

# *Annual Meeting*

## *Program Book & Annual Report*



*IQSA*

*International Quranic Studies Association*

الجمعية الدولية للدراسات القرآنية

## *Hybrid Meetings*

**November 18–21, 2021 • San Antonio, TX**

# ما أهمية الجمعية الدولية للدراسات القرآنية؟

ما يحدث الآن أن كثيراً من الاسئلة طُرحت، ومناهج عملية أُستحدثت، وتخصصات ومجالات متعددة الأبعاد باتت متاحة للباحثين.  
(د. وداد القاضي، جامعة شيكاغو)

القرآن كتاب مقدس مهم ومصدر إلهام لعقيدة الملايين من الناس. من المهم جداً أن نحاول أن ندرس هذا الكتاب وتاريخه للاستفادة منه ، لكل من المجتمعات الإسلامية والمجتمعات الأخرى.  
(د. سيدني جريفيث، الجامعة الأمريكية الكاثوليكية)

من أهم ما جذبني لدراسة القرآن هو جودة النص الشعري وعمقه وتعقيده وهو مصدر إلهام بجماله.  
أحدث هنا كانسان متذوق ولا أحدث كمسلم، لقد جذبني القرآن بعمق معانيه وتعقيده.  
(د. روفين فايرستون، كلية الإتحاد العبرية، المعهد اليهودي لدراسة الديانات فرع كاليفورنيا)

أعتقد أن هذه محاولة من باحثي القرآن للعمل مع باحثي الكتاب المقدس وتبادل المناهج والأدوات، وللإتطلاع على مناهج تفسيرية وتأويلية قيمة في دراسات الكتاب المقدس وإن أمكن تطبيق هذه المناهج على دراسة القرآن. هذا تحديداً مثيرٌ جداً لإهتمامي.  
(د. رضا أصلان، جامعة كاليفورنيا - ريفرسايد)



أنا مهتمٌ بدراسة القرآن لأنني قد إكتشفت في بداية مسيرتي المهنية أن مخطوطات القرآن تم نسيانها لفترة طويلة. من ذلك الوقت أخذت بالتبحر عميقاً في دراسة القرآن وكيفية دمجها في التراث الإسلامي.  
(د. فرانسوا ديروش، المدرسة التطبيقية للدراسات العليا باريس)

يهمني عمل باحثي القرون الوسطى عندما يتصدون ويحاولون الإجابة على أسئلة صعبة من وجهات نظر مختلفة. بنفس الوقت أستمتع بمشاهدة باحثين معاصرين يواجهون تحديات مماثلة في وقتنا الحاضر من أن أجل إيجاد وإبتكار حلول جديدة.  
(د. أندرو ريبين، جامعة فيكتوريا، كولومبيا كندا)

# IQSA

*International Qur'anic Studies Association*

الجمعية الدولية للدراسات القرآنية

---

***2021 Annual Meeting Program Book***

***2021 Annual Report***

***November 18–21, 2021***  
***Hybrid Conference • San Antonio, TX***

## Letter from Executive Director

Dear Friend,

Welcome to the 2021 Annual Meeting of the International Qur'anic Studies Association (IQSA). IQSA is dedicated to fostering qur'anic scholarship through:

- ☞ Assisting scholars of the Qur'an to form contacts and develop fruitful professional and personal relationships.
- ☞ Sponsoring rigorous academic scholarship on the Qur'an through its lectures, journal articles, book reviews, monograph series, and online resources
- ☞ Building bridges between scholars around the world.

This year our lives remain disrupted and impacted in unprecedented ways due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Many in-person meetings and conferences have been canceled and many others have moved online. Despite these unprecedented circumstances, I am excited to welcome you to our first ever “hybrid” Annual Meeting. It is during such extraordinary times that I remind everyone that IQSA is a community of scholars and friends. We remain committed to our mission, and to holding regular meetings for scholars of the Qur'an—whether in person or virtually.

Conscious of the importance of interdisciplinary conversations, IQSA continues to meet alongside SBL at its North American annual meetings. The 2020 Annual Meeting, which took place virtually, was a great success. For more details on all of our programs, publications, and member benefits please visit [www.iqsaweb.org](http://www.iqsaweb.org). Please download the “AAR & SBL 2021 Annual Meeting” app on your mobile device.

In this program book you will find a complete listing of IQSA events during the 2021 Annual Meeting. You will also find information on our Call for Papers for those who would intend to participate in our 2022 conferences and announcements about contributing to IQSA's journal (JIQSA), book series, and online book review service (RQR).

As a learned society, IQSA is shaped by the contributions and insights of its members. We are eager to draw together a diverse community of students and scholars of the Qur'an and look forward to working together to promote the field of qur'anic studies.

2021 marks my first year as Executive Director, taking over after Emran El-Badawi stepped down. I have come to appreciate the extraordinary amount of time and energy he dedicated to this organization since its inception. I have had the good fortune of having him by my side, helping me navigate the many intricacies that come with this role. I am grateful to the Board which has been a source of continued guidance throughout the year and to its Chair, Holger Zellentin, for his counsel. A special thanks to the hard work and expertise of our editors and standing committees, and the generosity of its members, partners, and friends.

Finally, I am looking forward to a productive and exciting program, with many more in-person, hybrid, and virtual conferences to come. I am also very excited about the launch of a new website in the new year, which will enable IQSA to reach a broader audience and share the knowledge and scholarship of its members with more people than ever. We also hope to bring more content to our website, increase engagement, and ultimately add value to everyone's memberships.

Welcome to IQSA 2021!

Hythem Sidky

*Executive Director, International Qur'anic Studies Association*

## Acknowledgment

The International Qur'anic Studies Association (IQSA) was first formed in 2012 through a generous grant by the Henry Luce Foundation and in consultation with the Society of Biblical Literature. IQSA was incorporated in 2014 and granted nonprofit status in 2015. We recognize the Windsor Foundation, DeGruyter Press, IQSA members and sponsors for their generous support.

IQSA members include students and scholars of the Qur'an and related fields from universities and institutions around the world. IQSA facilitates communication among its members, organizes regular world class conferences, sponsors a diverse range of publications, and advocates for the field of Qur'anic Studies in higher education and in the public sphere.

## Table of Contents

IQSA Events 2021 .....	4
Abstracts and Biographies .....	8
Reports	
Executive Summary 2021 .....	43
Nomination Committee .....	44
Publications and Research Committee.....	45
Programming Committee.....	46
International Programming Committee .....	47
Participation and Membership .....	49
IQSA Mission and Vision.....	50
Announcing IQSA Meetings 2022 .....	51
<i>JIQSA</i> Call for Papers.....	51
Review of Qur'anic Research.....	52
People.....	53



*Aerial view of San Antonio, Texas at Night (Adobe Stock Image)*

# IQSA Events 2021

---

*All times listed in the program book are CST (UTC-6:00).*

## **In-Person Meeting Information**

Need more information on the Annual Meeting including registration rates, housing information, meeting locations, airline discounts, etc? Please visit our Annual Meeting website at [tinyurl.com/mmpks22f](http://tinyurl.com/mmpks22f).

## **Virtual-Only Sessions Information**

Need more information regarding the Virtual Only Sessions including registration rates, sessions included benefits of attending virtually, etc. Please visit our Annual Meeting website at [tinyurl.com/mmpks22f](http://tinyurl.com/mmpks22f).

---

### **PV19-102a**

---

#### **The Qur'an: Surah Studies**

Friday, November 19, 9:00 AM–11:30 AM  
Virtual

Shawkat Toorawa and Nevin Reda, Presiding  
Valentina A. Grasso, University of Cambridge  
*Jinn among Humans and Birds: The Making of Qur'anic Cosmology (30 min)*

Johanne Louise Christiansen, University of Southern Denmark

*The Metaphorical Problem of Q al-Naml 27:80: Is Death really a (Spiritual) Disability? (30 min)*

Mohammad Salama, Independent Scholar  
*"Before you blink": Rhetorical Dynamics of mu'jiza and 'ilm in Surat al-Naml (30 min)*

Afra Jalabi, Concordia University  
*The Little Ant's Portal into the Qur'an: Towards a Hermeneutics of Nonresistance (30 min)*

David Penchansky, University of Saint Thomas (Saint Paul, MN)  
*Surat-al-Fil, the Elephant Surah: The Story and the Backstory (30 min)*

---

### **PV19-205a**

---

#### **The Societal Qur'an**

Friday, November 19, 1:00 PM–3:30 PM  
Virtual

Lauren Osborne, Whitman College, Presiding  
Sajjad Rizvi, University of Exeter  
*Contesting Islam and the Imam in Persianate Exegesis at the Turn of the Twentieth Century (30 min)*

Latifeh Aavani, Harvard University  
*Nor Anything Moist or Dry, but that it is in a Clear Book: The Significance of Two Approaches to Qur'anic Hermeneutics for the Iranian Constitutional Movement of 1906–7 (30 min)*

Mykhaylo Yakubovych, Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg  
*Vernacularisation as Mainstream: Experience of Qur'anic Culture among Polish-Lithuanian Tatars (30 min)*

Majid Daneshgar, University of Freiburg  
*Engine Behind Tafsisir Production in the Malay-Indonesian World at the Turn of the 20th Century (30 min)*

Ian VanderMeulen, New York University  
*Remediating the Ramziyya: Qur'anic "readings" and textual authority in Morocco (30 min)*

---

### **PV19-301**

---

#### **The Qur'an and the Biblical Tradition**

Friday, November 19, 4:00 PM–6:30 PM  
Virtual

Nora Katharina Schmid, Oxford University, and Holger Zellentin, University of Tuebingen, Presiding  
Abdulla Galadari, Khalifa University of Science & Technology  
*The Will and Testament of Jesus Christ: The Intertextuality between Q al-Ma'idah 5:116–120 and John 17 (30 min)*

Anna Canton, Sapienza University (Rome-Italy)  
*Is the Eschatological Window Closing? The Hour between Q al-Kahf 18:32–44 and the Parable of the Rich Fool (Luke 12:16–21) (30 min)*

Naomi Koltun-Fromm, Haverford College  
*Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Stones, Lythic Metaphors, and Sacred Space in the Bible, the Qur'an, and the Late Ancient Interpretive Traditions (30 min)*

Saqib Hussain, Oxford University  
*Adam and the Names (30 min)*

Zohar Hadromi-Allouche, Trinity College - Dublin  
*Bereshit in the Qur'an: Hebrew presence in qur'anic narrations of Genesis (30 min)*

---

## PV19-401a

---

### International Qur'anic Studies Association

Friday, November 19, 7:00 PM–8:00 PM  
Virtual

Theme: **Presidential Address**

Asma Hilali, University of Lille, IQSA President  
(40 min)

*Qur'an and Political Crises: Example of Siffin (657 e. c.)*

---

## P19-401b

---

### International Qur'anic Studies Association

Friday, November 19, 8:00 PM–10:00 PM  
Offsite

Margaritaville - San Antonio

849 E Commerce St, San Antonio, TX 78205

Theme: **General Reception**

---

## PV20-138a

---

### Qur'anic Studies: Methodology and Hermeneutics

Saturday, November 20, 9:00 AM–11:30 AM  
Virtual

Theme: **Qur'anic Narrative and Hermeneutics**

Celene Ibrahim, Presiding

David Solomon Jalajel, King Saud University, and  
Shoaib Malik, Zayed University

*Adam and Eve's Garden in Islamic Thought: Heaven or Earth? (30 min)*

Khalil Andani, Augustana College  
*Creation as Prophetic Initiation: Ismaili Exegesis (ta'wil) of the Quranic Adam Story (30 min)*

Adi Shiran, University of Chicago  
*Bloody Wrath and Healing Touches: Joseph and his Brothers in Early Twelver Shi'i Tafsir (30 min)*

Javad Hashmi, Harvard University and Haci  
Gunduz, Harvard University  
*The Qur'anic Story – Not Literal History But Literary Art: Muhammad Ahmad Khalafallah's Forbidden Dissertation (30 min)*

Alena Kulinich, University of Oxford/Seoul National  
University

*Justifying Wealth and Poverty by the Qur'an: A Medieval Muslim Perspective (30 min)*

---

## P20-148

---

### International Qur'anic Studies Association

Saturday, November 20, 11:30 AM–1:00 PM  
Offsite

Theme: **Graduate Student Luncheon**

---

## PV20-233

---

### Qur'anic Studies: Methodology and Hermeneutics

Saturday, November 20, 1:00 PM–3:30 PM  
Virtual

Khalil Andani, Presiding

Havva Guney-Ruebenacker, Yale Law School

*The Foundational Structure and The Methodology of Interpretation of the Qur'an as the Qur'an Tells (30 min)*

Kamal Ahmed, Princeton University  
*Epistemology of Exegesis: Tafsir and Ta'wil in Early Sunni Qur'an Commentaries (30 min)*

Nicholas Boylston, Seattle University  
*Troubling Tafsir bi'l-Ra'y: Sayyid Haydar Amuli's Negotiation of Hermeneutic Authority Between Twelver Shi'ism and Sufism (30 min)*

Syed A.H. Zaidi, Islamic Civilizations - Emory  
University  
*Relations from Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Geneva, New York. The Use of the Qur'an in the Brethren of Purity's (Ikhwan al-Safa') conception of God (30 min)*

Sheza Alqera Atiq, Harvard University  
*Revelation and Rhetoric in Early Mu'tazili Writings (30 min)*

---

**PV20-349**

---

**The Qur'an and Late Antiquity**

Saturday, November 20, 4:00 PM–6:30 PM  
Virtual

Theme: *The Prophet and the Prophetic in the Qur'an (Part 1)*

Michael Pregill, Presiding

Eric DeVilliers, University of Notre Dame  
*Is There No Doubt About the Hour?: The Limits of Prophetic Knowledge and the Historical Muhammad (30 min)*

Zahra Moeini Meybodi, University of Chicago Divinity School  
*Giving and Prophetic Time: A Thematic Re-reading of Surat al-Fajr (30 min)*

Mourad Takawi, University of the Incarnate Word  
*The Arboreal Presentation of Muhammad and the Believers in Q Al-Fath 48 (30 min)*

Juan Cole, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor  
*God's Biography of Muhammad in the Qur'an (30 min)*

Discussion (30 min)

---

**P21-127a**

---

**Linguistic, Literary, and Thematic Perspectives on the Qur'anic Corpus**

Sunday, November 21, 9:00 AM–11:30 AM  
225B (Meeting Room Level) - San Antonio Convention Center

Hythem Sidky, Presiding

Andrew J. O'Connor, St. Norbert College  
*Guidance Stories: A Prophetic Profile of Q al-Naml 27 (30 min)*

Gabriel Said Reynolds, Notre Dame  
*On Reported Speech in the Qur'an: A Preliminary Inquiry (30 min)*

Mourad Takawi, University of the Incarnate Word  
*The Arboreal Presentation of Muhammad and the Believers in Q Al-Fath 48 (30 min)*

Eric DeVilliers, University of Notre Dame  
*Is There No Doubt About the Hour?: The Limits of Prophetic Knowledge and the Historical Muhammad (30 min)*

Discussion (30 min)

---

---

**P21-152a**

---

**International Qur'anic Studies Association**

Sunday, November 21, 11:30 AM–1:00 PM  
Virtual

Theme: *IQSA Business/General Meeting*

---

**P21-231b**

---

**Linguistic, Literary, and Thematic Perspectives on the Qur'anic Corpus**

Sunday, November 21, 1:00 PM–3:30 PM  
225B (Meeting Room Level) - San Antonio Convention Center

Andrew O'Connor, St. Norbert College, Presiding  
Han Hsien Liew, Arizona State University  
*Sidestepping Controversy: A Reassessment of al-Mawardi's Mu'tazili Learnings in His Qur'anic Exegesis (30 min)*

Jáchym Šenkyřík, Charles University  
*Rhetorical Strategies Used in the Qur'an for Creating the "Other": Examples from Surahs 5 and 9 (30 min)*

Daniel Bannoura, University of Notre Dame  
*A Critical Literary Examination of Q 38: Its Theology and Redaction History (30 min)*

Hythem Sidky, Independent  
*Consonantal Dotting in the 'Uthmanic Archetype (30 min)*

Discussion (30 min)

---

**PV21-348**

---

**The Qur'an and Late Antiquity**

Sunday, November 21, 4:00 PM–6:30 PM  
Virtual

Theme: *The Prophet and the Prophetic in the Qur'an (Part 2)*

Johanne Louise Christiansen, Presiding  
Emran El-Badawi, University of Houston  
*Contesting Female Power in Q 53 (30 min)*  
Diaa Abdelmobyd, University of Copenhagen  
*Ambiguity as a Bridging Identity: The Role of Semantic Ambiguity in Forming the Prophetic Identity of Muhammad (30 min)*

Mehdi Azaiez, Université catholique de Louvain  
*A (Im)possible Biography of the Qur'anic First Addressee (30 min)*

---



Michael Pregill, Chapman University  
*Is There a Prophet in This Text? The Qur'anic Author  
and the State of Muhammad Studies (30 min)*  
Discussion (30 min)

---

**PV22-149**

---

**The Qur'an: Manuscripts and Textual  
Criticism**

Monday, November 22, 9:00 AM–11:30 AM  
Virtual

Marijn van Putten, Independent Scholar, Presiding  
Daniel Alan Brubaker, Independent

*Judging the Significance of Single Occurrence Non-  
orthographic Qur'an Manuscript Variants (25 min)*

Adam Flowers, University of Chicago  
*P.Utah.Ar.120: A Late-7<sup>th</sup>/Early-8<sup>th</sup>-Century CE  
Qur'anic Quotation on Papyrus (25 min)*

Yousef Wabb Aly, Faculty of Law, University of  
Windsor

*Qur'an vs Qira'at: Early Legal Discourses on Textual  
Authenticity (25 min)*

Mohsen Goudarzi, University of Minnesota  
*Pagans, Jews, and the Torah in Late Antique Arabia  
(25 min)*

Mu'ammarr Zayn Qadafy, Freiburg University  
*An Early Chronological Interpretation of the Qur'an  
(Ibn 'Atiyyah [d. 542/1147] on the Zakah Verses  
(25 min)*

Devin J. Stewart, Emory University  
*Typological Language in the Qur'an (25 min)*

## Divine Covenant

Science and Concepts of  
Natural Law in the Qur'an  
and Islamic Disciplines

**Ulrika Mårtensson**

Exploring the Qur'anic concept of  
divine knowledge through scientific,  
theoretical paradigms—in particular  
natural law theory—and their relationship  
with seven Islamic scholarly disciplines:  
linguistics, hadith, politics, history,  
exegesis, jurisprudence, theology.

Publishing 2022 in paperback, hardback,  
PDF and ePub formats

**order online at [equinoxpub.com](http://equinoxpub.com)**

# Abstracts and Biographies

---

PV19-102a

---

## The Qur'an: Surah Studies

Friday, November 19, 9:00 AM–11:30 AM  
Virtual

### **Shawkat Toorawa, Yale University, Presiding**

Shawkat M. Toorawa is Professor of Arabic Literature and Chair, Department of Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations, Yale University. His “A Translation of Surat al-Kahf (Q. 18) ‘The Cave’,” and “Cadenced Rhyming Translations of Surat al-Naba’ (Q. 78) and Surat al-Takwir (Q. 81)” recently appeared in the *Journal of Qur’anic Studies* 23 (2021).

### **Nevin Reda, University of Toronto, Presiding**

Nevin Reda is associate professor of Muslim Studies at Emmanuel College of Victoria University in the University of Toronto. Her research interests include the poetics and hermeneutics of Qur’anic narrative structure, Hebrew Bible and Qur’an, spiritually integrative approaches to the Qur’an, Islamic feminist hermeneutics and Islamic ethical-legal theory. Her publications include *The al-Baqara Crescendo: Understanding the Qur’an’s Style, Narrative, Structure and Running Themes* (2017) and a co-edited volume, *Islamic Interpretive Tradition and Gender Justice: Processes of Canonization, Subversion, and Change* (2020).

### **Valentina A. Grasso, Institute for the Study of the Ancient World (NYU)**

Valentina A. Grasso is a Visiting Assistant Professor at New York University’s Institute for the Study of the Ancient World. She holds a Ph.D. (2021) from the University of Cambridge where she completed her doctoral dissertation on the history of pre-Islamic late antique Arabia under the supervision of Professor Garth Fowden. While her current research explores the interactions between Arabia and Ethiopia during Late Antiquity, her teaching seeks to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the first millennium world outside of a Eurocentric framework.

### ***Jinn among Humans and Birds: The Making of Qur’anic Cosmology***

The Qur’an is a multi-strand text(s) composed by a series of *logia* collected during different periods and across various places, but likely all assembled in Arabia. The blended arrangement of the Qur’anic macrotext merged strands of traditions whose boundaries were already vague. Muhammad thus gave birth to a vibrant process of adaptation and reshaping of pre-existing pagan and scriptural narratives. These systems, however, were often merged in an imprecise way either consciously in order to blur doctrinal differences, or because the rapid *mise en place* of the Qur’an did not allow much space for polishing and editing single narratives within the macrotext. The Meccan surah Q al-Naml 27 is a great example of the active merging of strands of traditions anchored to their Arabian milieu with other material featured in the Bible. Through a focus on verses Q al-Naml 27:16-17, this paper sheds light on the taxonomy of the Qur’anic jinn and their relationship with similarly liminal creatures of ancient and late antique times. The portrayal of these beings shows notable similarities with Zoroastrianism and Judeo-Christian angelology, but at the same time recalls ancestral Bedouin cults. Furthermore, the topos of a celestial creature bears many intriguing parallels and equivalences in Antiquity, such as the Roman genii and the Greek daimones found in the Greek-written pseudepigraphal Testament of Solomon. My analysis will first compare and contrast the Qur’anic jinn with supernatural beings found in other milieux, and then move to examine the jinn’s relationship with beings mentioned in the scattered *logia* of the Qur’anic macrotext. In contrast with the vague features of the jinn which occupy an ambiguous moral position, the scriptural angels and demons were conceived as rigidly dualistic beings. This paper argues that the jinn are re-elaborations of pagan creatures, which grew to represent interfaces between the sacred and secular spheres, and were adapted to serve the strictly hierarchical Qur’anic cosmology. Deeply influenced by Jewish-Christian debates, the Islamic profession of faith is based on the *taw ĩd*, which argues for the oneness of God. This concept perfected the system of belief of pre-Islamic ‘imperfect monotheists’ who believed in a Supreme God (Allah) but also in the intercession of lesser divine creatures.

As such, the identity of these beings had long fermented in the Arabian milieu, but gradually lost ground to external scriptural influences, either expunged from Muhammad's prophecy or shrewdly reshuffled as in the case of the liminal jinn.

### **Johanne Louise Christiansen, University of Southern Denmark**

Johanne Louise Christiansen, Ph.D., is Assistant Professor at the Department of the Study of Religions, University of Southern Denmark. Her research focuses on the application of theoretical perspectives from other research fields, such as the study of religions, to the Qur'an. Among Christiansen's recent work are the article "God Loves not the Wrongdoers (*zalimun*): Formulaic Repetition as a Rhetorical Strategy in the Qur'an" (*Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 22/1, 2020, 92-132) and the forthcoming book *The Exceptional Qur'an: Flexible and Exceptive Rhetoric in Islam's Holy Book* (Gorgias Press, 2021).

### **The Metaphorical Problem of Q al-Naml 27:80: Is Death really a (Spiritual) Disability?**

In the qur'anic verses 80–81 of Q al-Naml 27, the Prophet seems to take comfort in the following words: "You cannot make the dead hear (*innaka la tusmi'u l-mawta*), nor can you make the deaf hear the call (*wa-la tusmi'u l-summa 'du'a'a*) when they turn their backs and move away./ You cannot guide the blind from their error (*wa-ma anta bi-hadi l-'umyi 'an dalalatihim*). You cannot make [anyone] hear (*in tusmi'u*) except those who believe in Our signs and surrender themselves". This passage is part of the surah's concluding section, intertwining polemics, comfort, and eschatological promises of reward and punishment (vv. 59–93). Here, Muhammad is exempted from any responsibility for the unbelievers given that they are dead, deaf, and blind. However, similarly to the almost verbatim repetition of this passage in Q al-Rum 30:52–53, Q 27:80–81 contains a metaphorical problem: Whereas the mentioning of deafness and blindness is clearly meant in a spiritual sense, is that also the case for the dead, as has been argued by O'Shaughnessy (1969, 11–13)? Or is this a physical reference to the preceding prophet stories of Q 27, linking these two parts of the surah firmly together? The description of unbelief as "spiritual death" is not uncommon in the Qur'an (e.g., Q 44:56), but placing death in the same overall conceptual category as blindness and deafness is. Such spiritual disabilities usually occur together in clusters, including also the "dumb" (*al-summ*), the "lame" (*al-a'raj*), and the "sick" (*al-marid*) (e.g., Q 2:18; 48:17; Schipper 2006).

With point of departure in Q 27:80–81, this paper focuses on the interplay between qur'anic descriptions of the actual, physical body – including its (lack of) qualities – and the metaphorical one (Avalos 2007). Based on cognitive metaphor and conceptual blending theories, I argue that this interplay has fundamental consequences for the understanding of not only the coherence and structure of, e.g., Q 27, but also the Qur'an's general usage of metaphorical language (Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Fauconnier & Turner 2003).

Avalos, Hector, et al. 2007. *Thisabled Body: Rethinking Disabilities in Biblical Studies*. Atlanta: SBL; Fauconnier, Gilles, and Mark Turner. 2003. *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities*. New York: Basic Books; Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. 1980. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: Chicago UP; O'Shaughnessy, Thomas. 1969. *Muhammad's Thoughts on Death: A Thematic Study of the Qur'anic Data*. Leiden: Brill; Schipper, Jeremy. 2006. *Disability Studies and the Hebrew Bible: Figuring Mephibosheth in the David Story*. New York: T&T Clark.

### **Mohammad Salama, George Mason University**

Mohammad Salama is Professor of Arabic and Chair of the Department of Modern and Classical Languages at George Mason University. He holds a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from The University of Wisconsin-Madison, and has previously held faculty positions at UW-Whitewater and San Francisco State University. Salama works on figurative significations of Qur'anic language and its imbrications in classical and modern Arabic literature. His recent publications include "The Untranslatability of the Qur'anic City" in *The City in Arabic Literature: Classical and Modern Perspectives* (Edinburgh UP, 2017), *The Qur'an and Modern Arabic Literary Criticism: From Taha to Nasr* (Bloomsbury, 2018) and *Islam and the Culture of Modern Egypt: From the Monarchy to the Republic* (Cambridge UP, 2018).

### **"Before you blink": Rhetorical Dynamics of *mu'jiza* and 'ilm in Surat al-Naml**

This paper considers the connection between *mu'jiza* (miracle), 'ilm (knowledge) and their dynamic relationships in Q al-Naml 27. While this dynamic interaction between extraordinary phenomena and divine knowledge in Q 27 has its own semantic cycle within the text of the sūrah, it also spirals centrifugally outside of it, thus demonstrating the need for intra-textual trans-surah knowledge of the Qur'an text for complementary explications, e.g. *fi tis'i ayyatin ila fir'awna wa-qawmihi*.

