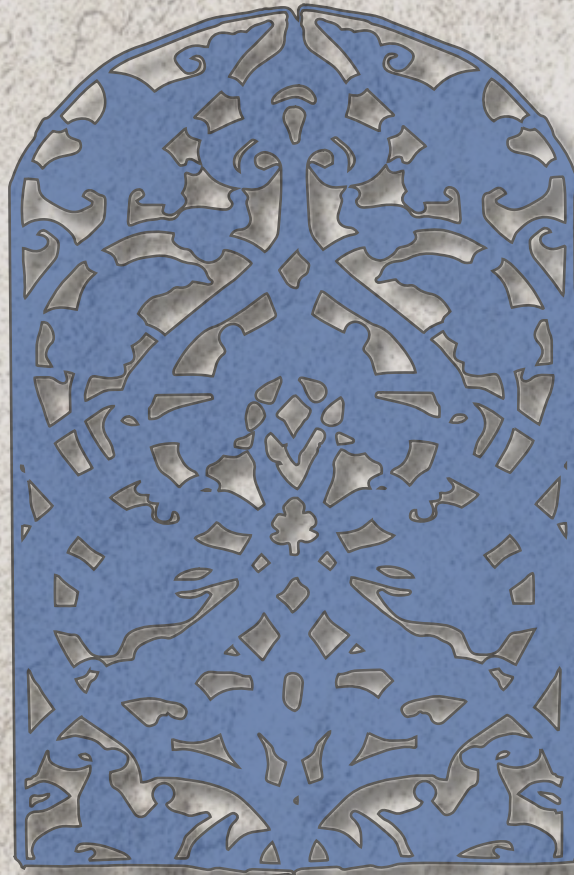


Third International  
**Ismaili Studies Conference**  
Histories, Philosophies & Communities

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Friday, August 6 - Tuesday, August 10, 2021

Hosted by Leiden University Shi'i Studies Initiative



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**Convened by:**

Dr. Khalil Andani (Augustana College)

Dr. Ahab Bdaiwi (Leiden University)

**Organizing Committee:**

Dr. Daniel Beben (Nazarbayev University)

Dr. Ali Asgar Alibhai (University of Texas at Dallas & EODIAH)

Dr. Alyshea Cummins (University of Ottawa)

Syed A. H. Zaidi (Emory University)

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Register and Attend the Conference at  
[bit.ly/IsmailiStudiesConference](https://bit.ly/IsmailiStudiesConference)



## Welcome to the Third International Ismaili Studies Conference (2021)

Welcome to the **Third International Ismaili Studies Conference, "Histories, Philosophies and Communities," organized by the Leiden University Shii Studies Initiative**. This Conference builds on the progress of the 2014 and 2017 Ismaili Studies Conferences held at the University of Chicago and Carleton University respectively. These conferences are a progressive and autonomous endeavor for presenting the work of academics based in universities and research establishments and independent scholars engaging with the intellectual space termed broadly called "Ismaili Studies". The ISC is not aligned with any communal, political, or ideological organization. The conferences seek to provide multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary platforms for scholarly exchanges. ISC2021 is pleased to welcome speakers from multiple countries and presentations on a variety of academic and constructive themes.

This year's ISC includes: **Keynote Address by Prof. Karim H. Karim**; several panels on **Ismaili history, esoteric exegesis, literature, and contemporary Ismaili theological reflection**; and the announcement of the **(inaugural) 2021 Karim and Rosemin Karim Prize**; and a concluding **Scholars Roundtable** featuring senior scholars of Ismaili Studies.

ISC offers a unique forum for academic discussion and debate in Ismaili Studies. This venue is conceptualized as a pluralist locus for scholarship on the different entities and communities that are related to, emerged from, or associated with Ismaili interpretations of Islam. It is an intellectual space that includes but is not limited to the critical analysis of the histories, philosophies, migrations, and institutions and their social, economic, political, and cultural manifestations. ISC is inclusive of all geographical regions pertinent to the broad Ismaili movement and values the study of its entire temporal presence without privileging a specific historical period. ISC also addresses Ismaili communities' relations with the wider Shia, Muslim and other societies as well as articulations of thought and faith in between dominantly defined religious and cultural domains. Such an approach provides for a robust and integral understanding of a broadly situated Ismaili Studies.

ISC principles: the conferences and related initiatives provide for:

- Upholding high standards of critical scholarship inclusive of both academic/descriptive and constructive/theological approaches to Ismaili Studies;
- Discussion and respectful debate on all aspects of Ismaili Studies;
- a scholarly space that is conceptualized in a broad and interdisciplinary manner inclusive of a multiplicity of viewpoints, cultures, and expressions;
- Peer-based scholarly assessments rather than hierarchical vetting;
- Inclusionary participation rather than exclusionary ownership;

The Ismaili Studies Conference 2021 is being organized by the Leiden University Shii Studies Initiative. Due to pandemic conditions, the entirety of the ISC 2021 will take place virtually (see below). **Registration is free and open to the public.**

Zoom Link for all ISC 2021 Panels and Events (Friday August 6 to Tuesday August 10):  
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82442434811> | [bit.ly/ismailistudiesconference](https://bit.ly/ismailistudiesconference)

The Twitter Handle for the conference is: #ISC2021

## **Ismaili Studies Conference 2021 Schedule**

(All times are Eastern Time of USA/Canada)

Panel Format: 20 minute presentations followed by 30 minutes of Q&A

### **Friday, August 6th 2021**

8:00am

**Opening Remarks**

8:30am - 10:05am

#### **Panel 1: Scholarly Constructions of "Ismailism"**

**Chair: Ali Asgar Alibhai**

- Shin Nomoto (Keio University): *Two Approaches to Ismailism: Toshihiko Izutsu (1914–1993) and Henry Corbin (1903-78)*
- David Hollenberg (University of Oregon): *The origins of Ismā'īlism and the politics of representation*
- Daniel Beben (Nazarbayev University): *Of Stranger Kings and Old Men of the Mountains: Rethinking the Social Dimensions of the Ismaili Da'wa*

10:20 am-11:55 am

#### **Panel 2: Fatimid Ismaili Thought**

**Chair: Ismail Poonawala (UCLA)**

- Alexander Treiger (Dalhousie University): *Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī and the Longer Theology of Aristotle: In Search of a Common Source*
- Behnaz Keybakhi (Imam Sadiq University): *The Fatimids: Ismaili Theology and Legitimacy*
- Kainat Jalaluddin (Habib University): *Al-Ghazali's selective Theology in refuting Ismailis: An analysis of the refutation of Ta'lim Doctrine in Fadaih al Batiniyya wa Kitab al Mustazhiri*

### **11:55am-1:00pm Lunch Break**

1:00 pm - 2:20 pm

**Keynote Address by Prof. Karim Karim (Carleton University):  
*Asking Hard Questions: Soldiers, Scholars & People of Faith***

- Responding: Khalil Andani (Augustana College)

2:30 pm - 4:00 pm

**Panel 4: Distant reading approaches to the**

**Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'**

**Chair: Ismail Poonawala**

- Aslisho Qurboniev (AKU-ISMC): *What can stylometry tell us about the anonymous Brethren of Purity and their Epistles?*
- Mathew Barber (AKU-ISMC): *Discovery and dissemination: designing a digital application for understanding the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'*
- Gowaart Van Den Bossche (AKU-ISMC): *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' as an open text tradition: Towards an assessment of the manuscript tradition and its many social contexts*

**Saturday August 7**

8:30 am - 10:05 am

**Panel 5: Ismaili Devotional Literature**

**Chair: Tazim R. Kassam**

- Perwaiz Hayat (Concordia University): *Yogi Lāl Dās and Ginans – a comparative study of the term jogi in the Su'āl va Javāb and the Ismaili devotional literature of the Indo-Pak subcontinent*
- Iqbal Surani (Florida International University): *From Haridās to 'Alīdās: an analysis of the ginān-s attributed to Pīr Shams : hamadil khāla allāha sohī vasejī ; kesari sinh sarup bhuḷāyo*
- Alijan Damani (Institute of Business Administration): *My Pīr is Ḥassan Shāh (Merā Pīr Ḥassan Shāh): Life and Works of the last Ismā'īlī Ginān Composer-Precacher in India, Saiyyida Imām Begum*

10:20 am - 11:55 am

**Panel 6: Fatimid and Ismaili Intellectual History**

**Chair: Shiraz Hajiani**

- Kumail Rajani (University of Exeter): *Examining Hadith Sources of al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān (d. 363/974): A Case Study of al-Kutub al-Ja'fariyya*
- Paul Walker (University of Chicago): *Ismaili Hadith*
- Jose Bellver (US Louvain): *Maslama b. al-Qāsim and the Dating of the Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'*

**11:55am-12:45pm Lunch Break**

12:45 pm - 2:20 pm

**Panel 7: Ismaili History and Historiography**

**Chair: Ali Asgar Alibhai**

- Taha Juzer Tyebkhan (Aljamea-tus-Safiyah): *Inscriptions of Happiness: Expanding the Frontiers of Medieval Ornamentation*
- Shiraz Hajiani (University of Chicago): *Ilkhanid Chronicles as Sources for History and Doctrines of Fatimid Ismailism*
- Kasra Shiva (Institute of Ismaili Studies): *Search for the Light of the Imam*
- Huzefa Tawawalla (Aljamea-tus-Safiyah): *A Narratological Analysis of the Prose Works by 'Umāra al-Yamanī*

2:30 pm - 4:15 pm

**Panel 8: Fatimid Ismaili Exegesis**

**Chair: Khalil Andani**

- Fârès Gillon (Institute of Ismaili Studies): *From Shi'i tafsīr to Ismaili ta'wīl: the evolution of 'personalised commentary' in da'wa context*
- Mushegh Asatryan (University of Calgary): *How to Read Muslim Heresiology? An Ismaili Man-of-letters and his Classification of Muslim Sects*
- Alex Matthews (University of Chicago): *Shifting Conceptions of the fatra in kitāb al-fatarāt wa-l-qirānāt*
- Alexander Morse Shepard (Indiana University): *Ismailism and Judaism: Polemics, Apologetics, and Synthesis*

**Sunday August 8**

8:30 am - 10:25 am

**Panel 9: Classical and Contemporary Ismaili Philosophy**

**Chair: Alyshea Cummins**

- Syed A.H. Zaidi (Emory University): *Hermetic Mysticism in the Works of the Brethren of Purity (Ikhwān al-Ṣafā')*
- Mohammad Magout (University of Leipzig): *Silent Reflexivity and Intellectual Dissonance in Contemporary Nizari Ismailism*
- Shahnaz Salim Hunzai (Institute for Spiritual Wisdom): *The Concept of Spiritual Science in the Teachings of ʿAllāmah Naṣīr Ḥunzāī*
- Khalil Andani (Augustana College): *Reconstructing Ismaili Neoplatonism: A Contemporary Proposal*

10:35am-12:10pm

**Panel 10: Contemporary Ismaili Gnosis**  
**Chair: Khalil Andani**

- Navid Amiri (Mercer University): *An Ismaili Exegesis of Free Will & Evil in the Gospel Parable of the Lost Son*
- Alyjan Daya (Harvard University): *Universal Restoration & Universal Soul: Comparative Christian & Ismā'īlī Eschatology*
- Adil “Khayal ‘Aly” Dhanidina (Ismaili Gnosis): *Theophanic Imagination (Khayal) in Ismaili Gnosis*

**12:10pm-1:00pm Lunch Break**

1:00pm-2:35pm

**Panel 11: Ismaili Devotional Literature II**  
**Chair: Ali Asani**

- Mansour Shakarmamadov (ITREB Tajikistan & Institute of Ismaili Studies): *Chirāgh-nāma: Literary Merits and Content*
- Chorshanbe Goibnazarov (University of Central Asia): *Performative Texts: Theorizing the Texts of Qasīda-khanī*
- Karim Tharani (University of Saskatchewan): *The Enduring and Inspiring Heritage of Gināns: Evidence from a Global Survey*

2:45pm-4:20pm

**Panel 12: Contemporary Nizari Ismaili Practice**  
**Chair: Karim Javan**

- Aziz Talbani (Independent Scholar): *Is Qiyāmah around the Corner? Has Dayt Kalinga (Anti-Christ) Appeared? Role of Knowledge in the Age of Qiyāmah*
- Nagib Tajdin (Heritage Society): *Evolution and re-evaluation of the Du'a (Prayer) of the Nizari Ismailis in the subcontinent following the Declaration of the Great Resurrection in Alamut*
- Rizwan Mawani (Independent Scholar): *Reconstructing Early 20th Century Religious Life and Social Practice through the English Language Archive*

## Monday August 9, 2021

8:30am-10:05am

### **Panel 13: Ismaili Material Cultures**

**Chair: Ali Asgar Alibhai**

- Afsana Amaral Jiwani (ITREB India): *Depicting Modernism through Photography at the swalihi coasts*
- Farhad Mortezaee (Independent Scholar): *How Ismaili Syrians interact with male non-family member visitors in their domestic space?*
- Zabya Abo Aljadayel (Univerisdade Nova de Lisboa): *Fatimid coins in Al-Andalus: a study on the political-economic influences of the Shiite caliphs in Al-Andalus during the 10th-12th centuries*

10:20am-11:55am

### **Panel 14: Modern Nizari Ismaili History and Thought**

**Chair: Daniel Beben**

- Karim Javan (Institute of Ismaili Studies): *Ismaili Inscriptions in Anjudan and Kahak: A New Source in Ismaili History*
- Amaan Merali (DPhil, Oxford University): *The Ismailis and Armenians in Wartime Salamiyya*
- Javad T. Hashmi (Harvard University): *The Modernist Imām: The Social and Religious Views of Aga Khan III in His Own Words*

## **Lunch Break 11:55am-1:00pm**

1:00pm-2:40pm

### **Panel 15: Authority in Tayyibi and Nizari Ismailism**

**Chair: Daniel Beben**

- Miklós Sárközy (Karoli Gaspar University): *Nizārīs and Bādūspānids in the Alamūt period*
- Ismail Poonawala (UCLA): *An Unprecedented Crisis in the Dā'ūdī Bohra Community and Its Aftermath*
- Ali Asgar Alibhai (University of Texas - Dallas): *The al-Dai al-Fatimi: Towards Understanding a Historical Religious Rank Through Modern Dawoodi Bohra Devotional Practice and Thought*

**Tuesday August 10, 2021**

8:30am-10:05am

**Panel 16: Contemporary Ismaili Communities**  
**Chair: Ruby Ramji (Cape Breton University)**

- Nadim Pabani (Independent Scholar): *Islam is a Way of Life': The AKDN as an Expression of a 21st Century Shi'i Worldview*
- Sascha Ian Stans (NTA): *An (updated) insight in contemporary Nizari Isma'ili interreligious realities*
- Alyshea Cummins (University of Ottawa): *The transmission of religion across generations: Canadian Ismaili Muslim Families*

10:20am - 11:00am

**Announcement of the Recipient of The 2021 Karim and Rosemin Karim Prize**

Karim H. Karim, Zayn Kassam, Zulfikar Hirji

12:30pm-1:30pm

**Scholars Roundtable Discussion:**  
**The Present and Future of Ismaili Studies**  
**Participants:** *Elizabeth Alexandrin, Ali Asani, Sumaiya Hamdani, David Hollenberg, Shainool Jiwa, Karim H. Karim, Tazim R. Kassam, Arzina R. Lalani, Paul Walker*

1:30pm

**Closing Remarks**



## **Keynote Address by Professor Karim H. Karim**

### *Asking Hard Questions: Soldiers, Scholars and People of Faith*

Intellectual reflection and learning are repeatedly encouraged as acts of faith in the Qur'an. This belief has been underlined by Nizārīs, Musta'līs, Druzes, among other Muslim groups. A key characteristic of what has come to be known as the Ismaili movement was the pursuit of universal truth, indicated by one of its long-held names: *Da'wat al-Haqq* (the Invitation to Truth). The histories of its various groups illustrate substantial intellectual attainments that are celebrated in contemporary times. Their current leaders speak about the value of the intellect, with the last century seeing significant educational advancement in the communities and notable achievements. However, there seems to be a ceiling in the contemporary scholarly quest that has limited the global significance of the movement's accomplishments. This keynote lecture will seek to address apparent constraints to intellectual engagement and consider ways of enhancing the pursuit of knowledge.

**Professor Karim H. Karim** is a Chancellor's Professor at Carleton University's School of Journalism and Communication, of which he was previously the Director. He is currently the Director of the Carleton Centre for the Study of Islam. Karim has also served as a Director of the Institute of Ismaili Studies and has been a Visiting Scholar at Harvard University and Visiting Professor at the Simon Fraser University and the Aga Khan University's joint program. He was the winner of the inaugural Robinson Prize for excellence in Communication Studies for his critically acclaimed book *Islamic Peril: Media and Global Violence*. A major focus of Karim's current writings is contemporary Ismaili communities, leadership and institutions. His publications have been extensively cited around the world and he has been a distinguished lecturer on several continents. He has participated in scholarly consultations organized by branches of the Canadian and American governments and has been interviewed by major media in several countries. Professor Karim has served in advisory capacities for the Aga Khan University's Graduate School of Media and Communications, Nairobi, Kenya and University of Central Asia's Communication and Media major. He has been honored by the Government of Canada for facilitating collaboration between religious communities.

