



# 2017

*The International Qur'anic Studies Association, Beït al Hikma,  
and KU Leuven partner to host the second biennial...*

## International Meeting

July 4-6 2017  
Carthage, Tunisia

# A Note from the IQSA Board

## Dear Friend,

Welcome to Carthage!

The International Qur'anic Studies Association (IQSA) is dedicated to fostering Qur'anic scholarship. As a learned society, IQSA: assists scholars of the Qur'an to form contacts and develop fruitful professional and personal relationships; sponsors rigorous academic scholarship on the Qur'an through its lectures, journal articles, book reviews, monograph series, and online resources; builds bridges between scholars around the world. After successfully holding its 2015 International Meeting in UIN Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, IQSA is proud to hold its 2017 International Meeting at Beit Al-Hikma, Carthage, Tunisia. This partnership is extremely valuable to us, as IQSA's goal is to build bridges between scholars around the world.

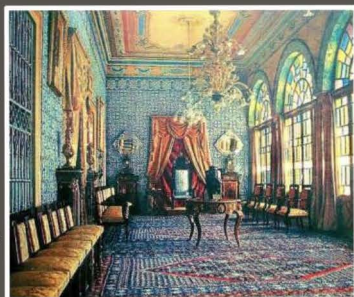
As a learned society, IQSA is shaped by the contributions and insights of its members. We are eager to draw together a diverse community of students and scholars of the Qur'an and look forward to working together to promote the field of Qur'anic Studies. Please visit [IQSAWEB.ORG](http://IQSAWEB.ORG) for more information; and consider submitting an English or Arabic manuscript to the IQSA book series, *Journal of the International Qur'anic Studies Association (JIQSA)* or writing a review for the *Review of Qur'anic Studies (RQR)*. Finally, we thank Beit Al-Hikma for their hospitality, friendship and professionalism.

We hope to see you again at IQSA 2017 in Boston.

Board of Directors

## About our Host

Beit al-Hikma (The Tunisian Academy of Sciences, Letters and Arts), is housed in the mid-19th century Zarrouk Palace situated on the Mediterranean coast at the base of the ruins of ancient Carthage. Beit al-Hikma was founded in 1992 as a scholarly scientific organization as a successor to the National Foundation for Translation, Establishment of Texts and Studies (1983).



# Call for Papers: JIQSA

## Journal of the International Qur'anic Studies Association

The *Journal of the International Qur'anic Studies Association (JIQSA)* is a peer-reviewed annual journal devoted to the scholarly study of the Qur'an. Our goals are to

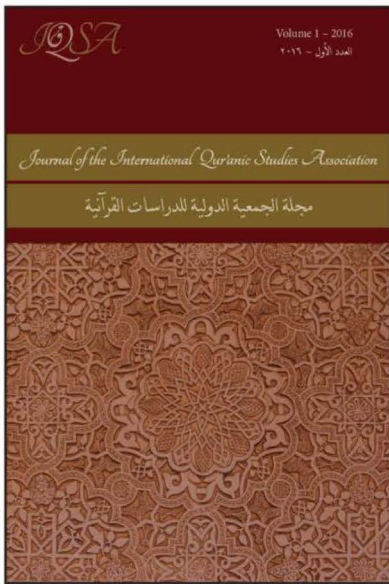
- Publish scholarship of high technical quality on the Qur'an; its historical context; its relationship to other text traditions; and its literary, material, and cultural reception.
- Cultivate Qur'anic Studies as a growing field with a distinctive focus and relevant linkages to the study of the Bible as well as Islamic tradition, including *tafsīr*.
- Facilitate conversations about the state of the field in Qur'anic Studies and its future.
- 

We invite submission of original research articles for consideration. Methodologies of particular interest include historical-critical, contextual-comparative, and literary approaches to the Qur'an. We especially welcome articles that explore the Qur'an's origins in the religious, social, and political contexts of Late Antiquity; its connections to various literary precursors, especially scriptural traditions of older religious communities; historical reception of the Qur'an; hermeneutics and methodology of qur'anic exegesis and translation; transmission and evolution of the *textus receptus*; Qur'an manuscripts and material culture; and literary and philological modes of investigation into Qur'anic style, compositional structure, and rhetoric.