In theistic discourses, the relationship of a prophet to a miracle is like that of a bird to its feather. One simply cannot exist without the other. The Arabic word for miracle is *muʿjizah*, whose three constitutive roots, ‘j-z, corresponds at some level with the Latin noun *miraculum* and the verb *mirari*, which means to “wonder at.” This “wondering at” is also an act of *iʿjaz*, which connotes impossibility and inimitability, namely, that which humans can “wonder at,” admire with great astoundment, but which they cannot mimic or reproduce. Q al-Naml 27 enumerates the miracles of several prophets, most of which are presented as a break with the laws of nature (e.g., Solomon, Moses, Salih). In Q 27, the word that describes the giving of the miracle is the di-transitive Arabic verb *atayna* (We have given/provided someone with/ bestowed upon someone), as in the following example in Q 27:15: *wa-la-qad atayna dawud wa-sulayman ʿilman*.

Like all surahs in the Qurʾan, Q 27 offers no exception to the rule of the miracle, except that the miracle of Muhammad does not manifest itself in the presentation of a supposedly marvelous event, but rather in the text of the Qurʾan itself, as an extraordinary linguistic and rhetorical phenomenon. This does not prevent the Qurʾan from speaking about the miracles of bygone prophets. These miracles, which include supernatural acts as well as revelations, are all performed, the Qurʾan confirms, under the knowledge and direction of God, as a phenomenal proof of His existence. Yet much of the credibility of miracle narratives does depend, to use the words of David Hume, “on the truth of that religion whose credibility they were first intended to support.” How then does the credibility of the miracle narrative in the Qurʾan hold itself against the credibility of the Qurʾan as a miracle? What rhetorical tools in Q 27 allow the reader to embrace both phenomenality and textuality and to find a seamless parallelism between narratives of past miracles and linguistic brilliance, between mountains commanded to repeat prayers and a language perfected to speak unsurpassability?

### **Afra Jalabi, Concordia University**

Afra Jalabi is a Ph.D. candidate at the Department of Cultures and Religions at Concordia University. She holds an M.A. in Journalism from Carleton University, and a B.A. from McGill University. She was a member of the editorial board of *The Journal of Law and Religion* at Hamline University in St. Paul, for several years and a weekly columnist in the Arab press for 17 years.

More recently she helped develop curriculum on peacebuilding and conflict resolution at the Centre for World Religions, Diplomacy & Conflict Resolution at George Mason University for Syrian activists.

### ***The Little Ant’s Portal into the Qurʾan: Towards a Hermeneutics of Nonresistance***

The presentation aims to offer a reading of the qurʾanic narrative in Surah 27 (Q al-Naml 27: 15–44) whose initial opening scene zooms into a little ant laying a strategy of nonresistance in the face of Sulayman’s encroaching army. The ant’s story functions as a foreshadowing to the politics of the Queen of Sheba, where the ants’ survival plan is later amplified as the Queen’s diplomatic response to Sulayman and his threat of a military invasion. The scenes move back and forth between the courts of the Queen and Sulayman, both of whose opposing dynamics are presented as *two modes of being in the world*. I make use of Hans-Georg Gadamer’s *dialogical ontology* to read the inevitable encounters that arise between humans and nature, man and woman, power, and powerlessness, but most importantly the modality of the political as an alternative to armed action. By reading the subtexts of the dramatic dialogue and eventful plot, I propose to present a qurʾanic politics of nonresistance as an alternative to armed patriarchy. I present a hermeneutics of power relations by using Christopher Long’s analysis of Greek mythology. His use of the way Zeus swallowed Metis as a metaphor of subverting feminine power provides a political reading of Sulayman’s interest in *dethroning* the Queen. Sulayman’s obsession with “stealing” the throne, resembles the obsession of Zeus, and therefore “articulates a dimension of the tragic dialectic of patriarchal dominion,” as Long argues. Sulayman’s reliance on physical force as his means of consolidating his multi-dimensional *sovereignty over being*, represents an invincible form of power immune to challenge. One feels like *an unheard ant* in the face of such an armed, epistemologically framed, and religiously justified, patriarchal power and authority. The parallels that arise in the stories of the ant and Queen, woven into a unified narrative, are worth noting because they echo an ethics of nonviolence that underpin the qurʾanic text, and which is emphasized as being *marginalized and unheard*. The passage therefore functions as a compressed ethical code in whose tropes the larger ethical themes of the Qurʾan are enlisted. The nonresistance of the ant and Queen echo the qurʾanic Prophetic archetypal response(s) as an alternative to domination and the threat of force when facing authoritarian nations or tyrants.

The passage unfolds between the tragic authority of patriarchal and military dominion and the promise of a nonviolent dialogical politics in which a woman, diplomatically, and non-violently, resolves an inter-state conflict while also laying a larger ethical paradigm as an alternative politics of encounter.

### **David Penchansky, University of St. Thomas**

David Penchansky is Professor Emeritus at the University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota, where he taught from 1989 to 2019. His most recent book was published by Eerdmans, *Understanding Hebrew Wisdom*. Forthcoming is his commentary on Hosea, a chapter in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary for the Twenty-First Century* from Bloomsbury. His book, *Solomon and the Ant: The Qur'an in Conversation with the Bible* will appear this fall, published by Wipf and Stock. He continues to apply to the Qur'an a literary critical methodology he developed studying the Hebrew Bible. "Surat-al-Fil, the Elephant Sura: The Story and the Backstory" is a part of this continuing project.

### ***Surat al-Fil, the Elephant Surah: The Story and the Backstory***

Q al-Fil 105 provides key elements that make a story. It has a threatening enemy, "the Elephant People", a fiendish plot, and divine intervention that saves the day: God sends birds, and they drop pebbles on the Elephant People and destroy their plot. The surah has these plot elements, but the story itself does not cohere. Many have assumed that the first audience of the surah already possessed the details needed to make sense of the plot. That would explain the ambiguity and lack of key details and explanation. Early Islamic interpreters provide a detailed backstory that fills out the missing details. I use Ibn Ishaq as a catch-all figure to represent the early tradition that fills in the details. He describes an army of Abyssinian Christians led by an elephant that attacks Mecca, intending to destroy the Ka'bah. They are killed by these bird-bombers. Almost every interpreter of this brief surah, both ancient and contemporary, assumes the historicity of this backstory, but there is no pre-Islamic evidence of such a battle ever taking place. Non-Islamic accounts of a sixth-century Abyssinian military campaign in the Hijaz do not resemble the account in Q al-Fil 105. In these accounts there are no elephants, no birds, and no unsuccessful attack on Mecca. If historical memory is not a source for the story, some have looked for literary precursors. I examine and find wanting the claim of Jewish or Christian antecedents or influences.

After a close reading of the text and its early reception, I consider the process by which the narrative that does not meet the expectations of its readers and generates these more detailed stories as a kind of "midrash" on the Elephant Surah. I find that this is a common rhetorical technique used by both the Bible and the Qur'an – fabricating stories embedded with built-in ambiguities. These absences then generate dramatic expansions in subsequent interpretation. I argue that this is not a weakness but rather a strength, inviting audience participation to construct and complete the story.

---

### **P19-205a**

### **The Societal Qur'an**

Friday, November 19, 1:00 PM–3:30 PM  
Virtual

### **Lauren Osborne, Whitman College, Presiding**

Lauren E. Osborne is Associate Professor of Religion at Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington. She holds a Ph.D. and A.M. from the University of Chicago, and bachelor's degrees in Religious Studies and Music Performance from Lawrence University. Her area of research is the recitation of the Qur'an.

### **Sajjad Rizvi, University of Exeter**

Sajjad Rizvi is an intellectual historian who teaches Islamic philosophical and theological traditions and Qur'anic exegesis at the University of Exeter. After obtaining his Ph.D. from Cambridge, he taught in theology and religious studies at the University of Bristol before moving to Exeter. His publications include *Mulla Sadra and Metaphysics*, *Mulla Sadra Shirazi*, and jointly edited with Feras Hamza, *An Anthology of Qur'anic Commentaries*, and jointly edited with Annabel Keeler, *The Spirit and the Letter*. He is currently editing with Ahab Bdaiwi, *The Oxford Handbook of Shi'i Islam*, as well as directing a project on philosophy in the contemporary Muslim world.

### ***Contesting Islam and the Imam in Persianate Exegesis at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century***

In the modern period (but not exclusively so), qu'anic exegesis was performatively aligned with the definition of confessional adherence as well as contestation over how one defines Islam. Exegesis became part of the wider networks and marketplace of religious ideas and practices that circulated among Persian speakers and the languages and idioms inflected by it. In this paper, I interrogate this Persianate performativity in two late 19<sup>th</sup> century Shi'i exegeses, one from a small centre in Gunabad in North-Eastern Iran and the other from the cosmopolitan centre of Lahore in North India and examine the nature of their hermeneutics as an engagement with the nature of the Qur'an and of the Imam as a way to make sense of the Shi'i paradigm of the complementarity of the two. These works are the Arabic and Persian *Bayan al-sa'ada* of the Ni'matullahi Gunabadi *pir* Sultan 'Ali Shah (1835–1909), and the *Lavami' al-tanzil* of the prominent Lucknow-trained Shi'i scholar Sayyid Abu'l-Qasim Rizavi Qummi (1833–1906), perhaps the largest Persian exegesis ever written.

A comparative study of these two works will show how Persianate exegesis negotiates between Arabic, Persian, and Urdu even when some of these languages are absent. The two works were written around the same time in a colonial and pluralist moment: in Iran within the context of the role of scholarly Sufi voices within the Shi'i hierarchy and contesting the Qur'an and Imamology within the seminary and beyond it as well as the abiding challenge of Shi'i "heterodoxies" and new religious dispensations, and in British colonial North India in which Islam and its primary signifier the Qur'an was contested by differential constituencies trying to make sense of their place in the new imperial order. By analysing the hermeneutical introductions of the two texts on the nature of the Qur'an, the Imam and the ways of approaching these twin revelations, supplemented by one case study of how they understood the notion of the "straight path" (*al-sirat al-mustaqim*), I will show the internal Shi'i contestations between a Sufi inflected, maximalist Imamology in opposition to the dominance of a rationalising notion of the Imam and his authority dissipated in the hierarchy of the *ulama*. What I suggest is that this contestation over the nature of Shi'i Islam performed in exegesis remains live in contemporary Persianate debates.

### **Latifeh Aavani, Harvard University**

Latifeh Aavani is a Ph.D. student in the Committee on the Study of Religion at Harvard University. She holds two LL.M. degrees from Harvard Law School and Boston College Law School focusing on constitutional law and jurisprudence. She received her B.A. in law from the University of Tehran. Her research examines the views of Shi'i jurists on the transition of law from Shari'a to *qanun* (modern legislation) in Iraq and Iran during the late-19<sup>th</sup> to mid-20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### ***Nor Anything Moist or Dry, but that it is in a Clear Book: The Significance of Two Approaches to Qur'anic Hermeneutics for the Iranian Constitutional Movement of 1906-7***

This presentation examines the significance of two opposing approaches to Qur'anic hermeneutics among Usuli Shi'i jurists in the Iranian constitutional movement of 1906–1907. The first approach was practiced by the anti-legislation jurists, namely those that opposed the constitution, the parliament, and the enactment of positive law besides Shari'a. In this paper, I argue that the Qur'an is central to the arguments of the anti-legislation jurists in two respects: firstly, in all three anti-legislation treatises that I examine in this paper (by Fadl Allah Nuri [executed 1909], Abul-Hasan Najafi Marandi [d. 1930], and MuHammad Husayn Tabrizi, [d. unknown]), the structure of argumentation develops through the discussion of several verses of the Qur'an; and secondly their interpretive method with regard to these verses is literalist (the precise meaning of which I explain in the paper). More specifically, for the anti-legislation jurists, verses such as 'nor any seed in the dark recesses of the earth, nor anything moist or dry, but that it is in a clear Book' (Q al-An'am 6:59) indicate that the Shari'a is complete, and therefore there is no space for modern legislation. Moreover, these jurists argue that whoever rejects the literal meaning of these verses, as they understand them, and argue that the scriptural sources do not offer adequate rulings have arrogated to themselves the Divine right to legislation (*tashri'*) and thus they can be deemed infidels.

In the second half of the paper, I juxtapose this approach with the significantly different interpretations of the disputed verses proposed by the pro-legislation jurists. By focusing on the legal category of 'emerging issues' (*al-mawdu'at al-mustahdatha*), the pro-legislation jurists, such as Muhammad Husayn Nayini (d. 1936), argued that there are necessarily issues that are not mentioned in the scriptural sources, and thus the disputed verses cannot be interpreted literally.

Indeed, Nayini accuses the jurists with who follow the literal meaning of these verses of implicitly following the hermeneutic methods of the Akhbaris (a literalist school of Twelver Shi'ism that had become sidelined by this point) despite the fact that the anti-legislation jurists self-identified as Usulis, the now mainstream interpretative tradition. As part of this argument, Nāyini focused on the concept of *ghayr mansus* (the area for which there is no scriptural text), using this concept to create a theoretical basis for positive law besides the rulings of the Shari'a.

By contrasting these two approaches, this paper seeks to show the enduring significance in the modern period of various pre-modern approaches to qur'anic hermeneutics, and the way this field shaped the central discussion among the ulama regarding the meaning and legitimacy of the goals of the Iranian constitutional movement.

#### ***Mykhaylo Yakubovych, University of Freiburg***

Mykhaylo Yakubovych (Ph.D. 2011) is currently involved in the ERC research project "The Global Qur'an" at the University of Freiburg (Freiburg, Germany). Primarily, he is interested in research on the Qur'an translations produced by the international institutions at Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Iran, specially focusing on Central Asian and Eastern European languages. Furthermore, he has conducted several academic projects on the Islamic manuscript heritage, starting from the post-classical intellectual history of the Crimean Khanate (Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, USA) and finishing with 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> century qur'anic interpretations among Lithuanian Tatars (Nicolaus Copernicus University, Torun, Poland).

#### ***Vernacularisation as mainstream: experience of Qur'anic culture among Polish-Lithuanian Tatars***

When addressing any of the well-developed qur'anic cultures in Central-Eastern Europe or Western Asia, one may see not only the "highest" traditions of dealing with the Qur'an, but also many vernacular developments. One of those cases is the 500- year Qur'an-related legacy of Polish-Lithuanian Tatars who live as a religious minority in a dominantly Christian area. Thus, in contrast to the rich tradition of scholarly tafsir production in the Muslim world, most of the copyists, translators, and other kinds of writers from this community describe themselves as no more than scribes, so the authorship of such important documents from the past as complete translations of the Qur'an into the Polish-Belarusian language or other individual manuscripts remains a big question.

Writing, interpreting, and finally translating the Qur'an has been a task usually performed by more or less educated individuals long separated from other parts of the Islamic world, which has resulted in the development of unique vernacular practices. This paper, based on the available Qur'anic manuscripts (some of them with interlinear translations) and the stories behind them, will present the dual position of the Qur'an among Polish-Lithuanian Tatars. The first perspective is how the copies were written (especially the "local" features in the font, style, binding, decorations, specifics of tajwid rules, etc.), and the second one is the related usage, mostly in the context of social rituals (e.g., weddings, funerals). Usually kept as family heirlooms, these manuscripts (with the oldest known one dating back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century) were used as a kind of sacred object, with the insertion of special pieces of paper for healing purposes still available in many copies of the Qur'an. The main argument of the study is that a kind of a deterioration in the tradition of Islamic learning (first of all, the loss of language skills in both Arabic and Tatar) nevertheless catalyzed attention to both the vernacular interpretation of the Qur'an and its ritual discourse, perceived as the main markers of ethnic, religious, and familial identity, due to the status of many Tatar families as local notables under both Polish and Russian rule from the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century. Since the tradition was developed persistently up to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the study will also cover recorded memoirs of contemporary representatives of the tradition, which are related to the societal usage of the Qur'an and thus illustrated by the rich, unique material.

#### ***Majid Daneshgar, University of Freiburg***

Majid Daneshgar studied religion with a particular reference to the connection between Islamic intellectual and exegetical progress over the course of history. He is also interested in Malay-Indonesian Islamic literature and exegetical works. He has published two monographs entitled *Tantawi Jawhari and the Qur'an: Tafsir and Social Concerns in the Twentieth Century* (Routledge, 2018) and *Studying the Qur'an in the Muslim Academy* (AAR Reflection and Theory in the Study of Religion/Oxford University Press, 2020). He has also coedited three volumes, *The Quran in the Malay-Indonesian World: Context and Interpretation*, coedited with Peter G. Riddell and Andrew Rippin (Routledge, 2016), *Islamic Studies Today: Essays in Honor of Andrew Rippin*, coedited with Walid A. Saleh (Brill, 2017), and *Deconstructing Islamic Studies*, coedited with Aaron W. Hughes (ILEX-Harvard University Press, 2020).

NEW SERIES

# THE EUROPEAN QUR'AN



*Edited by Mercedes García-Arenal, John Tolan, Roberto Tottoli and Jan Loop*



*The European Qur'an* is a peer-reviewed book series that presents the results of the ERC research project “The European Qur’an. Islamic Scripture in European Culture and Religion 1150–1850.” This project analyzes the important role that the Qur’an played in the formation of medieval and early modern European religious diversity and identity, showing how it was deeply embedded in the political and religious thought of Europe and was part of the intellectual repertoire. The volumes deal with aspects of the transmission, translation and study of the Qur’an in Europe, and follow debates about European cultural and religious identities and the place of the Qur’an in European culture.



First volume  
*Cándida Ferrero Hernández, John Tolan (Eds.)*  
**THE LATIN QUR'AN, 1143-1500**  
Translation, Transition, Interpretation

10/2021. 498 pages

**HC**

RRP € 99.95 / US\$ 114.99 / £ 91.00

ISBN 978-3-11-070263-7

**eBook**

RRP € 99.95 / US\$ 114.99 / £ 91.00

PDF ISBN 978-3-11-070271-2

EPUB ISBN 978-3-11-070274-3

The essays in this volume examine the range of medieval Latin transmission of the Qur’an and reaction to the Qur’an by concentrating on the manuscript traditions of medieval Qur’an translations and anti-Islamic polemics in Latin. The volume presents a key assessment of a crucial chapter in European understandings of Islam.



He is also an alumnus of the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies (FRIAS), where he worked on textual censorship in Islamic literature. He also worked as Assistant Professor and Lecturer of Islamic Studies in Malaysia and New Zealand, respectively. He was nominated for the Most Inclusive Teacher Award at the University of Otago, New Zealand in 2015. Majid also received the Auckland Library Heritage Trust Scholarship in 2017 by which he could compile the Catalogue of the Middle Eastern and Islamic Materials in New Zealand.

### ***Engine Behind Tafsir Production in the Malay-Indonesian World at the Turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century***

A large number of commentaries on the Qur'an reached the Malay-Indonesian world through the core lands of Islam. Given the role of the printing industry in Cairo and Mecca, on one hand, and the huge number of Malay students based in Egypt and Arabia, on the other, Malay-Indonesians soon had access to classical and modern commentaries. Bombay also contributed to the production of what was important for Malays, including their commentaries in the 1910s (Proudfoot 1994). Likewise, local presses had been founded in the Malay-Indonesian world since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. They republished bilingual dictionaries, Christian literature, the Qur'an as well as Arabic-Malay copies of Islamic literature, among other materials (e.g., Gallop 1990; Kaptein 1993; Proudfoot 1995). They later began to publish Arabic Qur'anic commentaries. This began with the first Singaporean edition of *Tafsir al-Baydawi* (?) between 1884–85 and an anonymous *Tafsir Juz* 'Ammā before 1887 (Proudfoot 1993, 496–97). In line with printing classical commentaries, translations of Egyptian and South Asian *tafsirs* (e.g., 'Abduh, Jawhari and Maulana Muhammad 'Ali, respectively) were published in various corners of the archipelago such as Batavia, Penang, Singapore, etc. However, the literature is silent on how and under what circumstances *tafsirs* were printed in the Malay-Indonesian world. In this regard, I aim to map the reproduction, translation and printing of *Tafsir* by local publishers, which led to the circulation of this genre of Islamic sciences among Malays. In so doing, I will rely on under-examined local catalogues and publishers' notes about the most important classical and modern *tafsirs* in the region. This study also invites readers to become cognizant of the fact that what have already been called [Islamo-Arabic] *Classics* in the Arab world (contra, El Shamsy 2020), are not necessarily considered so in different contexts like the multicultural and multinational Southeast Asia.

### **Ian VanderMeulen, New York University**

Ian VanderMeulen is postdoctoral lecturer in the department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at New York University, where he received his Ph.D. in September 2020. His research blends ethnographic and text-critical methods to investigate histories of Qur'an recitation practice and their technological reproduction, particularly as they relate to the revitalization of a lesser-known Qur'anic "reading" (*qira'a*) in contemporary Morocco. His research has appeared in *American Ethnologist* and the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*.

### ***Remediating the Ramziyya: Qur'anic "readings" and textual authority in Morocco***

The Qur'an is often thought to be Islam's paramount "medium and message" of divine authority, universal in some senses, but also privileging a vocalized form that harks back to its revelation as "recitation" (Sells 2006). Anthropologists have further suggested that this preference for vocalized authority undergirds a model of "recitational logocentrism" governing how Islamic authority is remediated generally, from textual economies to radio broadcasting (Schulz 2012; Messick 1993). But the relationship between spoken and inscribed forms of "the Word" is hardly so simple. During the early introduction of sound recording technologies, for example, scholars debated not only the legal *permissibility* of certain technologies, but in doing so offered at times conflicting implicit definitions of the role of human versus technological agents in the Qur'an's reproduction (Wickam 2018). Therefore, the remediation of Qur'anic vocalicity—whether in textual form or mechanical sound media—should not be taken as given but as a relationship to be critically examined across various practices and historical contexts.

In this paper, I take up this issue through a historical and ethnographic study of Morocco's contemporary "recitational revival" (*sahwa tajwidiiyya*), a state-driven effort to popularize *tajwid* among lay subjects and revitalize elite study of the seven variant "readings" of the Qur'an, known as the *qira'at*. Central to this latter, elite trend is a re-engagement with the *ramziyya*, a textual genre developed by Moroccan practitioners roughly four centuries ago to facilitate the combination (*jama'a*) of *qira'at* variants in a single performance.

Since this practice of combination applies variation at the level of the individual phrase (or *waqf*, in technical terms), and since the *order* of such variants change from one phrase to the next, practitioners use a “coded” system of letters (*rumuz*, sing. *ramz*) to communicate such sequencing of variants in textual form. The *ramziyya*, then, acts as a sort of vocal script, authenticating a sequence of variants for future practice. The second part of the paper turns to an ethnography of *qira’at* classroom pedagogy to illustrate the *ramziyya*’s reappropriation within the recitational revival, specifically how the piecemeal and collaborative construction of a *ramziyya* on the classroom whiteboard serves as both a pedagogical tool and particular mediator of scholarly authority. In essence, this whiteboard *ramziyya* decenters the textual authority formerly embodied in paper *ramziyyas* and reorients pedagogy toward a more diffuse form of *state* authority materialized by the institution itself.

---

## PV19-301

---

### The Qur’an and Biblical Tradition

Friday, November 19, 4:00 PM–6:30 PM  
Virtual

#### Nora Schmid, Oxford University, Presiding

Nora K. Schmid is a postdoctoral researcher in the project “Qur’anic Commentary: An Integrative Paradigm” (QuCIP) at the University of Oxford. She holds a Ph.D. in Arabic Studies from the Free University of Berlin (2018). Her research interests include the Qur’an as a late antique text, Arabic asceticism, early Islamic poetry, and the intellectual and literary traditions of pre-Islamic Arabia. She is a co-editor of the volume *Denkraum Spätantike: Reflexionen von Antiken im Umfeld des Koran*.

#### Holger Zellentin, University of Tuebingen, Chair

Holger Zellentin is Professor of Religion and Jewish Studies at the University of Tübingen. He holds a Ph.D. from Princeton University, and has previously held faculty appointments at the Graduate Theological Union and the University of California, Berkeley, at the University of Nottingham, and at the University of Cambridge. Zellentin works on Hellenistic and Rabbinic Judaism and on the relationship of the Qur’an to late antique law and narrative. His publications on the Qur’an include *The Qur’an’s Reformation of Judaism and Christianity: Return to the Origins* (Routledge) and *The Qur’an’s Legal Culture: The Didascalia Apostolorum as a Point of Departure* (Mohr Siebeck).

#### Abdulla Galadari, Khalifa University

Abdulla Galadari is Associate Professor of Islamic Studies at Khalifa University. His field is Qur’anic hermeneutics and the Qur’an’s possible engagement with Near Eastern traditions in Late Antiquity. He uses a multidisciplinary approach towards the Qur’an, including cognitive science of religion and philology. He is the author of *Qur’anic Hermeneutics: Between Science, History, and the Bible* (2018), *Metaphors of Death and Resurrection in the Qur’an: An Intertextual Approach with Biblical and Rabbinic Literature* (2021) and *The Spiritual Meanings of the ayy Rituals: A Philological Approach* (2021).

#### The Will and Testament of Jesus Christ: The Intertextuality between Q al-Ma’idah 5:116–120 and John 17

The Johannine Farewell Discourse replaces the Synoptic Gospels’ details of the Last Supper. The discourse has two major narratives: (1) John 14–16 describes Jesus’ speech and discussion with his disciples, and (2) John 17 is Jesus’s prayer to the Father, also called the High Priestly Prayer. From a literary perspective, John 17 stands as an independent storyline within the Farewell Discourse. Analogously, Q al-Ma’idah 5:111–115 also presents a discussion between Jesus and his disciples, while Q 5:116–120 portrays a discussion between Jesus and God. Similarly, Q 5:116–120 stands as an independent storyline, especially when taking into account the literary markers that divide the longer passage (Q 5:110–120), in which each section starts with “*idh*” (when) for God either saying or inspiring something. Several intertextual links between Q 5:116–120 and John 17 suggest that the Qur’anic passage is possibly alluding to Jesus’s High Priestly Prayer and reminding its audience of its content, presuming their awareness of it. For example, in Q 5:116–117, God questions Jesus if he asked the people to take him and his mother as two gods instead of God. Jesus glorifies God and responds that he only told them what God commanded him to say. This parallels John 17:3, where Jesus tells the Father that he has made the Father known as the only true God. It also parallels the frequent reminder that Jesus addresses to his disciples throughout the Farewell Discourse, including John 17, that he is only saying what the Father has commanded him to say. In Q 5:117, Jesus says he was a witness to his disciples as long as he was among them, which parallels John 17:6–8. Additionally, the Qur’anic passage states that Jesus informs God that when God caused him to die, it was God who remained as a witness and protector to his followers.

This also resonates with Jesus beseeching the Father to watch over his followers in John 17:11–12 and 17:15. Furthermore, Q 5:119 suggests that the truthful will be rewarded, which parallels Jesus asking the Father to sanctify his followers in truth in John 17:17–19.