## **Presenter Biographies and Abstracts**

### **Shin Nomoto: *Two Approaches to Ismailism: Toshihiko Izutsu (1914–1993) and Henry Corbin (1903-78)***

From 1960s to 1970s Henry Corbin (from France) and Toshihiko Izutsu (from Japan) took leading roles in the field of study on various forms of Islamic Thoughts, especially, mystical thoughts. However their studies brought forth different results. It has been pointed out that one of the examples of this difference is reflected in their approaches to speculative Sufi thought of Ibn 'Arabī (560/1165-638/1240): Corbin attempts to indicate Ibn 'Arabī's affinity to Christian mysticism and Ithna Ashari Shi'ism, whereas Izutsu discusses on his own finding, that is, the philosophical affinity between al-Shaykh al-Akbar and Taoist thinkers. This paper will make an attempt to show that also Izutsu's and Corbin's respective contributions to the field of Ismaili Study reflect the difference in their approaches to the subject. Their Ismaili Studies contrast themselves with each other in their accomplishments. Whereas Izutsu dedicated only one article on Ismaili Studies, Corbin wrote numerous articles, and edited and translated (and analyzed) important Arabic and Persian texts. And on the one hand, Corbin discusses extensively Ismailis' approach to sacred history. On the other hand, Izutsu scarcely dealt with it. However, both of them maintained that the declaration of the Great Resurrection (*qiyāmat al-qiyāmāt*) at Alamut in 559/1164 and the subsequent abolition of the *sharī'a* unveiled the quintessential nature of Ismailism. By close analysis of their works on Ismailism this paper will elucidate that their differences and resemblances show their respective philosophical projects: the criticism of the Western Christian tradition of philosophy of history (Corbin); and the construction of new philosophical paradigm based on the metaphysical experiences of the Existence itself ("zero-point of Existence") (Izutsu).

**Dr. Shin Nomoto:** Born in Tokyo, Japan, in 1961. B.A. (Keio University, Tokyo, Japan, 1984); M.A. (Keio, 1987); PhD (McGill University, Montreal, 2000); Currently, Professor at Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, Keio University, Tokyo; Specialized in History of Islamic Thought, especially, in Isma'ilism and Neoplatonist Philosophy in Islam. In Japan he presently works on English translation of *Kitāb al-Iṣlāḥ* by Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 334-5/934), an influential work on prophetic thought which ignited debate on Neoplatonist philosophy, theology and history of prophets. Additionally, the multifaceted nature of Isma'ilism led him to being interested in various genres such as occult sciences (alchemy, astrology, Hermeticism, etc.) and history of natural sciences.

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### **David Hollenberg: *The Origins of Ismā'īlism and the Politics of Representation***

In modern historiography, it has long been held that as an independent group, Ismā'īlism's origins can be traced to the ninth-century, small industrial towns in Khuzestan (in what is today southwest Iran), and quickly spread throughout the Islamic world. The fullest account of this history in modern historiography is Heinz Halm's magisterial *The Empire of the Mahdī*. This history is distinct from, but related to, Halm's textual studies of the so called "gnostic" groups of eighth-century Kufa that emerged in the generation following the death of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (d. 765) in the late eighth early ninth century. Halm emphasized despite sharing some shared terminology and concepts, were not directly related to the origins of Ismā'īlism.

It is this last claim, that Ismā'īlism should be viewed as separate from the eighth/ninth-century Kufan esotericists, that has recently come under renewed scrutiny and criticism. The most

substantial scholarship challenging this view has been offered by Daniel de Smet. In light of the preservation of the early Kufan “Mufaddal tradition” sources in Ismāʿīlī libraries, as well as the adoption of their doctrinal schemata by later Tayyebi Ismāʿīlīs, and other evidence De Smet argues that the origins of Ismāʿīlism are not ninth-century Khuzestan, but that, like Nuṣayrism, Ismāʿīlism’s initial phase should be traced to eighth-century Kufa. Historiography generally, and origin stories in particular, are necessarily informed by ideological commitments. In this paper, after rehearsing the evidence for both arguments, I will point out the ramifications of each of these accounts for the origins of Ismāʿīlism.

**Dr. David Hollenberg** is Associate Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Oregon. His research interests include Ismaili and Nusayri doctrine, Zaydi scholasticism, and manuscript culture. He and co-PI Mushegh Asatryan were recently awarded a three-year National Endowment for the Humanities Scholarly Editions and Translations grant to edit and translate the *Manhaj al-ʿilm wa l-bayan wa-nuzhat al-samaʿ wa l-ʿiyan* (The Method of Knowledge and Clarification and the Pure Joy of Auditing and Witnessing) a doctrinal treatise ascribed to the Nusayri author Muhammad ibn ʿAlī ʾIṣmat al-Dawla (d. ca. 450/1058). His publications *Beyond the Qurʾan: Ismaili taʿwil and the Secrets of the Prophets* (University of South Carolina Press, 2016) and *The Yemeni Manuscript Tradition* (Brill, 2015; editor with co-editors Sabine Schmidtke and Christopher Rauch).

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**Daniel Beben: *Of Stranger Kings and Old Men of the Mountains: Rethinking the Social Dimensions of the Ismaili Daʿwa***

This paper offers a new framework for understanding the historical formation of Ismāʿīlī communities. While the literature and theoretical exposition of the *daʿwa* has received a significant amount of attention in Ismaili studies scholarship, the question of the actual praxis of the *daʿwa* has received considerably less. The normative conception of the *daʿwa* presented in classical manuals such as the *Kitāb al-ʿālim wa l-ghulām* and in the autobiographical accounts of elite Ismaili converts such as Nāṣir-i Khusraw present an image of conversion to Ismailism as an intensive and individual process of learning and initiation. However, this model provides rather limited insight into understanding how Ismailism became established at the communal level and is particularly problematic for the post-Mongol era, when new Ismaili communities were established largely among more peripheral, non-literate and oftentimes largely non-Muslim regions. Notably, it is largely within these regions that Ismailism became most well-established as a communal identity and where Ismailism proved to be the most resilient against the pressures of persecution and assimilation.

The current research frameworks concerning the history of the Ismaili *daʿwa* are insufficient for explaining the establishment and persistence of Ismailism as a communal phenomenon. In this paper I argue that the emphasis on *taʿlīm* or authoritative teaching presented in the *daʿwa* literature has been too often misinterpreted as offering a historical rather than normative or idealized model of conversion within the Ismaili tradition. I demonstrate how ethnographic evidence and community narratives suggest an alternative framework for understanding the communal development of Ismailism. Drawing upon the Stranger King theory proposed by the late anthropologist Marshall Sahlins, I offer a revised approach to understanding the function of the Ismaili missionary or *dāʿī* that reorients focus from their didactic or intellectual role towards their position as social mediators and cultural brokers.

**Dr. Daniel Beben** received his PhD in History and Central Eurasian Studies from Indiana University. His research and teaching focuses on the history of Central Asia, Afghanistan and Iran, as well as the broader Islamic world, with a particular focus on the history of religious communities. Daniel is currently engaged in several research projects centered on the social and religious history of the Ismaili Shi'i communities of Central Asia. The second project is one for which Daniel and two colleagues (Jo-Ann Gross of the College of New Jersey and Umed Mamadsherzodshoev of the Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan) have recently been awarded a three-year Collaborative Research Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, titled "Ismailism in Badakhshan: A Genealogical History." Daniel also serves as treasurer for the Association for the Study of Persianate Societies. He previously taught Central Eurasian history at Indiana University and began teaching at Nazarbayev University in August 2015.

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**Alexander Treiger: *Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī and the Longer Theology of Aristotle: In Search of a Common Source***

In his ground-breaking monograph *Early Philosophical Shiism: The Ismaili Neoplatonism of Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī*, Paul Walker has pointed out parallels between al-Sijistānī's *Kitāb al-Maqālīd* and the *Longer Theology of Aristotle*—an augmented version of the *Theology of Aristotle* preserved mainly in Judeo-Arabic manuscripts and a sixteenth-century Latin translation. This raises the question of whether it is al-Sijistānī who cites the *Longer Theology*, or the unknown author of the *Longer Theology* who cites al-Sijistānī, or whether the two rely on a common source. Walker opts for the third solution: a common source used by both al-Sijistānī and the *Longer Theology*. In my contribution, I shall review some of the parallels between al-Sijistānī's *Kitāb al-Maqālīd* and the *Longer Theology*, demonstrate that Walker is indeed correct in postulating such a common source, and show that this common source contained some of the most significant ideas for Ismā'īlī Neoplatonism generally and al-Sijistānī's thought in particular: the idea that the Word (*al-kalima*) mediates between the Creator (*al-mubdi'*) and the Intellect, that the Intellect is united with the Word, that the Word is "non-existence" (*lays*), and several others. I shall then comment on how the *Longer Theology* might shed light on this common source and on the origins of Ismā'īlī Neoplatonism.

**Prof. Alexander Treiger** is Professor of Religious Studies at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. His research interests include Islamic philosophy, theology, and mysticism, Arabic and Syriac Christianity, Graeco-Arabic Studies, and transmission of ideas from Late Antiquity to early Islam. He is the author of *Inspired Knowledge in Islamic Thought: Al-Ghazali's Theory of Mystical Cognition and Its Avicennian Foundation* (2012) and editor of the book series "Arabic Christianity: Texts and Studies" (Brill).

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**Behnaz Keybakhi: *The Fatimids: Ismaili Theology and Legitimacy***

Overwhelmed by complements and praise, Fatimids' historiography is dedicated to Imam for his divine right of kingship, the very Fatimids' theo-political thought. This doctrine would never have built up unless a serious endeavor took place to draw theo-political principles to establish Fatimids' Shiite administration. It was Fatimids' Da'i theologians who manipulated the primary concepts of Ismaili theology to produce intellectual infrastructures by and large to legitimize Fatimid Imams.



Moving from Ismaili theological concepts to the legitimacy of Fatimids as a new initiative seems to have received little attention in contemporary Ismaili studies, particularly to the theo-histo-political works. One of the earlier works close to the theme of this research is Dr. Fatemeh Janahmadi's *Fatimids' Religious institution in Egypt* (2009) in which she argues that Fatimids took advantage of the element "Imam's Charisma" to strengthen their religio-political authority. In addition to that work, Sumaiya Hamdani's study of Qazi No'man's theo-political strategy in her *Between Revolution and State: The Path to Fatimid Statehood* (2006) explains how the flexible Fatimids' theology caused a prolonged socio-political system in North Africa.

In this research which is based on a descriptive-analytical approach, the examination of some hypotheses is carried out by following this map: first is the study of Fatimid history to acknowledge that there is a real connection between historical phenomena and the production of Da'is' political opinions. Then comes the study of Da'is' theo-histo-political works to discover how the Chief Da'is manipulated the already existed concepts in their literature in order to produce the legitimizing indices.

Finally, the evaluation of the influence of theology upon legitimacy is to be in trial. Findings show that some legitimizing indices such as *ta'wil* (exegesis), Nass (divine appointment) and the continuity of Nass among Fatimid offspring, comprehensive Knowledge of the Fatimid Imam along with his sanctity against any sin and the religious authority of Imam, all were manipulated to acknowledge the legitimacy of Imam and his authority. In this well-engineered process, mostly conducted by Qazi No'man and Hamid al-Din Kermani and Mo'ayyed-fidin-Shirazi, all three components of strengthening, stabilizing and survival of Fatimids political system have been the strategic priority for Chief Da'is, at least until the end of 5th century AH.

**Dr. Behnaz Keybakhi** is a lecturer at Imam Sadiq University and an Islamic institute in Tehran, Iran. She holds a Ph.D. in History of Islam from Al-Zahra University since 2017 with a specialization in Fatimid studies. Dr. Keybakhi had the privilege of benefiting from the expertise of professor Farhad Daftary in her dissertation. She has published papers in Persian journals and a book titled *The Fatimids: Ismaili theology and legitimacy* with a high citation rate. Her teaching career spans 20 years of work with passion and enthusiasm. Dr. Keybakhi has also spent years living in England and visiting Europe, Australia, China, Canada and the Middle East.

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### **Kainat Jalaluddin: *al-Ghazali's selective Theology in Refuting Ismailis: An Analysis of the Refutation of Ta'lim Doctrine in Fadai' al Batiniyya wa Kitab al Mustazhiri***

Among many debates on reason and authority in Islamic intellectual history, one debate took place between Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d.1111), a famous jurist and theologian, and a group of Fatimid Ismailis under the leadership of Hasan-e-Sabah (d.1124) at the end of the 11th century. The claim of the group of Ismailis for the insufficiency of reason and the need for an authoritative Imam to guide the community to reach the Divine Truth became an intellectual and political threat for al-Ghazali. Thus, al-Ghazali produced a refutation of their doctrines in his book *Fadai'h al-Batiniyya*. This essay attempts to critically analyze the refutation of al-Ghazali by situating it within his broader theological and political agenda. While providing the intellectual and political context of al-Ghazali and presenting in detail the doctrine of *Ta'lim* given by Ismailis, this paper sets up the ground to analyze two main arguments of al-Ghazali against Ismailis i.e the refutation of their position on invalidation of reason, and the refutation of their claim for the need of a unique knowledge from an infallible Imam. By critically analyzing the text, one can deduce that al-Ghazali's refutation consists of his selective Asharite theology along with the deep influence of Avicennan ideas. He conveniently chooses between both to successfully

refute the position of opponents. In an attempt to do so, he seemed to contradict his own position on matters such as Prophecy, Infallibility and Imamate. Additionally, this paper also sheds light on the significant variations in al-Ghazali's account of the doctrine as compared to all other accounts available such as from Abd al-Karīm ash-Shahrastānī(d. 1153), Nasir al-Din al-Tūsī (d.1274) , Rashid al-Din Fadl Allah's (d.1318) and Atā-Malek Juvayni's (d.1283). It is a significant issue regarding the analysis of *Fada'ih* because al-Ghazali's most of the refutation revolves around those variations. His refutation of the doctrine seemed to become inapplicable if the rest of the accounts are considered authentic.

**Kainat Jalaluddin** is a Lecturer in the School of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences at Habib University, Karachi, Pakistan. She teaches courses mainly on Islamic History and Thought. Kainat has two postgraduate qualifications from the UK in the field of Islamic Studies; a two-year postgraduate certificate in Islamic Studies and Humanities from the Institute of Ismaili Studies London and an MA in Islamic Intellectual History (Islamic Societies and Cultures) from SOAS, University of London. Her MA dissertation focused on the debate of reason and authority in medieval Islam by revisiting al-Ghazali's *Fada'ih al-Batiniyya wa Fada'il al-Mustazhiriyya*. Kainat's research focus lies in the post-Avicennian period in looking at the fusion of *Falsafa* and *Kalam* in the debates of Divine Existence, pre-eternity and natural causation.

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**Aslisho Qurboniev: *What can stylometry tell us about the anonymous Brethren of Purity and their Epistles?***

There has been much debate over the questions of the authorship, provenance, and the dating of the *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'*. This paper will present the results of a stylometric analysis of the full text of the encyclopaedia and individual epistles (including the *Risālat al-Jāmi'a* and *Risālat Jami'at al-Jami'a*). While there are still very few studies based on stylometric approaches to classical Arabic texts in general, this paper represents the very first attempt at a quantitative and stylometric analysis of the *Rasā'il* in terms of style, expression, authorial signal, and genre. I have considered the epistles individually, in comparison with each other, against a smaller corpus of similar content, and against a larger corpus of Arabic texts from the OpenITI corpus written during the first five centuries of Islam. Using a combination of methods I also test the hypothesis of the Ismaili background of the Ikhwān by comparing the texts linguistic features with other Ismā'īlī texts from the period. I intend to include texts from 4th-8th/10-15th centuries in my present analysis.

**Dr. Aslisho Qurboniev** is a historian of the Middle East and North Africa region with a strong interest in Central Asian and Persianate studies and cultures. His academic studies began at Khorog State University in Tajikistan where he studied Arabic and graduated with a Specialist Diploma in Oriental Studies. Aslisho has an MPhil in Oriental Studies from the University of Oxford, where he did read Islamic Studies and History (2012-2014; Arabic and Ottoman Turkish). He received his PhD in Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Cambridge (2015-2019) with a PhD thesis entitled "Traditions of Learning in Fāṭimid Ifrīqiya (296-362/909-973): Networks, Practices, and Institutions." As a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the KITAB project, Aslisho's primary area of research is the Islamic West, including Maghrib, al-Andalus, and Sicily. In addition to his contribution to the Open-ITI corpus, Aslisho also works on subjects related to the Islamic East, premodern education and knowledge practices, connectivity, and book culture. You can follow him on Twitter to get updates about his academic projects: @aslishahqurbani

**Mathew Barber: *Discovery and dissemination: Designing a Digital Application for Understanding the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'***

Detailed research into any text can lead to the production of an enormous amount of data. Traditionally, much of that data remains in our notebooks or on our computers, awaiting a suitable project, paper or book, often left unused. When we start applying digital methods to a text, the quantity of data can potentially expand enormously. This is true for KITAB's text Reuse data for the *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'* (that is, evidence of text reuse produced using a computer algorithm called passim). This dataset is not as large as for some texts in KITAB's Corpus, but it is large enough to present difficulties for study.

In this paper, I will argue that high-quality digital applications can aid us both in undertaking our research and in the dissemination of research results. I will take as my example, the *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'* and evidence of reuse of this text. The paper will explain the design of the application and how it has allowed us to understand and interrogate a complex dataset. For example, I will explain how the application might be used to understand how different *Rasā'il* were disseminated throughout time and across space. It will then conclude by stressing the importance of digital applications for the dissemination of research. Such research does not necessarily need to be created-digitally, and the creation of applications using user-friendly tools such as Microsoft PowerBI need not be difficult. Thus, a well-designed digital application can advance not only the researcher's understanding of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', but help other researchers pursue their own questions.

**Dr. Mathew Barber** is a historian specialising in Egyptian historiography and in particular Fatimid history writing (c. tenth-twelfth centuries). He studied his BA in history at the University of Oxford (2010-2013), before going on to study an MSc in Arabic at the University of Edinburgh. He received his doctorate in 2021 from the University of Edinburgh on the subject of Fatimid history writing, entitled: "Fatimid historiography and its survival. A case study of the vizierate of al-Yāzūrī (r. 442-450/1050-1058)." In 2018-2019 he worked with the KITAB team in a partnership with the Qatar National Library to develop a prototype digital reading environment for exploring texts on the biography of the Prophet and data about those texts. He now works with the KITAB team on the development of visualizations and applications for their datasets. At the same time, he is exploring what KITAB's text reuse data (alongside other datasets) can teach us about Fatimid historiography, its survival and history-writing practices in Egypt.

