensitivities, and logics of representation specific to each cultural area. Far from simple translation, these processes have often produced new works in their own right, nourished by logics of transculturation.

The world of Kalila wa Dimna is not limited to the text. Images, visual representations, and illustrations often sumptuous constitute an essential extension of it. These paratextual elements, far from being incidental, direct the gaze and guide interpretation. The animals, at the heart of the narrative device, are also material and visual figures that can be reconstructed today, for example through 3D printing. The spatial arrangement of these representations reveals the symbolic richness of the aesthetic choices, which differ depending on the version. The illustrations associated with the Arab-Persian tradition or the Mamluk era obey distinct logics, both stylistically and ideologically, and fully participate in the construction of meanings.

CEFREPA in the media:

An interview with Dr. Makram Abbes, Director of the French Centre for Research in the Arabian Peninsula: <https://youtu.be/oJPhh8AZaks?si=bPn3umBtNimraYqF>

Article in Al Jareeda news about Kalila wa Dimna: <https://www.aljarida.com/article/95733>

## LECTURE



### **“The Caravan of Fables: Kalila wa Dimna's Journey Through Time and Cultures” by Khouloud KHALFALLAH**

**April 16, 2025 at CEFREPA**

CEFREPA hosted on April 16, 2025 a rich and captivating lecture entitled: “The Caravan of Fables: Kalila wa Dimna's Journey Through Time and Cultures” by Khouloud KHALFALLAH, a PhD student at Freie Universität Berlin (Kalila and Dimna ERC research project)

## THEATER



### **Theater performance "A nos fables"**

**Featuring the French school of Kuwait (LFK) students, led by the theater director Françoise COUPAT**

**April 16, 2025 at CEFREPA**

CEFREPA opened workshops with theater director Françoise COUPAT from March 20, 2025 to April 15, 2025 for middle and high school students and French-speaking nationals interested in theater.

The aim was to discover the art of telling fables and performing them together, young and old.

The public presentation of the workshops took place at CEFREPA on April 16, 2025 in presence of the French school of Kuwait (LFK) students and parents.



## CINEMA



### A documentary film "Les yeux de la parole"

**April 17, 2025 at the French Institute in Kuwait.**

To mark the celebrations of Francophonie Month and "Kuwait, Arab Capital of Culture 2025," CEFREPA organized a screening of "Les yeux de la parole," a documentary film chronicling the encounter between middle school students from a working-class neighborhood of Aix-en-Provence and the creation of an opera adapted from the famous 8th-century fable Kalila wa Dimna.

## PUPPET SHOW



### Puppet Show inspired by the fables of Kalila and Dimna

**April 18, 2025 at Studio Al-Taqa al-ibdayah at Al Shahed tower**

CEFREPA cooperated with the artist-writer Huda AL-SHAWWA to present the Puppet Show inspired by the fables of Kalila and Dimna. Huda Al Shawa is a children's and young adult writer and founder of the Al-Taqa al-ibdayah Studio in Kuwait.

## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE



### Archaeology & Architecture between Modern Technology & National Identity

**April 20, 21 & 22, 2025**

#### **Holiday Inn Kuwait al-Thuraya amphitheater**

A conference entitled "Archaeology and Architecture: Between Modern Technology and National Identity," was organized by the French Research Centre of the Arabian Peninsula (CEFREPA) in collaboration with the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters (NCCAL) from April 20-22, 2025 in the presence of the French Ambassador to Kuwait, Mr. Olivier Gauvin, the General Secretary of the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters, Dr. Mohammed Al-Jassar, and Dr. Makram Abbas, Director of the French Center for Research on the Arabian Peninsula.

### READ MORE

The International conference involved different participants Zahra ALI BABA (NCCAL), Noora AL MUSALLAM (NCCAL), Hasan ASHKANANI (Kuwait University), Mathilde GELIN (CNRS), Ali TUEAIMAN (Hail University), Mashary A. AL NAIM (Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University), Simon TEXIER (Université de Picardie Jules-Verne), Abdul-Muttalib AL BALLAM (Kuwait University), Jean-François CABESTAN (Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University), Etienne LENA (Atelier Multiple), Manar HAMMAD (Paris III University - Sorbonne Nouvelle), Nadya ROUIZEM LABIED (National School of Architecture Val de Seine), Nabil AZMI (Axiolis Director) and Yoann COUVE (Axiolis heritage technical lead).