Articles to be considered for publication may reflect a variety of disciplinary perspectives, but should be:

- Located in and engaged with the relevant scholarly literature.
- Explicit about aims, theoretical posture, and methodology.
- Reflective about their impact on larger issues and debates in Qur'anic Studies.

To submit an article for consideration for publication in *JIQSA*, please e-mail a complete manuscript (in the range of 8,000-12,000 words) and abstract (approx. 400 words) to [jiqsa@iqsaweb.org](mailto:jiqsa@iqsaweb.org). Authors are encouraged to conform their submission to our current **style guideline**.



Announcing

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CONTENTS TO VOLUME 1:

Editors' Introduction: The Qur'ān between Bible and *Tafsīr*

*Michael E. Pregill and Vanessa De Gifis*

The Problematic of Prophecy: 2015 IQSA Presidential Address

*Reuven Firestone*

Response to Reuven Firestone's 2015 IQSA Presidential Address

*Ebrahim Moosa*

The Current State of Qur'ānic Studies: Commentary on a Roundtable Discussion

*Karen Bauer*

Form Criticism or a Rolling Corpus: The Methodology of John Wansbrough through the Lens of Biblical Studies

*Michael Graves*

Did Ḥafṣah Edit the Qur'ān? A Response with Notes on the Codices of the Prophet's Wives

*Sean W. Anthony and Catherine L. Bronson*

"Nothing but Time Destroys Us": The Deniers of Resurrection in the Qur'ān

*Patricia Croné*

Bukhārī's *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*

*Christopher Melchert*

Afterword: The Academic Study of the Qur'ān—Achievements, Challenges, and Prospects

*Devin Stewart and Gabriel Said Reynolds*

القرآن: ما بعد أبي زيد وما قبل المصحف  
علي مبروك



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# Call for Papers: *ISIQ*

## **IQSA Studies in the Qur'an (ISIQ)**

IQSA seeks proposals and suggestions for works to be included in its new monograph series, *IQSA Studies in the Qur'an (ISIQ)*. The Editorial Committee plans to publish in three areas:

1. Scholarly monographs devoted to Qur'anic studies. Proposals that reflect the ethos of the Association – the analysis of the Qur'an as a text of Late Antiquity – are especially welcome, although the Editorial Committee will consider proposals reflecting diverse approaches to the study of the text. We welcome proposals from established scholars as well as from young scholars who have recently completed or are close to completing a doctoral thesis. Guidance will be offered on what is needed to transform a PhD thesis into a book suitable for publication for a wider readership.
2. The republication of classic works no longer in copyright, and the translation of important works written in languages other than English. IQSA does not have in-house translators, so translation proposals should identify a willing and competent translator – competence obviously includes not only command of English and the source language, but also familiarity with the technical aspects of Qur'anic studies.
3. 3. A sub-series devoted to aids to the study of the Qur'an (studies of vocabulary, concordances, etc.), the proceedings of the bi-annual IQSA international conferences, and edited volumes of essays.

The monograph series Director, Dr. David Powers [email: [dsp4@cornell.edu](mailto:dsp4@cornell.edu)], warmly welcomes any proposals for this series.