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**Gowaart Van Den Bossche: *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' as an open text tradition: Towards an Assessment of the Manuscript Tradition and its many Social Contexts***

The manuscript tradition of the *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'* is both extremely rich and notoriously complex. Scholars have long since identified the most authoritative manuscripts and have painstakingly identified their taxonomy and the ways in which they are interrelated. The crowning achievement of all this work is the ongoing new edition of the text led by the Institute of Ismaili Studies, of which some volumes are prefaced with in-depth studies of the manuscript tradition. Much less studied, however, are the various contexts in which these manuscript witnesses were copied and read, and the reasons why we find such a high degree of textual and structural variance within them, not to mention the many excerpts (sometimes of dubious character) circulating historically. In the present paper, I argue that such variation is deeply meaningful if we approach the *Rasā'il* as an open text tradition and zoom in on its varying reception across place and time and within different communities. I present a distant reading of metadata about a great amount of such manuscripts taken both from catalogues and from my

own perusal of (digitised) manuscripts, and identify general trends in the mutability and general spread of the tradition. I specifically zoom in on two aspects. First, I survey the high degree to which the text was transmitted not in full manuscripts, but in excerpts, often to be found in composite and multiple text manuscripts, and formulate some thoughts about what that means for how scholars accessed the contents of the *Rasā'il*. Secondly, I analyze a small number of manuscripts that can be linked to *Ismā'īlī* contexts, especially in Mamluk and Ottoman Syria, and discuss how these particular communities found meaning in a centuries-old text by creatively re-assembling it and supplementing it with other materials relevant to their worldview.

**Dr. Gowaart Van Den Bossch** is a postdoctoral research fellow with the KITAB project. He studied History and Arabic and Islamic Studies at Ghent University and the Netherlands-Flemish Institute in Cairo. He obtained his PhD in history at Ghent University in January 2019 with a dissertation entitled "The Past, Panegyric, and the Performance of Penmanship: Sultanī Biography and Social Practice in Late Medieval Egypt and Syria". This dissertation won the 2020 BRAIS – De Gruyter Prize in the Study of Islam and the Muslim World. His research focuses on historiography, literature and manuscript culture in late medieval Egypt and Syria. He is generally interested in the narrative qualities of historiography and the ways in which authors made use of literary forms of expression in Medieval Islamic written culture.

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**Perwaiz Hayat: *Yogi Lāl Dās and Ginans – a comparative study of the term jogi in the Su'āl va Javāb and the Ismaili devotional literature of the Indo-Pak subcontinent***

The present study is based on the text traditionally known as *Su'āl va Javāb* – a transcript of an intellectual discussion between the Mughal Sufi crown prince Dārā Shukōh (d.1659 CE) and a Yogi Lāl Dās (d.?) during the 17th C.E. This paper will examine the concept of *jogi* as it appears in the conversation and its significance in the manuscripts identified as *Su'āl va javāb* in India Office Library Collection, British Library, and a few secondary sources available. This will follow with the elaboration of the concept of *jogi* as discussed in the contemporary devotional literature (Ginans) of Ismaili Nizaris of the Indo-Pak subcontinent. A close analysis of the content of the manuscripts shows that the concept of *jogi* as discussed in the conversation is one of the most important concepts articulated by Yogi Lāl Dās. For example, in his answer to Dārā's question regarding the individual soul feeling pain or pleasure and its sojourn and subjugation in body, Lāl Dās tells him that if the individual soul remains in the companionship of the 'perfect man' it transcends the feeling of pain and pleasure. Later, responding to another question, he reiterates the same idea by saying: "If you need a safe (tranquil) abode, then seek the companionship of the *fuqarā'* (*jogis*) because tranquility is not present anywhere else." Similar ideas can be found in Ginans where the composers of Ginans such as Imam Begum sings "When I found the true master, miseries were gone, and the problems of this servant were resolved; I achieved happiness." Similarly, there are various Ginans composed by Ismaili preachers such as Pir Shams and Pir Hasan Kabirdin explaining the idea of *jogi*. Based on his thought, and internal evidence of the dialogue, it seems that Lāl Dās was close to Ismaili Guptis of his time. Whether he himself was one of the Guptis is the question which remains unanswered.

**Dr. Perwaiz Hayat** is a Lecturer at the Department of Religions and Cultures, Concordia University, Montreal. He has achieved his degrees of Masters and Doctorate from the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University. His area of research and expertise is Mysticism in 17th century India, with special reference to the Mughal Sufi Prince Dara Shukoh. He has contributed an article on Dara Shukoh in the *Encyclopedia of Religion*. He has presented his research on the platforms of various universities such as Aga Khan, Bishop's, Concordia, Dalhousie, Hawaii,



McGill, and Oxford. His various articles have been published in Journals, Magazines, and Newsletters.

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**Iqbal Surani: *From Haridās to ‘Alīdās: an analysis of the ginān-s attributed to Pīr Shams: hamadil khāliq allāha sohī vasejī; kesari sinh sarup bhulāyo***

The figure of the Imām is central in shī’sme, particularly for the Khoja Ismailis where the Imām is physically present in the person of Shāh Karīm al-Husaynī, Aga Khan IV. He is considered as the 49th Imām descendant of the Prophet Muhammad from his daughter Fâtima and his cousin and son in law ‘Alī (d. 661). An emblematic and historical figure, the Imām assumes a double heritage that of Abrahamic tradition vested in the interpretation of the Quran, and presented in the devotional texts of ginān and du’a as the 10th *avatār* of Vishnu in the hindu tradition. The devotional literature of the Khojas Ismaili of South Asia are of three different kinds: the *gināns*, the *farmans* and the *du’ā* and texts of sermons. Through an analysis of some ginān and of some selected verses of *Kalām-i Maulā* which are examples of the devotional literature of the community we shall try to understand the construction of religious identity of the Khojas Shia Imāmī Ismailis in South Asia. The devotional literature of the khojas concerning their religious practices is centered upon the recognition of the Imām as the only condition for all murids in quest of salvation. In referring to certain passages of the *gināns* and the *Kalām-i Maulā*, we shall try to show how the process of conversion towards satpanth took place over a period of time to cristalise the faith towards the sole figure of the Imām, to the exclusion of the any charismatic figure such as the Pirs. Those texts are the testimony of the passage from the abandoning (déculturation) of the original culture of the Khoja Ismailis to identify with the sole culture of the Imām. The *gināns* which were formally the heart of the spiritual quest are relegated today to the role of ritual chants and serve now merely as the background to the religious ceremonies.

**Dr. Iqbal Surani** obtained his Ph D in Arabic Studies and Islamic and Oriental Civilisations from the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (Paris). His dissertation consisted on the French translation and commentary of *Kalām-i Maulā* and the devotional Ismailis texts. He continues his research as a postdoctoral researcher affiliated with Florida International University on the mode of transmission of knowledge among the Khojas.

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**Alijan Damani: “My Pīr is Ḥassan Shāh” (Merā Pīr Ḥassan Shāh): Life and Works of the last Ismā‘īlī Ginān Composer-Precer in India, Saiyyida Imām Begum**

Academic studies on the Satpanth (literally, true path) Nīzārī Ismā‘īlī tradition are relatively scarce, generally speaking. This paper, thus, seeks to present a preliminary study on the life and works of Saiyyida Imām Begum (d. 1866?), who, according to the Indian Ismā‘īlī traditions, was the last Ginān composer in the line of the Ismā‘īlī Pirs and Saiyyids, and an important figure in propagating the Satpanth Nīzārī Ismā‘īlī teachings in the Indian subcontinent. Her handful number of published Gināns are extremely popular within the community (but also outside the community) and are recited with high levels of devotion. Using ethnographic fieldwork data, oral accounts, and hitherto unexamined primary sources in the Khojī script, this paper (which is based on my forthcoming book on Imām Begum) addresses multiple aspects, albeit extremely briefly, related to the figure of Imām Begum: Numeric, linguistic, rhythmic and thematic scope of her Gināns (published and unpublished); her biographical details; her activities during her life and role in the Ismā‘īlī mission (preaching, ginān composition, travelling

etc); her character in the social memory of the Indian Ismāʿīlīs; her popular love story and its broader implications; myths about her; and, her mausoleum (its history, architecture etc), to name just a few. As such, conventional histories (about Imām Begum) based primarily on oral accounts have been revisited, critically analyzed and evaluated in this paper. Quite a few details and descriptions about Imām Begum, which have neither been examined by community scholars nor academicians, have been made an integral part of this paper. By assessing the very figure of Imām Begum, this paper hypothesizes that it is no less productive approach to look at the history of the Indian Ismāʿīlī Satpanth tradition in a chronologically reverse order. The research methods employed during relevant investigations for this paper and the complex obstacles that have been overcome may thus aid to set an example for scholars interested in conducting similar research on other Ismāʿīlī Pīrs or Sayyids.

**Ali Jan S. Damani** works on the Satpanth tradition for almost a decade. He was the youngest presenter at the 2nd International Ismaili Studies Conference (IISC) which took place in 2017, Ottawa, Canada. In the past years, he has published numerous articles on Ginans, a corpus that constitutes an important part of the Satpanth tradition. He has recently published English transliterations of hitherto unexplored and unpublished Ginanic compositions like Manhar and Satgur Jo Saloko. Ali Jan continuously conducts research on Ginans, Khojki, and other aspects of the Satpanthi tradition. The subjects of his forthcoming publications are Amir Pir (a site located in Jhimpir, Sindh), Ismaili Da'wa in South Asian regions, and the Critical edition of a couple of Ginans and Giranth.

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**Kumail Rajani: *Examining Hadith Sources of al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān (d. 363/974): A Case Study of al-Kutub al-Jaʿfariyya***

Soon after the Fatimids established their hegemony over North Africa, al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān (d. 363/974) was tasked with the responsibility of compiling a work of law that would serve as an authoritative point of reference for jurists, judges and bureaucrats in the burgeoning Ismaili state. It is evident that he had to have recourse to earlier collections of hadith as he cites them consistently in his writings and incorporates them into his works. His first voluminous legal work, *al-Īḍāḥ*, survived in the form of a small fragment, cites several early hadith collections that were used to formulate and systematise various aspects of Ismaili belief and practice. One such source is *al-Kutub al-Jaʿfariyya*, also known as *al-Jaʿfariyyāt* and *al-Ashʿathiyyāt*, that is believed to have been composed in Medina before it travelled to Baghdad and North Africa to be incorporated in the larger hadith collections of Twelvers and Ismailis. It is detailing the trajectory of this early hadith collection and its incorporation in the later Shiʿi hadith collection that my study is primarily concerned. My study aims to develop and test a new methodology of unearthing early Shiʿi hadith sources that served as the basis for the later collections of the fourth/tenth century. In order to investigate the historicity of *al-Kutub al-Jaʿfariyya*, as a case study, I propose to conduct a 'cross-regional textual analysis' of the reports of *al-Kāfī* and *al-Īḍāḥ*. Cross-regional textual analysis entails conducting a comparative study of a set of reports preserved in the later collections (in my case study, *al-Kāfī* and *al-Īḍāḥ*) composed in two distant geographical locations (Qum and Qayrawān) by contemporaneous authors (al-Kulaynī and al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān) adhering to distinct religious persuasions (Twelver and Ismaili traditions). The findings of this investigation, I will conclude, contribute to our understanding of both geographical transmission of early sources and compositional arrangements of the later hadith compendia.

**Dr. Kumail Rajani** is a Postdoc Research Fellow in Islamic Studies at the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter, working on the Law, Authority and Learning in Shiite Islam (www.lawalisi.eu) project. Though primarily focused on the origins and development of Shī'ī Ḥadīth, his research includes Qur'anic exegesis, fiqh, *uṣūl*, Ismā'īlī Studies, and Shi'i Studies more broadly. Rajani completed his doctoral thesis entitled *Making Sense of Ismaili Traditions: The Modes and Meanings of the Transmission of Ḥadīth in the Works of al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān* (d. 363/974) at the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter. He also edited the forthcoming *The Sound Traditions: Studies in Ismaili Texts and Thought* (Brill, 2021).

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### **Paul Walker: *Ismaili Hadith***

The standard rule with regard to the authority of a given Imam's pronouncements is that they carry superior weight over any earlier until a later imam issues a new and thus superseding rule. The living imam must be followed, but, in the absence of a later declaration, individuals are to accept the previous one.

For the Ismailis, who never produced or accepted as canonical a specific collection of hadith, Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's *Da'ā'im al-islām* is and was the closest thing to such a corpus, although it was in fact limited by the author to the pronouncements of imams Ja'far and his predecessors and does not incorporate the utterances of any later imams including those under whom QN worked.

There are in fact several examples of what might be term ḥadīth featuring the words of the Fatimid imams who are all, from al-Mahdī onward, subsequent to the imams represented in the *Da'ā'im*. One set of examples would be the material contained in QN's *Kitāb al-majālis wa'l-musāyarāt*, which is a record of al-Mu'izz's actions and pronouncements. Another source might be the *khuṭab*, sermons by the imams al-Qā'im, al-Manṣūr and al-Mu'izz, and some from later. However, none of these appear to have as much status or force as those in the *Da'ā'im*, which was said to have been examined and approved by al-Mu'izz himself. But that raises serious questions about what were the sources of Ismaili hadiths in general, both prior to (a question partially answered by Madelung's study of QN's *Idāh*) and after this work, and what authority did any of those not in the *Da'ā'im* have. The index for the edited text of Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī's *al-Zīna* lists eight pages of prophetic hadiths that appear in this early work. From where did he get them? During the imamate of al-'Azīz, the wazir Ibn Killis (d. 380/991), a convert from Judaism to Ismaili Islam, compiled a supplement that included hadith-like material from at least al-Mu'izz and al-'Azīz. It was known as the *Kitāb al-fiqh mimā samī'ahu min al-Imām al-Mu'izz wa al-Imām al-'Azīz*, or variously as *al-Risāla al-wazīriyya*, *Kitāb mukhtaṣar al-wazīr*, *Muṣannaf al-wazīr*. In the year 416/1025, the Fatimid government issued a prohibition against using any law book other than the *Da'ā'im* and this very book, and it also encouraged copying both (with financial incentives). Moreover, al-Maqrīzī, some four centuries later, claimed that he owned a copy of it and had studied it. He reported that it was in size about half that of Bukhārī's well known *Ṣaḥīḥ*. Unfortunately, the book has yet to surface in modern collections although clearly it once was treated as an important source of hadith in the Ismaili context. There are in addition hints that portions of it have survived.

**Dr. Paul Walker** is the Deputy Director for Academic Programs, Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Chicago, (Ph.D. University of Chicago, 1974) was director of the American Research Center in Cairo for over ten years (1976-86) and has taught also at Columbia, McGill and the University of Michigan. As a specialist in the history of the Islamic thought, he has published numerous papers and more than a dozen books, among them *Early Philosophical*

*Shiism: The Ismaili Neoplatonism of Abū Ya‘qūb al-Sijistānī* (Cambridge, 1993); *An Ismaili Heresiography: The “Bāb al-Shayṭān” from Abū Tammām’s Kitāb al-Shajara* (with Wilferd Madelung) (Leiden, 1998); *Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī: Ismaili Thought in the Age of al-Ḥākīm* (London, 1999); *The Advent of the Fatimids: A Contemporary Shi‘i Witness* (with Wilferd Madelung) (London, 2000); *Exploring an Islamic Empire: Fatimid History and Its Sources* (London, 2002), *Caliph of Cairo: al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah, 996-1021* (Cairo, 2009) and most recently *Affirming the Imamate: Early Fatimid Teachings in the Islamic West, edition and English translation of works attributed to Abu ‘Abd Allah al-Shi‘i and His Brother Abu’l-‘Abbas* (with W. Madelung) (London, 2021).

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### **José Bellver: *Maslama b. al-Qāsim and the Dating of the Rasā’il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’***

In 1996, Maribel Fierro published her persuasive and influential article “Bāṭinism in al-Andalus: Maslama b. Qāsim al-Qurṭubī (d. 353/964), Author of the *Rutbat al-Ḥakīm* and the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* (Picatrix)”. In this piece, Fierro suggested that Abū l-Qāsim Maslama b. al-Qāsim al-Qurṭubī (b. 293/905-6, d. 353/964) was the author of *Rutbat al-ḥakīm* and *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm*, two works that the manuscript tradition usually credits to the Andalusī astronomer Maslama b. Aḥmad al-Majrīṭī al-Qurṭubī (d. c. 398/1007).

*Rutbat al-ḥakīm* and *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm* are two of the most important Bāṭinī works written in al-Andalus—*Rutbat al-ḥakīm* in the field of alchemy and *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm* in the field of talisman-making and astral magic. Considering the wealth of sources quoted in them, among which *Rasā’il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’*, although not by name, both works are also salient witnesses of the transmission of Bāṭinism into the Islamicate world and its development, particularly, in al-Andalus.

The author of *Rutbat al-ḥakīm* and *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm* wrote down the initial and final year of composition in the introductory sections of both books. Most manuscripts of the *Rutba* give the year 439 AH (1047-8 AD), as the initial date of composition, and the year 442 AH (1050-1 AD), as the final one. However, other manuscripts, less in number, give the dates 339 AH (950-1 AD) and 342 AH (953-4 AD) for the composition, that is one century before. As to the dates found in *Ghāya*, the manuscript tradition unanimously gives the beginning of 343 AH (954 AD) as the initial date of composition and the end of 348 AH (960 AD) as the final one. In all, we have two possible periods for the composition of these works. They may have been written in the 4th/10th century or in the 5th/11th century.