The conference explored the fascinating relationship between architecture and national identity within Kuwait and the Arabian Peninsula, while opening up to the experiences of other countries in this field. The fact that a nation's history, culture, and aspirations are embodied in specific buildings, expressed through styles, or embodied in the use of materials specific to a country or region demonstrates how architecture is a powerful language at the heart of representing history, heritage, and culture.

The conference also addressed the issue of sustainability and environmental adaptation, which has become a key factor in affirming national identity. To design sustainable architecture, it is essential to consider the ecological and cultural context of a place. Architectural styles that do not respond to climatic conditions often end up disappearing, even if they have other merits. Promoted within recommendations made by several global organizations (UNESCO, ALIPH, World Monuments Fund, etc.), heritage preservation measures such as adaptive reuse involve transforming historical buildings for new purposes, thus preserving the historical identity of places while meeting the growing needs of contemporary urbanism.

CEFREPA in the media:

<https://cefrepacnrs.fr/social-networks/>

## WORKSHOP



**PUBLIC ROUNDTABLE**

**Migration Experiences in Kuwait and Beyond**

**Monday, 28 April 2025 - 6PM**  
**CEFREPA, Kuwait**

Join us for a discussion on migration in Kuwait and the broader region, bringing together leading voices from academia and civil society.

**Moderated** by Laure Assaf,  
NYU Abu Dhabi

CEFREPA  
Khaz Al Diwan - 10 Street  
Dasman, Kuwait City

Logos: CEFREPA, GIP, NYU ABU DHABI

## Migration Experiences in Kuwait and Beyond

**April 27-28, 2025**

### Kuwait

A two days workshop entitled “Decentering Intersectionality and Migration: Perspectives from the Gulf” was held on April 27-28, 2025 at CEFREPA.

Participants from New York university-Abu Dhabi, University of Cologne and transMID, we mention them: Michaela Pelican, Habib Khondker, Laure Assaf, Hélène Thiollet, Saleh Seid Adem, Jonathan Ngeh, Naomi Hosoda, Asseel al Ragam and Laavanya Kathiravelu attended this workshop.

## READ MORE

The workshop included a public roundtable “Migration Experiences in Kuwait and beyond” that was also held at the French Research Center of the Arabian Peninsula (CEFREPA) on 28 April, 2025.

This discussion was followed by joint social activities: visit to Bayt al-Sadu or AlSadu Society – Showcasing Kuwait’s textile heritage, visit to American Mission Hospital / Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah

## JOURNAL PUBLICATION



## Arabian Humanities – International Journal of Archeology and Social Sciences in the Arabian Peninsula - N.20/2025

### « Ce que la guerre fait aux migrations yéménites »

A new Issue N.20 of the Arabian Humanities Journal «Ce que la guerre fait aux migrations yéménites» is OUT!

