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The Voice of ʿAntara –A Revolutionary Hero In 1882, Cairo

Based on new archival material, the presentation deals with how history, politics, theatre and voice met in one body on the stage of the Opera House during the spring of 1882. This is the time when the ʿUrābī government hoped that foreign financial control could be lifted from late Ottoman Khedivial Egypt. The political and patriotic expectations found their sentimental expressions in the performances of the Arab Opera Troupe of Sulaymān Qardāḥī starring Shaykh Salāma Ḥijāzī. Resistance was embodied via the plays about the hero ʿAntar. Being the symbol of Arabness, being familiar to everyone, either via folktales or via the *Sīrat ʿAntar*, this hero from the past – and its incarnation, Salāma Ḥijāzī - offered a possibility for emotional community with the support of Colonel ʿUrābī, who, being in the audience, mirrored the rise of an Arab/Egyptian hero in the present.