### **Anna Canton, Sapienza University of Rome**

Anna Canton is a second-year Ph.D. candidate at the Sapienza University of Rome in a joint degree (*cotutela*) with the Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies (PISAI, Rome). Her research centers on *al-Dajjal* and ‘Isa b. Maryam in the thought of al-Qurtubi (d. 1273). She holds an M.A. in History (Padua University, 2007), an M.A. in Religious Sciences (Istituto Superiore di Scienze Religiose of Padua, 2015), and a Licentiate in Arabic and Islamic Studies (PISAI, 2019). Her research interests include classical Qur’anic exegesis and commentaries, Christian-Muslim apologetics, and interreligious relations during Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages.

### ***Is the Eschatological Window Closing? The Hour between Q al-Kahf 18:32–44 and the Parable of the Rich Fool (Luke 12:16–21)***

The imminent coming of the Hour or the Last Judgment is one of the core messages communicated both by the Gospel and the Qur’an. Both sacred texts use different devices to express this topic, including the parable/*mathal*. These narratives aim to create an analogy between something well known to the people to whom these stories are addressed and the message that Jesus or Muhammad desire to teach them. The Parable of the Rich Fool finds an apparent echo in the *mathal* transmitted in Q al-Kahf 18:32–44. One of the focal points of these passages appears to be human faith: both stories exemplify how human choices might have eschatological consequences. The Hour is a matter of belief: the believer will be rewarded on the Last Day, whereas the unbeliever will be punished. The Last Judgment is the horizon between now and not yet, in which the narratives of the parable/*mathal* are placed. It could happen anytime and both stories articulate a subtle warning to be ready and act accordingly. The characters involved in these narratives act like fools and this could be a reflection of their faithlessness. The Hour is a constant reminder that no one will be saved despite all the riches of the world. Both stories are focused on human greediness: man considers himself self-sufficient in relation to his Creator without recognizing that Judgment will come upon him. Human self-satisfaction reveals a hubris stuck deep in man’s soul.

Having acquired worldly riches and amenities, man forgets who has provided these things, including his own life. Hidden in this forgetfulness is the human desire for immortality that makes man set God aside. One cannot say that in both stories the human figures are the main characters. While Luke’s parable centers on a rich fool, the Qur’anic *mathal* involves two main characters, whereby one represents the good God-fearing man and the other the man who is filled with selfishness and pride. To describe this latter one, some Muslim commentators have used the root *k-f-r* to underline both his disbelief and the foolishness of his attitude leading him astray. Similarly, the parable in Luke 12 finds some reflections in Sirach 11:10–28 and 1 Enoch 97:8–10 in which there is a warning: if man does whatever he wants and accumulates earthly wealth, this potentially leads to perdition and punishment when the Last Judgment arrives. This paper suggests that the Hour might provide an interpretative key to this kind of allusive literature based on an analysis of the wider biblical and apocryphal literature (for example, the Gospel of Thomas) and Qur’anic commentaries.

### **Naomi Koltun-Fromm, Haverford College**

Naomi Koltun-Fromm is Associate Professor of Religion at Haverford College. She specializes in late ancient Jewish history, religious polemics, comparative biblical exegesis, rabbinic culture, and the Syriac speaking churches. Recently she has ventured into early Islamic studies and classical Arabic. In addition to her monograph, *Hermeneutics of Holiness: Ancient Jewish and Christian Notions of Sexuality and Religious Community*, she has recently co-edited *The Blackwell Companion to Late Ancient Jews and Judaism* as well as *The Routledge Handbook on Jerusalem*. Her present book project focuses on the representations of the rock within the Dome of the Rock in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic myth and history.

### ***Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Stones, Lythic Metaphors, and Sacred Space in the Bible, the Qur’an, and the Late Ancient Interpretive Traditions***

Muqatil ibn Sulayman, in his *tafsir* on Q al-Isra’ 17:1, evokes two rocks within his narrative: the *sakhra* of Jerusalem and a *hajar* in Mecca. In the Islamic tradition, the *sakhra* comes to represent Jerusalem and the one, or two, *hajars* of Mecca, the black stone and/or the maqam of Ibrahim, come to represent Mecca, yet neither stone is evoked as such within the Qur’an. How do these rocks come to represent these cities’ sacredness and, moreover, what is their function within Muqatil’s *tafsir*?

It will be suggested that Muqatil depends on a long lineage of prophets and their rocks with which Muqatil builds up Muhammad's prophethood. This paper will explore the use of rocks and monumental stones as memorials or makers of sacred place in the Bible, the Qur'an, and the later interpretive traditions with particular reference to Jerusalem and Mecca. The biblical texts proliferate with rocky narratives and stony metaphors, particularly in relationship to patriarchal and prophetic narratives, but they also symbolically represent God. Jacob sleeps on a rocky-hard pillow at Beth-el (Gen 28:11, 18–19), Moses speaks to or hits a rock in the desert (Exod 17; Num 20), Joshua builds a memorial of rocks in the middle of the Jordan (Josh 4:9). Moreover, other texts invoke the idea of a rock as a metaphor. God is compared to a *tsur*, a rock-solid divine backer to the people of Israel (Ps 18:32); and Zion is likened to a corner stone, one that does not budge (Isa 28:16). In the Qur'an, the term *sakhra* appears three times, twice in reference to generic rocks, but once it refers to the rock upon which Moses sits where the two rivers meet in Q al-Kahf 18:63. *Hajar*, which also means rock or stone, appears more frequently in the Qur'an. It refers most often to generic stones, but on several occasions, it refers to the rock which Moses struck to produce water (Q al-Baqarah 2:60; al-A'raf 7:160). In this paper I will compare various late ancient imaginations of prophetic personages and their sacred rocks to suggest that these two holy cities' lythic realities, when overlaid with the stony metaphors of their shared textual traditions, permeated and helped to anchor the evolving Islamic epic narrative, as manifested in Muqatil's *tafsir*.

### **Saqib Hussain, University of Oxford**

Saqib Hussain is a D.Phil. student at the University of Oxford. He is the assistant editor for *JQSA*, and a contributor to the ERC-funded "Qur'anic Commentary: An Integrative Paradigm" (QuCIP) project. His doctoral dissertation is on the term *hikmah* ("wisdom") in the Qur'an and its relationship to the biblical tradition. His research interests include the Qur'an and Late Antiquity, qur'anic law, *surah* structure, and literary analysis of the Qur'an. He has recently published journal articles on the meaning of *nushuz* in Surat al-Nisa', and the Prophet's visions as described in Surat al-Najm.

### ***Adam and the Names***

In the Adam creation story as related in Q al-Baqarah 2, God "taught Adam the names, all of them" (v. 31). An intertextual reading of this passage has illuminated it in multiple ways (Reynolds 2010; Pohlmann 2012; Tesi 2016; Zellentin 2017; Sinai 2017). On the surface, the naming incident is a straightforward allusion to the Genesis story in which Adam names the animals that God presents to him (Gen 2:19–20). It has therefore not been particularly problematized in any previous study of the qur'anic story. But a closer look at the text reveals a complicated picture. First, the masculine plural pronouns that refer to the "names" that Adam was taught (vv. 31, 33) are usually reserved in qur'anic Arabic for humans rather than animals. Second, through God teaching Adam the names, the angels' concern that man will "sow corruption and spill blood" in the land (v. 30) is somehow adequately addressed; it is not clear how this is achieved, however, if the qur'anic naming episode is simply alluding to the Genesis account. Due to these issues, some early Muslim exegetes suggested that the story is actually about Adam being introduced to his righteous offspring, who are counterevidence to the angels' claims that man will not be righteous. This reading has some basis in several midrashic and talmudic passages, in which Adam is shown his righteous descendants. It also helps clarify God's enigmatic declaration to the angels: "I know what you reveal and what you conceal." This can now be read as a polemical corrective to the rabbinic story that God hid some of the actions of man from the angels so as not to give the latter yet further reasons to object to His creation. In the Qur'an, God shows the angels humanity "all of them" (v. 31), and declares that it is in fact the angels who had failed to mention (i.e., "concealed") that there would also be righteous people among mankind. Based on these and other considerations, I will argue that this rarely cited *tafsir* reading is in fact the correct interpretation of the passage. Additionally, by examining how the Qur'an merges rabbinic accounts of the angels' objection to the creation of Adam with the biblical vocabulary of Adam and the naming of the animals, I will show just how freely the Qur'an draws upon antecedent traditions. This allows me to highlight the pitfalls of intertextuality. The Adam story demonstrates that the creative integration in the Qur'an of such diverse biblical and para-biblical motifs means that even seemingly clear allusions to biblical passages are liable to be misunderstood.

This shows how intertextual readings that do not pay sufficient attention to a close reading of the Qur'an on its own terms can obscure rather than illuminate the text.

### **Zohar Hadromi-Allouche, Trinity College - Dublin**

Zohar Hadromi-Allouche is an assistant professor in Classical Islamic Religious Thought and Dialogue at Trinity College Dublin. She holds a Ph.D. in Religious Studies from SOAS, University of London. Her research interests include intertextual reading of the Qur'an and the Bible, Fall narratives in scriptural contexts, and the biography of Muhammad. Among her courses are "Muslim God, Christian God," "Qur'an: Scripture, History, Literature," and "Women leaders, women prophets in Islam."

### ***Bereshit in the Qur'an: Hebrew Presence in Qur'anic Narrations of Genesis***

A significant link seems to exist between the Qur'an and the book of Genesis. Of the twenty-five major biblical characters in the Qur'an, nine are from Genesis. At least thirty-seven of the fifty chapters of Genesis are represented in the Qur'an. At the same time, the Qur'anic representations of Genesis-related characters and narratives often differ considerably from their Hebrew Bible (HB) narrations. Traditional Islamic sources tend to explain these differences through the doctrine of *tahrif* – the distortion of the HB and the New Testament by Jews and Christians respectively, presumably culminating in the initially-identical three scriptures differing from one another. A prevalent assumption among contemporary scholars is that these differences derive from that the Qur'an only knows the Hebrew Bible in a mediated form, in translation (probably into Syriac), and via oral transmission. Both approaches share the view that the differences between the Qur'an and Bible in narrations of a given episode are accidental. But a close reading of Genesis and Genesis-related Qur'anic verses reveals that the Qur'an is familiar with (at least parts of) the Hebrew Bible in Hebrew; and that in (at least some) Qur'anic narrations the differences from the correlating Genesis episodes are deliberate. Qur'anic narrations of Genesis episodes often include textual evidence of close knowledge of the Hebrew text of Genesis. An indicative example is the presence in the Qur'an of Hebrew-based wordplays. Such wordplays use Arabic words that sound similar to the Hebrew vocabulary in the countertype Genesis episode.

In some cases, they convey a similar meaning, such as in the story of Lot, where Q al-Qamar 54:34 "*bi-sahar*" ("before dawn") echoes Gen. 19:15 ("*ha-shahar 'alah*," dawn rose); Q Hud 11:81 "*musibuha ma asabahum*" ("she will suffer the fate of the others") echoes Gen. 19:26 ("*wa-tehi nesib melah*," "she became a pillar of salt"); and Q 11:82 "*wa-amtarna 'alayha hijarah*" ("we rained upon them stones") echoes Gen. 19:24 "*we-YHWH hintir 'al Sdom we-'al 'Amorah gofrit*" ("and YHWH rained on Sodom and Gomora sulfur"). Other times, the similar sound serves to convey a different meaning. For example, in the story of Abraham's guests, Abraham's wife approached "*fi sarra fa-sakkat wajhahā*" ("with a cry and struck her face," Q al-Dhariyat 51:29). This phrase echoes the biblical "*sahaqah Sarah*" ("Sarah laughed," Gen. 18:13), while reversing its meaning. It thus fulfils an interpretative function, as part of the Qur'anic effort to polemicize with this biblical narrative, disambiguate, and solve theological difficulties in it. The presence in the Qur'an of wordplays on the literal text of Genesis thus indicate that at least some sections of the Qur'an were familiar with at least some parts of the Hebrew Bible, in Hebrew. Such knowledge was expected of the audience of the Qur'an, too, or else these wordplays would have been meaningless. But in a HB-literate, Arabic-Hebrew speaking environment, an oral recitation of such wordplays would be a powerful rhetoric tool.

---

### **PV20-138a**

### **Qur'anic Studies: Methodology and Hermeneutics**

Saturday, November 20, 9:00 AM–11:30 AM  
Virtual

### **Khalil Andani, Presiding**

Khalil Andani is an Assistant Professor of Religion at Augustana College (USA) and specializes in Qur'anic studies, Islamic intellectual history, Ismailism, and Sufism. He holds a Ph.D. and two Masters degrees in Islamic Studies from Harvard University. His dissertation, which explores Qur'anic, Sunni, and Ismaili theologies of revelation, won best Ph.D. Dissertation of the Year from the Foundation for Iranian Studies. Khalil's publications have appeared in several journals and edited volumes including Religion Compass, the Oxford Journal of Islamic Studies, the Brill Journal of Sufi Studies, and Deconstructing Islamic Studies.

### **Havva Guney-Ruebenacker, Yale Law School**

Dr. Havva G. Guney-Ruebenacker is a Research Fellow at the Kamel Center for the Study of Islamic Law and Civilization at Yale Law School. She received her S.J.D from Harvard Law School, with a dissertation titled “An Islamic Legal Realist Critique of the Traditional Theory of Slavery, Marriage and Divorce in Islamic Law.” As a Visiting Assistant Professor, Dr. Guney-Ruebenacker taught comparative family law and Islamic law at Boston University School of Law and she served as a fellow at the Oxford Center for Islamic Studies at University of Oxford and at Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics at Harvard. She studied both major schools of Islamic law (Sunni and Shiite) in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, received a B.A. in Law from the University of Tehran and an LLM in European Union law and European legal history from University of Cambridge. She is fluent in English, Turkish, Arabic, and Farsi.

#### ***The Foundational Structure and The Methodology of Interpretation of the Qur’an as the Qur’an Tells***

Perhaps no other verse in the entire Qur’an has caused so much intense debate, past and present, about its possible meaning as the verse Q al-‘Imran 3:7. The key term that has been central in this whole debate is undoubtedly the mighty and mysterious word: *mutashabih*. As the classical *tafsir* (Qur’anic interpretation) literature informs us, more than seventy different theories have been developed by classical scholars about its exact meaning, and yet the list continues to grow today, and so does the controversy around it, without any convincing, coherent clarification one way or another. This highly puzzling content of the verse led some contemporary scholars of Qur’an to even suggest that this verse might have been a later post-prophet Muhammad addition to the Qur’an. If there is any single author for the Qur’an, however, as the majority of its followers believe, then under this scenario of a possible single authorship at least, how is it possible to imagine that the author of the Qur’an would leave such a foundational key term, which seems to be so consequential for the comprehension of the structure of the entire Qur’an, to sheer speculation without providing any explanation for, or at least some hints towards its meaning? Could there be any relevant clues inside the Qur’an itself that have been missed so far?

This paper argues that a careful study of the other neglected key terms entailed in that very verse Q 3:7 and some other related key terms and their interconnections, such as *ta’wil*, *haqq* and *ayat bayyinah*, as these terms are used and explained throughout the Qur’an, in fact do provide some important clues and evidence towards solving this central qur’anic puzzle. Based on this new evidence, it is possible to introduce a comprehensive map for the foundational structure of the Qur’an and also to develop a set of necessary basic principles for a coherent methodology for the textual interpretation of the Qur’an. As Ibn Kathir and other classical scholars shrewdly argued, the most authentic way for Qur’anic interpretation would be to try to understand and interpret the Qur’an with the Qur’an itself (“*tafsir al-Qur’an bi-l Qur’an*”). Decoding and mapping some of the Qur’an’s most foundational terms based on their meaning and use inside the Qur’an itself, would be a good place to start implementing their advice.

### **Kamal Ahmed, Princeton University**

Kamal R. Ahmed is a Research Collaborator at the Princeton Project in Philosophy and Religion and works on “Building Collaborative Research Networks across the Islamic Scholarly Tradition and Western Philosophy,” a project funded by the John Templeton foundation. Affiliated with the Center for the Study of Religion, his research draws on intellectual history, religious studies, and philosophy to carefully bring several Muslim thinkers from the 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, such as al-Maturidi, al-Baqillani, al-Ghazali, and al-Razi into conversation with Western philosophical traditions. In 2017–18, he was a casual lecturer in the Faculty of Oriental Studies at the University of Oxford and co-taught the module on Qur’an. His areas of specialization are early Islamic law and intellectual history, Islamic theology and philosophy, and qur’anic exegesis (*tafsir*).

#### ***Epistemology of Exegesis: Tafsir and Ta’wil in Early Sunni Qur’an Commentaries***

Both al-Tabari (d. 310/923) and al-Maturidi (d. 333/944) titled their qur’anic commentaries as works of *ta’wil* rather than *tafsir*. This paper examines these two terms and seeks to trace their development and usage. I argue that these terms were used in the earliest Sunni exegetical works (100–300 AH) to represent different levels of epistemological certainty. *Tafsir* was used to denote meanings that were considered integral to the text itself and to be accepted at a level of (near) certainty (*qat’*).

*Ta'wil* was used to denote the best possible interpretations of the text, however numerous and mutually exclusive. These multiple meanings were then sorted and ranked for plausibility according to hermeneutical methods developed by different interpretive communities. It was only later that *ta'wil* came to represent allegorical interpretation, whether by Ismailis, Sufis, or the *mutakallimun*. For the early Sunni exegetes, the *ahl al-ta'wil*, as al-Maturidi refers to them repeatedly in his exegesis, were the scholars, often jurists (*fuqaha*), who strove to discover layers of meanings in the text. Even exegetical comments from early generations such as the Followers (*tabi'un*) were treated as "*ta'wil*" unless there existed other corroborating evidence to raise their exegesis to the level of certainty of meaning reserved for "*tafsir*." To establish these conclusions, I will explore how early exegetical statements attributed to Mujahid ibn Jabr (d. 104/722), Muqatil ibn Sulayman (d. 150/767), and Sufyan al-Thawri (d. 161/778) were treated in 3<sup>rd</sup> century commentaries.

Third century exegetes such as al-San'ani (d. 211/827), al-Tahawi (d. 321/933) as well as al-Tabari and al-Maturidi needed to navigate the conflicting exegetical statements made by Companions and Followers. In order to establish their own interpretive meanings, especially in issues of *fiqh* and *kalam*, third century exegetes posited their interpretations, or *ta'wilat*, as even more authoritative than the earliest transmitted exegetical statements, or *tafsir*, thereby blurring, if not reversing, the distinction between these two terms.

### Nicholas Boylston, Seattle University

Nicholas Boylston is Assistant Professor in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at Seattle University. From 2017 to 2021 he taught at Harvard University as Lecturer and College Fellow, and he holds a Ph.D. from Georgetown University and an M.A. from the University of Tehran. He is a scholar of Islamic Studies, and his research areas include Shi'i Studies, Qur'anic Studies, Sufism, and Persian literature. His publications include, "Islam from the Inside Out: Ayn al-Qu āt Hamadānī's Reconception of Islam as Vector" (*Journal of Islamic Studies*, 32:2, 2021), "Qur'anic Exegesis at the Confluence of Twelver Shiism and Sufism: Sayyid aydar Amuli's al-Muḥīṭ al-a'zam" (*Journal of Quranic Studies*, 23:1, 2021), and "Speaking the Secrets of Sanctity in the Tafsir of afī Alī Shāh" (in *Approaches to the Qur'an in Contemporary Iran*, ed. Alessandro Cancian, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

### Troubling Tafsir bi'l-Ra'y: Sayyid Haydar Amuli's Negotiation of Hermeneutic Authority Between Twelver Shi'ism and Sufism

This paper forms part of a larger study of the methodology of qur'anic interpretation of the 14<sup>th</sup> century Twelver Shi'i-Sufi, Sayyid Haydar Amuli (d. after 787/1385), whose *Tafsir al-muḥīṭ al-a'zam*, makes use of tafsir/ta'wil to integrate the Twelver Shi'i juridico-theological with the Sufi metaphysics of Ibn 'Arabi and his interpreters. In this paper, I focus on a single issue: how contesting the status of *tafsir bi'l-ra'y* (interpretation through individual opinion) allows Amuli to negotiate the relative authority of Twelver Shi'i and Sufi exegetical precedents in his composition of the *tafsir* and *ta'wil* sections of his work. Crucially, Amuli sets up his hermeneutic project by drawing on the exegetical methodology of his forebear in Twelver Shi'i exegesis, al-Tabrisi (d. 548/1154). Amuli presents his work as a continuity of al-Tabrisi, paraphrasing key sections on methodology from the latter's *Majma' al-bayan*. As such, Amuli affirms the latter's understanding of the meaning and validity of both tafsir and ta'wil with two fundamental differences. Firstly, for Amuli, al-Tabrisi's classification of types of exegesis is incomplete: al-Tabrisi's conception of *ta'wil* only represents a subcategory of this method, namely "*ta'wil* according to masters of the outward sciences" (*ta'wil arab al-zahir*). To this he adds "*ta'wil* according to the people of the inward" (*ta'wil ahl al-batin*). Secondly, al-Tabrisi's hermeneutical methodology rests on a historically significant argument for the validity of *tafsir bi'l-ra'y* ("interpretation through individual opinion/reason"), which allows him to include the distinctive theological positions of Mu'tazili-influenced Twelver *kalam* as a valid component of qur'anic exegesis, a position that Amuli rejects, leading him to reaffirm a strong boundary between *tafsir* and *ta'wil*. Amuli's disagreements with al-Tabrisi's exegetical methods shed crucial light on his own project to use qur'anic exegesis to harmonize the Twelver Shi'i and Akbarian Sufi intellectual traditions. I argue that this harmonization is best seen as a dynamic negotiation of the domains of authority of these two traditions. The Twelver Shi'i exegetical tradition, embodied for Amuli by al-Tabrisi, is strongly affirmed: it has the final say in nearly all matters of tafsir, which Amuli sees as being fundamentally a project of *naql* or *tafsir bi'l-ma'thur* (interpretation of the Qur'an through Qur'an and Hadith), and it also plays a role in interpreting the *mutashabihat*, which for Amuli refers most directly to the interpretation of qur'anic anthropomorphism and the question of human free will.

Yet, at the same time the authority of Twelver Shi'i exegesis is limited: it has no role to play in the "ta'wil according to the people of the inward", a practice reserved for "those steadfast in knowledge" (*al-rasikhun fi'l-'ilm*, see Q al-'Imran 3:7), which for Amuli means the Household of the Muhammad and those Sufis who have inherited their understanding of *tawhid*, and thus implicitly excludes interpreters such as al-Tabrisi.

### **Syed A.H. Zaidi, Emory University**

Syed A.H. Zaidi is a Ph.D. candidate in Islamic philosophy at Emory University's Islamic Civilizations Program, Atlanta, GA. He has published several book reviews and articles in the *Journal of Iranian Studies*, the *Journal of Islamic and Muslim Studies*, the *Kronos Philosophical Journal*, and a chapter in *A Guide to Sufi Literature*. His dissertation is on the influence of Hermeticism and Neoplatonism on the thought of the Brethren of Purity (*Ikhwan al-Safa'*). He also works extensively on the *Theology of Aristotle*, and the works of Ibn Sina, Mir Damad. He obtained an M.A. (2016) in Islamic Studies from the George Washington University, Washington, DC, and a B.A. (2012) in International Relations from Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Geneva, New York.

### ***The Use of the Qur'an in the Brethren of Purity's (Ikhwan al-Safa') conception of God***

The Brethren of Purity (*Ikhwan al-Safa'*) were a tenth century CE Ismaili philosophical group that existed in Basra, Iraq. Little is known about the actual group or its members, and their only remains are 52 epistles and two summaries. However, their works played an influential role in various intellectual trajectories throughout Islamic and Jewish philosophical history. I argue that the Brethren's conception of God demonstrates how they combined qur'anic symbols with Ismaili Hermetic and NeoPythagorean ontology and Neoplatonic cosmology to create a new way to think about qur'anic hermeneutics that can allow human beings to bring themselves closer to God. In this paper, I show how God is addressed in the First and Thirty-third *Treatises*. Although they have been translated, a study of the influence of these *Treatises* and their summaries has yet to be published.

In the first treatise, the Brethren of Purity begin with an invocatory statement, "Know oh Brother, may God provide you and us with a spirit from Him." This statement says two things which are important for cosmology. First, despite the Neoplatonic emanationist model which they follow, they insist on God's direct intervention in the lives of individuals.

Second, the request for God to provide a spirit instead of His direct help is indicative of their Hermetic theurgical beliefs.

In their 33<sup>rd</sup> *Treatise*, entitled *On the Intellectual Principles According to the Views of Pythagoras*, the Brethren of Purity begin by stating that God, "the Creator, Blessed and Exalted, is of perfect Existence, complete in excellences, fully knowing about beings before they are, and able to bring them into being whenever He wishes." They then employ verses of the Qur'an to substantiate their claim that esoteric philosophical thought and the Qur'an are reflections of each other. For example, they cite the 112<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Qur'an stating that God is the "One, the Unique, the Eternally Sufficient unto Himself. He begets not; nor was He begotten. And none is like unto Him." Using Pythagorean ontology and language, the Brethren of Purity argued that the One, the Creator, Light, and Perfection are all found in God. The Brethren of Purity's use of these attributes and language for God is far from surprising. They constantly emphasize God's transcendence and immanence, His knowledge of all things, His role in creating the world and that God will be responsible for its eventual destruction.

### **Sheza Atiq, Harvard University**

Sheza Atiq is a fifth-year Ph.D. student in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University. She holds an M.A. in Theological Studies from Harvard Divinity School and a B.A. in English from Brown University. Her research interests include early *tafsir*, orality, and the intersection of literary theory, linguistics, and scripture. Her current project focuses on the role of the *haqiqa-majaz* dichotomy in the classical *tafsir* tradition, and in particular, in al-Zamakhshari's *al-Kashshaf*.

### ***Revelation and Rhetoric in Early Mu'tazili Writings***

This paper traces the evolution of the literary trope *haqiqa-majaz* (literal vs. figurative speech) in the qur'anic commentaries of early, classical Mu'tazili scholars circa 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> century. While *majaz* has garnered increasing attention in Western scholarship recently, its use and role as a hermeneutical tool in Mu'tazili works has been largely neglected particularly pre-Zamakhshari (d. 538 AH/1144 AD). Such a gap is striking given prevailing narratives in both Islamic and Western secondary scholarship that the emergence of the *haqiqa-majaz* dichotomy can be linked to theological concerns of anthropomorphism in emerging Mu'tazili circles in the second and third centuries.