## READ MORE

<https://journals.openedition.org/arabianhumanities/15017>

**Ce que la guerre fait aux migrations yéménites**

*ماذا تفعل الحرب بالهجرة اليمنية؟*

***What War Does to Yemeni Migration***

**Morgann Barbara Pernot Ali, Solenn Almajali, Mustafa Naji Aljabzi and Alexandre Lauret**

**[What War Does to Yemeni Migration](#)**

**Morgann Barbara Pernot Ali, Solenn Almajali, Mustafa Aljabzi and Alexandre Lauret**

**[Ce que la guerre fait aux migrations yéménites](#)**

**Reiko Otsubo**

**[Yemenis in South Korea: Risky Freedom under the Refugee Act and the Employment Permit System](#)**

***Les Yéménites en Corée du Sud : Liberté risquée sous la loi sur les réfugiés et le système de permis de travail***

**Nahla El-Menshawy and Jonathan Hearn**

**[Echoes of the Past: The Reproduction of Social Imaginaries amongst the Yemeni Diaspora in Cairo](#)**

***Échos du passé : La reproduction des imaginaires sociaux au sein de la diaspora yéménite au Caire***

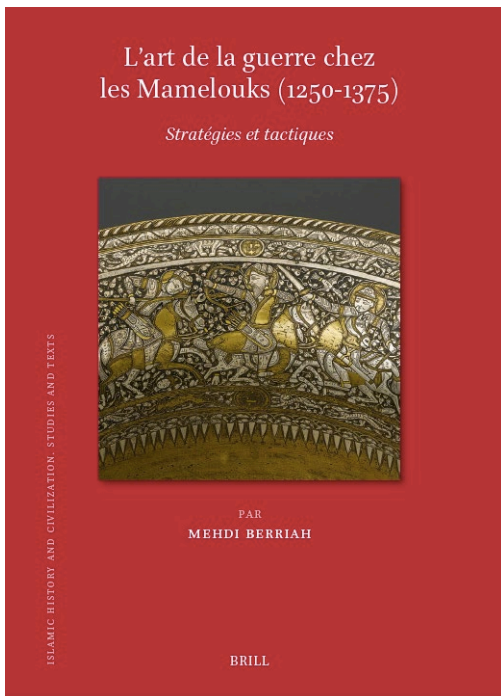


Abdulkhaleq Ali Ahmed Al-Rawafi

[Conflict-Induced Migration and Economic Opportunities: The Integration of Yemeni Migrants in Indonesia Amidst the Ongoing Yemeni Crisis](#)

*Migration induite par le conflit et opportunités économiques : l'intégration des migrants yéménites en Indonésie dans le contexte de la crise yéménite en cour*

## BOOK AWARD



The De Re Militari Society for Medieval Military History has awarded the 2024 Verbruggen International Prize to Mehdi Berriah for his book *The Art of War among the Mamluks (1250–1375): Strategies and Tactics*, published by Brill in November 2024.

Congratulations to Mehdi Berriah on winning the prestigious Verbruggen International Prize Award for his book *L'art de la guerre chez les Mamelouks (1250–1375): stratégies et tactiques*.

Mehdi Berriah is an associated researcher to CEFREPA and a researcher in Islamic Studies and Islamic History at the French Institute in the Near East (Ifpo) since September 2023. Previously, he was Assistant Professor for many years at the Vrije Universiteit of Amsterdam at the Faculty of Religion and Theology. His research and publications focus on military history and *furūsiyya*, the political, social and intellectual history of the medieval Islamic Near East. His work also deals with medieval and contemporary Muslim thought and theology, Ibn Taymiyya, jihad ideology and Islamic law of war.

## READ MORE

This prestigious award honors works that make a major contribution to the field of medieval military history. Mehdi Berriah's study offers an innovative analysis of Mamluk strategic thought, military practices, and the religious legitimization of warfare. Based on over one hundred sources in Arabic, Latin, Armenian, and Persian — including chronicles, didactic treatises, legal and religious texts, as well as archaeological and epigraphic material — the book

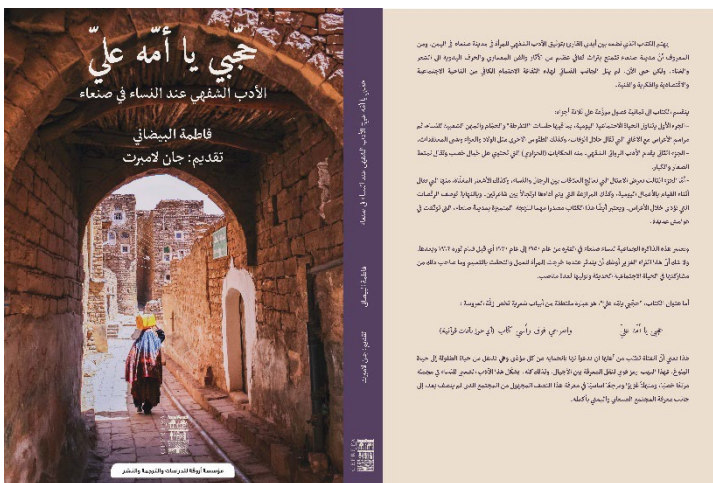
explores both the practical realities of war and the intellectual frameworks that shaped them.