Dozy, in his posthumous memory completed by de Goeje, entitled “Nouveaux documents pour l’étude de la religion des Harraniens”, already dismissed the attribution of these works to Maslama b. Aḥmad al-Majrīṭī. After identifying a mention of a *fitna* in al-Andalus in *Rutbat al-Ḥakīm* with the fall of the Umayyad caliphate of Cordoba in the years 399—422/1009—1031, Dozy dated *Rutbat al-ḥakīm* and *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm* the 5th/11th century. Fierro’s attribution of *Rutbat al-ḥakīm* and *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm* to Maslama b. al-Qāsim al-Qurṭubī, now widely accepted, meant that both works should be dated the 4th/10th century. Since *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm* borrows extensively from the *Rasā’il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’*, Fierro’s attribution means that the *Rasā’il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’* should be dated the late 3th/9th century or early 4th/10th century, much earlier than the first known mention of the *Rasā’il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’* by Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (d. 414/1023).

This paper challenges Fierro’s attribution of *Rutbat al-ḥakīm* and *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm* to Maslama b. al-Qāsim and suggests instead that both works were written in the 5th/11th century. Consequently, this new dating of *Rutbat al-ḥakīm* and *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm* involves that both works



do not provide enough basis to date the *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'* the late 3rd/9th century or early 4th/10th century. Consequently, al-Tawḥīdī's mention of the *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'* in the late 4th/10th century would be the earliest witness of the *Rasā'il*.

**Dr. José Bellver** is a Postdoctoral researcher at the ERC project 'The Origin and Early Development of Philosophy in tenth-century al-Andalus: the impact of ill-defined materials and channels of transmission' (ERC 2016, AdG 740618), conducted by Godefroid de Callataÿ at the University of Louvain. His primary research interest focuses on the intellectual history of Islam, particularly on the fields of Sufism, philosophy, *kalām* and history of science in al-Andalus. In the field of Andalusī Sufism, Bellver has devoted research to the sixth/twelfth and seventh/thirteenth centuries, and particularly to Ibn Barrajān and his disciples. He has published in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, *Arabica*, and *Al-Qanṭara* among others, and contributes on Andalusī Sufism to the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 3rd edition. Bellver is currently preparing monographs on the early development of theology and intellectual Sufism in al-Andalus.

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### **Taha Juzer Tyebkhan; *Inscriptions of Happiness: Expanding the Frontiers of Medieval Ornamentation***

As discussions related to Islamic Art and Architecture became largely dominated by surveys, archaeological reports, and exhibition catalogues, the concept of the mediation of ornament was increasingly emphasized. This concept refers to the way ornamentation can be used to compel "a relationship between objects or works of art, and viewers or users", and allows studies of art and architecture to surpass treating ornament simply "as a category of forms or techniques applied to some media". In this context, this paper posits that by using primary sources to reconstruct historical perceptions of happiness, a rich understanding of medieval inscriptions depicting motifs of happiness (*sa'āda*, *ghibṭa*, *baraka*, *yumn*) can be created. Using the Dā'ī al-Qaḍī al-Nu'mān's *Kitāb al-Majālis wal Musāyerāt*, the paper will shed light on the mediation of happiness' inscriptions by establishing concepts of happiness which would have been cultivated in the Fāṭimid court. Along with this, it also remarks on how this approach raises noteworthy concepts and questions relevant to understanding historical texts and prosperity.

**Taha Juzer Tyebkhan** is a student in his 10th year at Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah Arabic academy in Surat, India. He attended his primary and secondary education in Canada. His previous research involves investigating cross-cultural capabilities of qualitative happiness research methods within the Dawoodi Bohra community. Currently, he is researching historical constructs of happiness in Fatimid history and literature. His personal interests are art, design, and calligraphy, particularly if the art was created centuries ago.

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### **Shiraz Hajiani: *Ilkhanid Chronicles as Sources for History and Doctrines of Fatimid Ismailism***

Studies of Fatimid history and thought have predominantly relied on Ismaili da'wa literature preserved among the Ṭayyibī communities and on non-Ismaili histories. Among the histories, al-Maqrīzī's (d. 1442) writings are regarded as pivotal since he drew on contemporary and eyewitness accounts of the amīr al-Musabbiḥī (d. 1029) and the like which have since been lost.

Ismailis did not write history, *ta'rīkh qua ta'rīkh*. Ayyubid and Mamluk era authors, such as Ibn al-Athīr (d. 1233), in their peripheral mentions of the Fatimids, drew from *sīra* and *manāqib*

reports in Ismaili doctrinal texts. The Fatimid era Arabic *da'wa* literature has been highly privileged; however, the historiography was often written at distant removes of time, space and Creed.

The earliest most complete account of the Ismailis was written a century before al-Maqrīzī, by Juwaynī (d. 1283), as a dynastic chronicle based on texts plundered from the legendary library at Alamut. Rashīd al-Dīn (d. 1318) and Qāshānī (d. after 1337) also wrote sections on Fatimid and Nizari history and doctrine. These Persian sources have rarely been referenced for the study of the Fatimids—Farhad Daftary's chapter on the Fatimids in *The Ismā'īlīs: Their History and Doctrines* has three footnote mentions of these sources and Paul Walker's important *Exploring an Islamic Empire: Fatimid History and its Sources* has no mention of these Persian Texts.

These Ilkhanid authors derived their accounts directly from Nizari *da'wa* literature, including the earliest history written by the Ismailis with *ta'rīkh* in the title, namely the non-extant *Ta'rīkh-i Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ*. Fragments in these chronicles preserve Nizari construals and some information about the Fatimid era not found elsewhere. In this paper, I show that these histories, shorn of the narrative frameworks of Persian historical writing and the vitriol directed at the Ismailis, are important witnesses of Fatimid history and doctrine. Nizari sources embedded in Ilkhanid Persian chronicles along with the information from Arabic texts preserved by the Ṭayyibīs and in often hostile Sunni histories, used in studies over the past century, will give us better understandings of past actualities and Fatimid thought.

**Dr. Shiraz Hajiani, Ph.D.'s** doctoral research, *Reconstructing Alamut: New Approaches to the Study of the Qiyāma and the Nizari Polity in Iran*, advised by John Woods, Paul Walker and Farhad Daftary, focussed on the doctrinal, social, institutional, intellectual, political histories and thought of the Nizari Ismailis and their polity in Iran (1090-1256CE). Using multi-disciplinary approaches of digital humanities, historical, textual and narrative analyses, he has recovered subdued voices and traces of non-extant Nizari texts which are fragmentarily embedded in Ilkhanid chronicles. He has mapped the conflict and complex relations between the Ismailis and the 'Abbasids, Saljuqs and Mongols. His syntheses open new vistas on the tumultuous era and his editions and translations of several doctrinal treatises add new light on Nizari eschatology and religious authority. He also holds a Masters of Theological Studies from Harvard University. Shiraz Hajiani and Michael Bechtel founded the Ismaili Studies Conference at Chicago in 2014.

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### **Kasra Shiva: *Search for the Light of the Imam***

During recent decades there has been a growing body of literature in the field of Islamic studies that directly or indirectly addressed Ismaili history and ideology. However, one of the fields that had remained obscure is the historical context in which Ismaili *da'wa* was functioning in the aftermath of the Mongol invasion. Surrendered to a destiny comparable to that of their legendary castle Alamut, Ismaili communities were tracked down and massacred indiscriminately to a degree that for a long time it was believed that they had just vanished from the pages of history. The collapse of the Ismaili state led to a dark interval in the life of the Nizari Ismaili community in Iran that has been categorized by historians under the title of "the darkest stage." The Ismailis of this era followed *taqiyya* (dissimulation), sometimes under a Sufi mantle, to provide an appropriate atmosphere for the survival of their tradition. Nizari Quhestani (d. 721/1321) was one of the earliest Ismaili authors of the post-Alamut period whose poetical writings are of great importance from a historical and theological point of view. In 679/1280 he embarked on a long expedition that began from Quhistan and ended up in Georgia while

recording his journey in a poetic travelogue. Certain allusions in this book indicate Nizari's visit to a place called Dar al-Shifa in Tabriz, but he does not shed much light on the events that took place there. Indeed, the coincidence adoption of dissimulation policy and a complicated metaphorical and esoteric vocabulary – which are characteristics of Sufi poetry - make it arduous to extract solid historical evidence out of his writings. By adopting a critical approach, the present work will try to show that despite the claims of many secondary sources that Nizari evidently visited the Ismaili Imam in Tabriz, it was not possible to find any direct and clear piece of evidence to support this claim in Nizari's works.

**Kasra Shiva** is in the Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities at the Institute of Ismaili Studies. Their field of interest covers Shi'a history and ideology. Coming from Iran, the home to the largest Shi'i community across the world, they work to address the challenges imposed on their society and the wider Shi'i community around the world by acquiring a better understanding of the historical background of these communities. Familiarity with the Arabic language, alongside being a native Farsi speaker, has enabled them to access a wide range of primary sources in the field of Shi'i studies. Kasra also has a master's degree in polymer engineering from Iran's Polymer and Petrochemical Institute.

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#### **Huzefa Tawawalla: *A Narratological Analysis of the Prose Works by 'Umāra al-Yamanī***

This paper presents examples of narratological analysis being applied to the style, text and substance of the two prose works composed by the 12<sup>th</sup> century Yemeni historian and poet, 'Umāra al-Hakami (c. 515-569/1121-1174). The first work is his *Tārīkh al-Yaman* 1 which attempts to sketch key moments of Yemeni history beginning from the Ziyadids and how they came to power to the time period of 'Umāra's contemporaries among the Zuraiyids, Mahdids and Najahids. The second work is his *al-Nukat al-'Aṣrīyah fī Akhbār al-Wuzarā' al-Miṣrīyah* which, along with brief anecdotes about the Cairene caliphs, al-Fā'iz and al-Āḍid and their viziers, provides an autobiographical sketch of the author. This paper aims to study the *Tārīkh* and the *Nukat* from the perspective of narrative voice and authorial agency. It attempts to analyse 'Umāra's narrativity to see how he consciously and unconsciously weaved information to create the narrative that he did in both works, and what effect that narrative weave has on their historical and literary aspects. Is it possible to discern modes of emplotment from his narratives which, though portraying a picture of the past, also depict how "different readings of the present were brought into a more authoritative format"? 'Umāra's works are important from a historical perspective because of his unique proximity to events documented in his writings, because of who he was as an individual and due to the heterogeneous group of patrons he served.

**Huzefa Tawawalla** is presently Assistant Professor of Islamic History at Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah, Surat, India. A graduate of this academy, he received his Master's in Islamic Studies in 2005, which was followed by a Master in Education in 2009. He is currently undertaking doctoral studies in the field of narrative historiography. Besides historiography, his interests include comparative sociolinguistics and teaching academic writing.

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## **Fâres Gillon: *From Shi'i tafsīr to Ismaili ta'wīl: the Evolution of "Personalised Commentary" in Da'wa Context***

The early Ismaili tradition, as reflected in the works of Ja'far b. Manṣūr al-Yaman, presents several common features and parallels with the Shi'i 'pre-Buwayhid school of exegesis' (M.M. Bar-Asher), as well as parts of the Nuṣayrī literature. Among the most salient of these features is the use of 'personalized commentary' (M.A. Amir-Moezzi) of the Qur'ān, which consists in identifying elements of the Qur'ān with various protagonists from the beginnings of Islam, be they the Imams, their companions or their adversaries. The similitude of the exegetical techniques indicates that the various groups of the Shi'a were rooted in common ground, and that there was a common pool of concepts and Qur'ānic exegeses from which each of these groups drew its own, adapting and reshaping them when needed. In this paper, I will examine the exegeses of three verses in the works of the Fāṭimid Ismaili author Ja'far b. Manṣūr al-Yaman, to illustrate three Ismaili approaches of the pre-existing Shi'i tradition of 'personalized commentaries'. The 'personalized commentary' that identifies Abū Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmān with, respectively, 'turpitude, abomination and outrage' from Q 16:90, is found in Ja'far b. Manṣūr al-Yaman's *Kitāb al-Kashf*, as well as in several non-Ismaili Shi'i sources. This illustrates the anchorage of early Ismaili ta'wīl in the pre-Buwayhid school of exegesis. In the same work by Ja'far, the author presents several interpretations of Q2:197, one of which seems in line with the methods of pre-Buwayhid exegesis, while another, much more elaborated, is specifically Ismaili and deals with discipline matters within the da'wa. As for the third example, it concerns the prohibition of eating 'carrion, blood and pork'. While a 'personalized commentary' of these three elements is found in pre-Buwayhid Shi'i as well as Nuṣayrī sources, an Ismā'īlī interpretation confirmed by several sources exemplifies how the Ismaili exegetes have widened the use of 'personal commentary' to unnamed persons holding certain beliefs and attitudes, rather than historic protagonists. Again, the Ismailis develop their own da'wa-related themes by refining previous hermeneutical techniques.

**Dr. Fâres Gillon** is a Research Associate in the Shi'i Studies Unit of the Institute of Ismaili Studies (London). He specializes in Fāṭimid Ismailism and early Shi'ism. His wider interests include Islamic philosophy and thought, heterodoxies in Islamic context, and Qur'anic hermeneutics. He obtained his PhD in Arabic and Islamic Studies from the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (Paris): his dissertation consisted of a French translation and commentary of the *Kitāb al-Kashf*, attributed to the Fāṭimid Ismaili author Ja'far b. Manṣūr al-Yaman. He is currently preparing a monograph based on his doctoral research and comprising an English translation of the *Kitāb al-Kashf*. As part of his study of Fāṭimid Ismaili thought, Fâres Gillon is particularly interested in the corpus transmitted under the name of Ja'far b. Manṣūr al-Yaman, which is essential to map the early formation and evolution of Ismailism during the Fāṭimid period, and to highlight its anchorage in earlier Shi'i doctrines and debates.

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## **Mushegh Asatryan: *How to Read Muslim Heresiology? An Ismaili Man-of-letters and his Classification of Muslim Sects***

This article is a case study in how to fruitfully read Muslim heresiology. I take as a case the classification of Muslim sects in the heresiology of Ismaili author Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 322/933). Through a close reading of the text, and by situating it within the religious and intellectual milieu of the time, I explore how he classified the existing Muslim groups in such a way as to give preference to the Ismailis – without appearing to do so. A representative of a minority group writing for an unsympathetic majority, al-Razi deploys ambiguity, inverts received

categories (such as “Sunni”), and writes between the lines in order to critique established orthodoxy while maintaining plausible deniability. Through study of this work I propose a novel way of reading Muslim heresiologies in general. I contend that to fully understand such texts we must go beyond the sifting of fact from fiction, and to explore the social location of their authors, as well as the position of the groups to which they belonged. For depending on the power dynamics in which authors operated and on their intended audiences, they either chose to write openly, to camouflage their thoughts, or to write between the lines.

**Dr. Mushegh Asatryan** (PhD Yale 2012) is Associate Professor of Arabic and Muslim Cultures at the University of Calgary. His work explores the history of Muslim sectarianism, Muslim constructions of orthodoxy and heresy, and religious polemics in the Abbasid empire. His monograph, entitled *Controversies in Formative Shi'i Islam*, studies the religious and literary history of early Shi'i sectarianism, and his forthcoming articles include "The Heretic Writes Back: Feigning Orthodoxy in Saffar al-Qummi's *Basa'ir al-Darajat*" (forthcoming in *History of Religions*). In 2020, Mushegh Asatryan received the Zahid Ali Fellowship from the Institute of Ismaili Studies, to write a monograph on Muslim heresiology. He is currently working on a study and translation of Mu'tazili theologian al-Khayyat's *Kitab al-Intisar* (under contract with Gorgias Press). Together with David Hollenberg, he is preparing a critical edition and study of a major medieval Nusayri theological treatise (a project funded by NEH).

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#### **Alex Matthews: *Shifting Conceptions of the fatra in kitāb al-fatarāt wa-l-qirānāt***

This paper will examine the concept of the *fatra*, or interim time without an imam, as it develops throughout the Fāṭimid context. In particular, this paper will focus on the *fatra* as it is discussed and defined in the *kitāb al-fatarāt wa-l-qirānāt* (The Book of Interim Times and Planetary Conjunctions), a 10th-century text attributed to Ja'far b. Maṣṣūr al-Yaman. In addition, this paper will explore *kitāb al-fatarāt wa-l-qirānāt's* connections with the discussion of *fatra* in Abū Ḥatim al-Rāzī's *kitāb al-iṣlāḥ*, as well as Ja'far's slightly earlier *sarā'ir al-nuṭaqā'*. *K. al-fatarāt wa-l-qirānāt* is noteworthy for a number of reasons. Its discussion of the *fatra* in particular has been quoted and preserved in numerous later sources, such as Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir Ḥārithī's *Majmū' al-tarbiyah*, demonstrating its influence in later Ismā'īlī thought. Second, the discussion of the *fatra* in *kitāb al-fatarāt wa-l-qirānāt* is internally inconsistent and contradictory; it seems that Ja'far has preserved an earlier, perhaps pre-Fāṭimid conception of *fatra* that later proved problematic. In the earlier definition, a *fatra* is a time with no living imam, as the times between *nāṭiqs* can be so long that the lifespans of seven imams cannot fill them. In the later definition that became widely cited, the *fatra* is merely the quiescence of the imam, or the absence of his giving commands and prohibitions, because the *imamate* cannot be cut off from the earth “for even the blink of an eye.” By reconstructing these various arguments and definitions in connection with this text's account of when various *fatarāt* occurred, we can come to a greater understanding of how the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī theory of *imamate* evolved in response to its changing circumstances. Finally, this paper will make some brief observations about the differences between the Fāṭimid-Ismā'īlī concept of *fatra* and the Ithnā-'Asharī concept of *ghayba*, such as the varying religious and political circumstances that gave rise to each of these concepts.