This study will examine the extent to which *majaz* developed as an exegetical and rhetorical tool in Mu'tazili commentaries, acquiring a technical meaning distinct from its early usage. A close study of the writings of figures such as al-Jahiz (d. 255 AH/868 AD), Abu Bakr al-Razi al-Jassas (d. 370 AH/981 AD), and Ibn al-Malahimi (d. 536 AH/1141 AD) shall reveal that the use of *majaz* as denotation of figurative or non-literal language in qur'anic verses occurred far earlier than has been suggested by scholars. Such early understandings and interest in the figurative naturally have implications for the literal as well; the paper is thus also interested in identifying moments in these works where the *haqiqa-majaz* coupling first begins to emerge. A key interest of this study is to consider parallels between the question of the nature of the Qur'an as a created versus uncreated entity in theological circles on the one hand, and the role of figurative language in God's Divine Speech on the other. Such connections will invariably take us through critical moments in Islamic history such as the *mihna* (the Inquisition), underscoring the socio-political and historical-literary approach this project intends to take. Were initial references to *haqiqa-majaz* the sole purview of Mu'tazili scholars or were they linguistic transformations to be found in broader works of Qur'anic studies? How did the emergence of this linguistic trope as a hermeneutical tool evolve during the classical period up until al-Zamakhshari in his famous qur'anic exegesis, *al-Kashshaf*? In answering these questions, this paper aims to shed light on a group whose literary contributions to qur'anic scholarship — quite apart from their theological treatises — are lesser known. It also hopes to contextualize the examination of literary and linguistic perspectives on the qur'anic corpus within the broader historic-political climate wherein these discussions took place.

---

**PV20-233**

---

### **Qur'anic Studies: Methodology and Hermeneutics**

Saturday, November 20, 1:00 PM–3:30 PM  
Virtual

Theme: ***Qur'anic Narrative and Hermeneutics***

#### **Celene Ibrahim, Groton School, Presiding**

Celene Ibrahim is author of *Women and Gender in the Qur'an* (2020) and editor of *One Nation, Indivisible: Seeking Liberty and Justice from the Pulpit to the Streets* (2019).

Her next book, *Islam and Monotheism*, is forthcoming from Cambridge University Press. Ibrahim teaches in the Religious Studies and Philosophy Department at Groton School and is an affiliated faculty member at the Boston Islamic Seminary. She holds a Ph.D. from Brandeis University, an M.Div. from Harvard University, and a bachelor's degree from Princeton University.

#### **David Solomon Jalajel, King Saud University**

David Solomon Jalajel is a researcher at King Saud University's Prince Sultan Research Institute with a Ph.D. in Arabic and Islamic Studies from the University of the Western Cape. Formerly, he was a lecturer in Islamic theology and legal theory at the Dar al-Uloom in Cape Town. He has published *Women and Leadership in Islamic Law: A Critical Survey of Classical Legal Texts* (2017, Routledge), *Islam and Biological Evolution: Exploring Classical Sources and Methodologies* (UWC, 2009) and *Expressing ʿrāb: The Presentation of Arabic Grammatical Analysis* (UWC, 2011).

#### **Shoaib Ahmed Malik, Zayed University**

Shoaib Ahmed Malik is an Assistant Professor of the Natural Sciences at Zayed University, Dubai. He researches exclusively on the topics of science and religion, atheism, and Islamic theology. He is the author of *Atheism and Islam: A Contemporary Discourse* (Kalam Research & Media, 2018) and *Islam and Evolution: Al-Ghazālī and the Modern Evolutionary Paradigm* (Routledge, 2021).

#### ***Adam and Eve's Garden in Islamic Thought: Heaven or Earth?***

Muslims exhibit a wide spectrum of opinions about Islam and evolution. The growing literature on the subject identifies several points of contention, including the role of chance in evolution, the intelligent design argument, flaws in the science, and the creation narrative in Islamic scripture. One scriptural point that reappears is the location of the Garden from which Adam was expelled. This matter has been instrumentalised by both sides in the creation/evolution debate. Historically, Muslims have been divided about the location of Adam and Eve's Garden. Today, this classical disagreement is attracting renewed attention for its perceived relevance to the question of human evolution. This study examines sixteen exegeses covering all of Islamic history to determine how exegetes perceived, contextualised, approached and responded to this question, and what influenced their responses.

Four major opinions are identified — two placing the Garden in heaven, one locating it on Earth, and a stance of non-commitment (*tawaqquf*) — with supporting arguments and counter-arguments. The research finds that there is no consensus on this issue and it is not regarded as theologically binding, leaving the matter open to interpretation. The sheds light on the value this disagreement has for contemporary Muslim responses to human evolution, since even though the evolution debate is a distinctly contemporary one, the greatest resistance to evolution today, and particularly to human evolution, comes from contemporary Muslims who claim strict adherence to scriptural authority and received religious tradition.

### **Khalil Andani, Augustana College**

Khalil Andani is an Assistant Professor of Religion at Augustana College (USA) and specializes in Qur'anic studies, Islamic intellectual history, Ismailism, and Sufism. He holds a Ph.D. and two Masters degrees in Islamic Studies from Harvard University. His dissertation, which explores Qur'anic, Sunni, and Ismaili theologies of revelation, won best Ph.D. Dissertation of the Year from the Foundation for Iranian Studies. Khalil's publications have appeared in several journals and edited volumes including Religion Compass, the Oxford Journal of Islamic Studies, the Brill Journal of Sufi Studies, and Deconstructing Islamic Studies.

### ***Creation as Prophetic Initiation: Ismaili Exegesis (ta'wil) of the Qur'anic Adam Story***

The academic study of Ismaili Qur'anic *ta'wil* — often translated as “esoteric interpretation”, “allegorical interpretation”, or “spiritual exegesis” — is in its early stages with just one monograph by Hollenberg published on the topic. In that monograph, the author argues that medieval Ismaili *ta'wil* is meant to induce “new habits of mind” and thereby reinforce sectarian loyalty within the Ismaili movement and articulate veiled polemic against other Shi'is in light of contemporary socio-political events. Accordingly, Hollenberg interprets the Fatimid Ismaili *ta'wil* of the Qur'anic story of Adam as a polemic against the Eastern Ismaili *da'wa* that failed to recognize the Fatimid Imam-Caliph; in his reading, the Adam figure alludes to the first Fatimid Caliph al-Mahdi while Iblis refers to the *da'i* who had betrayed him. Even though *ta'wil* in Ismaili thought is self-defined as a teaching that orients and guides the believer to his/her spiritual origin (*awwal*), Hollenberg's thesis diverts the focus of Ismaili *ta'wil* to being primarily about socio-political events.

In this study, I offer an alternative perspective to this reading by arguing that the Ismaili exegesis of the Adam story was coined to harmonize the Qur'an with Ismaili theology and soteriology and thereby deepen Ismaili community's understanding of the Qur'an. My method is to analyze the Ismaili *ta'wil* of the Adam story as found in four sources: *Sara'ir wa-asrar al-nutuqa'* by Ja'far b. Mansur al-Yaman (10<sup>th</sup> CE), *Asas al-ta'wil* by al-Nu'man (10<sup>th</sup> CE), *Rawda-yi Taslim* by Nasir al-Din Tusi (13<sup>th</sup> CE), and *Zahr al-ma'ani* by Idris Imad al-Din (15<sup>th</sup> CE). I register core similarities of the Ismaili exegesis as presented over four centuries. I argue that the Ismaili interpretation of the Adam narrative found across these different Ismaili texts is primarily concerned with four theological goals: 1) safeguarding the absolute transcendence of God above all anthropomorphic qualities, such as vocal speech and literal breathing; 2) interpreting the creation of Adam from water and clay as his prophetic initiation as opposed to his physical creation, so as to affirm Adam's natural birth from human parents; 3) establishing the concrete existence of the Imam and his *da'wa* as a metahistorical channel of divine guidance on earth both before Adam and in succession to him; 4) positing Iblis as a renegade human teacher who reappears in every prophetic cycle, including that of Muhammad, to violate the protocol of *taqiyya* and betray God's representative. The Ismaili reading of the Adamic creation story is primarily concerned with interpreting the Qur'anic narrative in harmony with Ismaili theology, cosmology, and sacred history. One finds a consistent Ismaili exegesis of the Adam narrative from the 10<sup>th</sup> century to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, despite the varying socio-political contexts of these Ismaili thinkers. Therefore, the overall purpose of Ismaili *ta'wil* cannot be reduced to interpreting or situating socio-political events; it is self-styled as doing the opposite of this and this is confirmed by the content of the literature.

### **Adi Shiran, The University of Chicago**

Adi Shiran is a Ph.D. student at the University of Chicago Divinity School. Shiran earned a B.A. and an M.A. in Arabic language and literature from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where she studied in the Mandel Honors Program, and an M.A. from the Freie Universität Berlin. Shiran's research interests include medieval Islamic, Christian, and Jewish exegesis, Judeo-Arabic literature, and Mu tazilite *kalam*. In her dissertation, she deals with the notion of the ‘sealing of the hearts’ in tenth-century Qur'an and Bible exegesis.

Other current research projects include Islamic and Jewish interpretations regarding the physical appearance of the serpent/Satan, and a translation of Saadia Gaon's Judeo-Arabic discussion on the suffering of animals in his commentary on *Genesis*. Shiran earned a teaching certificate in Arabic from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She taught Qur'anic Arabic at the University of Chicago and taught Classical and Modern Arabic in high schools for several years.

### ***Bloody Wrath and Healing Touches: Joseph and his Brothers in Early Twelver Shi i Tafsir***

The meetings between Joseph and his brothers in Egypt are often portrayed in Qur'an commentaries as dramatic occurrences. During one of these meetings, Joseph accuses his brother of stealing, which leads to a discussion in which the brothers ask Joseph to spare the accused brother and take one of them in his stead. Joseph refuses, and the eldest brother decides to remain in Egypt. The commentators usually identify the accused brother as Benjamin and the eldest brother as Judah. A few early Twelver Shi i commentaries mention a peculiar account that describes the heated clash between the brothers and Joseph following Joseph's false accusation. According to this account, the brothers' wrath triggered unusual physical symptoms, including bleeding from various bodily organs. Judah's appearance is described as particularly ominous in this context. His volcanic temper, it seems, is only brought under control after the sudden appearance of a mysterious boy who carries a pomegranate. An examination of the extensive early Muslim exegetical tradition shows that this story is unique. The individual elements in it – the bleeding, the pomegranate, the bodily organs – are generally absent from other Muslim commentaries on the Joseph narratives. The choice to include such an odd story in a commentary is puzzling: Why did Twelver-Shi i commentators adopt it? Why does it appear in their commentaries but not in other exegetical works on the Qur'an? Where does the story come from, and how was it transmitted? Some of these questions cannot yet be answered. I will, however, offer some preliminary observations in this paper and will argue 1) that some of the elements that appear in the story originated in an early Jewish Midrash, and 2) that a comparison between the texts highlights the originality of the Twelver Shi i version and its possible innovativeness.

### **Javad Hashmi, Harvard University**

Javad T. Hashmi is a board-certified emergency physician, fmr. Fellow of Medical Ethics at Harvard Medical School, and a Ph.D. candidate in the Study of Religion (Islamic Studies) at Harvard University. In addition to his medical training, Dr. Hashmi holds a bachelor's and master's degree in Arabic & Islamic Studies from U.C. Berkeley and Harvard respectively. His research focuses on the topic of war and peace in the Qur'an, but he is also interested in Islamic intellectual history more generally and Islamic modernism in particular.

### **Haci Gunduz, Harvard University**

Haci Osman Gündüz (“Ozzy”) is currently pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Arabic Language and Literature in the Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations (NELC) department of Harvard University. He serves as a language instructor in Classical Arabic also at Harvard. Mr. Gündüz previously taught Arabic at Tufts University from 2010 to 2016. He is mainly interested in Arabic literature in Ottoman Syria during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. He is also interested in Islamic intellectual history and history of the Ottoman Empire.

### ***The Qur'anic Story – Not Literal History But Literary Art: Muhammad Ahmad Khalafallah's Forbidden Dissertation***

In 1947, Cairo University's Department of Arabic refused to accept the doctoral dissertation of one of its young students, an Islamic modernist by the name of Muhammad Ahmad Khalafallah (d. 1991). His work went on to cause a hailstorm of controversy but it would eventually be published under the title *al-Fann al-Qasasi fi l-Qur'an al-Karim (The Literary Art of the Holy Qur'an)*. In it, Khalafallah made the claim that pious Muslims should understand the Qur'anic stories not as literal history but as literary art. For many contemporary secular experts of Qur'anic Studies, this would hardly seem to be a radical proposal, but for Khalafallah's time—and even amongst many devout Muslims today—this idea could be considered dangerously blasphemous.

Yet, contrary to the claims of his detractors, Khalafallah was driven by a deep sense of piety and devotion to the Islamic scripture, as he anticipated and responded to many of the problems that a strictly historical approach to the Qur'an might run into. Khalafallah's intent was not to impugn the Qur'an as mere “myth” in the colloquial sense of the word, but rather, to render Islamic scripture immune from attack from “atheists, Jews, Christians, Orientalists, and missionaries.”

Of interest is the fact that Khalafallah's work invokes recent historical and archaeological evidence only but little; instead, the bulk of his work is dedicated to a close intra-qur'anic reading in order to demonstrate the creative literary freedom that the text employs in order to convey its stories in religiously meaningful and purposeful ways.

Unfortunately, Khalafallah's brilliant study remains relatively unknown to the wider non-Arabic and English-speaking world. In this paper, therefore, we introduce the reader to Muhammad Ahmad Khalafallah, situate his contribution, and engage in a close reading of his monumental study. Many of Khalafallah's insights will be useful to scholars of the Qur'an, including his detailed analysis of various prophetic stories. Overall, it is hoped that Khalafallah's pioneering work might bridge the gap between Islamic and secular approaches and help to normalize the modern critical study of the Qur'an amongst Muslim readers.

**Alena Kulinich, University of Oxford/Seoul National University**

Alena Kulinich is Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow at the Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Oxford, and Associate Professor of West Asian Studies in the Department of Asian Languages and Civilizations at Seoul National University. She received her Ph.D. from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London (2012), where she also taught as Senior Teaching Fellow (2010 to 2013). Her research interests include Islamic intellectual history, Qur'anic hermeneutics, and arabographic religious literature of the Lithuanian Tatars. Her current project explores the dynamic tradition of reading poverty in the Qur'an in medieval Muslim societies (8<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> centuries CE).

***Justifying Wealth and Poverty by the Qur'an: A Medieval Muslim Perspective***

The Qur'anic perspective on material wealth (*al-ghina*) and poverty (*al-faqr*), central to modern debates on Islamic economic ethics and social justice, was a question of concern and disagreement among medieval Muslim scholars as well. In the course of their debates on this matter, two contrasting views manifested – one suggesting that the Qur'an highlights the vanity of all worldly possessions and exalts poverty, the other arguing for the Qur'an's endorsement of material riches, considered as a reward or a gift from God. Both views were supported by proofs (*hujaj*) from the text of the Qur'an.

This paper examines how the proponents of these opposing views appropriated, adapted, and interpreted the Qur'anic text in order to justify their respective positions. As its main source, the paper uses a hitherto unexplored treatise *Hujaj al-Qur'an li-jami' ahl al-milal wa-l-adyan* (*The Proofs from the Qur'an for All the Sects and Religions*) by the Hanafi jurist A mad ibn Muhammad al-Razi (active in 631/1234). A list of a hundred and four Qur'anic proofs compiled by al-Razi from various sources for his chapter on the wealth versus poverty debate forms the core material for this examination. To analyse how medieval Muslim authors used the Qur'an to argue for the precedence of wealth over poverty or vice versa, the paper engages with the following three questions. First, how did the structure of the debate and the logic of argumentation shape the processes of selection and adaptation of the Qur'anic passages for proof-texting? Second, what strategies did the debating parties employ in assigning a desired meaning to these passages (e.g., polysemy, connotative meanings, semantic and syntactic ambiguity of the text)? Finally, to what extent do the resulting interpretations of these passages overlap with their interpretations as preserved in the Qur'anic exegetical literature? Do they represent the readings independent from the exegetical tradition? Through the examination of these three aspects, the paper demonstrates how medieval Muslim authors engaged the Qur'anic text to establish and justify particular views and values, highlighting a dynamic and context-dependant process of its reception in Muslim societies.

---

**PV20-349**

**The Qur'an and Late Antiquity**

Saturday, November 20, 4:00 PM–6:30 PM  
Virtual

Theme: ***The Prophet and the Prophetic in the Qur'an (1)***

**Michael Pregill, Chapman University, Presiding**

Michael Pregill is a scholar of comparative religion, focusing on the scriptural cultures of Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Much of his research focuses on the reception of biblical, Jewish, and Christian traditions in the Qur'an and Islam. His monograph *The Golden Calf between Bible and Qur'an: Scripture, Polemic, and Exegesis from Late Antiquity to Islam* (Oxford University Press, 2020) is the recipient of the 2021 American Academy of Religion Award for Excellence in the Study of Religion (Textual Studies).

He is currently a lecturer at Chapman University in Orange, California and a postdoctoral fellow of the ERC Synergy Project ‘The European Qur’an,’ pursuing a new project entitled “Re-Orienting Geiger: Revisiting the Jewish Foundations of Western Qur’anic Studies.”

#### **Eric DeVilliers, University of Notre Dame**

Eric DeVilliers is a third-year Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Theology at the University of Notre Dame. He holds an M.T.S. in the History of Christianity from the University of Notre Dame and a B.A. in Religious Studies from Yale University. His research focuses on the development of *Kalam* and Islamic Origins.

#### ***“Is There No Doubt About the Hour?: The Limits of Prophetic Knowledge and the Historical Muhammad”***

In its polemics and exhortations, the Qur’an repeatedly decries the ignorance of its opponents, who “do not know” God’s clear signs from nature or the divine character of God’s miracles (e.g., Q al-A’raf 7:187). The Qur’an’s rhetoric, however, provokes the question of what kind and amount of knowledge could be expected of believers and, more pressingly, of Muhammad as God’s prophet. Nowhere is this question more vexing than in Muhammad’s preaching of “the Hour”, where some verses seem to detail the character of the Hour, others strongly imply that Muhammad believed the eschaton to be imminent, and yet still others disavow the possibility that a prophet could ever know its arrival.

While much has been written on the eschatological aspect of qur’anic prophetology, this paper seeks to contribute to this discussion by asserting that prophetic agnosticism regarding the Hour is bound to the Qur’an’s prophetological discourse. Muhammad’s claim to prophethood was compared to those of Moses and ‘Isa, and the limits of his prophetic knowledge were re-presented as a doctrinal response against Jews and Christians. Even in passages that appear to acknowledge the historical Muhammad’s political successes, there is opposition from the qur’anic audience which nevertheless rejects the qur’anic verses despite their use of biblical imagery and parables (e.g., Q Al-An’am 6:36-47, Q al-Qamar 54:45-46). This paper argues that in announcing the Hour, Muhammad was understood as a messianic figure and, as such, was expected to possess eschatological power and knowledge akin to Jesus and Moses. However, his divergence from these expectations despite his professed similarities required a rapprochement that can be seen in the qur’anic text.

From this observation, it will argue that Muhammad responded to biblical and late antique apocalyptic traditions by utilizing them to assert the solely human nature of the prophets. As such, the agnosticism of the Hour is a crucial textual witness to a historical progression whereby the historical Muhammad reconciled the prophetic careers of Moses and Jesus to his own. The historical Muhammad may have begun his prophetic career by grounding his authority in the vindication that the imminent arrival of the Hour would bring, but the Hour’s function in the text transitions to a doctrine that delineated the human prophet from the one God. This paper, then, argues with Stephen Shoemaker that the arrival of the Hour was fundamental to the qur’anic faith preached by Muhammad, but qualifies that its importance shifted as Muhammad confronted continued skepticism from Jews and Christians towards his prophethood. Evidence from prophetic movements and personages from Late Antiquity, such as Aphrahat, illuminate the late antique prophetic expectations with which Muhammad conversed, and show that the qur’anic rhetoric surrounding knowledge of the end of the world represents a conscious break with this model after previously having aligned itself with it.

#### **Zahra Moeini Meybodi, University of Chicago**

Zahra Moeini Meybodi is a Ph.D. student in Islamic Studies at the University of Chicago Divinity School. She also holds an M.A. in Religious Studies from the Divinity School. Her research focuses on qur’anic ethics, exegesis, and early Islamic history. She is also interested in other fields such as classical Arabic rhetoric, Sufism, and Persian classical literature.

#### ***“Giving and Prophetic Time: A Thematic Re-reading of Surat al-Fajr”***

Influential voices in scholarship on the Qur’an have considered Surat al-Fajr (Q 89) to be a composite chapter, i.e. it is formed by segments originating in different locations and circumstances throughout the course of the prophetic mission. This is arguably reflected in the surah’s depictions of variegated characters, physical spaces and timeframes. Beyond the introductory oaths, the surah speaks of grand civilizations of the past such as the Pharaoh’s and tribes like Ad and Thamud, all of whom were annihilated due to their corruption (*fasad*). It then swiftly moves to speak in a present moment address, speaking in second-person to an interlocutor who has been wavering in faith (*iman*).

# LIBRARY OF ARABIC AND ISLAMIC HERITAGE

## مكتبة التراث العربي والاسلامي

Gorgias Press and The King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies (KFCRIS) are collaborating on an important academic book project, the Library of Arabic and Islamic Heritage مكتبة التراث العربي والاسلامي. The first undertaking of this new project is the Classical Islamic Texts Series (CITS), which will house ten Arabic-English translations. Specifically, the series will make available the single-volume translations of renowned classical Arabic works, showcasing texts that are of central importance to the fields of Qur'anic studies, Islamic law, Ḥadīth, Theology, History, and Philosophy.

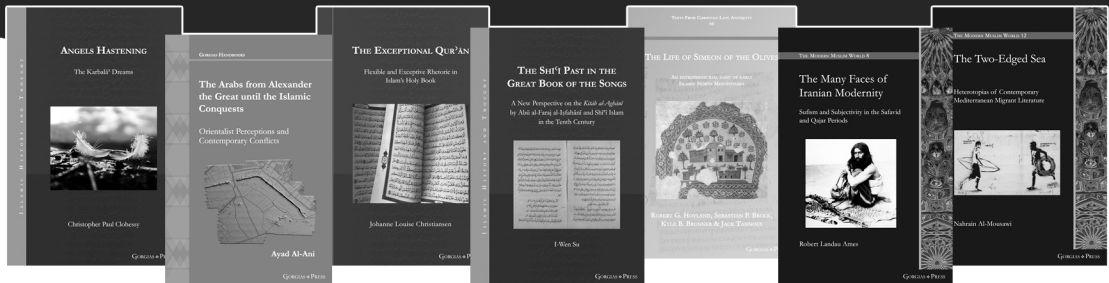
This is a unique project that moves beyond the traditional, yet valuable, translation model, by providing its readers with texts and formats that will cater to multiple levels of reader and use. The basic English-Arabic translation will be accompanied by in-depth studies and annotated notes. The text will be accessible to academics, traditional religious scholars, as teaching materials for students, or to be used by believers for personal devotion.

We are delighted to announce the first two translations in the Classical Islamic Texts Series (CITS):  
Abū Layth al Samarqandī's *Bustān al 'ārifīn*, by Dr Peri J Bearman (forthcoming)  
Muḥammad b. 'Uthmān al Khayyāt's *Kitāb al intiṣār*, by Dr Mushegh Asatryan (forthcoming)

To learn more about CITS titles, and to find out how to contribute to future volumes in the series, please visit:  
<https://www.gorgiaspress.com/library-of-arabic-and-islamic-heritage>

## NEW RELEASES FROM ❖ GORGIAS ❖ PRESS

These titles, and hundreds more, are 40% off in our Annual Sale  
when you order from [www.gorgiaspress.com](http://www.gorgiaspress.com) before the end of December 2021



### Angels Hastening: The Karbalā' Dreams

By Christopher Paul Clohessy  
978-1-4632-4209-1, Hb, \$95.00

### The Arabs from Alexander the Great until the Islamic Conquests: Orientalist Perceptions and Contemporary Conflicts

By Ayad Al-Ani  
978-1-4632-4285-5, Pb, \$114.95

### The Exceptional Qu'ran: Flexible and Exeptive Rhetoric in Islam's Holy Book

By Johanne Louise Christiansen  
978-1-4632-0729-8, Hb, \$120.00

### The Shī' Past in the Great Book of the Songs: A New Perspective on the Kitāb al-Aghānī by Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī and Shī' Islam in the Tenth Century

By I-Wen Su  
978-1-4632-0714-4, Hb, \$156.00

### The Life of Simeon of the Olives: An entrepreneurial saint of early Islamic North Mesopotamia

By Robert Hoyland, Sebastian P. Brock, Kyle B. Brunner & Jack Tannous  
978-1-4632-4346-3, Pb, \$50.00

### The Many Faces of Iranian Modernity: Sufism and Subjectivity in the Safavid and Qajar Periods

By Robert Ames  
978-1-4632-4237-4, Hb, \$106.00

### Rediscovering al-Azdī and the Futūḥ al-Shām Narrative: Manuscripts, Parallel Texts, Research History

By Jens Scheiner  
978-1-4632-4382-1, Hb, \$140.00

### The Two-Edged Sea: Heterotopias of Contemporary Mediterranean Migrant Literature

By Nahrain Al-Mousawi  
978-1-4632-4372-2, Hb, \$112.00

Conclusively, the reader is brought to experience the upheaval of the apocalypse (*yaʿm al-qiyamah*) where souls are judged by God. Ultimately the figure of a reassured soul (*nafs al-mutma inah*) is welcomed by the Deity to paradise. These seemingly disparate situations and timeframes are brought together in this paper by examining the historical, thematic and literary dynamics of the surah. These dynamics can be best appreciated most readily in the interplays of wealth and faith, where it is encouraged to believe and be devoted to God by detaching oneself from the grandeur of riches on the one hand, and to give injustice and charity to the disenfranchised members of society. The concept of giving, I argue, serves as a pivot for the surah. On the one hand, it unifies the chapter thematically, and on the other it harmonizes the fragmented sense of time in a prophetic conceptualization. Time is made prophetic by the reality of a pending divine judgment and significantly, also by the urgency to give in the present moment.

#### **Mourad Takawi, University of the Incarnate Word**

Mourad Takawi is assistant professor of Religious Studies at the University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio, Texas. He holds a Ph.D. and M.T.S from the University of Notre Dame and an M.A. and B.A. from the American University in Cairo. His current research focuses on Qur'anic interpretation and reception in the formative and classical Islamic period(s).

#### **“The Arboreal Presentation of Mu ammad and the Believers in Q Al-Fath 48”**

This paper investigates the concluding presentation of the Prophet Muhammad and the believers in Q al-Fath 48:29. More specifically, it sheds light on the arboreal presentation of the Prophet and the believers in the Inviolable Place of Prostration (*al-masjid al-haram*), which is cast in a biblical mold—specifically invoking their image (*mathal*) in the Torah and the Gospel. Departing from discussions of direct allusions to the biblical text (most notably Deuteronomy 6 and 11, and Mark 4—to the *tawrah* and *injil*, respectively), this paper proposes to examine the imagery against the backdrop of arboreal representations of the faithful in Eastern Late Antiquity. Not only will this provide a helpful framing for reading the floral/arboreal motifs in the surah as whole, but will it also shed light on the verse's implied connection between prayer and sowing, which culminates in the ensuing arboreal imagery. Unlike the late antique Syriac Christian presentations, however, here it is Muhammad and the believers, and not God, who both sow and emblemize the shooting tree in the midst of the Inviolable Place of Prostration.

