

### About AGYA

The Arab-German Young Academy of Sciences and Humanities (AGYA) is based at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (BBAW) and at the Academy of Scientific Research and Technology (ASRT) in Egypt. It was established in 2013 as the first bilateral young academy worldwide. AGYA promotes research cooperation among outstanding earlycareer researchers (3–10 years post-PhD) from all disciplines who are affiliated with a research institution in Germany or in any Arab country.

The academy effectively supports the interdisciplinary projects and collaborative initiatives of its members in various fields of scientific research, science policy and education. AGYA is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and various Arab and German cooperation partners.

### International Conference

# Conceptualizing Sacred Languages and Their Visual Inimitability

Arab-German Young Academy  
of Sciences and Humanities (AGYA)

7 - 8 December 2023

SOAS University of London, United Kingdom



[agya.info](http://agya.info)

### Venues

SOAS University of London  
Doctoral School  
Lady David Gallery, 1st Floor  
53 Gordon Square  
London



In cooperation with



Organized by AGYA members

**Hany Rashwan**  
United Arab Emirates University

**Florian Zemmin**  
Freie Universität Berlin

**in cooperation with**  
**Rachel Harrison**  
SOAS University of London

Thursday, 7 December 2023

Venue: SOAS University of London, Doctoral School, Lady David Gallery, 1st Floor

10:00 – 10:15 **Welcome Addresses, Introduction & Presentation of AGYA**

**Hany Rashwan**

AGYA member & United Arab Emirates University, UAE

**Florian Zemmin**

AGYA member & Freie Universität Berlin, Germany

**Rachel Harrison**

SOAS University of London, UK

10:15 – 11:00 **Keynote Lecture**  
**“Arabic of the Jews”: On the Early Interpretation of Judeo-Arabic Phenomena Among Scholars of the Wissenschaft des Judentums**

**María Ángeles Gallego**

The Spanish Council for Scientific Research (CSIC), Madrid, Spain

11:00 – 11:15 **Q&A Session**

Session 1

11:15 – 11:40 **From “Lingua Graphica” into “Lingua Sacra”:  
When Arabic Language Became the Lingua Franca of the Early Islamic Centuries**

**Najib George Awad**

University of Bonn, Germany

11:40 – 12:05 **Translation or Transliteration: The Qurʾān in West African Scripts**

**Jannis Kostelnik**

University of Hamburg, Germany

12:05 – 12:30 **Reclaiming Sacred Language: The Use of Arabic Among Expelled Moriscos in al-Anwār al-Nabawiyya fī Abāʾ Khayr al-Barriya**

**Andrew Russo**

University of Rochester, New York, USA

12:30 – 13:00 **Q&A Session**

13:00 – 14:15 **Lunch Break**

Session 2

14:25 – 14:50 **“If the Sight Expands ...” Conceptualizing the Notion of Sacred Language in Egypt Through Time**

**Amr El Hawary**

University of Bonn, Germany & The American University of Cairo, Egypt

14:50 – 15:15 **Re-examining the Shaping of the Taxonomic Notion of “Magic” Through the Sacred Linguistic Semantics of the Late Mediterranean Antiquity**

**Panagiotis Kousoulis**

University of the Aegean, Lesbos, Greece

15:15 – 15:40 **Look Like the Past, Write Like the Past: The Revival of Archaic Forms of Sacred Scripts in Late Period Egypt and Late Imperial China**

**Tian Tian**

Birkbeck College University of London, UK

15:40 – 16:10 **Q&A Session**

Session 3

16:20 – 16:45 **Language and Writing in Śaṅkara’s Interpretation of the Upaniṣads**

**Róbert Gáfrik**

Institute of World Literature of Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava, Slovakia

16:45 – 17:05 **Mother Tongue as the Language of Devotion: Malayalam and Adhyatma Ramayanam Kilippattu in Kerala**

**Gayatri Devi**

The Savannah College of Art and Design, USA

17:05 – 17:30 **Sacred Embraces and Discursive Conversions: The Dharma of Written Poetry in Aśvaghoṣa’s Buddhist Epics**

**Elizabeth Thornton**

Los Angeles Valley College, USA

17:30 – 18:00 **Q&A Session**

18:10 – 18:55 **Keynote Lecture**  
**Touching Sacred Music: Song, Silence, and Embodied Performance in Medieval Art**

**Francisco Prado-Vilar**

University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain

18:55 – 19:10 **Q&A Session**

19:10 – 19:20 **Closing Remarks & Thanks**

19:30 **Dinner at Restaurant**

Friday, 8 December 2023

Venue: SOAS University of London, Doctoral School, Lady David Gallery, 1st Floor

10:00 – 10:15 **Welcome & Introduction**

**Hany Rashwan**

AGYA member & United Arab Emirates University, UAE

**Rachel Harrison**

SOAS University of London, UK

10:15 – 11:00 **Keynote Lecture**

**The Qur'an and Kitab Malay: Preserving the Sacred Form in Transmitting the Message**

**Peter G. Riddell**

SOAS University of London, UK & Australian College of Theology, Sydney, Australia

11:00 – 11:15 **Q&A Session**

Session 1

11:15 – 11:40 **Can Muslims Write in Hindu Letters? Competing Sacred Scripts in Post-Partition Pakistan and the Case of Bengali**

**Federico Salvaggio**

University of Udine, Italy

11:40 – 12:05 **Pahlavi Psalter, Psalter Pahlavi: Reconsidering the Aramaeograms in the Pahlavi Psalter**

**Chia-Wei Lin**

Université de Lausanne, Switzerland

12:05 – 12:35 **Q&A Session**

12:35 – 13:35 **Lunch Break**

13:45 – 14:30 **Keynote Lecture**

**Takhmīs as Verbal Reliquary: Visual Performance in al-Fayyūmī's Takhmīs Burdat al-Būṣīrī, Walters Art Gallery ms W581**

**Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych**

Georgetown University, Washington D.C., USA

14:30 – 14:45 **Q&A Session**

Session 2

14:45 – 15:10 **Angels as Invisible Letters: The Angelic Matter of Arabic Sacred Speech**

**Louise Gallorini**

American University of Beirut, Lebanon

15:10 – 15:35

**Between Letters and Shapes: The Mysterious Magic Square of the 99 Divines Names attributed to Aḥmad al-Būnī (d. 622/1225)**

**Nadir Boudjellal**

Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales, Paris, France

15:35 – 16:05 **Q&A Session**

Session 3

16:05 – 16:30 **How did τὰ ἱερογλυφικὰ Create Religious Reality – Visual Strategies and Divine Words in the Oldest Egyptian Religious Accounts**

**Joanna Popielska-Grzybowska**

IMOC - Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw, Poland

**Marina Sartori**

University of Oxford, UK

16:30 – 16:55

**The Inimitability of Spell 149 in the Book of the Dead: Exploring Variations and Conservatism in Ancient Egyptian Sacred Language**

**He Huang**

University of Munich, Germany

16:55 – 17:20

**The Shape of Water: Materializing Neith's Fluidity Through Figurative Writing at Esna**

**Federica Pancin**

Sapienza University of Rome, Italy

17:20 – 17:50

**Q&A Session**

18:00 – 18:45

**Keynote Lecture**

**Placing Sacred Languages: From the Locative to the Utopian**

**Brian P. Bennett**

Niagara University, New York, USA

18:45 – 19:00

**Q&A Session**

19:00 – 19:10

**Closing Remarks & Thanks**

**Hany Rashwan**

AGYA member & United Arab Emirates University, UAE

**Florian Zemmin**

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