**Alex Matthews** is a Ph.D candidate at the University of Chicago Divinity School. Her dissertation focuses on the *k. al-fatarāt wa-l-qirānāt*, and her academic work more broadly spans the occult sciences, Fatimid history, and *ta'wīl*. She was appointed a Martin Marty Junior Fellow for 2021-2022.

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## **Alexander Shepard: *Ismailism and Judaism: Polemics, Apologetics, and Synthesis***

The medieval Muslim world was a time of fertile religious exchange in Andalusia, North Africa, as well as Baghdad. Andalusia especially was a thriving intercultural center where Muslims, Christians, and Jews exchanged ideas. There were many instances of cooperation as well as conflict in Andalusia. One extensive exchange of ideas occurred between Ismā'īlī missionaries and Jewish Rabbis who were targeted for conversion. In this paper, I examine several prominent Jewish polymaths who were profoundly influenced by Ismaili theology and polemics targeting Judaism. In a rather ingenious way, these scholars were able to turn Ismā'īlī polemics on their head and defend the Jewish faith from Islamic attack. The two individuals showcased are Abraham Maimonides, the son of the famed Moses Maimonides, and Bahya Ibn Paquda. Even though they were separated by centuries and kilometers, their challenge was to defend Judaism from the polemical attacks and the seductiveness of mystical Islam, in particular, Ismailism. Ismailism and other forms of Islamic mysticism posed a drastic challenge for the survival of the Jewish community. They did not necessarily face the threat of annihilation by the sword, yet they faced the potential danger of a spiritual annihilation through conversion and assimilation. Bahya Ibn Paquda and Abraham Maimonides helped save the Jewish community by claiming the esoterism of Ismailism and Sufism to have come from Judaism as opposed to Islam. These Ismaili and Sufi concepts included the speculative as well as the practical. This included a science of letters which was used to deduce knowledge of the innate and the esoteric. Additionally, a notion of spiritual leadership, or the Imamate, which the Ismailis stress as a key concept, was claimed to have a basis in the Old Testament Prophets. Abraham Maimonides made extensive use of the symbolism of the cloak popular in Ismaili and Sufi texts to argue for his case. Cosmologically and ontologically, the Jewish mystics were influenced by the Ismaili Neoplatonic structure of the world. This view of the cosmos stressed the emanation of creation from a Beyond-being. Maimonides and Paquda were highly also influenced by Ismaili ascetism. Ismaili polemics against Judaism prompted a synthesis of Jewish Mysticism in the form of religious apologetics.

**Alexander Shepard** is a doctoral candidate at Indiana University's Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures program. He received his MA from the same university in 2017. Mr. Shepard received his BA in Philosophy and Comparative Religious Studies with a minor in history from Le Moyne College in 2013. He is currently writing a dissertation on the paradox of power in Twelver Shia political theology. His research concerns the development of Shia Islam. Specifically issues pertaining the Imamate, state formation, revolution, and sacred texts. He has published articles through People of Shambhala, Primordial Traditions Press, and Attackthesystem.com. He has presented through Le Moyne College's Student Scholars day and Indiana Universities Center for the Study of the Middle East research center. He has also presented at the Psychedemia conference at the University of Pennsylvania, in 2013, as well as at the Middle Eastern Studies Association conferences of 2019 and 2020.

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**Syed A.H. Zaidi: *Hermetic Mysticism in the Works of the Brethren of Purity (Ikhwān al-Ṣafā')***

The Brethren of Purity (Ikhwān al-Ṣafā') were a ninth-tenth century Shī'ite Ismā'īlī philosophical movement from Basra. Little is known about the actual group or its members, and their only remains are 52 Treatises with two summaries. In this paper, I argue that the Brethren of Purity's mysticism is drawn from Hermetic, Neopythagorean works they were reading. Due to this, earlier studies have not shown what role Hermetic and Neopythagorean mysticism played in the Treatises of the Brethren of Purity. This paper finds fault with a theory posed by André-Jean Festugière and Kevin van Bladel that Hermeticism is merely a bricolage of concepts. Instead, as Christian H. Bull and J. Peter Södergård have argued, this paper argues that a distinct form of Hermetic mysticism is present in the Brethren of Purity's Treatises and that they used magic, theurgy, and numerology to achieve mystical union with the Universal Soul and the Universal Intellect. This paper demonstrates why Hermetic mysticism as a distinct school of philosophy existed in the Islamic world and is shown in their use of magic, theurgy, and numerology which allows the individual to achieve mystical union with the Universal Soul and the Universal Intellect.

**Syed A.H. Zaidi** is a PhD 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 (Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'). He also works extensively on the Theology of Aristotle, and the works of Ibn Sīnā, Mīr Dāmād. He obtained an MA (2016) in Islamic Studies from the George Washington University, Washington, DC, and a BA (2012) in International Relations from Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Geneva, New York.

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**Mohammad Magout: *Silent Reflexivity and Intellectual Dissonance in Contemporary Nizari Ismailism***

The Nizari Ismaili community prides itself in its extensive investments in academic education and knowledge production in humanities and social sciences, both in terms of institutional infrastructure and human resources. These investments, however, have not yet yielded a vibrant intellectual life within the community that actively engages with the social, moral, and intellectual challenges facing Ismailis around the world. In my proposed paper, I will explore this condition, which I would refer to as intellectual dissonance, through my own experience of conducting research and writing a monograph about the community's flagship academic institution, namely, the Institute of Ismaili Studies. I will show that even though the IIS nurtures reflexive critical thinking among its students, this reflexivity remains silent; that is, limited to individual self-reflection as opposed to public engagement with debates about urgent issues. This is due in part to a protective instinct that is anchored deep in the psyche of many Ismailis, whereby Ismailis shy away from any critical discussion of their communal and religious issues in public forums. More importantly, however, reflexivity in contemporary Ismailism is smothered by an excessive tendency in institutions such as the IIS to control what is researched or published about the community, focusing instead on self-representation and the projection of a polished image to counter centuries-old negative stereotypes. The paper will argue that a reflexive intellectual engagement that is freed from both existential anxieties and excessive institutional control is imperative for Ismailism to tackle the challenges of the twenty-first century.

**Dr. Mohammad Magout** is an associate researcher at the Humanities Center for Advanced Studies “Multiple Secularities – Beyond the West, Beyond Modernities” at the University of Leipzig, Germany, where he has been undertaking research about religion in Arabic periodicals in Beirut in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. His PhD dissertation about Ismaili students in London, which was submitted to the Oriental Institute of the University of Leipzig in 2016, subsequently published under the title *A Reflexive Islamic Modernity: Academic Knowledge and Religious Subjectivity in the Global Ismaili Community* (Ergon, 2020). His other research interests include secularization, religion in the Arab world, and religion in popular culture.

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**Shahnaz Salim Hunzai: *The Concept of Spiritual Science in the Thought of ‘Allāmah Naṣīr al-Dīn Naṣīr Hunzai***

Throughout their orations, prose and poetry, the Ismā‘īlī savants identify the Qur’ān’s exoteric dimension (*zāhir*) as a veil for multiple layers of increasingly revelatory esoteric meanings (*ta’wīlāt*). Of these savants, those of the Fāṭimid empire constitute some of the most prolific, and although their works abound in the unveiling of *ta’wīl*, they nonetheless spoke of a peak of knowledge that had yet to arrive, and having identified this blessed age as the cycle of resurrection (*qiyāmat*), foretold of the unveiling of the deepest layers of *ta’wīl* therein, and the consequent exposure of the Qur’ān’s *ta’wīl* in its purest form (*ta’wīl-i mujarrad-i maḥḍ*). The issue, however, is this: contemporary studies in the field of Ismā‘īlī teleology have, with impressive cogency, demonstrated the cycle of *qiyāmat* to have already dawned - and yet, at first sight, the unveiling of *ta’wīl* seems to have all but ceased with the very Fāṭimid savants who told us there was more to come. This presentation seeks to negate this initial observation through drawing attention to an understudied surge of newly unveiled *ta’wīlāt* found throughout the works of the twentieth and twenty-first century Ismā‘īlī sage, ‘Allāmah Naṣīr al-Dīn Naṣīr Hunzai, whose one-hundred and twenty-five books set forth layers of Qur’ānic *ta’wīl* that go beyond those expounded by earlier savants; whilst their *ta’wīlāt* deal primarily with explaining the relevant Qur’ānic parables (*amthāl*) as references to events that took place within the Ismā‘īlī *da’wa* through the ages, ‘Allāmah Hunzai’s *ta’wīlāt* go deeper, expounding those and other, previously untouched Qur’ānic *amthāl* as descriptions of the spiritual experiences that took place within the souls of the individuals they relate to. To that end, he paints an intricate picture of the spiritual realm, elucidating the laws that govern it, and describing in detail the experiences at each stage of one’s spiritual ascension. For this scientific study of the spiritual realm, he aptly coins the term ‘spiritual science’, and this presentation will expound spiritual science as a constructive approach to Ismā‘īlī philosophy that allows us to actualize the peak of knowledge this cycle was foretold to witness.

**Shahnaz Salim Hunzai** holds an advanced diploma in Islamic Studies from the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, as well as three master’s degrees from the University of Karachi in Arabic, Persian and Urdu, and another from the University of London in the Philosophy of Education. Mrs. Hunzai’s scholarship has enjoyed widespread representation, from her article on the reinvigoration of the Khusraw tradition in northern Pakistan being published in the Institute of Ismaili Studies’ *Nasir Khusraw: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*, to her being invited to speak at universities from Kyoto to Austin on subjects ranging from the cultural divides between the northern and southern Ismā‘īlī traditions of Pakistan to Monorealist philosophy and the concept of spiritual science. In her capacity as an ISW scholar, she has also co-translated Nāṣir-i Khusraw’s *Rawshanā‘ī-nāmah* from Persian into Urdu and ‘Allāmah Hunzai’s *Qur’ān awr*

*Rūḥāniyyat* from Urdu into Persian, and authored numerous articles on understudied areas of Ismāʿīlī philosophy.

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### **Khalil Andani: *Reconstructing Ismaili Neoplatonism: A Contemporary Proposal***

The most prevalent theological framework in the premodern Ismaili intellectual tradition was Neoplatonic metaphysics. It featured heavily among the Brethren of Purity and the Persian Ismaili philosophers in the early 10th century and continued to be deployed in eighteenth century Nizari works (such as *Kalam-i pir*). Neoplatonism presents a hierarchical worldview to explain the Cosmos: an absolutely transcendent and simple God grounds all contingent realities; an eternal Universal Intellect grounds all necessary truths and forms; and a creative Universal Soul animates the Cosmos and engenders individual souls. This Neoplatonic framework also features heavily in the mystical thought of Ibn ʿArabi and his interpreters, Persian Sufi thought, and Twelver Shiʿi theosophy of Mir Damad and Mulla Sadra among others. In the modern period, however, Neoplatonism has nearly disappeared from contemporary Ismaili theological discourse. There are strong theological and philosophical reasons to revive and reconstruct an Ismaili Neoplatonic worldview in the context of contemporary intellectual discourse. Firstly, Ismaili rituals and various statements of the Aga Khans still evoke concepts like the absolute transcendence of God, *Nur* (light) of Imamate, Universal Intellect, or Universal Soul/Single Soul, albeit without any elaboration. An intellectually coherent account of contemporary Ismaili belief and praxis requires a metaphysical worldview like Neoplatonism to elaborate and conceptualize Ismaili theological claims. Secondly, contemporary philosophers of religion employ several arguments in natural theology such as the contingency, *kalam*, teleological, and moral arguments. Philosophers assume that these different arguments posit the existence of one and the same God. However, these same arguments can be more coherently interpreted to posit the existence of specific Neoplatonic hypostases. The contingency argument of Avicenna and the unconditioned reality argument of D. B. Hart and Spitzer establish the existence of an absolutely simple transcendent God; the Augustinian and Leibnizian arguments from eternal necessary truths establish the existence of an eternal cosmic intellect – the Universal Intellect – that ontologically grounds these truths; and the nomological argument from the laws of nature and the *kalam* argument establish the existence of an incorporeal creator of spatiotemporal reality – this creator being the Universal Soul. Finally, an Ismaili Neoplatonic metaphysical framework addresses important debates in analytic theology such as the ontology of abstract objects and divine temporality.

**Dr. Khalil Andani** is an Assistant Professor of Religion at Augustana College (USA) and holds a Ph.D. and two Master's degrees in Islamic Studies from Harvard University. His dissertation, "Revelation in Islam: Qur'anic, Sunni, and Shi'i Ismaili Perspectives", won *Best Ph.D. Dissertation of the Year* from the Foundation for Iranian Studies in 2020. Dr. Andani's book project, based on this dissertation, is an analytical and historical investigation of Islamic theologies of revelation in the formative and classical periods of Islam, covering viewpoints within Quranic studies, classical *tafsir*, Sunni and Shi'i *hadith*, Sunni *kalam* theology, and Ismaili philosophical theology. His publications include a two-part "Survey of Ismaili Studies" in *Religion Compass* and various articles and chapters on Ismaili theology and hermeneutics in *The Oxford Journal of Islamic Studies*, *The Brill Journal of Sufi Studies*, *The Journal of Islamic and Muslim Studies*, and *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Philosophy*. Dr. Andani also serve as Co-Chair of the Methodology & Hermeneutics Unit in the International Quranic Studies Association (IQSA) and Steering Committee Member of the AAR Seminar on Constructive Muslim Thought.

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## **Navid Amiri: *An Ismaili Exegesis of Free Will & Evil in the Gospel Parable of the Lost Son***

Greek philosophy and metaphysics have been incredibly influential forces in the history of both Christian and Islamic thought. This allows for amazing possibilities in the areas of comparative and constructive theology. Following in the tradition of Ismaili theologian Abu Yaqub al-Sijistani who applied Ismaili Neoplatonism to Christian icons such as the Cross, I will attempt in this paper to apply elements of Ismaili thought to shed light on the exegesis of the Biblical Parable of the Lost Son. I will argue that the journey of the Lost Son out of his father's estate and his return journey symbolize the procession from and the return to the Universal Soul by the individual human soul. Furthermore, I will show that the return does not lead to the human soul remaining in the same condition that it left; rather, the human soul returns triumphantly as one that has realized its full potential.

I will begin the paper with a brief overview of the basic components of the cosmology of the 11th century Ismaili thinker Nasir Khusraw. Then I will apply these components to derive meaning from the various characters and literary devices used in the Parable of the Lost Son while justifying these applications through the use of other passages in both the Old and New Testaments. The elements of Ismaili cosmology I use will come primarily from Nasir Khusraw's work *Shish Fasl* but will also be drawn from other titles such as the *Gushayish wa Rahayish* and *Jami' al-hikmatayn*. Some key points will also draw on more contemporary Ismaili theological sources from the work of the 20th century Ismaili luminary Allamah Nasir al-din Nasir Hunzai. The metaphysical issues that will be addressed are protology, the place of human beings in the cosmos, angelology, why man's purpose entails the necessity for free will and struggle against evils, as well as the origin of evil despite the perfect creative act of God's Divine Word. The overall purpose of this project is to open up new ways in which Muslim Christian dialogue can be facilitated at the theological and metaphysical level.

**Navid Amiri** is a Master's of Science Candidate in Clinical Mental Health Counseling at Mercer University. He also holds a Master's of Arts in Comparative Religion from the University of Chicago Divinity School. Navid's primary research interests include Ismā'īlī theology and hermeneutics, Old and New Testament hermeneutics, and the intersection between western psychology and eastern mysticism.

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## **Alyjan Daya: *Universal Restoration & Universal Soul: Comparative Christian & Ismaili Eschatology***

In the history of the early Church, the theology of universal restoration of all creation to God, known as apokatástasis, was a serious and even mainstream theological idea endorsed by early church fathers such as St. Gregory of Nyssa (ca. 335 — ca. 395) and Origen (ca. 184 — ca. 253). Islamic theologians, like Mulla Sadra and Ibn Taymiyya, proposed similar eschatologies of universal salvation to these patristic figures, but did not speak about salvation using the language of creation's "restoration". However, in Ismaili Neoplatonic theology, we see an inkling of universal restoration theology — the imperfect Universal Soul, through its spiritual contemplation of the perfect Universal Intellect, creates the material world as the medium through which it can be perfected, and when it is finally perfected, the material world ends. This perfection and completion of the Universal Soul occurs only when all of its traces — that is all souls within the material world — are perfected. Although none of the medieval Ismaili theologians explicitly adopt or even wrestle with the idea of universal salvation, there is nevertheless a similarity in the language of the completion of the world and Soul between patristic figures and the Ismaili theologians. In this paper, I will argue that an explication of

Ismaili eschatology is stronger and more coherent only when the language of the patristic doctrine of apokatástasis is adopted.

I will first introduce Ismaili eschatology through the lens of 11th and 13th century Ismaili theological texts, such as Nasir Khusraw's (1004 — ca. 1088) *Shish Fasl & Wajh-i Din* and Nasir al-Din Tusi's (1201 — 1274) *Aghaz wa anjam & Rawda-yi Taslim*. I will then compare this to the eschatology of patristic figures by looking at several primary texts such as St. Gregory of Nyssa's *On the Making of Man* and *On the Soul and Resurrection* and Origen's *On First Principles*. I will then demonstrate that universal salvation and restoration is an inescapable consequence of the Ismaili Universal Soul theology espoused by medieval Ismaili thinkers, and, lastly, how modern Ismaili theologians and Imams — specifically Aga Khan III & Aga Khan IV — have both directly and indirectly taught universal restoration.