To this end, the present study departs from the hermeneutic pressures exerted by the overemphasis on the militant diction and imagery typically associating the surah with the conquest of Mecca, and instead invites a focus on the floral/arboreal motifs associated with the believers in general and with the Prophet specifically in the surah. The paper will comprise three parts: first, an investigation of the semantic field around the believers in the surah, particularly its the running floral/arboreal motif which reaches its climax in the concluding verse and its presentation of the believers in their vegetative stage worshipping in the Inviolable Place of Prostration; second, an overview of the fluid floral/arboreal presentation of the faithful in select key works such as the *Didascalía* and the *Odes of Solomon*, as well as a selection from the poetry of Ephrem; lastly, a concluding discussion on the particularities of the (Medinan) Qur'anic arboreal presentation of the Prophet, the believers, and the unbelievers (special attention will be paid to the contrast with Q al-Hadid 57:20).

#### **Juan Cole, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor**

Juan Cole is the Richard P. Mitchell Collegiate Professor of History at the University of Michigan. He is author of *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* (I.B. Tauris, 2020), *Muhammad: Prophet of Peace amid the Clash of Empires* (Nation Books, 2018), and *The New Arabs: How the Millennial Generation is Shaping the Middle East* (Simon and Schuster, 2014), among other works. He is currently working on the Qur'an in Late Antiquity and has recently published “Muhammad and Justinian: Roman Legal Traditions and the Qur'an” (*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 2020) and “Infidel or Paganus? The Polysemy of *kafara* in the Quran” (*Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 2020).

#### **“God’s Biography of Muhammad in the Qur’an”**

Scholars have long noted that the Qur'an does not offer a narrative of the life of the Prophet Muhammad, differing in this way from other world scriptures. His name is mentioned only four times. Uri Rubin and Alford Welch have written pieces pulling together the few biographical details that they argue can be gleaned from the text of the Qur'an; both are short essays. This paper will take a different tack, concentrating on direct divine address to or comments about the Prophet. The Qur'an is characterized by a frequent change in authorial voice: sometimes Muhammad as prophet is speaking, and sometimes God is the speaker. Sometimes God addresses Muhammad, whereas at other times he addresses wider audiences. When God is speaking to Muhammad, the second person singular is used.

Many of these passages speak of affect: Muhammad is consoled or encouraged. At other times the voice of God rebukes him. What would this emotional biography of the prophet, told in the voice of God, look like if we pulled out second person singular passages and analyzed them together?

God sometimes praises the Prophet. Sometimes he consoles him. Sometimes he commiserates with him. Sometimes he upbraids him. The later anecdotes about the meaning of these verses are unreliable, but the text is not so opaque that we cannot analyze it in its own right. Whatever the actual social context of the story of Muhammad neglecting a blind seeker in favor of socializing with and proselytizing the pagan elite of his city, Q. 80:1–10 clearly seeks to correct not only Muhammad’s behavior but also to question his assumptions about what is important. Q. 94:1–8 clearly offers solace: “Did we not soothe your breast and lift your burden—which weighed upon your shoulders—and exalt your mention?” Then Q 94:7–8 offer instruction: “Then when you have finished, stand for worship and turn toward your Lord.”

Some comparisons with other scriptures can also illuminate this direct address to the Prophet, which if followed through the Qur’an becomes a history of the latter’s emotional life in the sense used by Norbert Elias. In Numbers 12:6–8 God is depicted as saying that he speaks to Moses “face to face” and clearly rather than in riddles. Only a few other examples of divine direct address are found in the Hebrew Bible, all of them in Genesis. God speaks with Adam and Eve, Cain, Noah and his sons, and with Abraham and Sarah. In the New Testament, only in John 12:28 does there appear to be a direct address by God to Jesus: “Then a voice came from heaven, ‘I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.’” It is used to underline Jesus’s struggle with the prospect of his imminent crucifixion and so does tell us something, obliquely, about his inner turmoil. If we read John 12:28 against some of the Qur’an passages in which God speaks to Muhammad, will it affect our perception of the latter?

---

## P21-127a

---

### Linguistic, Literary, and Thematic Perspectives on the Qur’anic Corpus

Sunday, November 21, 9:00 AM–11:30 AM

Room 225B (Meeting Room Level) - San Antonio Convention Center

**Hythem Sidky, Independent, Presiding**

*See biography above, page 35.*

**Andrew O’Connor, St. Norbert College**

Andrew J. O’Connor is Assistant Professor of Theology & Religious Studies at St. Norbert College in De Pere, Wisconsin (USA). He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Notre Dame, a M.A. from the University of Chicago, and a B.A. from the University of Wisconsin–Madison. In the 2017–18 academic year, he was the recipient of a Fulbright Research Grant to study in Amman, Jordan. Andrew’s research interests include prophetology in the Qur’an and the Qur’an’s engagement with the cultural/religious environment of Late Antiquity. He is currently preparing a monograph on the Qur’an’s conception of prophethood.

### ***Guidance Stories: A Prophetological Profile of Q al-Naml 27***

In his monograph *The Bible in Arabic* (2013), Sidney Griffith formulates a “typology of Qur’anic Prophetology,” through which he argues that the Qur’an exhibits its own distinctive concept of prophethood. Griffith’s offers a compelling typology, but one could take his analysis further and argue that the Meccan and Medinan corpora of the text each feature distinctive prophetologies as well (e.g., Durie, 2018). Scholars may in turn take this even one step further and examine the prophetological contributions of individual surahs or groupings of similar surahs. It is in the spirit of this latter endeavor that this paper analyzes the prophetological profile of Q al-Naml 27. Surat al-Naml features a unique sequence of prophetic personas. After the introductory proclamations, the surah recalls episodes involving Moses (vv. 7-14), Solomon (vv. 15-44), Salih (vv. 45-53), and Lot (vv. 54-58), with the bulk of this narrative sequence dedicated to Solomon. Moses, Salih, and Lot make regular appearances in messenger-reports elsewhere in the Qur’an, but Solomon only appears in two other sequences: Q Sad 38 and Q al-Anbiya 21.



Neither of these two reminiscences adhere to the more typical paradigm of the so-called “punishment stories” (which feature a messenger warning his people about God’s impending judgment and retribution) and instead prioritize Solomon—and his father David’s—repentance, exemplary faith, and favor from God. The pericope featuring Solomon in Q al-Naml 27 is similar to the aforementioned surahs, but unlike the other Solomon narratives it is more tailored to the model of the punishment stories. It is also noteworthy because it presents a rare example of a punishment story with a happy ending: the Queen of Sheba repents of her unbelief and therefore shirks punishment at the hands of Solomon.

Much has been said in scholarship about the pre-qur’anic and post-biblical subtext of the Qur’an’s presentation of the Queen of Sheba story (e.g., Lassner, 1993). In the present paper, however, I examine the qur’anic presentation of this story itself in light of its neighboring messenger-reports and the surah as a whole, with particular attention to the claims this surah and story makes concerning the role and mission of qur’anic messengers. I question scholars’ widespread adaptation of the “punishment stories” appellation for messenger-reports in the Qur’an more broadly, and highlight the centrality of guidance (*huda*) to the surah and its narratives in particular.

### **Gabriel Said Reynolds, University of Notre Dame**

Gabriel Said Reynolds did his doctoral work at Yale University in Islamic Studies. Currently he researches the Qur’an and Muslim/Christian relations and is the Crowley Professor of Islamic Studies and Theology in the Department of Theology at Notre Dame. He is the author of *The Qur’an and the Bible* (Yale 2018), and *Allah: God in the Qur’an* (Yale 2020), among other works.

### ***On Reported Speech in the Qur’an: A Preliminary Inquiry***

The nature of reported speech in the Qur’an, and in particular the question of its relationship to Muhammad’s historical conversations with his interlocutors, has been largely unstudied. Q al-Ankabut 29:50, for example, has his opponents say *lawla unzila ‘alayhi ayatun min rabbih* (“If only signs were sent down on him from his Lord”), but were those their very words? In secondary scholarship the answer is often assumed to be “yes” (although Nicolai Sinai, in his *Historical-Critical Introduction*, writes that while such exchanges “are not unreasonably seen as having some grounding in real debates, it would of course be naïve to treat them simply as unfiltered transcripts” [p. 14]).

In this I will offer a preliminary outline of the nature of reported speech in the Qur’an. I will approach this question from two perspectives. First, I will discuss the linguistic nature of the Qur’an’s reported speech and especially its relationship to the spoken dialects of Arabia, inasmuch as we understand them on the basis of recent epigraphical and papyrological studies (drawing on the work of Ahmad al-Jallad, Michael MacDonald, Leila Nehmé, and Sulaiman al-Theeb). This will also involve revisiting the position of Theodor Nöldeke (*Neue Beiträge zur semitischen Sprachwissenschaft*, 2–23) that the Qur’an was originally proclaimed in a fully inflected Arabic (*fusha*), which matched the spoken dialect of western Arabia (and considering also K. Vollers’ reply in his *Volkssprache und Schriftsprache im alten Arabien*, 185–95). In addition, it will involve comparing direct speech with indirect speech in the Qur’an. Second, I will consider what insights memory science, in particular as applied to New Testament scholarship, can offer for the study of direct speech in the Qur’an. Of particular interest is April DeConick’s 2008 study, “Human Memory and the Sayings of Jesus: Contemporary Exercises in the Transmission of Jesus Tradition” (also of interest: Robert McIver and Marie Caroll: “Experiments to Develop Criteria for Determining the Existence of Written Sources” [2002]). I will be careful not to take for granted that conclusions regarding the study of Jesus traditions can be applied directly to Qur’anic traditions. Instead I will ask whether these conclusions can help us ask the right questions about the nature of the Qur’an’s reported speech. In particular I will be attentive to the distinctive rhetorical strategies that the Qur’an employs in its formulation of this speech. This approach of sidestepping controversy is also observed in his views on the createdness of the Qur’an and predestination, topics that have garnered the Mu’tazila much heat from traditionalist Sunni circles. Its notoriety among later scholars notwithstanding, al-Mawardi’s *Nukat* remains an important milestone in Islamic intellectual history. It serves as a testament to a moment in Islamic history when Mu’tazili ideas were in such vogue that they entered the *tafsir* work of a prominent Shafi’i jurist. Furthermore, it speaks to the intellectual flexibility and experimentation that was characteristic of the Buyid period, such that Mu’tazili theological views co-existed side by side with views considered “orthodox” by later Sunni scholars.

### **Mourad Takawi, University of the Incarnate Word**

Mourad Takawi is assistant professor of Religious Studies at the University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio, Texas. He holds a Ph.D. and M.T.S from the University of Notre Dame and an M.A. and B.A. from the American University in Cairo. His current research focuses on qur'anic interpretation and reception in the formative and classical Islamic period(s).

#### ***“The Arboreal Presentation of Mu ammad and the Believers in Q Al-Fath 48”***

This paper investigates the concluding presentation of the Prophet Muhammad and the believers in Q al-Fath 48:29. More specifically, it sheds light on the arboreal presentation of the Prophet and the believers in the Inviolable Place of Prostration (*al-masjid al-haram*), which is cast in a biblical mold—specifically invoking their image (*mathal*) in the Torah and the Gospel. Departing from discussions of direct allusions to the biblical text (most notably Deuteronomy 6 and 11, and Mark 4—to the *tawrah* and *injl*, respectively), this paper proposes to examine the imagery against the backdrop of arboreal representations of the faithful in Eastern Late Antiquity. Not only will this provide a helpful framing for reading the floral/arboreal motifs in the surah as whole, but will it also shed light on the verse's implied connection between prayer and sowing, which culminates in the ensuing arboreal imagery. Unlike the late antique Syriac Christian presentations, however, here it is Muhammad and the believers, and not God, who both sow and emblemize the shooting tree in the midst of the Inviolable Place of Prostration.

To this end, the present study departs from the hermeneutic pressures exerted by the overemphasis on the militant diction and imagery typically associating the surah with the conquest of Mecca, and instead invites a focus on the floral/arboreal motifs associated with the believers in general and with the Prophet specifically in the surah. The paper will comprise three parts: first, an investigation of the semantic field around the believers in the surah, particularly its the running floral/arboreal motif which reaches its climax in the concluding verse and its presentation of the believers in their vegetative stage worshipping in the Inviolable Place of Prostration; second, an overview of the fluid floral/arboreal presentation of the faithful in select key works such as the *Didascalia* and the *Odes of Solomon*, as well as a selection from the poetry of Ephrem;

lastly, a concluding discussion on the particularities of the (Medinan) qur'anic arboreal presentation of the Prophet, the believers, and the unbelievers (special attention will be paid to the contrast with Q al-Hadid 57:20).

### **Eric DeVilliers, University of Notre Dame**

Eric DeVilliers is a third-year Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Theology at the University of Notre Dame. He holds an M.T.S. in the History of Christianity from the University of Notre Dame and a B.A. in Religious Studies from Yale University. His research focuses on the development of *Kalam* and Islamic Origins.

#### ***“Is There No Doubt About the Hour?: The Limits of Prophetic Knowledge and the Historical Muhammad”***

In its polemics and exhortations, the Qur'an repeatedly decries the ignorance of its opponents, who “do not know” God's clear signs from nature or the divine character of God's miracles (e.g., Q al-Araf 7:187). The Qur'an's rhetoric, however, provokes the question of what kind and amount of knowledge could be expected of believers and, more pressingly, of Muhammad as God's prophet. Nowhere is this question more vexing than in Muhammad's preaching of “the Hour”, where some verses seem to detail the character of the Hour, others strongly imply that Muhammad believed the eschaton to be imminent, and yet still others disavow the possibility that a prophet could ever know its arrival. While much has been written on the eschatological aspect of qur'anic prophetic knowledge, this paper seeks to contribute to this discussion by asserting that prophetic agnosticism regarding the Hour is bound to the Qur'an's prophetic discourse. Muhammad's claim to prophethood was compared to those of Moses and 'Isa, and the limits of his prophetic knowledge were re-presented as a doctrinal response against Jews and Christians. Even in passages that appear to acknowledge the historical Muhammad's political successes, there is opposition from the qur'anic audience which nevertheless rejects the qur'anic verses despite their use of biblical imagery and parables (e.g., Q Al-An'am 6:36-47, Q al-Qamar 54:45-46). This paper argues that in announcing the Hour, Muhammad was understood as a messianic figure and, as such, was expected to possess eschatological power and knowledge akin to Jesus and Moses. However, his divergence from these expectations despite his professed similarities required a rapprochement that can be seen in the qur'anic text.

From this observation, it will argue that Muhammad responded to biblical and late antique apocalyptic traditions by utilizing them to assert the solely human nature of the prophets. As such, the agnosticism of the Hour is a crucial textual witness to a historical progression whereby the historical Muhammad reconciled the prophetic careers of Moses and Jesus to his own. The historical Muhammad may have begun his prophetic career by grounding his authority in the vindication that the imminent arrival of the Hour would bring, but the Hour's function in the text transitions to a doctrine that delineated the human prophet from the one God. This paper, then, argues with Stephen Shoemaker that the arrival of the Hour was fundamental to the qur'anic faith preached by Muhammad, but qualifies that its importance shifted as Muhammad confronted continued skepticism from Jews and Christians towards his prophethood. Evidence from prophetic movements and personages from Late Antiquity, such as Aphrahat, illuminate the late antique prophetic expectations with which Muhammad conversed, and show that the qur'anic rhetoric surrounding knowledge of the end of the world represents a conscious break with this model after previously having aligned itself with it.

---

## P21-231b

---

### Linguistic, Literary, and Thematic Perspectives on the Qur'anic Corpus

Sunday, November 21, 1:00 PM–3:30 PM  
Room 225B (Meeting Room Level) - San Antonio Convention Center

#### Andrew O'Connor, St. Norbert College, Presiding

Andrew J. O'Connor is Assistant Professor of Theology & Religious Studies at St. Norbert College in De Pere, Wisconsin (USA). He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Notre Dame, a M.A. from the University of Chicago, and a B.A. from the University of Wisconsin–Madison. In the 2017–18 academic year, he was the recipient of a Fulbright Research Grant to study in Amman, Jordan. Andrew's research interests include prophetology in the Qur'an and the Qur'an's engagement with the cultural/religious environment of Late Antiquity. He is currently preparing a monograph on the Qur'an's conception of prophethood.

#### Han Hsien Liew, Arizona State University

Han Hsien Liew is an assistant professor of Islamic Studies in the School of Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies at Arizona State University. He obtained his Ph.D. in History and Middle Eastern Studies from Harvard University. His research interests include Islamic political thought; premodern Islamic scholarly culture and transmission of knowledge; qur'anic exegesis (*tafsir*); Islamic historiography; and Islam in Southeast Asia. He is currently working on a monograph on the political thought of the twelfth-century Hanbali scholar and preacher, Ibn al-Jawzi. His research has been published in journals such as *Arabica* and the *Journal of the American Oriental Society* and in the edited volume, *New Trends in Qur'anic Studies: Text, Context and Interpretation*, edited by Mun'im Sirry.

#### *Sidestepping Controversy: A Reassessment of al-Mawardi's Mu'tazili Leanings in His Qur'anic Exegesis*

The Shafi'i jurist al-Mawardi (d. 1058) is best known today for his works on Islamic law and political thought. But his work of qur'anic exegesis (*tafsir*), *al-Nukat wa-l-'uyun fi tafsir al-Qur'an*, remains understudied, especially when compared to those of al-Tabari, al-Zamakhshari, and al-Razi. Yet among al-Mawardi's writings, the *Nukat* was the work on which most of his biographers fixated when they accused him of espousing Mu'tazili views on certain matters of theology. For instance, Ibn al-Salah (d. 1245), the author of a biographical dictionary of Shafi'i jurists, devotes half of his biographical entry on al-Mawardi to this very issue, deeming the *Nukat* to be harmful to its reader's faith because it contains "unorthodox" Mu'tazili views presented in a concealed fashion. Ibn al-Salah's allegations that al-Mawardi's harbored closeted Mu'tazili views would be transmitted in later biographical dictionaries, including those by al-Subki, al-Suyuti, and al-Dawudi. This paper evaluates these allegations by revisiting al-Mawardi's *Nukat*, particularly his commentaries on verses pertaining to three theological issues: God's attributes (*sifat Allah*), the createdness of the Qur'an (*khalq al-Qur'an*), and predestination (*qadar*). With regard to the verses on God's attributes, although al-Mawardi does introduce a myriad of interpretations that are metaphorical in nature and in line with the Mu'tazili belief that God cannot have any human attributes, for the most part, he avoids wading into controversial discussions and does not delve into the debates that surround these verses. At times, he simply glosses over a verse without providing commentary.

### Jáchym Šenkyřík, Charles University

Jáchym Šenkyřík is a Ph.D. candidate in the field of Philosophy of Religion at Charles University in Prague, Czechia. His Ph.D. research focuses on the qur'anic views of the 'religious other' and the qur'anic discourse about interrelations between people of different faiths. It thus combines the interests in the qur'anic studies, interhuman relations, the impact of the ubiquitous processes of othering on these relations, and how the qur'anic texts cope with these processes.

#### ***Rhetorical Strategies Used in the Qur'an for Creating the 'Other': Examples from Surahs 5 and 9***

In academia, there exist today many important studies dealing with the issue of sources of the Qur'an's polemics towards people of different faiths (esp. Jews and Christians). They posit the question, with what type of Christians or Jews or other non-Muslims was the Prophet's *ummah* in contact? (Cf. studies since Geiger 1833 until today; more recently, for example, Van Riel 2019; Slade 2014; Gilliot 2011; etc.). However, in recent years another perspective has emerged that has shifted its focus from the external circumstances to the internal use of the "Qur'an's creative rhetoric" (Reynolds 2014; cf. also Hoffmann 2020; Hawting 1999; Griffith 2011; etc.). It focuses on the usage of various rhetorical devices in Qur'an's polemics with different groups of people. This contribution follows the latter perspective in order to ask the question of what rhetorical tools the qur'anic texts utilize in polemics with different faiths for creating the opposition between the "Other" and the "Self." This opposition establishes a specific symbolic role for the "Other," helping the "Self" to differentiate itself from the "Other." The follow-up questions then ask about the purpose of creating this kind of contrasting imagery. Why are these particular rhetorical devices deployed for creating the image of the "Other"? Furthermore, are there also instances that problematize these oppositional stances? These questions will be answered by looking deeply at the two surahs revealed among the latest to Prophet Muhammad, Q al-Ma'idah 5 and Q al-Tawbah 9. These surahs bear much polemical material towards non-Muslims, in which can be discerned the creative usage of rhetoric (cf. Q 5:17f, 59ff, 72f, 116; 9:30f, 109, etc.). On the other hand, some verses also problematize the clear distinction between the "Self" and the "Other" (cf. esp. 5:43ff; 9:1ff).

This contribution will thus show how the Qur'an's powerful rhetoric (hyperbole, irony, metaphor, vocatives, etc.) is used in order to create the opposing images between "Self" and "Other" as well as the purpose of this contrasting imagery in its immediate literary context.

### Daniel Bannoura, University of Notre Dame

Daniel Bannoura is a Palestinian Ph.D. student in Qur'anic Studies at the University of Notre Dame. He received a B.S. degree in Physics from the University of Florida, an M.A. degree in Theology from London School of Theology, and a second M.A. degree in Islamic Studies from the University of Chicago. His research interests include redaction criticism of the Qur'an, Palestinian Theology, and Christian-Muslim relations. His first book publication, *An Introduction to the Qur'an*, written in Arabic, is forthcoming in 2022. Daniel is married to Shannon, and lives in South Bend, Indiana.

#### ***A Critical Literary Examination of Q 38: Its Theology and Redaction History***

Q Sad 38 can be divided into four primary sections: 1. The prologue of the disconnected letter *sad* and an oath (vv. 1-3), 2. a narration of a disputation between a *mundhir* (warner) and his community, which is understood to be between the prophet Muhammad and the leaders at Quraysh (vv. 4-8a); 3. A divine response to the results of the disputation that draws heavily on narratives found in the Hebrew Bible (vv. 8b-70); and 4. a pericope about the rebellion of Iblis (vv. 71-88). Prima facie the surah seems disjointed as its structure and themes appear to be haphazardly stitched together. This paper examines the content and structure of the surah in order to make sense of the process it undertook in its content and development until its final redaction in the Qur'an that we have today. The paper does this through a close analysis of both the syntax and the themes of the surah. When it comes to the syntax, the paper notes the changes in rhymed prose (*saj'*) at the verse endings (*fawasil*) or in the middle of verses, and the enallages (*iltifat*) dispersed through the text. Paying close attention to the various grammatical markers helps us, at least tentatively, to understand the development of the text of the surah. As for the themes, the paper looks into the reception of the introductory disputation pericope in the Islamic tradition through its "occasions of revelation" (*asbab an-nuzul*) and early tafsir traditions, and attempts to connect it with the biblical narratives that immediately follow.

Once a thematic connection is established between the disputation pericope and biblical material, we can attempt to reach reasonable conclusions about the process that led to the inclusion of all of this material in the surah to comprise a complete whole. This eventually leads to the finale in the Iblis pericope that connects, albeit loosely and awkwardly, with the rest of the material preceding it. At the end of the analysis the paper proposes a theory about the process of redaction that the surah went through where it developed from an original proto-surah based on the traditional understanding of the life and ministry of the prophet that was supplemented with biblical material in order to form a coherent narrative of the surah that follows the prophetic tropes found in biblical literature and elsewhere in the Qur'an.

### **Hythem Sidky, Independent Scholar**

Hythem Sidky is the Executive Director of the International Qur'anic Studies Association. His research combines expertise in the sciences with a specialization in qur'anic manuscripts and reading traditions. He holds an M.S. in applied mathematics and Ph.D. in biomolecular engineering from the University of Notre Dame. Hythem's dual background allows him to bring together traditional philology and mathematical analysis to study the dynamics and evolution of the Qur'an in early Islam. He has worked on the stemmatics of qur'anic manuscripts, reconstruction of regional oral traditions, and continues to investigate applications of stylometry to the Qur'an.

### ***Consonantal Dotting in the 'Uthmanic Archetype***

It is often assumed that the earliest qur'anic codices are free of consonantal dotting. However, material evidence has shown that the earliest extant manuscripts all contain some degree of consonantal dotting. I have previously discussed consonantal dotting in the canonical reading traditions (qira'at) vis-à-vis early qur'anic manuscripts. During the course of that project, I noticed the presence of consonantal dotting agreement across a number of early manuscripts. In many cases, this agreement spanned different manuscript regionalities. Based on this observation, I propose the possibility that consonantal dotting can be reconstructed back to the 'Uthmanic archetype in the same manner as the skeletal text. An alternative hypothesis is also considered where the existence of an archetypal oral tradition independently informed the consonantal dotting in those manuscripts.

On this basis, I revisit the definition of Qur'anic Consonantal Text (QCT) as used in the field today. Finally, I discuss proposed emendations to the QCT, such as those suggested by Luxenberg, in light of these new findings.

---

## **PV21-348**

---

### **The Qur'an and Late Antiquity (IQSA)**

Sunday, November 21, 4:00 PM–6:30 PM  
Virtual

Theme: ***The Prophet and the Prophetic in the Qur'an (2)***

#### **Johanne Louise Christiansen, University of Southern Denmark, Presiding**

Johanne Louise Christiansen, Ph.D., is Assistant Professor at the Department of the Study of Religions, University of Southern Denmark. Her research focuses on the application of theoretical perspectives from other research fields, such as the study of religions, to the Qur'an. Among Christiansen's recent work are the article "God Loves not the Wrongdoers (zalimun): Formulaic Repetition as a Rhetorical Strategy in the Qur'an" (*Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 22/1, 2020, 92-132) and the forthcoming book *The Exceptional Qur'an: Flexible and Exceptive Rhetoric in Islam's Holy Book* (Gorgias Press, 2021).

#### **Emran El-Badawi, University of Houston**

Emran El-Badawi is Associate Professor and Program Director of Middle Eastern Studies, as well as Department Chair of Department of Modern and Classical Languages at the University of Houston. He is author of *The Qur'an and the Aramaic Gospel Traditions*, and co-editor of *Communities of the Qur'an: Dialogue, Debate and Diversity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. He is writing a book about female power and male prophecy in late antique Arabia. He teaches courses on Islamic civilization as well as the modern Middle East, and is a contributor to *Forbes*, *The Houston Chronicle*, and *The Christian Science Monitor*.

### “Contesting Female Power in Q 53”

The classical exegetes believed Muhammad was haunted by the influence of the pagan goddesses—Allat, al-‘Uzza and Manat—even after his prophetic ministry. Islamic tradition blames the sole episode of ‘false prophecy’ experienced by Muhammad on Satan’s distortion of Q 53:19–22. The story goes that Satan caused Muhammad to condone rather than condemn the cult of the daughters of Allah. This episode is known as the “story of the cranes” (*qissat al-gharaniq*); and it was reimagined and popularized in Salman Rushdie’s modern adaptation called *The Satanic Verses*. What medieval scholars and modern authors neglect is that this scandal is tied to the appropriation of female power by the new cult of the Abrahamic God.