# Schedule of Events

## Day 1 (Tuesday July 4, 2017)

### Time Sessions

9:00am – 9:50am **Welcome Addresses**

Main Room

- 9.10 Abdelmajid Charfi, President of Beït al Hikma  
 9.20 Gerald Hawting, President of IQSA  
 9.30 Mokdad Arfa, Beït al Hikma  
 9.40 Mehdi Azaiez, KU Leuven

10:00am – 12:00am **Plenary Session 1 – Qur'anic Studies in/and Islamic Studies**

Main Room

Chair: Samir Rashwani, University of Tübingen, Germany

10. فريدة زمرّد, Dar El Hadith El Hassania Institution for Higher Education and Scientific Research, Rabat, Morocco  
 من "علوم القرآن" إلى "الدراسات القرآنية". دراسة في تطوّر التسمية والمفهوم

10.20 Yusuf Rahman, Faculty of Usuluddin and Graduate School, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University in Jakarta, Indonesia  
*The Transformation of Western Qur'anic Scholarship to the Academic Study of The Qur'an and Tafsir In Indonesia*

Questions (20mn)

11.00 محمد الطاهر الميساوي  
 الدراسات القرآنية والتفسير بين التداخل والتخارج الاصطلاحي والموضوعي  
 International Islamic University of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

11.20 David R. Vishanoff, University of Oklahoma, Norman, USA  
*An Anthropological Turn in the Qur'anic Sciences: European and Islamic Contributions to Aksin Wijaya's Indonesian Hermeneutic*

Questions (20mn)

# Schedule of Events

## Day 1 continued

### Time Sessions

12:00am - Lunch  
3:00pm

3:00pm – Panel 1: Intertextuality: The Qur'an and the Biblical Tradition  
4:30pm

Chair: Mehdi Azaiez, KU Leuven

Conference Room 1 & 2 3. Johanna Pink Albert, Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, Germany  
*Bringing the Bible and the Qur'an into Conversation. From Interreligious Polemics to Scriptural Exegesis*

3.20 Jacqueline Chabbi, University of Paris VIII, France  
*Récits bibliques vus du Coran*

3.40 Emran El-Badawi, University of Houston, USA  
مسابئل الكنائس المسيحية وإجابة الرسالة القرآنية--أنموذج متفاوتة

Questions (30mn)

### Panel 2: Early Manuscripts & Qirâ'ât

Chair: Hmida Ennayer, Al-Zaytuna University, Tunis, Tunisia

3. Asma Hilali Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, UK  
*The Sanaa palimpsest, 40 years after*

3.20 نادر الحمامي, Faculty of Arts, Sfax, Tunisia

تقديم كتاب المصحف وقرآته  
(عمل جماعي، إشراف عبد المجيد الشرفي)

3.40 Center for Islamic Studies, Kairouan, Tunisia  
ديناميكية الشأن المصحفي: مقارنة سوسيو-انثربولوجية لسلطتي التلاوة والخطاطة

Questions (30mn)

# Schedule of Events

## Day 1 continued

Time	Sessions
5:00pm – 6:45pm	<b>Panel 3: Approaches to Quranic Studies &amp; Hermeneutics I</b> Chair: Farid Zomorrod, Dar El Hadith El Hassania, Rabat, Morocco
<i>Conference Room 1 &amp; 2</i>	5.00 Devin Stewart, Emory University, Atlanta, USA <i>A Comparison of John Wansbrough's The Sectarian Milieu and Rudolf Bultmann's Das Urchristentum im Rahmen den antiken Religionen</i>
	5.20 حافظ قويعة Faculty of Arts, Sfax, Tunisia مقالة عصمة النبي واستتبعاتها على التفسير
	5.40 Mun'im Sirry University of Notre Dame, South Bend, USA <i>Christian Favoritism' in the Qur'an and Its Exegesis</i>
	Questions (25mn)
	<b>Panel 4: Approaches to Quranic Studies &amp; Hermeneutics II</b> Chair: Mohammed Tahir Missawi (Beit al Hikma)
	5.00 محمد الشنتوي Higher Institute for the Origins of Religion, Al-Zaytuna University, Tunis, Tunisia التأويل من الاستعمال القرآني إلى التوظيف الاصطلاحي،
	5.20 Thomas Hoffmann, Faculty of Theology, University of Copenhagen, Denmark <i>Loopholes and Invitations in Qur'anic Polemic</i>
	5.40 Fred Donner, University of Chicago, USA <i>An inscriptional context for the Qur'an?</i>
	Questions (25mn)