**Alyjan Daya** is a Master's of Theological Studies Candidate at Harvard Divinity School where he specializes in Islamic Studies. He graduated from the University of Texas at Austin in 2018 with a Bachelor of Arts in Islamic Studies with Departmental Honors, a Bachelor of Science and Arts in Computer Science, and a Bachelor of Business Administration in the Business Honors Program. Alyjan's current research interests include Ismā'īlī theology, Patristic theology, and comparative Christian and Shī'a soteriology.

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#### **Adil "Khayal 'Aly" Dhanidina: *Theophanic Imagination (Khayal) in Ismaili Gnosis***

In the Islamic sapiential tradition, teachings about the role and function of the theophanic imagination, or khayal, are often associated with the sufism of Ibn al-'Arabi. Less well known is the great importance given to the function of imagination, both in a microcosmic and macrocosmic sense, within the Ismaili tradition of gnosis. The Ismailis developed a unique understanding of the epistemic value of the faculty known as khayal as well as its cosmological counterpart which enabled one's spiritual ascension into higher realms of knowledge and union with the spiritual roots of creation. The role and influence of khayal also extended into eschatological formulations of afterlife survival.

This paper will explore Ismaili teachings on the theophanic imagination as found in the writings of Ismaili philosophical missionaries and poets, such as Abu Hatim al-Razi, Abu Yaqub al-Sijistani and Qadi al-Nu'man in the 10th century, Nasir-i Khusraw in the 11th, and Nasir al-Din Tusi in the 12th. A case will be made that historical Ismaili spiritual practice necessitated an understanding of the role and function of the theophanic imagination in the individual soul's ascension into higher levels of gnosis, and that these traditional teachings on Khayal continue to determine how Ismaili murids perceive the esoteric significance of the Ismaili Imam of the time vis-a-vis individual spiritual attainment.

**Khayal 'Aly (Adil Dhanidina)** is the co-founder of Ismaili Gnosis ([www.ismailignosis.com](http://www.ismailignosis.com)) - an Ismaili civil society organization dedicated to providing a contemporary and academically informed presentation of Ismaili Muslim history, theology, philosophy, and esotericism through various social media platforms. Khayal holds an Master of Arts in Islamic Studies from McGill University's Institute of Islamic Studies, where he focused on Ibn 'Arabi's thought. Khayal has also authored several Ismaili Gnosis articles and is a contemporary Ismaili philosophical poet; his poetry is published on his Instagram feed (@ismaili.poetry and @khayalaly).

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### **Mansour Shakarmamadov: *Chirāgh-nāma: Literary Merits and Content***

This study analyses the Chirāgh-nāma, a complex text at the heart of the funeral ceremony Chirāgh-Rawshan – itself the crown jewelry of a rich and ritualistic ceremonial landscape of a major Ismaili tradition. As such, it has enjoyed some attention both in Western and Russian academia. Yet the Chirāgh-nāma, being the key to understanding the ceremony's history, evolution and functions, has largely been ignored. I offer a thorough analysis of the Chirāgh-nāma on the basis of representative (though not exhaustive) collection of manuscripts, subjecting each of its poetic pieces to literary criticism and content analyses, compare and contrast them with each other, and try to look at them within a wider literary context. The findings coming from the study offer some reversal of perspectives, different interpretations and some new findings that likely to have serious impacts for further studies. In particular, the text(s) is revealed to be a work of Sufi-minded authors, composed for ceremonial purposes, where the orality of the text and its emotional appeal to receptive audience becomes important for its understanding. The study argues that most probably from before the mid-19th century, and due to the growing influence of the Ismailis of the region, the manuscripts reveal clear signs of the gradual and growing Ismaili engagement with the text, expressed mainly in strengthening of its Ismaili content, in fact ending in forming an alternative Sufi-Ismaili Chirāgh-nāma, which largely retained its Sufi language and themes. This even allows us to impose a level of classification of the manuscript material, dividing them into a Sufi and a Sufi-Ismaili versions of Chirāgh-nāma – an obvious fact missed out curiously in the study of the subject. Moreover, the analysis shows that this process strengthened from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century on with the Ismaili Imamat's institutional engagement with the text, which has continued up until recently, eventually transforming the Ismaili version as the only text utilised at the Chirāgh-Rawshan Ceremony.

**Mansour Shakarmamadov** is from Tajikistan: he holds a BA from Universal/ World History, Tajik State University, Faculty of History; MA in Modern Literature from University of East Anglia; and an MSc in Philosophy of the Social Sciences obtained from University of London, LSE, Department of Philosophy. He also completed the IIS Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities (2019-2001) and was a three-year Post-Graduate Research Fellowship (PGRF, Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, UK (2018-2021). His interests lie in historical issues and literary traditions of the Ismaili community of Tajikistan, in particular the textual and literary heritage of the region. Mansour is trained in different fields and inclined to study the heritage of native community-based mainly on the textual heritage with subjecting the historical, literary and ceremonial texts to literary study. Given his interdisciplinary background, including in Philosophy of the Social Sciences, he is inclined to conduct qualitative research in different aspects of community life, especially in the literary and historical study of the textual heritage of the region. Mansour works for a community-based organization, is deeply immersed in the local traditions of the community, and very committed to the study of all aspects of community heritage with a focus on the heritage critical to the community's identity.

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### **Chorshanbe Goibnazarov: *Performative Texts: Theorizing the Texts of Qasīda-khanī***

This paper aims to focus on classical Persian poetries sung as part of a musical performance tradition, qasīda-khanī, practiced among the Pamirī Ismaili Muslim community living in the mountainous Gorno-Badakhshan province of Tajikistan, Afghan Badakhshan, Gilgit-Baltistan region of Pakistan, and Chinese Xinjian. Historically speaking, these sung poetries are significant to the way Islam has been practiced in the Pamirs. Since their emergence in the



region, the sung texts have played a role of sacred scripture, alongside the Qur'an and other religious texts. They continue to be an important part of the local religious beliefs and practices today.

Qasīda-khanī in practice connects orality, writing, and performativity. While the poetry sung in qasīda-khanī primarily comes from an oral tradition, they have also been preserved, transmitted in written form, and performed. Here, mentioning the oral tradition, I refer to the song texts which come from classical Sufi and Ismaili authors and are orally passed from one performer to another. The qasīda-khanī performance embodies such an intertwined history of orality, writing, and performativity. Following Ali Asani's view, I critically engage with ethnomusicological studies (Stokes, 1994; 1997), performance studies (Schechner, 2020), and configuration human sensorium (Hirschkind, 2009) this paper aims to conceptualize qasīda-khanī as performative practice, with modes of expression: the sonic and the literary arts and question why and how the sung poetries participate in the configurations of relations between humans, invisible beings, mythical figures, God, prophets and Shi'i Imams.

To answer the question, this paper utilizes ethnographic data gathered from 2011-2014 in Badakhshan via interviews with musicians and practitioners and discusses the circulation of music and sung poetries, as well as their symbolic meanings for the Ismailis in Badakhshan of Tajikistan.

**Dr. Chorshanbe Goibnazarov** is an Assistant Professor and Research Fellow at the UCA's School of Arts and Sciences and the Graduate School of Development. He teaches Cultural Landscapes at the Naryn and Khorog Campuses. He holds a Ph.D. in Central Asian and Cultural Studies from the Institute of Asian and African Studies at the Humboldt University in Berlin, Germany, and a Master of Arts in Muslim Cultures from the Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilizations at the Aga Khan University in London, UK. Goibnazarov was on the Fulbright Visiting Scholar fellowship for the 2019-2020 academic year at the Music Department of Harvard University. Before joining the UCA, he worked as an English teacher in the Health Promotion Training Unit of the Aga Khan Health Service (AKHS) in Tajikistan for six years. He also worked as a Research Assistant in the Secondary Teaching Education Programme, Department of Curriculum Studies, at the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London. His doctoral research examined qasaid-khani, a musical performance among the Badakhshani community in Tajikistan, and the way music and musical performances express identities.

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### **Karim Tharani: *The Enduring and Inspiring Heritage of Gināns: Evidence from a Global Survey***

The emotive melodies (*rāgas*) of the gināns continue to bring faith, devotion, and worship into ecstatic harmony even for Nizari Ismailis who are not accustomed to the Indic languages and motifs of the *gināns*. Although now regarded as a corpus of devotional texts, at least from the perspective of Ismaili institutions, the *gināns* once served as scriptural texts that guided the normative understanding of the faith for the Satpanthi Ismailis in India. This divergent and unaddressed evolution of perspectives on the *gināns* continues to exacerbate the anxiety about the future of *gināns*. Within the community, this division has resulted in debates on what constitutes official or authentic sources and materials of *gināns*. At the institutional level too, this dissonance has thwarted any sincere efforts to solicit and meet the devotional and intellectual

needs of those community members who remain interested in the theological, ethical, and gnostic knowledge (*gyan*) encapsulated in the *gināns*.

In 2020, the University of Saskatchewan conducted a global survey to gather community sentiments toward the *gināns*. This paper will present the results of this survey which attracted participants from over twenty countries around the globe. The survey found that the availability of *ginān* materials in English remains a crucial need for the community members who have little or no knowledge of the language of the *gināns*. The development of curriculum-based *ginān* materials for teachers and students as well as the establishment of institutionalized *ginān* classes emerged as the most common and unmet expectations of the community. Additionally, the survey results validated the community's longstanding desire for a more pronounced recognition and promotion of the heritage of *gināns* and its significance in the communal and scholarly initiatives of its institutions. The presentation will particularly highlight the survey responses of the English-speaking Ismaili community members residing in the Western diaspora. These responses are crucial for understanding and meeting the needs and expectations of the community members who wish to learn and understand the *gināns* and to pass on the tradition and its teachings from generation to generation.

**Dr. Karim Tharani** is an academic librarian and tenured faculty member at the University of Saskatchewan in Canada. He teaches Information Management at the University's Edwards School of Business. He specializes in knowledge organization systems and has published several articles on the use of information technology to enhance accessibility and preservation of at-risk and marginalized knowledge materials, including *gināns*. As part of his doctoral dissertation, he designed an online *ginān* learning tool to incorporate contemporary best practices of language-learning with the traditional methods and materials for teaching *gināns*. He is the lead researcher for Ginān Central and Geets Portal at the University of Saskatchewan.

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**Aziz Talbani: *Is Qiyāmah around the Corner? Has Dayt Kalinga (Anti-Christ) Appeared? Role of Knowledge in the Age of Qiyāmah***

The presentation discusses that idea of knowledge and *ta'wil* as interpreted in the era of approaching *qiyāmah*. Are we unwitting accessories of Dayt Kalinga? The presentation will identify Dayt Kalinga and define *ta'wil* as the method to escape from Dayt Kalinga and take a path to enlightenment, if possible. Knowledge is the social construction, recognition, and legitimization of categories of information.

Since the time of Aristotle, there have been various classifications of knowledge. Philosophers and thinkers recognized that the sources of different types of knowledge differ from each other, and multiple forms of information have specific functions. All forms of knowledge have two essential components: first, a category of knowledge that defines its content and purpose, explaining what it is; second, how one can acquire a specific kind of knowledge. Generally, each type of knowledge has a different method of achieving it.

Knowledge controls and manages people within a group. Most people who live in an ecosystem of creeds and rituals do not understand people's experiences who are taking the spiritual journey. A spiritual path is an intellectual and aesthetic journey. It is intellectually challenging, ethically complex, aesthetically alluring, and social/politically intriguing to a person undertaking the journey. Ikhwan a-Safa informed us that the lack of purpose and absence of a sense of

direction grows in human beings because of people's indulgence in materialism. If people do not use their inner faculties, they become sedentary and numb. Hence, people lose communication with the soul and lose the vocabulary to communicate with their authentic self and further lose the ability to decipher mystical symbols. *Ta'wil* has diverse forms of articulations and expressions, but their meanings are uniquely personal. *Ta'wil*'s inner and supra connotations go beyond the boundaries of symbols and meanings assigned by a group. Concepts of internal and supra generate two opposite meanings. In both cases, meaning disconnects itself from frivolous and delivers connotations understood by a small group of initiates. The current discussion is based on Ismaili literature of various periods. It elaborates on when the period of *qiyāmah* began and what would lead it to its end, and the role of knowledge in the *qiyāmah* narrative.

**Dr. Aziz Talbani** is the author of numerous articles, book chapters, books, and research projects on religion and education. He has taught at the institutions of higher education in North America, Europe, and Asia. He received Ph.D. (Educational Administration and Policy Studies) and MA (Islamic Studies) degrees from McGill University, MA (International and Comparative Education) from the University of London, and MA (Arabic Language and Literature) from Karachi University. He taught in Educational Leadership, Teacher Education, and Religious Studies programs.

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**Nagib Tajdin: *Evolution and re-evaluation of the Du'a (Prayer) of the Nizari Ismailis in the subcontinent following the Declaration of the Great Resurrection in Alamut***

The Declaration of the Great Resurrection by the Ismaili Imam Ḥasan 'Alā Zikrihi al-Salām on 8 August 1164, that is on 17<sup>th</sup> of Ramadan abolished the Shariah as practiced by Ismailis up to that date, and brought a re-examination of the recitation of the text of the five daily Namaz in the Ismaili community. Pir Shams arrived in the Indian Sub-Continent around 1,200 CE, few decades after the Declaration. The first reference of the Du'a recited three times a day and replacing the previous five daily Namaz can be found in Pir Shams' Granths. Three generations later, in the 14th Century, that Du'a was revised or completed by Pir Sadardin. In his judgment of the Haji Bibi Case, Justice Russel recognized from his observation of the Du'as since the time of Imam Aga Hassanali Shah (Aga Khan I) up to 1908 that there were only minor changes in the Du'a through times.

This paper will attempt to show the evolution of the Ismaili Du'a from the time of Imam Nizar II to the present time with particular emphasis on the last two Centuries. It will analyze the evolution of both regular three times Du'a known as the Asal Du'a of Pir Sadardin and of his Asal Gat Pat ji Dua which was recited on special occasion during ceremonies of the Holy Water. The historical Asal Du'a of seventeen and twentieth chapters composed in Gujrati, Sindhi, Farsi and Arabic and whose recitation was lasting half an hour were shortened to become one unified Arabic Du'a of five minutes introduced for the first time in 1956 in Madagascar, subsequently adapted to newer circumstances and recited in a unified manner three times a day by all Ismailis from 1969 onwards. The paper draws extensively from primary sources from Khojki Ismaili manuscripts and other sources written in various scripts and languages.

**Nagib Tajdin** completed his Licence en Science Économique from the Université des Sciences et Technologies de Lille in France. During his studies, he exchanged numerous correspondences with Professor Henry Corbin of the Sorbonne. He has been involved in the field of library and publication since 1970 with his first book "A Bibliography of Ismailism" being

published in 1985. As a hobby, he has completed oriental and medieval manuscripts courses at Harvard and Princeton. He has researched extensively in the Subcontinent and in East Africa since 1981 and that has allowed him to gather one of the largest collection of Ismaili Khojki Manuscripts, leading to the discovery of hundreds of pages of guidance of various Imams of the past, as well as countless unpublished ginans and unknown works such as the *Das Avatar Moto* of Pir Shams. He is also one of the founders of the oldest and largest Ismaili website.

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### **Rizwan Mawani: *Reconstructing Early 20th Century Religious Life and Social Practice through the English Language Archive***

What did ritual and social practices amongst the Khojas look like in latter part of the 19th century and first decades of the 20 th century in British India and elsewhere. While archival materials in Khojki script, documented life histories, extant farmans of the 48<sup>th</sup> Ismaili Imam, Aga Khan III, Sultan Mahomed Shah (r. 1885-1957) and early Gujarati print-language materials provide some fragmentary clues to help reconstruct this information, there is a body of much neglected materials in English that have generally been neglected that may be integral elements of filling in these gaps.

In this paper, I explore three sets of archival materials, as examples, that help us to reconstruct some aspects of ritual practice and social life during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. I do so to demonstrate the richness of the neglected archive and the ways in which English language materials reveal aspects of social and ritual life that have generally not been made available and that help us to better understand a crucial period in the life of a community. In particular, we examine the ways in which we may be able to reconstruct and reformulate the diverse social practices and religious articulations of an emergent Ismailism at a nexus of identity building and articulation.

The body of materials from this period, help us to further nuance the various localities, cultural and caste groups which ultimately became subsumed within the broader identity marker of Ismaili during this time period. For it is a time in the social and religious life of a community which is in a state of flux and pre-consolidation of Aga Khan III. The English archival body helps us to demonstrate the ways in which disparate materials shed led into the diversity of practices during this period.

In particular, we explore the Times of India archive from the late 19 th and early 20 th century, and in particular, the testimonies, reports and transcripts around the 1908 “Haji Bibi Case.” Secondly, we look at a cadre of documents known as the “Rules and Regulations,” which become textual markers of religious authority and social governance in places as far flung as Rangoon, Gwadar, Shah Turrel, Mombasa and Zanzibar. And finally, we explore examples of the correspondence notes which are now part of the British intelligence archives for Zanzibar and the Indian Subcontinent. In utilizing this extensive archive, it becomes clear that documentary evidence produced by members of the Ismaili community, their Imam, and those with whom the Ismailis interacted have left behind important fragments which help us to better enliven and understand communal life during this period.

**Rizwan Mawani** has degrees from Carleton University in Canada and the Graduate Theological Union in the United States with a background in anthropology and religious studies. His current research interests focus on the nineteenth and twentieth century Indian Ocean social and

religious life of Ismaili and related communities. To this end, Rizwan has been digitally documenting the photographic and English language print and handwritten archive from this period and has also been working on a project exploring the development and establishment of the jamatkhana as a social institution and identity marker, along with its predecessors. Rizwan previously documented the variety of Muslim religious practices and spaces of worship of more than 50 communities in more than seventeen countries which resulted in his work, *Beyond the Mosque: Diverse Spaces of Muslim Worship* (2019).