The locus of female power in the Qur’an, and its confrontation with male power, is Q 53. Its title, “The Star” (*al-najm*), evokes the long tradition of late antique Arabian astrology and star gazing, referenced elsewhere in the corpus, and which otherwise shape the complex Qur’anic worldview, especially its cosmology, propheticology and apocalypticism. It is the only surah to explicitly list the pagan goddesses—Allat, al-‘Uzza and Manat—while addressing its audience. Q 53 is a unique source fusing together female power and male prophecy. This is because it is simultaneously a literary text and a documentary witness. There is, of course, ample scholarship on the many fascinating and rich dimensions of this chapter. It links the celestial and terrestrial, pagan and Judeo-Christian, historical and metaphysical, female and male; and it therefore serves as a sort of window into female power in late antique Arabia.

This paper examines Q 53’s form and content. I tentatively present its composition in four units: a series of two prophetic traditions, an alternate prophetic vision, and a “priestly” interpolation.

I explore these four textual units, its conversation with biblical and Near Eastern traditions, its connection to the demise of ancient Arabian peoples (esp. ‘Ad and Thamud), and then demonstrate its role in demoting the ubiquitous Arabian cult of high goddesses to “daughters of Allah.” They were likely successors to the “daughters of Il” worshipped in various pre-Islamic urban Arabian communities, as demonstrated in Old South Arabian and Palmyrene inscriptions. However, I argue the encroachment of Abrahamic religions, notably Christianity, made their demotion inevitable. This was a necessary part of the campaign to promote and endorse the cultic veneration of a single male God.

### Diaa Abdelmoby, University of Copenhagen

Diaa Abdelmoby is a third-year Ph.D. student in the Section of Biblical Studies, Faculty of Theology at the University of Copenhagen. He holds a B.A. in Arabic language and literature and an M.A. in Qur’anic exegesis (*tafsir*) from Cairo University. His research interests are in the areas of Islamic studies, literary criticism, rhetoric, and linguistics. Currently, he participates in the research project *Ambiguity and Precision in the Qur’an*, in which he studies the literary and rhetorical aspects of ambiguity in Qur’anic language. In 2019, he published an article entitled “Ambiguity and Vagueness in the Qur’an: A Semantic Investigation into Significant Examples.”

#### “Ambiguity as a Bridging Identity: The Role of Semantic Ambiguity in Forming the Prophetic Identity of Muhammad”

While Muhammad’s prophethood as presented in the Qur’an has been thoroughly investigated historically and theologically, it remains to be studied from a linguistic-rhetorical perspective. This study is a result of research conducted in the frame of the *Ambiguity and Precision in the Qur’an* project in which I work as a Ph.D. fellow. The project is held at the University of Copenhagen under the supervision of Professor Thomas Hoffmann. The study aims to explore the role of Qur’anic language in shaping Muhammad’s identity as a prophet through analysis of a number of early Meccan passages, i.e., Q al-‘Alaq 96:1–5; Q al-Muddaththir 74:1–7; Q al-Muzzammil 73:1–11; Q al-Duha 93:6–11; Q al-Sharh 94; Q al-Kawthar 108. The analysis focuses on ambiguity, which I define as the existence of at least two probable interpretations of a stretch of speech, as it appears in a number of polysemous words such as *rabb*, *muzzammil*, *muddaththir*, *yatim*, and *dall*. Other relevant techniques receive attention: second-person pronouns, the vocative, the active participle, and rhetorical questions. The American theorist Kenneth Burke (d. 1993) offers exciting methodological possibilities that could be exploited in studying the rhetorical aspects of ambiguity. According to Burke, the need for rhetoric arises when experiential ambiguity (that stems from life experience) interacts with symbolic ambiguity (that stems from language). In this interaction, ambiguity is effectively utilized as a rhetorical strategy. I combine Burke’s ideas with theoretical concepts belonging to identity studies such as self-identity, identity change, and role identity. The analysis reveals that ambiguity functions as a strategic management tool for overcoming identity uncertainty.

By identification, the central concept in Burke's rhetoric, ambiguity creates a bridging identity: a certain type of identity that links past biographical experience (e.g., orphanage which is mentioned in Q. 93:6) with a current role (as a prophet). In qur'anic expression, ambiguity is deployed to transfer the prophet from the stage of *ya-ayyuha'l-muddaththir* ("O thou shrouded in thy mantle") in Q. 74:1 to the stage of *ya-ayyuha'n-nabiyiy* ("O Prophet") in Q. 33:1. This finding suggests that qur'anic scholarship needs to reconsider qur'anic ambiguity not as a translation problem or a source of puzzlement but as a rhetorical device employed to achieve purposes. Besides, the insights gained from this study may be of assistance to reassess some of the various frameworks of qur'anic chronology that has been developed in Western qur'anic scholarship so that the chronological order of qur'anic chapters and passages could be constructed based not only on circumstances of Muhammad's religious career but also on the rhetorical development of his prophetic identity.

#### **Mehdi Azaiez, Université catholique de Louvain**

Mehdi Azaiez is Professor of Islamic Studies at the Université catholique de Louvain in Belgium. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Provence. His main fields of research are Qur'anic Studies and early Islam. He published *Le Contre-discours coranique* and co-edited the *Qur'an Seminar*. He is a contributor to *Le Coran des Historiens*.

#### **"A (Im)possible Biography of the Qur'anic First Addressee"**

As is well known, the Qur'an is by no way a biography of Muhammad. As a text of exhortation in which various literary genres (narration, praise, description, polemic) are mixed, it remains an indispensable historical source, but incomplete and allusive to identify the probable contours of an exceptional prophetic career. In this context, what can we expect from a reading of the Qur'an in the (impossible) undertaking of writing a biography of Muhammad?

It will be argued here that it is possible to analyze the presence of a 'first addressee', that is, a primary addressee to whom the divine voice in the Qur'an is primarily addressed and whom Islamic tradition identifies with Muhammad. Starting from a mapping of this presence in the Qur'an as a whole, our analysis will present the distribution, forms and functions of this addressee throughout the qur'anic text (Part I).

The analysis will continue with a description of the types of relationships that develop between the speaker (divine voice) and the first addressee by determining possible breaks and developments in this relationship (Part II). Finally, these last results will be the occasion to question the characteristics and the staging of the "prophetic" experience in the Qur'an (Part III).

#### **Michael Pregill, Chapman University**

Michael Pregill is a scholar of comparative religion, focusing on the scriptural cultures of Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Much of his research focuses on the reception of biblical, Jewish, and Christian traditions in the Qur'an and Islam. His monograph *The Golden Calf between Bible and Qur'an: Scripture, Polemic, and Exegesis from Late Antiquity to Islam* (Oxford University Press, 2020) is the recipient of the 2021 American Academy of Religion Award for Excellence in the Study of Religion (Textual Studies). He is currently a lecturer at Chapman University in Orange, California and a postdoctoral fellow of the ERC Synergy Project 'The European Qur'an,' pursuing a new project entitled "Re-Orienting Geiger: Revisiting the Jewish Foundations of Western Qur'anic Studies."

#### **"Is There a Prophet in This Text? The Qur'anic Author and the State of Muhammad Studies"**

This paper will comment on significant trends in the study of Muhammad as the source and context for the revelation and composition of the Qur'an over the last several years. Scholarship produced during the resurgence in research and publishing on the Qur'an in the mid-2000s often reflected a pervasive agnosticism concerning the source of the Qur'an and its connection to the revelatory context described in the sirah tradition; this agnosticism continues in many quarters today and is a common feature of research presented and published by IQSA and other scholarly venues. At the same time, over the last decade or so numerous scholars have returned to an approach to the Qur'an that directly links it to the historical Muhammad and evaluates the text through recourse to traditional sources for the biography of the Prophet. Here, I will respond to various aspects of the papers presented during this two-part panel, as well as analyzing the perspective on the historical Muhammad and the origins of the Qur'an reflected in several recent publications.

**The Qur'an: Manuscripts and Textual Criticism (IQSA)**

Monday, November 22, 9:00 AM–11:30 AM  
Virtual

**Marijn van Putten, Independent Scholar, Presiding**

Marijn van Putten is currently an unaffiliated researcher (previously Leiden University) focusing on the textual history of the Qur'an and the linguistic history of Arabic and qur'anic Arabic specifically. He is currently focused on the history of non-canonical reading traditions as they appear in early qur'anic manuscripts, and in January he will start a research project at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, focusing on a specific group of Basran B.II-style manuscripts whose vocalisation reflect a non-canonical reading tradition.

**Daniel Alan Brubaker, Independent**

Daniel Alan Brubaker is a postdoctoral researcher on physical corrections in early Qur'an manuscripts. He is the author of *Corrections in Early Qur'an Manuscripts: Twenty Examples*; other books and editions are forthcoming. Brubaker is a co-founder of Qur'an Gateway and is developing further tools and material to serve scholars of Islam in late antiquity. In the summer of 2020, he began the YouTube channel Variant Quran

***Judging the significance of single occurrence non-orthographic Qur'an manuscript variants***

Early Qur'an manuscripts contain many *rasm* variants and physical corrections. A subset of these may easily be attributed to orthographic developments, and another group may certainly be attributed to scribal error. The former will be, for the most part, easily discerned, and it is sometimes possible to discern the latter is the case as well. The existence of other manuscripts or fragments that follow either the standard *rasm* or a known variant at the same verse, with probable time of production contemporary or prior to the subject, provides one piece of evidence in support of the single occurrence non-orthographic manuscript variant being a mere scribal error. However, there is sometimes reason to suppose that there is more to the picture. In this paper, I present and discuss instances of single-occurrence corrections and variants, drawn from a variety of Qur'an fragments from the 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries A.H., whose particular features suggest to me that they should not be dismissed too quickly as mere instances of scribal error.

**Adam Flowers, University of Chicago**

Adam Flowers is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Chicago. His primary research interests include the genres of qur'anic discourse, the Qur'an's textual history, and early Arabic papyri.

***P.Utah.Ar.120: A Late-7<sup>th</sup>/Early-8<sup>th</sup>-Century CE Qur'anic Quotation on Papyrus***

Belonging to the University of Utah's Arabic Papyrus, Parchment, and Paper Collection, P.Utah.Ar.120 is an eleven-line papyrus document that exhibits a late-7<sup>th</sup>/early-8<sup>th</sup>-century CE Arabic script. The structure of the document suggests that it is a personal letter between two individuals, and, most intriguingly, lines seven and eight include a near complete quotation of Q al-Zukhruf 43:69-70. The document's potentially early dating combined with the inclusion of Q 43:69-70 position P.Utah.Ar.120 as one of the earliest known qur'anic quotations in papyrus. This presentation will begin with an introduction to P.Utah.Ar.120 complete with a full transcription and translation of the text. It will proceed to argue for a late-7<sup>th</sup>/early-8<sup>th</sup>-century CE dating for the document based on orthography and literary conventions; additionally, the presentation will argue that the document, based on its overall structure, is a personal letter. Having established the appearance of an extended qur'anic quotation in an early-Islamic letter, the presentation will explore how P.Utah.Ar.120 both elucidates the ways in which the Qur'an was used by early Muslims in non-devotional contexts and confirms the existence of a standardized and widely-known edition of the Qur'an text by the early 8<sup>th</sup> century CE.

**Yousef Wabb Aly, Faculty of Law, University of Windsor**

Yousef Wabb teaches Islamic Law at the University of Windsor, Faculty of Law. He holds an LL.M. from Windsor Law and a Bachelor in Islamic Studies from Al-Azhar University. He serves as the Research Director of the Qur'anic Studies Department at Yaqeen Institute for Islamic Research, a Research Intern at the Stanford Muslim Mental Health & Islamic Psychology Lab, and the Muslim Chaplain of the University of Windsor.



### ***Qur'an vs Qira'at: Early Legal Discourses on Textual Authenticity***

*Qira'at* extend beyond recital renditions or exegetical traditions to theological conceptions of the Qur'an, its legal authority, and textual authenticity. Evolving around the same text, Islamic disciplines outlined an interdisciplinary framework to synthesize Qur'anic Studies. While theologians were concerned with the textual inimitability as a manifestation of God's speech, legal theoreticians (*usulis*) scrutinized its jurisprudential authority within the dichotomy of primary and secondary sources of law. In investigating the authenticity of oral and written transmission, Qur'an scholars (*qurra'*) sought to standardize the canonized readings. Despite the Qur'an becoming a closed text after the 'Uthmanic systemized print, the canonization of its *qira'at* continued over four centuries without agreed-upon criteria. This lengthy filtering process eventually established a tripartite taxonomy of canonical readings peculiar to that of the *usulis* who tried to limit the scope of canonical readings to maintain consistent legal interpretations. Furthermore, *usulis* incorporated, later, a theological-legal distinction between Qur'an and *qira'at* in response to the disputed authenticity of the text. Early Islamic legal and exegetical literature (8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries), concomitant to the establishment of the doctrinal legal schools (*madhahib*), relied on a wider array of *qira'at* than the later seven to ten dominant readings. The multi-layered meaning phenomena of *qira'at* influenced the deriving of legal rulings by confirming an agreed-upon opinion, outweighing one opinion over another, reconciling between conflicting opinions, extending the application of certain rulings, or clarifying an ambiguous meaning intended by the lawgiver. Moreover, *qira'at* triggered theoretical debates pertaining to distinguishing the preserved holy book from its variant readings, reducing the legal authority of non-canonical readings by equating them to verdicts of the Prophet's companions (*qaww al-sahabi*) as secondary sources of law, and synthesizing textual additions (*ziyadah 'ala al-nass*) of non-canonical readings as signals for abrogated verses (*naskh*). These debates paralleled evolving discourses of the epistemic principle of "true narrative" and the hadith concept of *tawatur*, denoting boundaries of legal certainty. There is sparse academic literature analyzing the impact of *qira'at* on the law.

While *qira'at*'s canonization and history are fairly studied in academia, "the idea that specific types of readings were generated through early legal discourses has not been fully probed" (Shah, 2016, p. 203). In tracing these interdisciplinary interactions through the prism of Qur'an's manuscript tradition, I seek to discuss how early *usulis* (8<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> centuries) defined Qur'an and characterized sources of law prior to *qira'at*'s prolonged canonization and taxonomy.

#### **Mohsen Goudarzi, Harvard University**

Mohsen Goudarzi is Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies at the Harvard Divinity School. His research focuses on the Qur'an, its relationship to the intellectual developments of Late Antiquity, and its history of interpretation in Muslim exegesis. Currently, he is working on his first book project, which proposes a new reading of major elements of the qur'anic worldview, including the Qur'an's conception of scriptural and prophetic history.

#### ***Pagans, Jews, and the Torah in Late Antique Arabia***

The ninety-first verse of Q al-An'am 6 has proven puzzling to scholars of the Qur'an. This verse opens by criticizing those who claim that "God has sent down nothing to a human being," a claim that seems to stem from the Prophet's pagan opponents. However, to rebut this claim, the verse adduces the precedent of the Torah ("the book that Moses brought") and reminds its addressees that "*you* make it [the Torah] into documents (*qaratis*) that *you* display, while you conceal much." The rebuttal thus seems addressed to the Jews, who cherished the written Torah in their learning and piety. Some scholars have been content to note these contrasting indications about the verse's addressees without attempting a resolution (e.g. Rudi Paret, *Der Koran: Kommentar und Konkordanz*, 147). Others have suggested that the verse originally addressed the Meccan pagans but was supplemented in Yathrib—by the phrase "you make it [the Torah] into documents that you display, while you conceal much"—to reflect displeasure with the town's Jewish authorities (Richard Bell, *A Commentary on the Qur'an*, 1:197). More recently, the late Patricia Crone claimed that this verse addresses only the pagans and shows that far from being scripture-less, they were "in the habit of copying [Mosaic revelations] on papyrus sheets" (*The Qur'anic Pagans and Related Matters*, 1:111).

In this paper, I argue that the best solution to the puzzling features of Q 6:91 is departure from its dominant reading. Specifically, the skeletal Arabic text that is rendered as “you make it into documents, which you display, while you conceal much” should be read as featuring third-person verbs instead of second-person ones, that is to say, as “they make it into documents, which they display, while they conceal much” (*yaj'alumahu qaratisa yubdunaha wa-yukhfuna kathiran*). This reading eliminates the apparent oscillation in the target audience of this verse, which should be seen as addressing the pagans in its entirety. In addition to making a case for this reading, the paper examines the invocation of the Torah in Q 6:91. As alluded to earlier in the surah (v. 7) and elsewhere in the Qur'an (e.g. Q al-Qasas 28:48), the pagans seemed to have disparaged the Qur'an as inferior to the Torah on account of the former's piecemeal and oral manner of dissemination. The qur'anic text under consideration may be countering this disparagement by noting that, at least in its present form and for practical purposes, the Torah is fragmented (into scrolls?) and of limited availability to outsiders. The paper ends by discussing the material form of the Written and Oral Torah in Late Antiquity, and the significance of orality to the qur'anic self-image.

#### **Muammar Zayn Qadafy, Freiburg University**

Muammar Zayn Qadafy is a fourth-year Ph.D. student in the Department of Islamic Studies at Albert-Ludwig Universität, Freiburg. He holds his M.A. and B.A. in Qur'anic Studies from Sunan Kalijaga University, Yogyakarta. His research focuses mainly on the development of the diachronic-chronological reading of the Qur'an from its early time to the current development. He is also interested in the history of *tafsir* literature in non-Arabic speaking regions, especially Indonesia. Among his publications is “Qur'anic Exegesis for Commoners: A Thematic Sketch of Non-Academic *Tafsir* Works in Indonesia”.

#### ***An Early Chronological Interpretation of the Qur'an (Ibn 'Atiyyah [d. 542/ 1147] on the Zakah Verses***

In terms of presentation, two types of qur'anic commentaries are known: Those whose composition is based on the arrangement of the 'Uthmanic *mushaf* are synchronic, while those which follow a particular chronological arrangement is diachronic in style. Considering that books of the second genre began to appear quite recently (Darwazah [1964], al-Dizuri [1965], al-Maidani [2000], al-Jabiri [2008]), it is suggested that attention to the chronological interpretation of the Qur'an in the Islamic World emerged only after the rise of the historical-critical research to the Qur'an in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Western Scholarship. This paper challenges this kind of understanding. It argues that a kind of chronological-diachronic awareness of the qur'anic meanings had been possessed by the Sixth-century Andalusian exegete, Ibn 'Atiyyah, although he wrote his *tafsir* book in a synchronic style. This paper examines Ibn 'Atiyyah's commentary on seven *zakah* verses (Q al-Araf 7:156, Q al-Naml 21:3, Q Fussilat 41:7, Q al-Baqarah 2:43, 277, Q al-Ma'idah 5:55, Q al-Tawbah 9:71), which represent the Meccan, Early Medinan, and Last Medinan revelation according to the traditional theory of chronology. The macro-analysis is carried out by approaching *al-Muharrar* as a commentary that collects, summarizes and refashions its seven sources: (1) *Jami' al-bayan* of Tabari (d. 310/923), (2) *Ma'ani al-Qur'an* of al-Zajjaj (228-310/842-922), (3) *Ma'an' al-Qur'an* of al-Nahhas (d. 338/949), (4) *al-Kashf wa-l-bayan* of Tha'labi (d. 427/1035), (5) *al-Tahsil li-Fawa'id Kitab al-Tafsir al-Jami' li-'ulum al-tanzil* of al-Mahdawi (d. 430/1039), and (6) *al-Hidayah ila Bulugh al-nihayah* of Makki Ibn Abi Talib (d. 437/1046). This study finds that Tabari and his true admirer, Ibn Abi Talib had in hand wealthy traditional materials. However, the two exegetes do not have a diachronic awareness to them due to their loyalty to the synchronic methodology of displaying Qur'anic commentary on the one hand and to the structural analysis of the Qur'anic verses on the other. A chance to make the exegetical materials chronologically tell a story is even smaller in the commentaries of Zajjaj, Nahhas, and Tha'labi and Mahdawi. Unlike his predecessors, Ibn 'Atiyyah has maintained his chronological awareness when accommodating three meanings of the Qur'anic *zakah*, conforming to three distinctive periods of revelation. More than that, Ibn 'Atiyyah consistently uses this chronological framework to read other qur'anic keywords related to *zakah*, such as *sadaqah*, *infaq*, and *haqq ma'lum*.

## Devin Stewart, Emory University

Devin Stewart earned a B.A. in Near Eastern Studies from Princeton University in 1984 and a Ph.D. in Arabic and Islamic Studies from the University of Pennsylvania in 1991. He now teaches in the Department of Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies at Emory University in Atlanta. His areas of scholarly interest include the Qur'an, Shiite Islam, Islamic legal scholarship, biography, autobiography, speech genres, and other topics in Arabic and Islamic studies. He is the author of *Islamic Legal Orthodoxy* (Utah University Press, 1998) and *Disagreements of the Jurists* (NYU Press, 2015) and a co-author of *Interpreting the Self* (University of California Press, 2002). He has written a number of studies on Qur'anic rhyme and rhythm, on form criticism of the Qur'an, and on other topics in Qur'anic studies.

### *Typological Language in the Qur'an*

Attention to typology began some time ago in Qur'anic Studies, but it has grown slowly and gradually. Focused studies that recognize typology as a fundamental feature of Qur'anic discourse include Michael Zwettler's typological analysis of Q al-Shu'ara' 26 (1990), a similar analysis by Sidney Griffith (2013), and an analysis of Q al-Qamar 54 by Devin J. Stewart (2000). Angelika Neuwirth discussed typology as in *Der Koran als Text der Spätantike* (2010), and a forthcoming volume edited by Islam Dayeh, based on the proceedings of a conference at the Freie Universität in Berlin in 2015, will be devoted primarily to Qur'anic typology. The present study focuses on one facet of the topic, examining the language in which the Qur'an couches typological arguments. Some of the terms used may be expected, such as the conjunction *kama* "as" or "just as," which generally serves a comparative or analogical function and is often pressed into the service of typology.

The term *mathal* "example, likeness" has been thoroughly examined in a series of studies on Qur'anic parables, and scholars in that tradition argued that *mathal*, in some of its occurrences, represents the Qur'anic term for "type" in a typological sense, beginning with the work of Hartwig Hirschfeld (1902) and culminating in the study of Theodor Lohmann (1966). This result should be recognized as valid and important, despite the fact that it has not been incorporated into Qur'anic Studies generally. Franz Rosenthal has already noted that the Qur'an emphasizes the relative chronology and that the term *qabl-*, "before," played a crucial role in establishing this chronology. What he did not stress, however, is that *qabl-* has a crucial typological function in the Qur'an. The term *qablaka* "before you (sing.)," addressed to Muhammad, not only reports that other prophets preceded him but also implies that they were similar and parallel to him, pre-figurations of him in his role as prophet. Similarly, the terms *qablakum* "before you" and *qablahum* "before them," referring to the Prophet's audience, do not simply report that historical peoples were also addressed by earlier prophets, but also suggest that those audiences were parallel to the Prophet Muhammad's audience and models for their behavior. Attention to these and related terms throws significant light on Qur'anic typology, while also explaining some of the misconceptions that have arisen in Qur'anic Studies scholarship regarding the portrayal of history in the sacred text.



River Walk San Antonio, Texas at Night (Adobe Stock Image)



# WORLD RELIGIONS WORLD CHURCH

Notre Dame's World Religion World Church Program, in the Department of Theology offers Ph.D. and M.T.S. degrees in Islamic Studies and Comparative Theology

- Hosts "Exploring the Qur'an and the Bible" on YouTube
- Organizes conferences and scriptural reasoning
- Visit us on Facebook (NDWRWC) and [theology.nd.edu](http://theology.nd.edu)



UNIVERSITY OF  
NOTRE DAME

THEOLOGY

# Reports

---

---

## Executive Summary

It is with great pleasure that the International Qur'anic Studies Association (IQSA) holds its 2021 annual meeting virtually and in-person in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. This year's conference hosts multiple sessions with dozens of presenters and discussants coming from across the globe. The following report by the executive director summarizes the progress of IQSA throughout 2021 as well as forthcoming plans.

### ***Governance***

The board held its spring 2021 Annual Meeting virtually. The executive director reported to council IQSA's financial, operational, and administrative activity. The board discussed updates within the standing committees and remains committed to convening the next Annual Meeting in collaboration with the Biblioteca La Pira, Palermo, Italy in the Summer of 2022.

### ***New Website***

The executive office has been working with a design agency throughout most of 2021 to rebuild the IQSA website from the ground up. The new website will be more modern and mobile-friendly. It will feature a new weekly blog, drawing on scholarship from our growing member base. It will also launch with new initiatives including master classes, conference recordings, and webinars—all hosted by leading scholars of qur'anic studies. The new platform will serve to further IQSA's mission of advocating for the field of qur'anic studies in the public square. We hope that the new website will also increase member engagement and add value to an IQSA membership. Stay tuned for more exciting news!

### ***Membership & Benefits***

Paid memberships are now over 300—an 18% increase—with lapsed or unpaid members down to 75. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, revenue is up 19%. Past and future IQSA members are kindly instructed to continue paying their annual membership dues manually until further notice. IQSA currently has seven lifetime members, and four institutional members.

### ***Donations & Sponsorships***

IQSA has been receiving installments from the Windsor Foundation periodically, totaling \$10K. We are immensely grateful to the foundation for their longtime support and look forward to continued future partnership. Nonetheless, the general climate of uncertainty makes your donations and service necessary during times of need. We thank members and partners for years of generous giving—thank you. IQSA is an independent tax-exempt 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. This means that our world class programming and publishing is only possible through your generosity and participation. Senior colleagues, professionals, and partner organizations are especially encouraged to give generously. You may feel inclined to sponsor a particular cause—such as publications, annual or international meetings, general or graduate receptions, and so on. If you believe in fostering qur'anic scholarship, building bridges, and using scholarship as a means for peace and mutual understanding—***please give***. Please make your tax-deductible donation at [members.iqsaweb.org/donate](https://members.iqsaweb.org/donate).

### ***Expenditure & Operations***

Annual expenditure by the end of 2021 is approximately \$26k (up from \$14K in 2020 but below \$29K in 2019). The significant increase is mostly due to the costs associated with the development of the new website. Given the decrease in typical expenditures this year as a result of the pandemic, it represented the ideal time to pay for the cost of website development. Revenue from membership is up 19% and advertising remains unchanged. Nonetheless, IQSA is looking to further diversify its revenue streams. *Members' assistance and feedback are most welcome.*

### ***Online Discussion Group***

Join the **new Google group** to share ideas, discuss, and collaborate with other scholars and members of IQSA. Join by visiting [groups.google.com/g/IQSAdiscussion](https://groups.google.com/g/IQSAdiscussion).

## IQSA Nominations Committee

The Nominating Committee oversees all nominations suggesting a number of suitable candidates for most IQSA leadership positions, through a process of consultation and discussion with the Board of Directors. After the Board, with discretionary powers for emendations and suggestions, approves a ranked list, the Nominating Committee reaches out to the nominees. During 2021, the nominating committee consisted of four members: Johanna Pink and Karen Bauer, who are also members of Council, Stephen Burge and Nora K. Schmid.