# Schedule of Events

## Day 2 (Wednesday July 5, 2017)

### Time Sessions

9:00am – 12:00am **Panel 5: Quran and Philosophical Approaches**  
Chair: Najia Ouriemmi, ISLT, University of Carthage

Main  
Room

9.00 أبو يعرب المرزوقي Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,  
University of Tunis  
الحكم والسياق أو منزلة الدين في الأرشيتاكتونيك الفلسفية

9.20 مقّداد عرفة Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University  
of Tunis - Beït al Hikma, Carthage  
منسية، الفهم الفلسفي لمتنابه المترع على رأي ابن رشد

9.40 Massimo Campanini, University of Trento, Ambrosian Academy  
Milano – Italy *Beauty in the Qur'an: an esthetical approach*

Questions & Break (30mn)

### Panel 6: Quran and Exegesis

Chair: Mohammed Bouhlal, Faculty of Arts and Humanities,  
University of Sousse, Tunisia

10.30 Gerald Hawting, SOAS, London, UK  
*'Al-Şafā and al-Marwa are among God's signs': Q2: 158 and its problems*

10.50 احميدة النيفر, Higher Institute of Usul al-Din, Al-Zaytuna  
University, Tunis, Tunisia- Beït al-Hikma  
الجديد في تفسير القرآن الكريم: قراءة في المنهج من الداخل الثقافي

11.20 Farid Esack, University of Johannesburg, South Africa  
*The Qur'an on Black and White – Searching for Germs or Traces of Race  
and Racism in Tafsir Literature*

Questions (20mn)

12:00am – 2:00pm **Lunch**

2-6:00pm Visit of the National Bardo Museum

# Schedule of Events

## Day 3 (Thursday July 6, 2017)

Time	Sessions
9:00am – 12:00am	<p><b>Plenary Session 2: Quranic Polemics</b> Chair: Gerald Hawting, SOAS</p> <p>9.00 Michel Cuypers, &amp; Sami Larbes, IDEO, Egypt and Algeria <i>L'analyse rhétorique de la sourate 9, al-Tawba</i> (40mn)</p> <p>9.40 سامر رشواني - Institute of Islamic Sciences, University of Tübingen, Germany الدرس المقارن للقرآن والكتب المقدسة: المنهج والإشكالات</p> <p>Questions &amp; Break (20 mn)</p> <p>10.30 Andrew J. O' Connor, University of Notre-Dame, South Bend, USA <i>"When is this victory, if you are truthful?": Apocalyptic as Polemic in the Qur'ān</i></p> <p>10.50 Mehdi Azaiez, KUL, Leuven, Belgium <i>'Dieu est pauvre et nous sommes riches!': un contre-discours coranique à la lumière des littératures biblique, talmudique et islamique.</i></p> <p>11.10 محمد بو هلال Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University of Sousse, Tunisia تكنولوجيا القرآن من خلال جواهر القرآن للغزالي</p> <p>Questions (30mn)</p>
12:00am – 3:00pm	<p><b>Lunch</b></p>
3:00pm – 5:00pm	<p><b>Panel 7: Quranic Themes</b> Chair: Abu Ya'rub Marzouki, University of Tunis-Beit al-Hikma</p>
Conference Room 1 & 2	<p>3.00 Carol Bakhos University of California Los Angeles, USA <i>Constituting Community: Biblical and Qur'anic Concepts of Covenant</i></p>