The selection committee offered the following praise for Berriah's book:

*"We have long needed a book like this on the Mamluks. Berriah's approach is very scholarly, using a wide variety of sources, with a particular emphasis on Arab material. It is well organized so that readers can find their way around what is a very complex subject. The author deals very fairly with the work of other scholars, notably Ayalon and Amitai-Preiss, while expressing his own views with great clarity. This is a monumental work which will serve scholarship for many generations."*

In *L'art de la guerre chez les Mamelouks*, Mehdi Berriah sheds light on the mechanisms that structured the conduct and practice of warfare in the Mamluk army. The Mamluks made their army one of the most efficient in the medieval Near East in the 13th-14th centuries, enabling them to repel the triple threat (Mongols, Franks and Armenians) that threatened the territories of the dār al-Islām in the Near East. Of servile origin, coming mainly from the Eurasian steppes and the Caucasus, the Mamluks were recruited above all for war. War was their *raison d'être*, their politico-religious legitimacy deriving exclusively from their military exploits. Basing on an extensive corpus of chronicles (Arabic, Latin, Armenian and Persian), didactic sources and archaeological works, Mehdi Berriah explains in detail the military successes of the Bahri Mamluks which ultimately enabled the Mamluk sultanate to establish itself as the leading power in the region at the end of the 8th/14th century.

## BOOK PUBLICATION



### Publication of the book “Surround me with your prayers, O my mother” by Fatima al-Baydani.

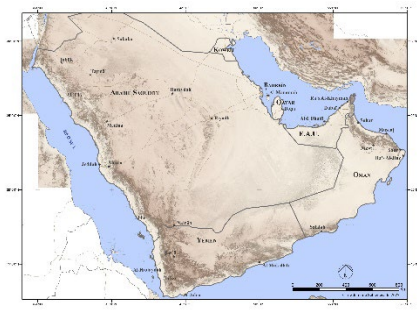
The French Research Center of the Arabian Peninsula is pleased to announce the publication of the book “Surround me with your prayers, O my mother” by Fatima al-Baydani and presented by Jean Lambert. This book was published by CEFREPA and Arwīqa for Studies, Translation and Publishing.

## READ MORE

This is the first book entirely devoted to the oral culture of the women of Sana'a, who, it must be admitted, had been overlooked in the early efforts to preserve the cultural heritage of this historic city. This book is documenting many aspects of life in the social, literary and cultural fields. As is well known, the Old City of Sana'a was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1986. This gave rise to several landmark publications, including the book by Serjeant and Lewcock (1983), which covered many aspects of the city's social history, but hardly addressed the role of women.

In 2003, it was the turn of the Song of Sanaa, the emblematic music of the city, to be classified on the UNESCO list of Intangible Heritage. Here, even more, the feminine part was left aside, because this music is itself the prerogative of men, which pointed to a disturbing reality: on the one hand, the noble and "classical" character of homayni poetry, cultivated in an elitist manner by men, excluded women *de facto*; on the other hand, as in many other Arab-Muslim countries, women were traditionally not allowed to play melodic instruments, and in the case of Yemen, to play the lute (they were very rare to do so before the 1980s) (Lambert 1997). As a result, the music of the women of Sanaa, simple chants accompanied by percussion, was *ipso facto* relegated to the subordinate category of "popular songs." At least, this was the view of many of my male informants during my investigations into the Song of Sanaa, who unashamedly expressed their pride in holding this monopoly...

In the 1990s and 2000s, Yemeni society evolved significantly, and the status of Yemeni women experienced a number of remarkable advances, but also setbacks. With the Unity of Yemen achieved in 1990, which established the merger of the former Yemen Arab Republic and the former People's Democratic Republic, the status of women in the South, more liberal in many respects, presented itself as a possible alternative to the more prevalent patriarchal system in the North. A minimum age for marriage was established at 16 in 1992 (Dahlgren 2013), unfortunately, this legislation was later repealed for political reasons. However, more and more girls entered the education system, up to higher education, and more and more women's associations were being created. Some of them played an important role in the social, cultural and political spheres: it is enough to mention the careers of Atiqa al-Shâmî, Fawziya No'man, Raoufa Hassan, Huryya Mashhour, Amat al-Alim al-Sousoua, Amal al-Basha, Khadija al-Salami, Jamila Ali Raja, and many others. Many debates and struggles were waged on the social, legal and political rights of women during these two decades, then during the revolutionary movement of 2011-2012.



## The French Research Center of the Arabian Peninsula

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