This year, the Committee had to fill a number of important positions beginning in 2020, partially by reappointment, and partially by appointing new candidates.

Nevin Reda has been appointed as a new member of the Nominating Committee while Nora K. Schmid, who is already a member of the Committee, will replace Alba Fedeli who has concluded her term as chair of the Committee.

The Committee nominated Fred Donner as the new president-elect of the association to replace Asma Hilali when her position as the president of the Board of Directors will end.

We have appointed Halla Attallah and Lien Iffah Naf'atu Fina as representatives of the students to contribute to the activities of the Programming Committee.

Nicolai Sinai has been renominated as the general editor of JIQSA for a second term.

In its deliberation, the Committee sought to balance a large number of requirements an ideal candidate would fulfil, including a scholar's commitment to IQSA, public profile, and contribution to the field.

Among the suitable candidates, we also sought to balance IQSA's leadership in terms of gender, religious commitments, and geographic representation, issues whose importance continues to grow.

My position as chair of the Committee will end in December 2021 and it has been a great pleasure and honour to be in contact with many IQSA colleagues for serving the association in such a position. I want also to express my gratitude to all new, current, and parting members of the board and of the nominations committee for the work during this past year.

Alba Fedeli  
Chair, Nominating Committee

## IQSA Publications & Research Committee

First convened in December 2013, the IQSA Publications and Research Committee (PRC) is tasked with supervising the various branches of the IQSA publishing division. These include the annual *Journal of the International Qur'anic Studies Association (JIQSA)*, the monthly book review known as *Review of Qur'anic Research (RQR)*, and the IQSA monograph series known as *IQSA Studies in the Qur'an (ISIQ)*.

*JIQSA*. IQSA has released five volumes to date of its flagship annual publication, the *Journal of the International Qur'anic Studies Association*, edited by Nicolai Sinai (assistant editor Saqib Hussain). *JIQSA 6* will be released in late 2021. It will include articles by Devin Stewart, Todd Lawson, Marijn van Putten, Ahmad al-Jallad, Sidney Griffith, Michael Pregill and Iqbal Abd El-Raziq. For full digital access to all volumes of *JIQSA*, become a member of IQSA. Submissions are currently invited for volume 7. *JIQSA* has historically had a fast turnaround time between submission and publication, so it has become a popular venue for young as well as accomplished scholars. Please contact Profs. Nicolai Sinai, Saqib Hussain or Gabriel Said Reynolds ([reynolds@nd.edu](mailto:reynolds@nd.edu)) for more information.

*RQR*. Edited by Shari Lowin, the *Review of Qur'anic Research* continues to publish its popular monthly book reviews. Recent releases include Mona Siddiqui on Carlos A. Segovia, *The Quranic Jesus: A New Interpretation*; Reuven Firestone on Michael Pregill, *The Golden Calf between Bible and Qur'an: Scripture, Polemic, and Exegesis from Late Antiquity to Islam*; Ameena Yovan on Gabriel Said Reynolds, *Allah: God in the Qur'an*; and Holger Zellentin on Zishan Ahmad Ghaffar, *Der Koran in seinem religions- und weltgeschichtlichen Kontext: Eschatologie und Apokalyptik in den mittelmekkanischen Suren*. These and more are available via the membership portal of the IQSA website. Members can also sign up to have them delivered directly to your inbox as they are released, a regular and timely advantage of IQSA membership. You can also be counted among the honored *RQR* reviewers by contacting Professor Lowin through the IQSA website/*RQR* (*RQR* especially welcomes female reviewers and will happily receive suggestions of works by female scholars to be reviewed).

The *ISIQ* Monograph Series is edited by David S. Powers. *ISIQ* has released the English translation and updated edition of Michael Cuypers' *A Qur'anic Apocalypse: A Reading of the Thirty-Three Last Sūrahs of the Qur'ān* (2018), Mun'im Sirry (ed.), *New Trends in Qur'anic Studies: Text, Context and Interpretation* (2019). This volume includes an introduction by the editor and fifteen essays presented at the IQSA conference held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia in August 2015. *ISIQ* is happy to announce the forthcoming publication of *Qur'anic Studies: Between History, Theology, and Exegesis*, ed. Mehdi Azaeiz and Mokdad Arfa Monsia with essays in English, French, and Arabic. In addition three monograph projects are in preparation for submission to *ISIQ*. New manuscripts are welcome for submission. Please contact Prof. David Powers or Gabriel Said Reynolds ([reynolds@nd.edu](mailto:reynolds@nd.edu)) for more information.

Gabriel Said Reynolds  
Chair, Publications & Research Committee

## IQSA Programming Committee

IQSA's Programming Committee (PC) is responsible for the academic content of the Annual Meeting and reports to the Board of Directors. It approves new program units, oversees the operation of existing ones, and shapes future meetings in the light of its evaluation of past ones. The current shape of IQSA's program units is as follows:

1. Linguistic, Literary, and Thematic Perspectives on the Qur'anic Corpus  
Chairs: Anne-Sylvie Boisliveau and Mohsen Goudarzi
2. The Qur'an: Manuscripts and Textual Criticism  
Chairs: Marijn van Putten and R. Michael McCoy
3. The Qur'an and the Biblical Tradition  
Chairs: Nora K. Schmid and Holger Zellentin
4. Qur'anic Studies: Methodology and Hermeneutics.  
Chairs: Khalil Andani and Celene Ibrahim
5. Surah Studies  
Chairs: Nevin Reda and Shawkat Toorawa
6. The Qur'an and Late Antiquity  
Chairs: Johanne Louise Christiansen and Michael Pregill
7. The Societal Qur'an  
Chairs: Johanna Pink and Lauren Osborne

The Programming Committee would like to take this opportunity to thank previous chairs, including Alba Fedeli, Shady H. Nasser, and Karen Bauer, for their many years of service, and to welcome Marijn van Putten, R. Michael McCoy, Celene Ibrahim, and Lauren Osborne into the fold. The Societal Qur'an has also officially been added as the seventh program unit.

The call for papers for IQSA's 2021 meeting was published in January, and later in the spring a total of 65 submissions had been received and reviewed by the session chairs. At the 2021 meeting, IQSA's seven programming units will hold a total of ten sessions. The conference has been planned for a hybrid format, with eight virtual panels and two in-person panels in San Antonio. A virtual Presidential Address has also been timetabled for the meeting.

The Programming Committee would also like to express gratitude to everyone (co-chairs, the SBL programming committee, and IQSA's wider membership) who put in extra time and effort to accommodate the many transitions and uncertainties we have had to navigate in these difficult times.

Andrew O'Connor  
Chair, IQSA Programming Committee



### ***Qur'an in Contact: Plurality of Views from Other Traditions, Disciplines and Peripheries***

The fifth international meeting of IQSA was virtually hosted by the La Pira Library and Research Institute in Palermo, Italy on July 5–10. Scholars and colleagues from the La Pira and IQSA have worked jointly towards putting together this event and gathering all of us to share our research and discover new approaches in studying the Qur'anic text. Scholars of various backgrounds and disciplines presented their paper and convened online from at least fifteen countries from California, USA to Kerala, India. The call for papers invited scholars to submit proposals in any topic within the range of the interests of the Qur'anic text encouraging in particular papers that explore the *Qur'an in contact: Plurality of views from other traditions, disciplines and peripheries*.

Thus, scholars submitted proposals for both panels and single papers that covered a broad range of topics and approaches, from theology and philosophy to archaeology, epigraphy, linguistic and digital humanities, thus shedding light on contacts between the Qur'an and other traditions and disciplines. Five panels and twenty-five single proposals on diverse topics were selected by Andrew O'Connor, Johanna Pink and Alba Fedeli. The single papers were easily grouped together and became six panels, sign of the common research interests of scholars in Qur'anic Studies all over the world.

Devin Stewart opened the first panel on *Scripture, Epigraphic Corpora, Gnosticism, and Beda Venerabilis* presenting a paper on the nature of scripture as it is presented in the Qur'anic text, while Valentina Grasso explored the use of the words Allāh and al-Ra mān, comparing the Qur'an with the epigraphic corpora of late antique Arabia and Abdulla Galadari focused on the idolatry as it is presented in the Qur'an. The panel was closed by Thomas Eich who proposed a new interesting hypothesis about the intertexts and possible travels of models that connect Ibn Hishām's Sīra and the *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*. The second panel on *Characters, Narratives, and Strategies in the Qur'anic Text* hosted papers on Hud and Salih and the structures of the two stories in Surat Hud (by David Penchansky); the story of Isaac almost being sacrificed as narrated in the Rabbinic literature and al-Ṭabarī (by Madeline Wyse); the account of the

faithful group of believers in Jesus and its allusion to the Gospel of Luke (by Mohammad Ghandehari); the narrative of Solomon as part of the discursive strategies that the Qur'an employs from ancient biblical stories for persuading its audience (by Mustapha Tajdin) and the concept of knowledge through the analysis of the use of cognitive verbs that convey subjectivity and intersubjectivity with reference to God and the addresses of God's speech (by Yehudit Dror). Papers on the Islamic notion of *ḥijra* and its connection with the *ḥanīfī* religion (by Jacob Kildoo); on the word *anīf* (by Ivan Dyulgerov); the Ismaili Muslim Neoplatonic view of revelation (by Khalil Andani) and post-Talmudic forms of Palestinian Judaism as the key tradition that shaped the type of Arabian Judaism (by Holger Zellentin), were presented in the third panel on *Qur'anic Perspective and Other Views*. Stephen Burge organized a panel on *Miracles and Magic: Explorations in the Qur'an and the Supernatural* to explore different aspects of the supernatural, namely the connection between the Qur'an and the miracles story of Muhammad in the earliest sīra works (Rebecca Williams); the prophetic miracles in the Aḥmadī and Sunnī exegetes (by Nebil Husayn) and the refutation of magic in Mu ammad Abduh's and Rashīd Riḍā's *Tafsīr al-Manār* (Stephen Burge). The fifth panel on *Theology, Mysticism, and Pluralism* hosted Reza Akbari presenting a paper on Mulla Sadra's interpretation of the Qur'an; Adnane Mokrani looking in the Qur'an for elements that support a radical nonviolent reading and go beyond the just war theory; Munshid Falid Wadi with Angela Bivol reflecting on the Qur'an's teachings of pluralism, mutual respect and dialogue while Shameer Sulaiman focused on the *wahdat-e-din* (unity of all religions) of Abul Kalam Azad in his Qur'an Commentary *Tarjuman-ul-Quran*. Two panels covered diverse topics related to the *Carriers of the Text and Readings*. Carriers referred to the materiality of the carriers in terms of manuscripts, illustrations, printed editions and amulets. Thus, Beena Butool investigated the nature of Qur'anic amulets as medical intervention inside Islamic West Africa; Hagit Nol presented archaeological, epigraphic and papyri data of early mosques in connection with depictions of early mosques in Qur'anic manuscripts; Marijn van Putten as well explored data from a corpus of Qur'anic

manuscripts to analyse their layer of pre-canonical and non-canonical Basran readings and lastly, Abdallah El-Khatib moved to the early printing of the text, describing the Hinckelmann edition of the Qur'an and the manuscripts that he used for producing this edition. A further panel on *Carriers of the Text and Readings* was co-organized by Alicia González Martínez and Alba Fedeli to present the text in its digital medium and digital tools applied to the study of the Qur'an. Thus, their panel *The Qur'an in Light of Digital Humanities* hosted Thomas Milo describing his new approach to Arabic text editing in the official Qur'an edition of the Sultanate of Oman; Hythem Sidky presented statistical methods for identifying unknown Qur'an readings in manuscript variations and lastly, Menwa Alshammeri, Abdallah Alsaleh and Shatha Altammami presented three papers on artificial intelligence and machine learning for analysing and understanding the Qur'anic text, like for example measuring semantic similarity between verses of the Qur'an or between hadith and verses of the Qur'an. Johanna Pink presented some preliminary results of her current research on the Global Qur'an in the panel that she organized on *Qur'an Translation and its Exegetical Dimension*. She opened the panel with a paper on the construction and reconstruction of the Qur'an's meaning through translation built on exegetical traditions. Then, Sohaib Saeed explored that aspect presenting the specific case of the translation and exegesis of the episode of Abraham who was ordered by God to kill and chop up four birds while Gulnaz Sibgatullina focused on the mechanisms of creating an Islamic language in the translation of Qur'an commentary in Türki-Tatar and Mykhaylo Yakubovych gave a comprehensive overview of the translations of the King Fahd Qur'an Printing Complex exploring their translation strategies. Francesca Badini and Francesco Cargnelutti, from La Pira Library, coordinated five papers on *Anti-imperialism in Contemporary Qur'anic Exegesis*, namely on Sayyid Qutb's Conception of Jihād against the Ṭawāgīt of the New Jāhiliyyah (by Riccardo Amerigo Vigliermo); the political thought of Rachid Ghannushi and his interpretation of Qur'anic passages (by Francesco Cargnelutti); the anti-imperialism in the *tafsīr* of the Azharite scholar Mu ammud al-Ghazālī (by Francesca Badini); the anti-capitalism and cultural imperialism in the *tafsīr* of Bāqir al-Ṣadr (by Pietro Menghini) and lastly, the *tafsīr* performed in Cape Town's Claremont Main Road Mosque about the oppressed to legitimize the mosque's socio-political mission (by Margherita

Picchi). The tenth panel on *Women in the Qur'an and Using the Qur'an: Its Lexicon, Interpretations, Exegesis, History, Geography, and its Use to Demand Women's Rights* presented a joint paper by Karen Bauer and Feras Hamza on a historical-critical approach to the women in the Qur'an following the Qur'anic chronology proposed by Nicolai Sinai and then addressing the coherence of the Qur'anic text regarding the subject of women; Abla Hasan proposed a new interpretation of the controversial verse Q.4:34 and Orhan Elmaz explored into publications of the late Ottoman empire to analyse the presence of specific verses cited in the feminine discourse.

The eleventh and last panel on was organized by Andrea Pintimalli on *Medieval Falsafa and the Qur'an: A Changeable Relationship*. He coordinated papers on the Mu'tazilah rationalization as a valid philosophical system to Islamic metaphysics of divine unity and divine justice (by Syed Muhammad Waqas); a paper on rationality and mystical approach in al-Ghazali presented by Ines Peta; an analysis of an alchemical reading of the scripture in the works of the Moroccan alchemist-poet Ibn Arfa Ra s suggested by Richard Todd, while Andrea Pintimalli presented a paper on al-Bīrūnī's studies on other religious traditions and his use of the Qur'an as a normative source and a joint paper with Vincenzo Muggittu on ancient Greek philosophy and Qur'anic theology in al-Bīrūnī.

The conference hosted the launch of the new book written by Johanne Louise Christiansen, on *The Exceptional Qur'an: Flexible and Exeptive Rhetoric in Islam's Holy Book*, published in September by Gorgias Press.

Despite the online format, the conference hosted by the La Pira has been a very lively, inclusive, inspiring and enjoyable event that created new contacts among scholars in Qur'anic studies thus confirming IQSA's mandate as an international academic association to help scholars meet and share their knowledge and discuss their hypotheses and analyses. The enthusiastic and generous support of the whole La Pira team in hosting the online conference has been fundamental in making possible this successful event that every speaker and attendee hope to repeat in person in Palermo next year.

# Participation and Membership

## ***IQSAweb.org***

*IQSAweb.org* has all the information necessary for you to benefit from IQSA and for you to get involved. On this site, visitors can familiarize themselves with IQSA's governance, resources, and programs, as well as learn about its policies, vision, and history. To receive updates, subscribe online by entering your e-mail address where it states "Follow IQSA by E-Mail" on the left margin of IQSA's website.

## **Online Discussion Group:**

Join the IQSA Google Discussion Group to share ideas, discuss, and collaborate with other scholars and members of IQSA. Join by logging in to Google Groups and searching "International Qur'anic Studies Association." Then click "Apply to Join Group"!

## **Weekly Blog Updates:**

The IQSA blog has attracted widespread international interest and participation of scholars, students, and the general public. The blog includes weekly updates about IQSA, information on its academic meetings (North American and International), schedules for other conferences and colloquia taking place around the world, and various stories and reports on new research. IQSA strongly encourages all those working on new and exciting Qur'anic Studies projects to contribute to the IQSA blog.

## **Become a Member of IQSA:**

Become a member of IQSA, join from the IQSA website, located under "Membership & Governance." Be sure to follow *IQSAweb.org* for updates about this and other matters. Through the website, members will receive access to our publications, including:

- ☞ *Review of Qur'anic Research*
- ☞ Membership Directory
- ☞ Bilingual English-Arabic *Journal of the International Qur'anic Studies Association*

If you are interested in getting involved, writing for the IQSA blog, or have advertising or other inquiries, please write to [contactus@iqsaweb.org](mailto:contactus@iqsaweb.org). Do not forget to find IQSA on Facebook and Twitter!

## **Donate:**

Support IQSA's work by making a tax-deductible contribution. Donate online at [members.iqsaweb.org/donate](http://members.iqsaweb.org/donate) or e-mail us at [contactus@iqsaweb.org](mailto:contactus@iqsaweb.org).

## **Advertise with Us**

IQSA is the first and only learned society of its kind devoted to the critical investigation of the Qur'an, encompassing a broad community of scholars, students, publishers, and members of the public. IQSA encourages advertising partnerships and opportunities in the following capacities:

1. **Advertise in the Annual Meeting Program Book** – Every year the International Qur'anic Studies Association holds an Annual Meeting in conjunction with the Society of Biblical Literature/American Academy of Religion, attracting a wide audience in the scholarly community from across the nation. The accompanying Program Book published by IQSA is read by hundreds at the Annual Meeting and thousands around the world, providing a critical platform for relevant businesses market their publications and services. Email [contactus@iqsaweb.org](mailto:contactus@iqsaweb.org) to reserve an advertising space today!
2. **Advertise in Print** – IQSA provides advertising space in three of its flagship publications: the *Journal of the International Qur'anic Studies Association (JIQSA)*, the monthly *Review of Qur'anic Research*, and the forthcoming monograph series *IQSA Studies in the Qur'an (ISIQ)*. Email [contactus@iqsaweb.org](mailto:contactus@iqsaweb.org) for details.
3. **Advertise Online** – While IQSA does not currently hold a physical headquarters, its website serves as the central meeting point and face of the organization visited by hundreds of members and non-members every day. Email [contactus@iqsaweb.org](mailto:contactus@iqsaweb.org) to inquire about advertising with us online via [www.iqsaweb.org](http://www.iqsaweb.org).
4. **Send an Email to IQSA Members** – IQSA will send emails on behalf of publishers and other advertisers of interest to our members. The publisher/advertiser is responsible for composing the email. Please contact the Executive Office at [contactus@iqsaweb.org](mailto:contactus@iqsaweb.org) for more information.

# IQSA Mission and Strategic Vision

---

## **Mission Statement:**

Foster Qur'anic Scholarship

## **Strategic Vision Statement:**

The International Qur'anic Studies Association is the first learned society devoted to the study of the Qur'an from a variety of academic disciplines. The Association was founded to meet the following needs:

- ☞ Regular meetings for scholars of the Qur'an
- ☞ Cutting edge, intellectually rigorous, academic research on the Qur'an
- ☞ A bridge between different global communities of Qur'anic scholarship
- ☞ Regular and meaningful academic interchange between scholars of the Bible and scholars of the Qur'an
- ☞ Involvement of Islamic scholarly institutions and faith communities

The Association offers its members opportunities for mutual support, intellectual growth, and professional development through the following:

- ☞ Advancing academic study of the Qur'an, its context, its relationship to other scriptural traditions, and its literary and cultural influence
- ☞ Collaborating with educational institutions and other appropriate organizations to support Qur'anic scholarship and teaching
- ☞ Developing resources for diverse audiences, including students, faith communities, and the general public
- ☞ Facilitating broad and open discussion from a variety of academic perspectives
- ☞ Organizing congresses for scholarly exchange
- ☞ Publishing Qur'anic scholarship
- ☞ Encouraging and facilitating digital technology in the discipline
- ☞ Promoting cooperation across global boundaries

## **Core Values:**

- |                    |                         |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| ☞ Accountability   | ☞ Openness to Change    |
| ☞ Collaboration    | ☞ Professionalism       |
| ☞ Collegiality     | ☞ Respect for Diversity |
| ☞ Critical Inquiry | ☞ Scholarly Integrity   |
| ☞ Inclusivity      | ☞ Tolerance             |

# Announcing IQSA Meetings 2022

---

Given ongoing uncertainty as a result of the pandemic, IQSA's 2022 conference schedule is still being deliberated. IQSA encourages submission of papers delivered at the any of the organization's meetings for publication in the *Journal of the International Qur'anic Studies Association*.

The official Call for Papers for the Annual Meeting will open in December with a deadline of March 2022. All those interested should be subscribed to the blog on *IQSAweb.org* in order to remain updated and receive further details on the conference, program units, and Call for Papers.

---

## Call For Papers

---

### *Journal of the International Qur'anic Studies Association*

The *Journal of the International Qur'anic Studies Association (JIQSA)* commenced publication annually in 2016, with Michael E. Pregill and Vanessa De Gifis serving as its founding editors. Articles are rigorously peer-reviewed through a double-blind review process, with reviewers appointed by the Head Editors in consultation with the Editorial Board.

The journal's launch reflects a time of particular vitality and growth in Qur'anic Studies, and its primary goal is to encourage the further development of the discipline in innovative ways. Methodologies of particular interest to the journal include historical-critical, contextual-comparative, and literary approaches to the Qur'an. We especially welcome articles that explore the Qur'an's origins in the religious, cultural, social, and political contexts of Late Antiquity; its connections to various literary precursors, especially the scriptural and parascriptural traditions of older religious communities; the historical reception of the Qur'an in the west; the hermeneutics and methodology of Qur'anic exegesis and translation (both traditional and modern); the transmission and evolution of the *textus receptus* and the manuscript tradition; and the application of various literary and philological modes of investigation into Qur'anic style and compositional structure.

The journal's website, including additional information and contact details, can be found at [lockwoodonlinejournals.com/index.php/jiqsa](http://lockwoodonlinejournals.com/index.php/jiqsa). For more information on the International Qur'anic Studies Association, please visit [www.iqsaweb.org](http://www.iqsaweb.org).

#### **Editors:**

Nicolai Sinai, University of Oxford / Pembroke College, UK (volumes 3 and following)

Michael E. Pregill, University of California, Los Angeles, USA (volumes 1 to 3)

Vanessa De Gifis, Wayne State University, USA (volumes 1 and 2)

#### **Editorial Board:**

Anne-Sylvie Boisliveau, University of Strasbourg, France

Majid Daneshgar, University of Otago, New Zealand

Vanessa De Gifis, Wayne State University, USA

Reuven Firestone, Hebrew Union College, USA

Asma Hilali, University of Lille, France

Marianna Klar, University of Oxford, UK

John Reeves, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, USA

Sarra Tlili, University of Florida, USA

Shawkat Toorawa, Yale University, USA

# Review of Qur'anic Research

---

The *Review of Qur'anic Research (RQR)* is an online companion to the International Qur'anic Studies Association (IQSA). IQSA is committed to the advancement and dissemination of high quality scholarship on the Qur'an and to the facilitation of deeper understandings of the Qur'an through scholarly collaboration. *RQR* is an online resource that features reviews of cutting-edge scholarship in the field of Qur'anic Studies and allied fields.

**Reviewers:** Our editorial board solicits reviews from appropriate academic reviewers for each volume reviewed. *RQR* editors request that reviewers write their review in a timely manner (usually 90 days) and in accordance with best scholarly practices. Authors who wish to submit their own reviews for consideration are considered on a case by case basis.

**Submissions:** While *RQR* acts mainly as a clearinghouse for the review of new scholarly publications (monographs, translations, edited texts, reference works, etc.), published works of cultural and religious significance that fall outside the traditional domain of academic publication may also be reviewed. Publishers and authors who wish to submit their publications for review in *RQR* should contact the *RQR* editor Shari Lowin (Stonehill College) at [rqr@iqsaweb.org](mailto:rqr@iqsaweb.org).

**Editor:** Shari L. Lowin is Professor of Islamic and Jewish Studies in the Religious Studies Department of Stonehill College. Her research centers on the interplay between Islamic and Jewish texts in the early and early medieval Islamic periods, focusing mainly on exegetical narratives. She is the author of *The Making of a Forefather: Abraham in Islamic and Jewish Exegetical Narratives* as well as *Arabic and Hebrew Love Poems of al-Andalus, a study of these exegetical narratives in the desire poetry of Spain*. Her current project reexamines the qur'anic verses attributed to the Jews in light of the midrash and piyyut.

All inquiries can be directed to the *RQR* editor, Shari Lowin (Stonehill College) at [slowin@stonehill.edu](mailto:slowin@stonehill.edu).

# People

---

---

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

---

### **Asma Hilali, University of Lille, President**

Asma Hilali is a Research Associate at the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London and an Associate Professor in Islamic Studies at the University of Lille. She gained her PhD from l'École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris. She has worked in various research centres in Germany, France and the United Kingdom. Her main interest is related to the transmission of religious literature in early and mediaeval Islam, and the issues of how religious texts were used and what impact this use had on their forms and contents.

### **Mehdi Azaiez, KU Leuven**

Mehdi Azaiez is Professor of Islamic Studies at the Université catholique de Louvain in Belgium. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Provence. His main fields of research are Qur'anic Studies and early Islam. He published *Le Contre-discours coranique* and co-edited the *Qur'an Seminar*. He is a contributor to *Le Coran des Historiens*.

### **Karen Bauer, Institute of Ismaili Studies**

Karen Bauer (Ph.D., Princeton University, 2008) is a Research Associate in the Qur'anic Studies Unit of the Institute of Ismaili Studies, where she researches the Qur'an and Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsir*). She has published widely on *tafsir* and on gender in Islamic thought and has recently begun a project on emotion in the Qur'an. Her publications include *Gender Hierarchy in the Qur'an: Medieval Interpretations, Modern Responses, and Aims, Methods, and Contexts of Qur'anic Interpretation (ed.)*, and she has written articles on topics such as women's right to be judges in medieval Islamic law, the potential and actual audiences for medieval *tafsir*, and the relationship between documentary evidence and *tafsir* in contracts of marriage.

### **Shari Lowin, Stonehill College**

Shari L. Lowin is Professor of Islamic and Jewish Studies in the Religious Studies Department of Stonehill College. Her research centers on the interplay between Islamic and Jewish texts in the early and early medieval Islamic periods, focusing mainly on exegetical narratives.

She is the author of *The Making of a Forefather: Abraham in Islamic and Jewish Exegetical Narratives* as well as *Arabic and Hebrew Love Poems of al-Andalus, a study of these exegetical narratives in the desire poetry of Spain*. Her current project reexamines the Qur'anic verses attributed to the Jews in light of the midrash and piyyut. She is the editor of the *Review of Qur'anic Research*.