# Schedule of Events

## Day 3 continued

Time	Sessions
3:00pm - 5:00pm	<p>3.20 ناجي الحجاوي Higher Institute for Islamic Civilization, Zaytouna University, Tunisia سؤال المنهج في قراءة المصحف</p>
Conference Room 1 & 2	<p>3.40 Sarra Tlili, University of Florida, Gainesville, USA <i>Qur'anic Creation: Anthropocentric Readings and Eco-Centric Possibilities</i></p>
	<p>4.00 إيمان مخينيني Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University of Sousse, Tunisia المنظور الأخلاقي في الترامات القرآنية، قراءة في فكر طه عبد الرحمن</p>
	<p>Questions &amp; Break (40mn)</p>
	<p><b>Panel 8: Quranic Themes</b> Chair: Asma Hilali, IIS, London</p>
	<p>3.00 Hamza M. Zafer, University of Washington, USA <i>The Quran's "News of the Cities" as a Historiographical Genre</i></p>
	<p>3.20 محمد الحاج سالم, Religious and Political Anthropology الديانة الجاهلية من خلال القرآن الكريم</p>
	<p>3.40 Rufino Enno H. Dango University of Notre-Dame, South Bend, USA <i>lahā mā kasabat wa-lakum maa kasabtum (Q. 2:134), Exploring the Qur'anic Concept of Individual Responsibility as an Allusive Critique to the Alleged Concept of Predestination of its Jewish and Christian Audience.</i></p>
	<p>Questions &amp; Break (40mn)</p>
5:00pm – 7:00pm	<p><b>General Discussion and Closing Remarks (Main Room)</b></p>

# Abstracts and Bios

## Mehdi Azaiez, KU Leuven, Belgium

Mehdi Azaiez is Assistant Professor of Islamic Theology and Studies at Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium. He completed his Ph.D. at the University of Aix-en-Provence. His main fields of research are Qur'anic Studies and early Islam. During 2012–2013, he was an instructor in Islamic Studies at the University of Notre Dame and co-director, along with Gabriel Said Reynolds, of the "Qur'an Seminar," an academic project dedicated to increasing scholarly understanding of the Qur'anic text. He recently published *Le Contre-discours coranique* and *Le Coran: Nouvelles approches*.

### Abstract

*« Dieu est pauvre et nous sommes riches ! » : un contre-discours coranique à la lumière des littératures biblique, talmudique et islamique.*

*La polémique anti-judaïque constitue une des controverses les plus marquantes du Coran. Une des formes explicites de celle-ci consiste à attribuer aux juifs des discours rapportés hostiles au Prophète et à la révélation coranique. Parmi ces « contre-discours », l'expression « Dieu est pauvre et nous sommes riches » (III, 181) fera l'objet d'une analyse intra et inter-textuelle à la lumière des littératures biblique, talmudique et islamique. On tentera ainsi de démontrer l'arrière-fond talmudique de cette expression et les stratégies de réécriture mobilisées par l'exégèse islamique afin de contextualiser cette expression.*

## Emran El-Badawi, University of Houston, U.S.A.

Emran El-Badawi is Associate Professor and Program Director of Middle Eastern Studies at the Department of Modern and Classical Languages at the University of Houston (UH). He is author of *The Qur'an and the Aramaic Gospel Traditions* (Routledge, 2013), co-author of *A History of the Classical Middle East* (Cognella, forthcoming) and editor of *Communities of the Qur'an* (Oneworld, in progress). He teaches courses on Islamic Civilization as well as the modern Middle East. At UH he is responsible for three undergraduate degree programs, consulting for the private sector and government, and partnering with community organizations on a variety of initiatives. El-Badawi is founding Executive Director and Treasurer of the International Qur'anic Studies Association, starting his first term in 2014. He received his Ph.D. with honors from the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at the University of Chicago.