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**Zabya Abo aljdayel: *Fatimid coins in Al-Andalus: a study on the political-economic influences of the Shiite caliphs in Al-Andalus during the 10th-12th centuries***

During the 10th-12th centuries, the Fatimid monetary system raised to be one of the most influential in the Mediterranean basin. Fatimid coins had their reputation of purity. Their leaderships posed strict observation on the mints and the bureau of weights. The Shiite state got control on the roads to African (Sudani) gold in different periods. Which also richened their sources of the yellow metal. Meanwhile, Europe lacked it and relied on silver for its currencies. Al-Andalus was one of the linking points between the Muslim and Christian worlds on the Mediterranean Sea. Therefore, it witnessed the economic process among them. In al-Andalus, the exchange of Fatimid coins could be sometimes subject to political conditions between the Fatimid and Andalusí rulers. Whereas, the presence of coins related to Ubayd Allah al-Mahdi in al-Andalus, raised questions in our study about the nature of their use. Especially that they were exchanged at a time known for the hostilities between the two Muslim caliphs of different religious backgrounds. Unlike the absence of coins related to al-Qa'im and al-Mansur. This could be linked to the strict observation of Abd al-Rahman on Fatimid movements into al-Andalus. Nevertheless, Fatimid numismatics formed the majority of foreign monetary findings in today's Portugal, Spain and the Balearic Islands. Many of these findings were studied separately in the archaeological reports. This study collects all the Fatimid hoards spread across the Iberian Peninsula. It compares their results to see their rapprochement with the historical facts and emphasizes the relationship between the economic process and political conditions. It includes important results based on a statistical analysis of the pieces showing their geographical distribution according to their chronology. It also compares the number of pieces and the averages of golden dinars and silver dirhams spread across the Iberian Peninsula.

**Zabya Abo aljdayel** is a PhD student in History (Archaeology) at the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences-Universidade Nova de Lisboa and previously was an economics student at the University of Aleppo. She completed an MA in Archaeology with a thesis on Fatimid material culture in Al-Andalus at FCSH-UNL. She is involved in personal archaeological and historical multidisciplinary research about Medieval, Post-medieval and Modern ages. Zabya is also Interested in the heritage of ancient Mediterranean societies and focuses on political, cultural and economic processes between them. She researches the Fatimid-Andalusí relationships from an archaeological perspective. Recently, she started new research about the archaeology of Morocco during the Portuguese occupation.

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### **Afsana Amirali Jiwani: *Depicting Modernism through Photography at the Swahili coasts***

During the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Indian Ocean route became increasingly important for trading. The demand for luxury goods kept on rising particularly spices, tea, porcelain and fine textiles. With this, came an influx of foreign goods leading to cultural exchanges and artistic innovations.

One such innovation that came into existence in the Swahili coast is fine arts of photography. The research focuses on how exotic imports created mercantile networks connecting several ports of Swahili, leading to collection of photographs displaying global objects in a localised culture. The context of the research is Swahili coastal regions of Eastern Africa mainly Zanzibar and Mombasa. The research aims to explore the concept of urbanism and its impact on symbiotic relationships developed within communities and various social groups through photography which became popular in the local regions, providing memories to the traders across regions, depicting multi-cultures through showcasing luxurious goods, and the way of lifestyles. It leads towards unfolding mysteries of the fine arts by gauging the impact of photos on the local people & western countries and indirectly, resulting in cultural appropriation by the migrants from India to Swahili ports. The proposed methodology for this research is historical methodology as it will help to understand the events from the 17<sup>th</sup>- 19<sup>th</sup> Century at the Swahili coastal regions. This includes systematic study of the facts, collecting the evidence and deducing the inferences about the events that took place in history. By taking a qualitative approach, the data can be collected by photo analysis, field research interview and natural observation. The research will explore the Ismaili community in specific which migrated from Bombay to Swahili coasts and settled there. The community has gone through transitional phases making a large impact in cultural, economic and political conditions in Africa. The western notions of chivalry and need to fit in the social milieu amongst blended communities was to be seen and practiced. This rarely touched field makes my research unique, making a significant contribution to scholarly work.

**Afsana Jiwani** is an IIS Graduate of 2017 with a focus on Service Learning Project Research in Masters of Arts from University College London. For the last 4 years, she has been working with ITREB, India as a STEP Teacher. Currently, she is staying in Lisboa Portugal. She has been helping the newly migrated women in the Mozambique Jamat to learn English language. Coming from a Gujrati background, where Dhokla was a staple breakfast since childhood, it became difficult to adapt in a Western culture. it was quite interesting to know about other Gujratis and their life struggles.

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### **Farhad Mortezaee: *How Ismaili Syrians interact with male non-family member visitors in their domestic space?***

This paper captures the findings of the field research conducted by the author under the Institute of Ismaili Studies tutelage in the summer of 2004. More than twenty houses in Syria were surveyed in locations where the Ismailis historically have lived: Salamiyyah, Mosyaf, Qadmus, Nahr al-Khawwabi. Accompanied by two female Syrian Ismaili architects, the research involved documenting different typologies of housing and families, mind maps, and interviews, measuring the houses, and indicating the angles of views on the drawings. A brief literature review will precede the research findings. The research finding was that, while some non-Ismaili Muslims, kept their guests shallow in their domestic space, a separate front room, the Ismailis welcomed the male guest deep into their domestic space. However, a careful examination of the angle of views and mapping of people's location showed a dominant pattern, where the author, as an example, will be placed in a location with minimum visual surveillance to the rest of the



house. This was an invisible chaperoning that was often intangible. The paper will be a visual presentation showing pictures, drawings, and diagrams to illustrate the research findings. Given a long time between the field research and the paper presentation, this paper is being edited through the support of one of the author's female Syrian colleagues and reviewed by one of the former field research assistants.

**Farhad Mortezaee** is a registered practicing architect based in Calgary, Canada, and the principal of FarMor Architecture. Farhad holds a MArch degree from Mashhad Azad University and a graduate diploma in Advanced Architectural Studies from University College London and he is a proud graduate of the IIS GPISH class 2005. Farhad is an adjunct lecturer at the University of Calgary and has worked on a pro bono basis on a number of international development projects. Farhad has served on a number of leadership positions within the Ismaili community and the architectural community of practice. Farhad has created a complete 3D reconstruction of Fatimid Cairo and is fascinated with cartography and historiography.

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### **Karim Javan: *Ismaili Inscriptions in Anjudān and Kahak: A New Source in Ismaili History***

In 2018, I conducted a field study in the Maḥallāt region during which I visited Anjudān and Kahak. During this field work, I came across a large number of rock inscriptions related to different Ismaili Imāms living in the area around Haftād-Qullah Mountains in central Iran. Despite the long history of residence of Ismaili Imams in this area, there is not enough information available in the known historiographical literature to portray a complete picture of Ismaili history in this region. The information of these rock inscriptions in the mountains of Haftad-Qulleh along with other inscriptions on different gravestones of Ismaili mausoleums in Anjudān and Kahak provide significant information about Ismailis during the Anjudān revival.

Some of the information on these inscriptions that exceeds over one hundred contradicts some of our previous information. Along with introducing these inscriptions and their locations in this paper, number of new issues that they raise in our knowledge about Ismaili history will be analysed and discussed. In light of the information on these inscriptions, certain dates about the leadership of some Ismaili Imams and their status are challenged. In order to examine this new information, they will be compared with other available information that we get from Ismaili Manuscripts.

Apart from what these inscriptions can explain about the life of Ismaili Imams, they also provide some insight over the interaction of Ismaili community with the Imams in different periods of time. In this paper, the nature of interaction between different Ismaili communities and the Imams will be discussed according to the inscriptions and Ismaili manuscripts.

**Dr. Karim Javan** completed his BA and MA in Persian Literature from Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Iran, in 1999 before pursuing a Graduate Program in Islamic Studies and Humanities at the IIS (GPISH, class of 2004). After GPISH, he completed an MPhil in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies from University of Cambridge. After graduation, he worked as a translator for the IIS website, and taught Persian at the graduate programs of IIS and AKU-ISMC (Aga Khan University–Institute for the study of Muslim Civilisations). In 2014, Karim joined the Persian manuscripts cataloguing project at the Aga Khan Library and, in 2018, obtained his PhD on 'Qiyama in Ismaili History: A Study on the Proclamation of Resurrection and its Historical Context' from SOAS. He is currently working with the IIS-Ismaili Special Collections Unit (ISCU)

where he is editing and translating a number of new Persian Ismaili texts from the Alamut period of Ismaili history.

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### **Amaan Merali: *The Ismailis and Armenians in Wartime Salamiyya***

Ismaili Imam the Aga Khan III participated in the competing Great-War campaign to win over Muslim loyalty. As Ottoman ulama issued pronouncements to rally imperial citizens to the war effort, the Aga Khan instructed not only his Ismaili followers but all Muslims to join the Allies. The twenty thousand Ismailis in Ottoman Syria never received news of the Aga Khan's appeal but were as keen as other Syrians to avoid military service. The Ismailis, nonetheless, presented themselves as Ottoman patriots because of recent political and religious persecution at the hands of officials. In summer 1915 deportations and massacres of Armenians in Eastern Anatolia began, and Governor-General of Syria Cemal Pasha devised a resettlement policy. The Ismaili town of Salamiyya, about midway between Homs and Hama, became a reception area for the relocation of thousands of Armenian victims of genocide. Their arrival compounded other wartime exactions, such as property requisition, military service, disease, food shortages, and inflation. Yet Salamiyya's townsmen and newcomers fared relatively well, with sufficient food supplies in a time of famine and little intercommunal violence in a time of sanguinariness. Syrian Ismaili and Armenian sources claim that, because of the Ismailis' own recent experiences of state violence, Salamiyya's townsmen shared a bond of solidarity with the refugees. This paper argues that, although the Ismailis certainly felt for their fellow man, they accommodated the Armenians mainly for pragmatic reasons. Ottoman suspicions of the Ismailis' loyalty – something the Aga Khan's appeal had exacerbated – forced the community to prove their fealty and so they dared not oppose the resettlement policy. Some Ismaili notables, moreover, provided their facilitation of policy as a means to ingratiate themselves with the administration, thereby improving their current and postwar opportunities. This paper concludes that, more than the Ismailis' ability to empathize with the Armenians' plight, their precariousness vis-à-vis the Ottoman administration precluded them from opposing the resettlement policy. This analysis has several implications for state-Ismaili and intercommunal relations in late Ottoman Syria. In particular, it privileges political constraints and motivations over a narrative of Ismaili victimization and subsequent solidarity to explain the community's accommodation of the Armenians.

**Dr. Amaan Merali** is a historian of the Ottoman Empire with additional expertise in British India. His current book project explores the Syrian Ismailis' newfound spiritual allegiance to the Aga Khan III and the effects this had on the community as Ottoman subjects and its implications for the imam's fashioning of a global Ismaili community. Dr Merali, an alumnus of the Institute of Ismaili Studies' Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities, holds a BA in History (SFU), a MA in Turkish Studies (SOAS), and a DPhil in Oriental Studies (Oxon). He has lectured on African and Asian histories at the University of Oxford and the Institute of Ismaili Studies, among others.

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**Javad T. Hashmi: *The Modernist Imām: The Social and Religious Views of Aga Khan III in His Own Words***

This article seeks to acquaint the reader with the social and religious thought of an understudied but major figure of the Indian subcontinent, Sir Sultan Mohamed Shah (1877–1957), commonly known as Aga Khan III. As the forty-eighth Imām of the Nizārī Ismāʿīlī community, a minority sect of Shīʿa Islam, the Aga Khan implemented sweeping social and religious reforms that rapidly modernized his following. At the same time, however, he had ambitions of reforming and modernizing the Indian Muslim community as a whole. In this article, I will view the Aga Khan through the lens of Islamic modernism, which will situate his reforms in the wider Islamic discourse.

The goal is to take the Aga Khan out of the sectarian box of Ismāʿīlism and put him in the company of other major Islamic reformers and modernists, such as his colleague Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān (1817–1898). In fact, in relation to these other thinkers, the Aga Khan was actually ahead of the curve and particularly progressive for his time, especially on women's issues. For example, he was one of the first Muslim faith leaders calling for the total abolition of the purdah system and the complete emancipation of women. The Aga Khan, I would argue, serves as a particularly instructive example of Islamic modernism for the very fact that he was one of the few that was successful in pushing through his radical reforms, at least when it came to his own community.

**Dr. Javad T. Hashmi** is a board-certified emergency physician, former Fellow of Medical Ethics at Harvard Medical School, and a Ph.D. student in the Study of Religion at Harvard University. In addition to his medical training, Dr. Hashmi holds bachelor's and master's degrees in Arabic & Islamic Studies from U.C. Berkeley and Harvard respectively. Dr. Hashmi specializes in Islamic studies, with a focus on Qurʾānic studies and Islamic intellectual history. His research work centers on the ethics of war and peace in the Qurʾān, as well as discourses of Islamic modernism, revival, and reform.

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**Miklós Sárközy: *Nizārīs and Bādūspānids in the Alamūt period***

The present paper addresses the contacts held between Alamūt and Kujūr (the capital of Rustamdār) under Imam Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad II. It is a hitherto neglected fact that our local sources of Māzandarān reveal a heightened Nizārī Ismaili activity among the Bādūspānids of Rustamdār in the second half of the 6th /12th century.

The Bādūspānids, whose territory was situated between that of the Nizārīs and the Bāwandids, were divided politically. During his nearly twenty-year reign Kay Kāʾūs proved himself to be a fierce anti-Nizārī ruler, he remained a committed opponent of the Nizārīs. Upon the death of Kay Kāʾūs in 580/1184, however, major changes occurred. Besides the branch of Kay Kāʾūs, the descendants of his brother Shahrnūsh represented another Bādūspānid line; and one must not forget the descendants of Nāmāwar who was also acknowledged as a legitimate Bādūspānid prince by some local aristocrats, although his lineage remains obscure. When Kay Kāʾūs died in 580/1184, all three lines of the Bādūspānids vied for local power in Rūyān. Shahrnūsh and Nāmāwar were hostile towards the Bāwandids.

With Nāmāwar, we find strong arguments in some sources that this same (assumed) Bādūspānid Nāmāwar, who seriously challenged the power of other Bādūspānids in Rūyān, donated the fortress of Sīyāhrūd to the Nizārīs in around 533/1139, and perhaps his family was involved in the inner Nizārī clashes of around 559-562/1164-1166. Hazārasf and his brother Khalīl sons of Shahrnūsh were excluded from inheriting Rūyān after their father's death 564/1168. Their whereabouts remain obscure during the rule of their uncle Kay Kā'ūs. It is not unreasonable however to assume that Hazārasf and Khalīl fled to Nizārī-controlled areas, since upon his accession to power Hazārasf immediately and radically terminated the anti-Nizārī policy of his uncle and instituted an openly pro-Nizārī attitude in Rūyān.

One cannot judge the amount of real Nizārī support given to Hazārasf and the Bādūspānids, however, it seems evident that the Nizārīs were allies of Hazārasf. It is important to note, however, that pro-Nizārī tendencies can be detected among the last Bādūspānids as late as the 10th / 16th century CE.

**Dr. Miklós Sárközy** was born in Hungary in 1976. He studied Iranian studies, history and classical philology in Budapest between 1994 and 2002. He defended his PhD in 2008 at the Department of Iranian studies of the Eötvös Loránd University of Budapest. The title of his PhD thesis is as follows: The history of Tabaristān's principalities in the first centuries of Islam before the Mongol period. Miklós Sárközy joined the Institute of Ismaili Studies of London in early 2013 and became its research fellow until December 2015. His research project within the Institute of Ismaili Studies focused on the political history of the Nizari Ismailis in Northern Iran before 1256 CE addressing aspects of Nizari local history in the Caspian provinces. Miklós Sárközy has been teaching middle eastern studies and Shi'i history at various Hungarian universities since 2002 and currently is the associate professor of the Károli Gáspár University of Budapest.

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### **Ismail Poonawala: *An Unprecedented Crisis in the Dā'ūdī Bohra Community and Its Aftermath***

The dominant narrative disseminated by the Bohra religious establishment is that their religious institution of the *dā'ī muṭlaq*, i.e. the *dā'ī* with unlimited authority, continues uninterrupted from its inception in 526/1132 when the infant imam al-Ṭayyib, son of the Fatimid caliph-imam al-Āmir (d. 524/1130), went into occultation. The purpose of this inquiry is to deconstruct and debunk the prevailing narrative with an otherwise suppressed counter account that remained widely popular among the learned élite from 1256/1840 until today.

The critique begins with the forty-sixth *dā'ī muṭlaq*, Muḥammad Badr al-Dīn, who died suddenly in 1256/1840 in Surat at a young age of thirty without public announcement of his successor. His death was surrounded with mysterious circumstances and it was suspected that he was poisoned. Since it was an unprecedented event in the history of the Musta'īl-Ṭayyibī *da'wa*, four prominent *mashā'ikh* led by 'Abd-i 'Alī Shāhjahānpūrī concealed the events from the community and decided to nominate his protégé, 'Abd al-Qādir Najm al-Dīn, the then holder of the third rank of *mukāsir* in the *da'wa* hierarchy, as *nāẓim* (an adjuster) for administrative purposes only. It was orally agreed by the latter that he would abstain from claiming the spiritual position of the *dā'ī* and its title "*dā'ī muṭlaq*." However, on the very first day of assuming the new position, Najm al-Dīn raised his mentor Shāhjahānpūrī to the rank of *mukāsir* by conferring on him the title 'Imād al-Dīn (the Pillar of Faith), and bestowing upon him a monthly remuneration of five hundred rupees.