### **Johanna Pink, Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg (Germany)**

Johanna Pink is professor of Islamic Studies at the Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, Germany. She taught at Freie Universität Berlin and the University of Tuebingen. Her main fields of interest are the transregional history of *tafsir* in the modern period and Qur'an translations with a particular focus on transregional dynamics. She is the Principal Investigator of the research project "GloQur – The Global Qur'an" and general editor of the *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an Online*. Her most recent monograph is entitled *Muslim Qur'anic Interpretation Today* (Equinox, 2019).

### **Devin J. Stewart, Emory University**

Devin Stewart is Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies at Emory University. His research has focused on Islamic law and legal education, the text of the Qur'an, Shi'ite Islam, Islamic sectarian relations, and Arabic dialectology. His published works include *Islamic Legal Orthodoxy: Twelve Shi'ite Responses to the Sunni Legal System* and a number of articles on leading Shi'ite scholars of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. His work on the Qur'an includes "Saj' in the Qur'an: Prosody and Structure" in the *Journal of Arabic Literature* and "Rhymed Prose" in the revised edition of the *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*.

### **Sarra Tlili, University of Florida**

Dr. Tlili is a scholar of Arab and Islamic studies. She graduated from the University of Pennsylvania, department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilization. Her primary research interests are stylistics of the Qur'an, animals in Islam and Arabic literature. Among the courses she has taught are "The Qur'an as Literature" and "Sustainability in Arabic Texts."

**Holger Zellentin, University of Cambridge, Chair**

Holger Zellentin is Professor of Religion and Jewish Studies at the University of Tübingen. He holds a Ph.D. from Princeton University, and has previously held faculty appointments at the Graduate Theological Union and the University of California, Berkeley, at the University of Nottingham, and at the University of Cambridge. Zellentin works on Hellenistic and Rabbinic Judaism and on the relationship of the Qur'an to late antique law and narrative. His publications include *The Qur'an's Reformation of Judaism and Christianity: Return to the Origins*, *The Qur'an's Legal Culture: The Didascalia Apostolorum as a Point of Departure*, and *Rabbinic Parodies of Jewish and Christian Literature*.

**Suleman Dost, University of Toronto, Secretary**

Dr. Suleyman Dost is an Assistant Professor of Late Antiquity and Early Islam at the University of Toronto. He received his PhD from the University of Chicago in 2017. Dr. Dost's research and teaching interests include history of late antique Arabia and Ethiopia, pre-Islamic Arabian epigraphy and Qur'anic Studies. He is currently completing a book manuscript on the historical, religious and linguistic context of the Qur'an's origins through a study of pre-Islamic inscriptions from the Arabian peninsula.

**Hythem Sidky, Independent Scholar – Ex Officio**

Hythem Sidky specializes in the written and oral transmission of the Qur'an in early Islam. He holds an M.S. in applied mathematics and a Ph.D. in chemical and biomolecular engineering. His research combines mathematical and statistical analysis with traditional philology applied to Qur'anic manuscript and reading traditions. Hythem is part of the DFG-AHRC project InterSaME (The intertwined world of the oral and written transmission of sacred traditions in the Middle East).

---

**Executive Office****Hythem Sidky, Independent Scholar – Executive Director and Treasurer**

*See biography above, page 54.*

**Lien Iffah Naf'atu Fina, Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia**

Lien Iffah Naf'atu Fina is a lecturer at the Department of Qur'anic Studies, Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University Yogyakarta, Indonesia. She obtained a Master's degree from the Hartford Seminary, where she wrote a thesis on al-Baqillani's manuscript on miracles and magic.

Her research interests include modern-contemporary Qur'anic hermeneutics, receptions of the Qur'an in every day Muslim life, the Qur'an and magic, and intertextual study among scriptures. This year she commences Ph.D. studies at the University of Chicago Divinity School, where she aims to work on the place of the Qur'an in contemporary Sufi communities in Indonesia.

**Anne Marie McLean – Executive Assistant**

Anne Marie McLean is the Executive Assistant for the International Qur'anic Studies Association. She studied Religious Studies and Political Science at Emory & Henry College and received a Masters of Theological Studies at Emory University. She completed her second Masters of Library and Information Studies through the University of Alabama and works professionally as a Reference Librarian & Outreach Coordinator at Pitts Theology Library (Emory University).

**Justin Novotny – Blog Coordinator – Catholic University of America**

Justin began graduate school at the Catholic University of America in 2014. He earned his master's in Medieval and Byzantine Studies in 2016 and is currently completing dissertation under the guidance of Lev Weitz. Justin's dissertation examines narratives about Ethiopia within the Islamic literary tradition. While at CUA, he studied both Arabic and Syriac, and his broader research interests include Qur'anic Studies, Muslim-Christian relations, and Islamic history. Before coming to CUA, Justin completed a Masters of Liberal Arts at St. John's College in Santa Fe, NM and taught high school history and English for three years.

---

**Programming Committee****Andrew O'Connor, St. Norbert, Chair**

Andrew J. O'Connor is Assistant Professor of Theology & Religious Studies at St. Norbert College in De Pere, Wisconsin (USA). He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Notre Dame, a M.A. from the University of Chicago, and a B.A. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In the 2017-18 academic year, he was the recipient of a Fulbright Research Grant to study in Amman, Jordan. Andrew's research interests include eschatology in the Qur'an and the Qur'an's engagement with the cultural/religious environment of Late Antiquity. He is currently preparing a monograph on the Qur'an's prophethology.



---

**Cecilia Palombo, Princeton University**

Cecilia Palombo is a PhD student in Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University. She researches aspects of social, political and intellectual history in the pre-modern Middle East, the documentary cultures of Arabic-, Coptic- and Aramaic-speaking groups, the transmission of the Qur'an, and the role of religious organizations in government making. She has been a member of IQSA since 2015.

**Asma Hilali, University of Lille**

See biography above, page 53.

**Thomas Hoffmann, University of Copenhagen**

Thomas Hoffmann is Professor (with special responsibilities) in Qur'anic Studies at the Faculty of Theology, University of Copenhagen. M.A. in Comparative Religion and Ph.D. on the dissertation *The Poetic Qur'an: Studies on Qur'anic Poeticity* (Harrassowitz Verlag 2007). Most recent publication in English: "The Appealing Qur'an: On the Rhetorical Strategy of Vocatives and Interpellation in the Qur'an," JQS 22.1, 2020. Currently, he is Principal Investigator for the Danish Research Fund project "Ambiguity and Precision in the Qur'an."

**Michael E. Pregill, University of California, Los Angeles**

Michael E. Pregill's areas of specialization are the Qur'an and its interpretation; Islamic origins; Muslim-Jewish relations; and the reception of biblical, Jewish, and Christian traditions in the Qur'an and Islam. He is co-chair of the IQSA Qur'an and Late Antiquity program unit. His monograph *The Golden Calf between Bible and Qur'an: Scripture, Polemic, and Exegesis from Late Antiquity to Islam* was published by Oxford University Press in 2020.

**Gabriel Said Reynolds, University of Notre Dame**

Gabriel Said Reynolds did his doctoral work at Yale University in Islamic Studies. Currently he researches the Qur'an and Muslim/Christian relations and is Professor of Islamic Studies and Theology in the Department of Theology at Notre Dame. He is the author of *The Qur'an and its Biblical Subtext* and *The Qur'an and the Bible*, among other works.

---

**Programming Unit Chairs**

---

***Linguistic, Literary, and Thematic Perspectives on the Qur'anic Corpus*****Anne-Sylvie Boisliveau, University of Strasbourg, France**

Anne-Sylvie Boisliveau (Ph.D.) is Assistant Professor in History of Medieval Islam at the Faculty of History of the University of Strasbourg (France). Her first book (*Le Coran par lui-même. Vocabulaire et argumentation du discours coranique autoréférentiel*, 2014) deals with synchronic self-referential discourse in the Qur'an. She wrote several surah commentaries for the book *Le Coran des historiens* (edited by Mohammad-Ali Amir-Moezzi and Guillaume Dye, 2019). Among her interests are Qur'anic-biblical intertextuality, early Islamic History, Umayyad Syria, and early Islamic religious texts such as *Fada'il al-Qur'an* genre.

**Mohsen Goudarzi**

Mohsen Goudarzi is Assistant Professor at the University of Minnesota's Classical and Near Eastern Studies Department. His research focuses on the intellectual and social aspects of Islam's emergence, in particular the Qur'an's relationship to late antique literature as well as its textual history. Currently, he is working on his first book project, which proposes a new reading of major elements of the Qur'anic worldview, including the Qur'an's conception of scriptural and prophetic history.

***The Qur'an: Manuscripts and Textual Criticism*****Marijn van Putten, Independent Scholar, Presiding**

See biography above, page 38.

**Michael McCoy III, Independent Scholar**

After doctoral study in Oxford, R. Michael McCoy III went on to a 2-year postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Notre Dame where he prepared his dissertation for publication with Brill. During that time he also worked for the Qur'an Gateway project on Qur'an manuscript research. He has published in the areas of Christian Arabic manuscripts and Tafsir studies, including his most recent contribution *Interpreting the Qur'an with the Bible (Tafsir al-Qur'an bi-l-kitab)* Reading the Arabic Bible in the Tafsirs of Ibn Barra'an and al-Biqā'i ([brill.com/view/title/56568](http://brill.com/view/title/56568)).

### ***The Qur'an and the Biblical Tradition***

**Holger Zellentin, University of Cambridge**

*See biography above, page 54.*

**Nora K. Schmid, University of Oxford**

Nora K. Schmid is a postdoctoral researcher in the project “Qur’anic Commentary: An Integrative Paradigm” (QuCIP) at the University of Oxford. She holds a Ph.D. in Arabic Studies from the Free University of Berlin (2018). Her research interests include the Qur’an as a late antique text, Arabic asceticism, early Islamic poetry, and the intellectual and literary traditions of pre-Islamic Arabia. She is a co-editor of the volume *Denkraum Spätantike: Reflexionen von Antiken im Umfeld des Koran*.

### ***Qur’anic Studies: Methodology and Hermeneutics***

**Karen A. Bauer, The Institute of Ismaili Studies (UK)**

*See biography above, page 53.*

**Khalil Andani, Augustana College (USA)**

*See biography above, page 20.*

### ***The Qur'an and Late Antiquity***

**Michael E. Pregill, University of California, Los Angeles**

*See biography above, page 55.*

**Johanne Christiansen, University of Southern Denmark**

Johanne Louise Christiansen, Ph.D., is Assistant Professor at the Department of the Study of Religions, University of Southern Denmark. Her research focuses on the application of theoretical perspectives from other research fields, such as the study of religions, to the Qur’an. Among Christiansen’s recent work are the article “God Loves not the Wrongdoers (zalimun): Formulaic Repetition as a Rhetorical Strategy in the Qur’an” (*Journal of Qur’anic Studies* 22/1, 2020, 92-132) and the forthcoming book *The Exceptional Qur’an: Flexible and Exeptive Rhetoric in Islam’s Holy Book* (Gorgias Press, 2021).

### ***Sura Studies***

**Nevin Reda, University of Toronto**

Nevin Reda is associate professor of Muslim Studies at Emmanuel College of Victoria University in the University of Toronto. Her research interests include the poetics and hermeneutics of Qur’anic narrative structure, Hebrew Bible and Qur’an, spiritually integrative approaches to the Qur’an, Islamic feminist hermeneutics and Islamic ethical-legal theory.

Her publications include *The al-Baqara Crescendo: Understanding the Qur’an’s Style, Narrative, Structure and Running Themes* (2017) and a co-edited volume, *Islamic Interpretive Tradition and Gender Justice: Processes of Canonization, Subversion, and Change* (2020).

**Shawkat M. Toorawa, Yale University**

Shawkat M. Toorawa is Professor of Arabic and Chair, Department of Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations, Yale University. His rhythmic, rhyming translation of Q Luqman/31 is forthcoming in *His Pen and Ink Are a Powerful Mirror: Andalusī, Judaeo-Arabī, and Other Near Eastern Studies in Honor of Ross Brann*, ed. Adam Bursi, S.J. Pearce and Hamza Zafer (Brill, 2020).

### ***The Societal Qur'an***

**Johanna Pink, Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg (Germany)**

*See biography above, page 53.*

**Lauren Osborne, Whitman College**

Lauren E. Osborne is Associate Professor of Religion at Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington. She holds a Ph.D. and A.M. from the University of Chicago, and bachelor’s degrees in Religious Studies and Music Performance from Lawrence University. Her area of research is the recitation of the Qur’an.

---

## **International Programming Committee**

**Mun'im Sirry, University of Notre Dame, Chair**

Mun'im Sirry is an Assistant Professor of Theology in the Department of Theology with additional responsibilities for the “Contending Modernities Initiative” at the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, University of Notre Dame. He earned his Ph.D. in Islamic Studies from the University of Chicago’s Divinity School. His academic interest includes political theology, modern Islamic thought, Qur’anic Studies, and interreligious relations. His publications have appeared in several peer-reviewed journals, including *Arabica*, *BSOAS*, *Interpretation*, *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, *Journal of Semitic Studies*, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, *The Muslim World*, *Studia Islamica*, and *Die Welt des Islams*. His most recent book is entitled *Scriptural Polemics: the Qur’an and Other Religions*.

**Mehdi Azaiez, KU Leuven**

*See biography above, page 53.*

### **Majid Daneshgar, University of Freiburg**

Majid Daneshgar studied religion with a particular reference to the connection between Islamic intellectual and exegetical progress over the course of history. He is also interested in Malay-Indonesian Islamic literature and exegetical works for which he has published co-edited volumes with Peter Riddell, Andrew Rippin and Walid Saleh. He published his monograph on *Tantawi Jawhari and the Qur'an Tafsir and Social Concerns in the Twentieth Century* in 2017. He is a junior fellow at Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies, University of Freiburg, where he works on the history of textual censorship in Islamic exegetical works in Persian, Arabic and Malay. He also worked as Assistant Professor and Lecturer of Islamic Studies in Malaysia and New Zealand, respectively. He was nominated for the Most Inclusive Teacher Award at the University of Otago, New Zealand in 2015. Majid also received the Auckland Library Heritage Trust Scholarship in 2017 by which he could compile the Catalogue of the Middle Eastern and Islamic Materials in New Zealand.

### **Daniel Madigan, Georgetown University**

Daniel Madigan, S.J. is an Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies in the Department of Theology at Georgetown University. His main fields of teaching and research are Qur'anic Studies, interreligious dialogue (particularly Muslim-Christian relations), and comparative theology. He has also taught as a visiting professor at Columbia University, Ankara University, Boston College, and Central European University. He published *The Qur'an's Self-Image: Writing and Authority in Islam's Scripture*.

### **Abdullah Saeed, University of Melbourne**

Abdullah Saeed is currently the Sultan of Oman Professor of Arab and Islamic Studies and Director of the National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies at the University of Melbourne, Australia. He is also a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Humanities. His research focuses on the negotiation of text and context, ijthad, and interpretation.

Among his publications are: *Islamic Banking and Interest*; the coauthored *Freedom of Religion, Apostasy and Islam*; *Interpreting the Qur'an: Towards a Contemporary Approach*; *The Qur'an: An Introduction*; *Islamic Political Thought and Governance* (ed.); *Islam and Human Rights* (ed.); and *Reading the Qur'an in the Twentieth Century: Towards a Contextualist Approach*. He is currently working (with Andrew Rippin) on a major research project on the reception of ideas associated with critical historical approaches to the Qur'an in Muslim higher education institutions. Saeed works closely with various government departments and international organizations and contributes to their projects relating to Islam and Islamic thought. He is currently a member of the UNESCO Commission of Australia of the Department of Foreign Affairs of Australia. He contributes to print and electronic media on Islamic issues. He has a wide range of professional and research relationships around the world, and is on the editorial board of several international refereed journals. He is also well-known for his interfaith activities in Australia and overseas, and for his contributions to this area,

### **Nayla Tabbara, Adyan Foundation**

Dr. Nayla Tabbara is the Vice-Chairperson and founding member of Adyan, Foundation for Diversity, Solidarity and Human Dignity. She is also a co-president of Religions for Peace, and member of the Executive Committee of its World Council. She holds a PhD in Science of Religions from Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (Sorbonne-Paris) and Saint Joseph University (Beirut) and is a university professor in Religious and Islamic Studies. She is also a muslim woman theologian and has publications in the fields of Islamic theology of other religions, Islamic Feminism, Education on interreligious and intercultural diversity, Qur'anic exegesis and Sufism. She works on curricula development (formal and non-formal) on multifaith education, inclusive citizenship and FoRB. She has received the Gold Medal of the French Renaissance Award and the Special Jury award of the Fr. Jacques Hamel Prize, the Ecritures et Spiritualités Award and the Academie des Sciences d'Outre mer award for her book *L'islam pensé par une femme* (Bayard, 2018).

---

## Publications and Research Committee

---

### Gabriel Said Reynolds, University of Notre Dame

– Chair

See biography above, page 55.

### Carol Bakhos

Carol Bakhos is Professor of Late Antique Judaism in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at UCLA. Since 2012 she has served as Chair of the Study of Religion program and Director of the Center for the Study of Religion at UCLA. Her most recent monograph, *The Family of Abraham: Jewish, Christian and Muslim Interpretations* (Harvard University Press, 2014), was translated into Turkish (2015). Her other monographs and edited works include: *Ishmael on the Border: Rabbinic Portrayals of the First Arab* (SUNY, 2006), winner of a Koret Foundation Award, *Islam and Its Past*, edited with Michael Cook (Oxford, 2017), *Judaism in its Hellenistic Context* (Brill, 2004), *Current Trends in the Study of Midrash* (Brill, 2006) and the co-edited work, *The Talmud in its Iranian Context* (Mohr Siebeck, 2010).

### Vanessa De Gifis, Wayne State University

Vanessa De Gifis is Associate Professor of Islamic Studies and Chair of the Department of Classical and Modern Languages, Literatures, and Cultures at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan, USA. De Gifis received her PhD from the University of Chicago in 2008 and is the author of *Shaping a Qur'anic Worldview: Scriptural Hermeneutics and the Rhetoric of Moral Reform in the Caliphate of al-Ma'mun* (2014). She was co-editor of the first two volumes of IQSA's flagship *Journal of the International Qur'anic Studies Association* and continues to serve on its editorial board.

### Amir Hussain, Loyola Marymount University

Amir Hussain is Chair of Theological Studies at Loyola Marymount University, where he teaches courses on Islam and comparative religion. His own area of expertise is contemporary Muslim communities in North America. In 2018, he was elected to the Board of Directors of the American Academy of Religion. From 2011 to 2015, Amir was the editor of the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*. He is an advisor for the television series *The Story of God* with Morgan Freeman. In 2008, he was appointed a fellow of the Los Angeles Institute for the Humanities. His most recent book is the fourth edition of *A Concise Introduction to World Religions* for Oxford University Press in 2019. The author or editor of 8 other books, he has also published over 60 book chapters and scholarly articles about religion.

### Saqib Hussain, Oxford University

Saqib Hussain is a D.Phil. (Ph.D.) student at the University of Oxford, and the assistant editor for *JIQSA*. His doctoral dissertation is on the term *hikmah* (“wisdom”) in the Qur'an, and its relationship to the biblical tradition. His research interests include the Qur'an and Late Antiquity, surah structure, and literary analyses of the Qur'an. He has forthcoming publications on the Qur'an's minor prophets (Job, Jonah, Elijah, and Ezra) and on new approaches to textual criticism of the Qur'an. He is a contributor to the ERC-funded QuCIP project.

### John Kutsko, Society of Biblical Literature

John F. Kutsko was named Executive Director of the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) beginning July 2010. He holds a Ph.D. in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations from Harvard University and is an affiliate faculty member at Emory University. In 2012, he received a grant to explore the formation of a learned society for scholars of the Qur'an, which in 2014 became the International Qur'anic Studies Association, and serves as its consultant. He also serves on the editorial advisory board for the *Journal of General Education*. He was a contributing editor of *The SBL Handbook of Style* and directed its 2014 revision. He is author of *Between Heaven and Earth: Divine Presence and Absence in the Book of Ezekiel* and co-editor of *The King James Version at 400: Assessing Its Genius as Bible Translation and Its Literary Influence*.

### Shari Lowin, Stonehill College

See biography above, page 53.

### David S. Powers, Cornell University

David S. Powers is Professor of Islamic Studies at Cornell University. His research focuses on the rise of Islam and the history of Islamic law and its application in Muslim societies. Powers is Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Islamic Law and Society* and author of *Studies in Qur'an and Hadith: The Formation of the Islamic Law of Inheritance* (University of California, 1986); *Law, Society, and Culture in the Maghrib, 1300–1500* (Cambridge University, 2002); *Muhammad is Not the Father of Any of Your Men: The Making of the Last Prophet* (University of Pennsylvania, 2009); and *Zayd* (University of Pennsylvania, 2014). He is currently Director of the Medieval Studies Program.

**Nicolai Sinai, Oxford University**

Nicolai Sinai is Professor of Islamic Studies at the University of Oxford and a Fellow of Pembroke College. His published research deals with the literary and historical-critical study of the Qur'an against the background of earlier Jewish, Christian, and Arabian traditions; with pre-modern and modern Islamic scriptural interpretation; and with the history of philosophical and theological thought in the Islamic world.

**Munther Younes, Cornell University**

Munther A. Younes is the Reis Senior Lecturer of Arabic Language and Linguistics at Cornell University in the Department of Near Eastern Studies. His research focuses on Arabic linguistics (phonetics, phonology, morphology, sociolinguistics, and comparative/historical dialectology), teaching Arabic as a foreign language, the language of the Qur'an, comparative Semitic linguistics. He has contributed to the field with a number of publications, including but not limited to *The Routledge Introduction to Qur'anic Arabic* (2012), *Kalila wa Dimna for Students of Arabic* (2013), and most recently, *In Search of the Original Qur'an* (forthcoming December 2018).

---

**Nominations Committee**

---

**Alba Fedeli, Universität Hamburg, Germany – Chair**

*See biography above, page 55.*

**Karen Bauer, Institute of Ismaili Studies**

*See biography above, page 53.*

**Stephen Burge, Institute of Ismaili Studies**

Stephen Burge is Senior Research Associate in the Qur'anic Studies Unit at the Institute of Ismaili Studies. He has published the monograph *Angels in Islam: Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti's al-Haba'ik fi akhbar al-mala'ik* (London, 2012), and has edited a volume on Qur'anic lexicology, *The Meaning of the Word: Lexicology and Qur'anic Exegesis* (Oxford, 2015). He has published a number of articles on angels, exegesis, and interpretation. He is also co-editing and translating a volume of the Anthology of Qur'anic Commentaries Series on the Pillars of Islam. His main research interests are the works of al-Suyuti, hadith studies, tafsir, and angelology.

**Johanna Pink, Johanna Pink, Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg (Germany)**

*See biography above, page 53.*

**Nora Schmid, University of Oxford**

*See biography above, page 56.*

---

**Lifetime Members**

---

**Reza Aslan, University of California, Riverside**

Reza Aslan is a religions scholar and writer whose books include New York Times bestseller *Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth*, international bestseller *No god but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam*, and *God: A Human History*. He was an Executive Producer for ABC's *Of Kings and Prophets*, a Consulting Producer for HBO's *The Leftovers*, and host and executive producer for *Rough Draft with Reza Aslan* and CNN's *Believer*. He teaches creative writing at UC Riverside.

**Jane McAuliffe, Library of Congress**

Jane McAuliffe is the inaugural Director of National and International Outreach, a new division of the Library of Congress. She is also the immediate past President of Bryn Mawr College and former Dean of Arts and Sciences at Georgetown University. McAuliffe is general Editor of the six-volume *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*, the first major reference work for the Qur'an in Western languages. Other books include *The Norton Anthology of World Religions: Islam, The Cambridge Companion to the Qur'an, With Reverence for the Word, Abbasid Authority Affirmed, Qur'anic Christians: An Analysis of Classical and Modern Exegesis*, and the recently published *The Qur'an: A Norton Critical Edition*. She is past President of the American Academy of Religion and a member of the American Philosophical Society, the Council on Foreign Relations, and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

**Sharif Randhawa, Bayyinah Institute**

Sharif Randhawa completed his Bachelor's degree in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations from the University of Washington in 2018 and is currently applying for graduate school. His interests include the composition of the Quran as well as its relationship with Late Antique Biblical tradition. He has served as a researcher on these aspects of the Quran for Bayyinah Institute, and is the author, with Nouman Ali Khan, of *Divine Speech: Exploring the Quran as Literature*. He is also affiliated with the Centre for the Advanced Study of the Quran and its Interpretation (CASQI).

### **Farid Esack, University of Johannesburg**

Farid Esack, University of Johannesburg Farid Esack is a South African scholar of Islam and public intellectual who completed the Darsi Nizami in traditional madrasahs in Karachi, Pakistan, and his Ph.D. at the University of Birmingham, UK. Since 2000, Esack has been teaching at the University of Johannesburg (UJ), where he is Professor in the Study of Islam and head of its Department of Religion Studies. In addition to serving as a Commissioner for Gender Equality in the first South African democratic government (appointed by President Mandela) and heading a number of leading national and international not-for-profit entities, he has taught religion, Islamic Studies, and Qur'anic Studies in South Africa (University of Western Cape, Cape Town and UJ), Europe (Universities of Amsterdam and Hamburg), the United States (College of William and Mary, Union Theological Seminary, Xavier University, and Harvard Divinity School) and in Asia (International Islamic University of Islamabad and Gaja Mada University in Yogyakarta).

### **Daniel Brubaker, Qur'an Gateway**

Alan Brubaker did his doctoral work at Rice University on physical corrections in early Qur'an manuscripts. Today he continues this research independently, traveling to study manuscripts, and delivering public lectures and conference papers. He is the author of *Corrections in Early Qur'an Manuscripts: Twenty Examples*, has contributed to several edited volumes, and has two additional monographs forthcoming.

He co-founded *Qur'an Gateway* and is working on further tools and material to serve the scholarly community focused on early Islam. He has taught university courses in Arabic, world religions, and Qur'an; he also teaches biblical Hebrew weekly at his home.

### **Ghazala Anwar, Independent Scholar**

Ghazala Anwar is an independent scholar of Islamic and Qur'anic Studies whose research focus in recent years has been on the lived practice of Sufism, the historical critical study of the Qur'an, and articulating a Muslim theology of animal rights.

### **Abdulla Galadari, Khalifa University of Science and Technology**

Abdulla Galadari holds a PhD in Civil Engineering from the University of Colorado and a PhD in Arabic and Islamic Studies from the University of Aberdeen. His main field of inquiry is Qur'anic Studies, especially in relationship to its Late Antiquity context with its Biblical, extra-biblical, and rabbinic engagements, as well as comparative theology and Christology. Galadari is also co-convenor of the Qur'an and Islamic Tradition in Comparative Perspective Unit of the Society of Biblical Literature.



*Historic MarketSquare Mexican Shopping Center, San Antonio, Texas (Adobe Stock Image)*



IQSA

*International Qur'anic Studies Association*  
الجمعية الدولية للدراسات القرآنية