# Abstracts and Bios

*Emran El-Badawi Abstract*

عنوان البحث: مسائل الكنائس السريانية وإجابة الرسالة القرآنية- نماذج متفاوتة

كثيراً ما يضيع أي نقاش مثير حول دور الأدب السرياني المسيحي في تشكيل سياق القرآن بين أزمنة حديثة تتعلق بالسياسة والإسلام، الإمتشاق وصراع الحضارات أو كماً شابه ذلك. إذا كان بوسعنا تجنب تلك المآزق الفكرية والإكتفاء بالنظر إلى نص القرآن وثناصه بالأدب السرياني المسيحي نجد أمامنا العديد من الأطروحات اللاهوتية والأخلاقية والشرعية المتألقة، دون التطرق إلى الميرة والحديث الذين دُونا بعد القرآن بكثير. والمثير أن تلك الأطروحات القرآنية بمثابة إجابات مباشرة على مسائل كانت تعصف بالكنائس الشرقية، وبالأحرى السريانية، في أواخر العصور القديمة.

هناك أسباب عديدة تدفع الباحث إلى دراسة مقارنة بين مسائل الكنائس السريانية وإجابة الرسالة القرآنية، أولها أن هناك العشرات من الآيات التي تخاطب أهل الكتاب وبني إسرائيل واليهود والنصارى، بينما هناك بعض الآيات فقط التي تذكر آلهة قديمة (نحو عبادة الأصنام في الجاهلية كما هي مصورة في المسيرة)، بما فيها اللآت ومناة والعزى، وبشكل غير مباشر. المسبب الثاني هو أن الإسلام القرآني ارتكز على إعادة تأسيس العقيدة الإبراهيمية، والذي تنازع بين صفوفه مؤمنون والمسلمون ومناقون ومشركون وكفار من قبل مجموعات مسيحية ويهودية. والمسبب الثالث هو أن الشرق الأوسط كان محترقاً بالحروب الإقليمية بين بيزنطة وفارس ومتأججاً بالنزاعات الدينية بين اليهود والنصارى وبين الكنائس نفسها، وذلك في القرن السادس والسابع ميلادياً، أي في تمام وقت ظهور القرآن.

هذا البحث يلقي الضوء على بعض المواقف والتعبيرات والصياغات القرآنية الهامة، والتي لم تفهم بشكل صحيح من قبل أهل التفسير وغيرهم في قرون لاحقة. بل كانت الرسالة القرآنية هذه تخاطب أحزاب الكنائس المتنازعة والطوائف المرتبكة، من خلال الكتاب المقدس السرياني الآرامي وشرحاته، ولكن بلسان عربي مبين. للمزيد أنظروا في كتابي "القرآن وثقافة الإجيل الآرمي". يعرض البحث في ثلاثة أقسام أو محاور وهي:

1. ثقافة الأثبياء والرسول
2. إدانة الكهنوت ورفع المستضعفين
3. مسائل اللاهوت والحساب

# Abstracts and Bios

Carol Bakhos, University of California Los Angeles, U.S.A.

Carol Bakhos is Professor of Late Antique Judaism at the University of California Los Angeles, and Director of the Center for the Study of Religion. Her recent book, *The Family of Abraham*, translated into Turkish, examines Jewish, Christian, and Muslim interpretations of the biblical and Qur'anic stories about Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, Ishmael, and Isaac. She is co-editing the forthcoming book *Islam and its Past* with Michael Cook. She served as Vice President of Membership and Outreach of the Association for Jewish Studies and is currently the Co-Editor of the *AJS Review*.

## Abstract

*Constituting Community: Biblical and Qur'anic Concepts of Covenant*

*The scriptures of Christians and Muslims attest to the need to grapple with the relationship between God and God's covenanted people, whether with the Jews in the case of Christianity or the Jews and Christians in the case of Islam. How do they identify themselves vis-à-vis pre-existing communities that have a claim to an eternal covenantal relationship to God? How do they negotiate their understanding of themselves in light of the covenants God has already made and the revelations that already exist? In fact, the very notion of Old and New Testaments attests to how early Christians understood themselves as inheritors of the Israelite covenant. The Old and New Testaments are intrinsically connected, not as two separate parts of a whole but as one in which each testament is part and parcel of the other. But even this relationship is complicated. For our purposes, I would like to draw attention to strategies articulated in Jewish, Christian and Muslim scriptures that shed light on how competing claims to the covenant are addressed. Needless to say, what I will be presenting is rather schematic, but nevertheless I hope it will afford us an opportunity to explore intersections and divergences with respect to covenantal claims. In fact, I will attempt to demonstrate that even though the Qur'an mentions covenants, and employs similar strategies as those found in Paul's letters, it presents the new community of believers as trans-ethnic and supra-covenantal.*

