

IIAS Fellowship Programme

In the spotlight

The International Institute for Asian Studies annually hosts a large number of visiting researchers (research fellows) who come to Leiden to work on their own individual research project. In addition, IIAS also facilitates the teaching and research by various professorial fellows as part of agreements with Dutch universities, foreign ministries and funding organisations. Meet our fellows at www.iias.asia/fellows



**Norah
Gharala**

From Mozambique to Mexico: forced journeys in the early modern Iberian world

I began my fellowship in February and feel very fortunate to be here. The flexibility of IIAS has been generous, as has my digital reception from scholars in the Netherlands. I am working on a book manuscript about the forced movements of people from Southeastern Africa to Mexico in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, using a central story as a focal point. So far, I have found Leiden an ideal place for reflection and am grateful for the opportunity to research and write. I have online access to relevant materials through the Leiden University Libraries: maps of Southeast Asia; travel accounts; and cutting-edge volumes like *Being a Slave: Histories and Legacies of European Slavery in the Indian Ocean* (edited by Alicia Schrikker and Nira Wickramasinghe of Leiden University, 2020).

Brief references to enslaved people from 'Mozambique in the Indies of Portugal' in Mexican archives caught my attention

a few years ago. Because the mentions were brief, my process of understanding this term has necessitated engagement with archives and libraries beyond Mexico. Part of the first chapter of my book explores early modern European descriptions of the Indian Ocean World and Southeast Asia. These texts collectively contributed meaning to the labels applied to enslaved people. Gold mining, maritime knowledge, loyalty, rebelliousness, and military prowess were some of the practices and traits associated with the term 'mozambique' in Iberian worlds.

Beyond analyzing how Portuguese and Spanish vocabularies incorporated Indian Ocean Africa, my project explores how Africans and Afrodescendants deployed labels. Men sometimes made oblique references to Southeastern Africa by claiming relationships with each other within Spanish colonial institutions. In Mexico City, Juan Bartolo told a priest that he had maintained a friendship with another enslaved man "from the time

he was a young boy ... in Mozambique where they are from". The two traveled "to China by boat" and then on to Mexico around 1588 (Mexican National Archive, I.V. 1356 exp. 12). Such a rare friendship must have meant a great deal to both men as they were trafficked halfway around the world. A handful of these remarkable stories persist in fragments throughout the archives of the former Iberian empires. My first task while in Leiden is analyzing these fragments in order to draw out as much meaning from them as possible. People of East African origin or descent in Mexico had little opportunity to describe their homelands in the historical record. My research must reckon with those gaps in our historical knowledge and contextualize the clues East Africans left to their experiences of an interconnected world.

Norah Gharala,
University of Houston, Texas, USA

IIAS Fellowship possibilities and requirements



Apply for an IIAS fellowship

The International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) in Leiden, the Netherlands, invites outstanding researchers to apply for an IIAS fellowship to work on a relevant piece of research in the social sciences and humanities.



Combine your IIAS fellowship with two extra months of research in Paris

When applying for an IIAS Fellowship, you have the option of simultaneously submitting an application for an additional two months of research at the Collège d'études mondiales of the Fondation Maison des sciences de l'homme (CEM-FMSH), in Paris, France, immediately after your stay in Leiden.

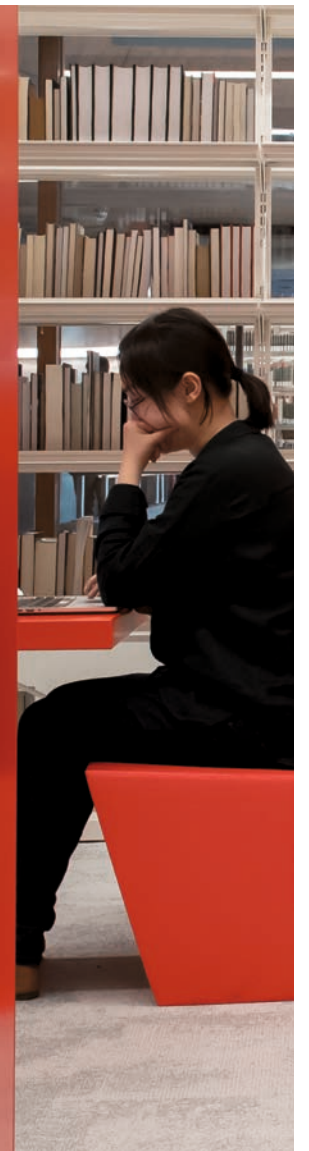
The next application deadline is 1 October 2021.



Apply for a Gonda fellowship

For promising young Indologists at the post-doctorate level it is possible to apply for funding with the J. Gonda Foundation of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) to spend three to six months doing research at IIAS.

The next deadline is tentatively set for 1 September 2021. Please check the website for the latest information.



Information and application forms:
www.iias.asia/fellowships