In hindsight, one can state that it was a clever tactical move by Najm al-Dīn, not only to consolidate his authority and power but also to shield him against any criticism. The present investigation seeks to analyze the events that followed and resulted in a bitter struggle between the *nāẓim* and the majority of the '*ulamā*'. Although Najm al-Dīn survived the turbulent years of his long reign of forty-six years by Machiavellian intrigues, the dignity of the religious office was permanently impaired beyond recovery. Moreover, this study aims at scrutinizing the sources that have never been studied before. Finally, it will examine the institution of the *dā'ī mutlaq*, in light of Aḥmad al-Nīsābūrī's treatise on The Etiquette of the Missionaries with a provisional conclusion.

**Dr. Ismail Poonawala** is a Professor Emeritus of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. His latest publication entitled *The Sound Traditions: Studies in Ismaili Texts and Thought*, a collection of his articles, to be released by Brill in October, is edited by Kumail Rajani. At present he is working on a new edition of Majdu's Fihrist based on three new manuscripts and revising and expanding his Biobibliography of Ismaili Literature for the second edition. Both the books to be published by Brill.

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**Ali Asgar Alibhai: *The al-Dai al-Fatimi: Towards Understanding a Historical Religious Rank Through Modern Dawoodi Bohra Devotional Practice and Thought***

This paper explores the historical office of al-Da'i al-Mutlaq and its formation in the Ismaili-Tayyibi tradition through a survey of Ismaili-Tayyibi *adab*, namely the continuation of the medieval Islamic literary tradition of writing the *qasida*. Qasidas are a form of the classical Arabic literary tradition in which the poet showers the patron with praise (*madh*). This tradition is central to Dawoodi Bohra theological thought because the qasidas reflect and contextualize the beliefs of the community, especially in regard to the position of the Dai al-Mutlaq upon whose praise they are themed and centered. The literary *qasida* tradition of writing *madh* was well established in the Fatimid courts of the Imams of North Africa and Cairo, and continued in the historical time periods of the Duat al-Mutlaqeen (pl. of al-Dai Mutlaq) in Yemen and India. The tradition of writing and reciting the *qasida* is unwaveringly continued today in Dawoodi Bohra society.

The evidence gathered in this paper will establish two important points: 1) Through parallels between literature written in the eras of the Fatimid Imams and the eras and the Duat al-Mutlaqeen, it will demonstrate a continuity of Dawoodi Bohra thought, especially in terms of the position of the Da'i al-Mutlaq as the highest spiritual rank of the community after the Imam. I will argue Dawoodi Bohra history and thought upheld and maintained the fundamental belief that the Da'i has full vested authority (*itlaq*) over the Da'wa and its followers, an authority which is equal to the Imam. A historical survey of the *qasida* demonstrate this notion quite clearly; 2) The second point will demonstrate an evolution of descriptors (*wasf*) used in *qasidas* that reflect the historical context of the time period in which they were written. By tracing the historical context of the *wasf* (descriptive verse) in these historical *qasidas*, one can also see new descriptive words added to the praise of the Da'i. One such descriptor is "Fatimi," a *nisba* adjective that links the position of the Dai al-Mutlaq to that of the Fatimi Imams of Cairo and North Africa. The use of this descriptor coincides with the historical context of the 20th and 21st century in which the Dawoodi Bohra community adopted the visual culture that was revivalist in nature of Fatimid-era art and architecture. However, through the literary analysis adopted in this paper, it is clearly evident that even these "new" descriptors maintain a continuity of Dawoodi Bohra

thought and belief in the position of the Dai al-Mutlaq which has been present since the establishment of this historical office in the twelfth century.

**Dr. Ali Asgar Alibhai** holds a PhD from the Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations department at Harvard University (November 2018). He is a scholar of the histories and cultures of Muslim societies and focuses his research on the medieval Maghrib and Mediterranean worlds, with specializations in the histories and art and architecture of medieval Tunisia, Sicily, Spain, and Morocco. Ali's academic work combines the study of textual and historical studies with art and architectural history to further understand the socio-cultural history and material culture of the medieval Islamic world. He is currently a Visiting Assistant Professor in Art History at the University of Texas at Dallas and the Edith O'Donnell Institute of Art History.

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### **Nadim Pabani: *'Islam is a Way of Life': The AKDN as an Expression of a 21st Century Shi'i Worldview***

His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV (b. 1936) is today the 49th hereditary Imam or "spiritual leader" of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims, tracing his ancestry in a direct line of descent from the Prophet Muhammad. Since acceding to the Ismaili Imamate in 1957, the Aga Khan has been actively engaged within the realm of human development. As founder and Chairman of the Aga Khan Development Network or AKDN, a group of non-denominational institutions which seek to improve the quality of life of vulnerable people and marginalised communities the world over, the Aga Khan often describes this work, as integral to his role and mandate as the Ismaili Imam, within his broader understanding of Islam's all-encompassing ethical vision and understanding of Shi'i authority in the contemporary world.

Using speeches and interviews of the Aga Khan, this paper seeks to investigate the relationship between a 21st century conception of Shi'i authority and the establishment of a global network of institutions engaged in issues of human development and devoted to the improvement of quality of life. This paper introduces audiences to how the Shia Ismaili Imam articulates the significance of AKDN, as a manifestation of contemporary Islamic piety; one which is firmly grounded and rooted in his understanding and interpretation of 3 distinct and unique but interrelated concepts:

- (1) Islam's all-encompassing worldview
- (2) a Shi'i paradigm of authority and leadership
- (3) a unifying vision of a common humanity

In conclusion, the paper will illustrate how a contemporary Shi'i Imam has sought, over close to sixty-five years, to exercise his role in a manner which is centrally grounded and firmly rooted within a traditional understanding of the all-encompassing role which the Shi'i Imam was understood as needing to play and fulfilling what he therefore views as his mandate to improve the quality of human life, as inheritor of the Prophetic mantle.

**Nadim Pabani** was born and raised in London, England where he completed his Bachelor of Laws as part of his Undergraduate degree from City University London in Law and Property Valuation. In 2012, Nadim completed a Masters degree in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Edinburgh in 2012 following which he completed a double Masters degree at the Institute of Ismaili Studies (IIS) in collaboration with University College London (UCL) as



part of the Secondary Teacher Education Programme (STEP), obtaining an MA in Education and Master of Teaching in 2014. Nadim currently serves as a Management Consultant in Education with Council for USA. Nadim's academic interests lie in comparative religious studies, Islam and the social and cultural anthropology of Muslim societies with a focus on the Ismaili Muslim community and hopes to pursue his PhD in a related field in the near future.

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**Sascha Ian Stans: *Khojas of Hyderabad: An (updated) insight into contemporary Nizari Isma'ili interreligious realities***

The aim of this paper is to explore the way in which a local Nizari Isma'ili community, the Khojas of Hyderabad, translate the articulated ideals of their spiritual leader, the Aga Khan, on topics of religious identity and inter-religious interaction into their daily contexts. Through qualitative data gathered from interviews in Hyderabad in the autumn of 2015, this paper discerns social layers within the Hyderabad Khoja community that each express different experiences concerning memory, normative values, practices, and geographical context. These differences, in turn, influence the way these community members translate the Aga Khan's ideals into local realities in Hyderabad. This paper is an update to the 2016 thesis 'An insight in contemporary Nizari Isma'ili inter-religious realities.'

**Sascha Stans** is a researcher and trainer for NTA, a Dutch research agency that focuses primarily on social security, radicalization, extremism and issues related to societal polarization. Additionally he works as an advisor and trainer in issues related to terrorism financing and radicalization for the Dutch banking sector. Sascha's focus in research centers on an anthropological approach to the study of religion and minority groups. Most of his research work has been commissioned for in-company use, and have therefore remained out of the public domain. Some of the institutions he has worked with in a research capacity are: Museum Catharijne Convent, Triodos Bank N.V. and various branches of local and national government. Sascha has obtained a Master's Degree from Utrecht University, where he studied Religious Studies with a focus on Islamic traditions.

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**Alyshea Cummins: *The transmission of religion across generations: Canadian Ismaili Muslim Families***

Studies show that religion is declining across generations; that each subsequent generation is becoming less and less religious. The Canadian case is no exception. This paper is interested in examining whether religion is also declining in Canadian Ismaili Muslim families, a community that began (re)settling in Canada in the 1970s. This paper offers preliminary insights into the factors that appear to be contributing to the successful and unsuccessful transmission of religion across generations in Canadian Ismaili families.

The research is informed by interview and survey data gathered from two different projects: a study that examined Canadian Ismaili identity and experience (2021) and preliminary findings from a multi-national project entitled, The Transmission of Religion Across Generations. Findings support that religion is declining across generations in Canadian Ismaili Muslim families and insights are offered to explain this growing trend.

**Dr. Alyshea Cummins** is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow for the Transmission of Religion Across Generations project at the University of Ottawa. This multi-national project aims to understand (1) how religion, and non-religion, is passed on from one generation to the next and (2) the factors that contribute to the (un)successful transmission of religion across generations. Cummins is also a Research Fellow for the Non-religion in a Complex Future project, hosted at the University of Ottawa, examining nonreligious identity and nonreligious immigrant identities.

In addition to her research activities, Cummins is employed as an instructor of Religion in the College of Humanities and in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Carleton University. Alongside her research and teaching engagements, Cummins serves as the Member-At-Large for the Canadian Society for the Study of Religion (CSSR) and as a Committee Member for the Religion and Migration unit at the American Academy of Religion. (AAR).

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### **Scholars Roundtable Participants:**

**Dr. Elizabeth Alexandrin** joined the University of Manitoba's Department of Religion in 2005. Professor Alexandrin's current book project focuses on dreaming and sleeping in 13-14th-century Muslim societies, with a particular focus on Kubravi Sufi texts, medical treatises, and hagiographical works. As part of this project on medieval Sufism in Iran, Anatolia, and Central Asia, she is co-editing with P. Ballanfat (Galatasaray University, Istanbul) the 13th-century Sufi Sa'd al-Din Hamuyeh's *Kitab al-Mahbub*. Her forthcoming book is *Walāyah in the Fatimid Isma'ili Tradition*, State University of New York Press (June 2017). Professor Alexandrin teaches courses on Islam, Women and Religion, and Religion and Violence.

**Prof. Ali Asani** is Murray A. Albertson Professor of Middle Eastern Studies and Professor of Indo-Muslim and Islamic Religion and Cultures at Harvard University. He served as the Director of the Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Islamic Studies Program at Harvard University from 2010-2016. He completed his graduate work at Harvard in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations (NELC), receiving his Ph.D. in 1984. Prof. Asani holds a joint appointment between the Committee on the Study of Religion and NELC. He also serves on the faculty of the Departments of South Asian Studies and African and African-American Studies. He has taught at Harvard since 1983, offering instruction in a variety of South Asian and African languages and literatures as well as courses on various aspects of the Islamic tradition. His books include *The Bujh Niranjana: An Ismaili Mystical Poem*; *The Harvard Collection of Ismaili Literature in Indic Literatures: A Descriptive Catalog and Finding Aid*; *Celebrating Muhammad: Images of the Prophet in Muslim Devotional Poetry* (co-author); *Al-Ummah: A Handbook for an Identity Development Program for North American Muslim Youth*; *Ecstasy and Enlightenment: The Ismaili Devotional Literatures of South Asia*; and *Let's Study Urdu: An Introduction to the Urdu Script and Let's Study Urdu: An Introductory Course*. In addition, he has published numerous articles in journals and encyclopedias including *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, *Encyclopedia of South Asian Folklore*, and the *Muslim Almanac*. He also served on the editorial advisory board of the *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World* and the *Encyclopedia of Islam in the United States*.

**Dr. Sumaiya Hamdani** received her BA from the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University, and her M.A. and Ph.D. from the Near Eastern Studies Dept. at Princeton in Islamic history. Dr. Hamdani teaches at George Mason University in Fairfax, VA. Her courses include offerings on Islamic, Middle Eastern and Central Asian, Mediterranean and South Asian history, the history of Shi'ism, and women in Islam. Her research on these subjects has been published in a number of journals, and most recently her research has focused on the construction of identity in Muslim minority communities in South Asia during the colonial and post-colonial periods. She founded and was director of the Islamic Studies program at George Mason University from 2003-2008. Dr. Hamdani is the author of *Between Revolution and State: the Construction of Fatimid Legitimacy* (I.B. Tauris 2006).

**Dr. David Hollenberg** is Associate Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Oregon. His research interests include Ismaili and Nusayri doctrine, Zaydi scholasticism, and manuscript culture. He and co-PI Mushegh Asatryan were recently awarded a three-year National Endowment for the Humanities Scholarly Editions and Translations grant to edit and translate the *Manhaj al-'ilm wa l-bayan wa-nuzhat al-sama' wa l-'iyan* (The Method of Knowledge and Clarification and the Pure Joy of Auditing and Witnessing) a doctrinal treatise ascribed to the Nusayri author Muhammad ibn 'Ali 'Ishmat al-Dawla (d. ca. 450/1058). His publications *Beyond the Qur'an: Ismaili ta'wil and the Secrets of the Prophets* (University of South Carolina Press, 2016) and *The Yemeni Manuscript Tradition* (Brill, 2015; editor with co-editors Sabine Schmidtke and Christopher Rauch).

**Dr. Shainool Jiwa** is the Head of Constituency Studies and a Senior Research Fellow at The Institute of Ismaili Studies. Prior to this, she was the Head of the Department of Community Relations from 2005 to 2012. She was also the founding coordinator of the Qur'anic Studies Project at the IIS (2002-2005). Dr Jiwa is a specialist in Fatimid history, having completed her Master's degree from McGill University and her doctorate from the University of Edinburgh. As a senior faculty member, Dr Jiwa teaches on the IIS graduate programmes (GPISH & STEP) and contributes to the development of the IIS Secondary Curriculum. Dr Jiwa has written several journal articles, chapters and books. Her latest publication, *The Fatimids: The Rise of a Muslim Empire*, is a World of Islam series title, for which she also serves as the series General Editor. She is also the co-editor of *The Shi'i World: Pathways in Tradition and Modernity* (2015), and *The Fatimid Caliphate: Diversity of Traditions* (2017). She has also edited and translated key medieval Arabic texts relating to Fatimid history, including *Towards a Shi'i Mediterranean Empire* (2009) and *The Founder of Cairo* (2013).

**Prof. Karim H. Karim** is a Chancellor's Professor at Carleton University's School of Journalism and Communication, of which he was previously the Director. He is currently the Director of the Carleton Centre for the Study of Islam. Karim has also served as a Director of the Institute of Ismaili Studies and has been a Visiting Scholar at Harvard University and Visiting Professor at the Simon Fraser University and the Aga Khan University's joint program. He was the winner of the inaugural Robinson Prize for excellence in Communication Studies for his critically acclaimed book *Islamic Peril: Media and Global Violence*. A major focus of Karim's current writings is contemporary Ismaili communities, leadership and institutions. His publications have

been extensively cited around the world and he has been a distinguished lecturer on several continents. He has participated in scholarly consultations organized by branches of the Canadian and American governments and has been interviewed by major media in several countries. Professor Karim has served in advisory capacities for the Aga Khan University's Graduate School of Media and Communications, Nairobi, Kenya and University of Central Asia's Communication and Media major. He has been honoured by the Government of Canada for facilitating collaboration between religious communities.

**Dr. Tazim R. Kassam** (PhD McGill University) is Associate Professor of Religion at Syracuse University. A historian of religions specializing in the Islamic tradition, her research and teaching interests include gender, ritual, devotional literature, and the cultural heritage of Muslims. Her book *Songs of Wisdom and Circles of Dance: Hymns of the Muslim Saint Pir Shams* (SUNY Press:1995) explores the origins and creative synthesis of Hindu-Muslim ideas expressed in the devotional song tradition called *ginans* of the Ismaili Muslims of the Indian Subcontinent. She has chaired the Study of Islam section of the American Academy of Religion and the Department of Religion at Syracuse University. A Lilly Teaching Scholar she designed and taught a summer program on Muslim Cultures at Syracuse University's London Study Abroad center. Awards include fellowships from the Social Science Research Council in Canada and the National Endowment for the Humanities in the US. Her interests include Indian classical vocal music, digital learning technologies, and community service.

**Dr. Arzina R. Lalani** received her doctorate in 1988 from the Department of Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Edinburgh. A specialist in early and medieval Arabic Literature, she focuses on multi-dimensional aspects of Shi'i thought. Her work *Early Shi'i Thought: The Teachings of Imam Muhammad al-Baqir* (London, 2000) won prestigious literary awards in London and Iran. Following peer reviews and translations in several languages, the work is now available in paperback (London, 2004). Her recent publication *Degrees of Excellence* is a bilingual work on an Arabic manuscript on Leadership in Islam from Fatimid times, the *Kitāb Ithbat al-Imama* of Ahmad al-Naysaburi.

**Dr. Paul Walker**, Deputy Director for Academic Programs, Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Chicago, (Ph.D. University of Chicago, 1974) was director of the American Research Center in Cairo for over ten years (1976-86) and has taught also at Columbia, McGill and the University of Michigan. As a specialist in the history of the Islamic thought, he has published numerous papers and more than a dozen books, among them *Early Philosophical Shiism: The Ismaili Neoplatonism of Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī* (Cambridge, 1993); *An Ismaili Heresiography: The "Bāb al-Shayṭān" from Abū Tammām's Kitāb al-Shajara* (with Wilferd Madelung) (Leiden, 1998); *Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī: Ismaili Thought in the Age of al-Ḥākim* (London, 1999); *The Advent of the Fatimids: A Contemporary Shi'i Witness* (with Wilferd Madelung) (London, 2000); *Exploring an Islamic Empire: Fatimid History and Its Sources* (London, 2002), *Caliph of Cairo: al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah, 996-1021* (Cairo, 2009) and most recently *Affirming the Imamate: Early Fatimid Teachings in the Islamic West*, edition and English translation of works attributed to Abu 'Abd Allah al-Shi'i and His Brother Abu'l-'Abbas (with W. Madelung) (London, 2021)

Ya Ali Madad.