*My paper will focus on Surah 5 and engage the work of Fred Donner. I will attempt to argue that what we have in surah 5, and indeed quite possibly throughout the Qur'an, is a multi-confessional monotheism that included among its ranks Christians, Jews, other monotheists as well as those who were once mushrikun, "Associationists," "the disbelievers." In discussions of this chapter, scholars assume that with Muhammad a new covenant is established, however, reference to mithaq, "pledge," is made with respect to Jews and Christians. What Muhammad brings is Scripture, which according to the Qur'an the Jews and Christians have distorted. In other words, a new covenant is not established with the mu'minin. This is not to suggest an abrogation of previous covenants, but rather to underscore that this new community is called to adhere to basic tenets that might be part... (continued on next page)*

# Abstracts and Bios

## *Bakhos Abstract Continued*

...and parcel of covenants made with Jews and Christians but must be understood as supra-covenantal, for what the Prophet Muhammad brings is not only for Jews and Christians but also and perhaps primarily for the mushrikun.

*In order to provide a comparative context, I will begin with a discussion of rabbinic attitudes to the giving of Torah. Whether Jews identify religiously or ethnically, Abraham is considered the forebear of the Jewish people, of am Yisrael. His encounter with God, who makes a covenant with him and his descendants, sets the Jewish people apart from the nations of the world (umot ha-olam). Even though God announces to Abraham that he will be a father of many nations, the covenant God makes with him and his seed is through Isaac, not through Ishmael or the sons he has with Keturah (Gen. 25:1–2). This paper will attempt to demonstrate that both Paul's letters and the Qur'an employ similar strategies to accommodate a new communal context, yet at the same time covenant functions differently in each.*

## Jacqueline Chabbi, University of Paris 8, France

Jacqueline Chabbi is Professor emeritus of Arabic studies at the University of Paris 8 Vincennes–Saint-Denis. She has worked to develop an application of this historical-anthropological approach to the Qur'an for over twenty years. She published three books on the period of the origins of Islam: « Le Seigneur des tribus, l'islam de Mahomet » (Paris, Noésis, 1997, 2010, 2013); « Le Coran décrypté, Figures bibliques en Arabie » (Fayard Paris, 2008 rééd Cerf 2014); « Les Trois piliers de l'islam, lecture anthropologique du Coran » 2016).

### **Abstract**

#### *Récits bibliques vus du Coran*

*Le processus des emprunts interculturels ne va pas sans sélection ni omission. C'est qu'il s'agit avant tout de répondre aux enjeux anthropologiques du milieu d'accueil de ces emprunts. On le vérifiera sur plusieurs exemples entre Bible et Coran. Les scénarios des récits bibliques ont des règles de fonctionnement qui sont les leurs. Ces scénarios dépendent moins d'une religion que nous verrions comme intemporelle que d'enjeux précis de société dans une temporalité déterminée. On aurait tort de croire que ce n'est pas le cas des récits du Coran, fussent-ils empruntés au champ biblique. Mais le substrat anthropologique d'un texte qui supporte l'imaginaire collectif d'une société ne se donne pas à apercevoir d'emblée. Il doit être recherché en tant que tel, aussi bien dans le dit que dans le non dit du texte.*

# Abstracts and Bios

## Michel Cuypers, Institut dominicain d'études orientales, Belgium

Michel Cuypers is from Belgium and lives in Cairo. He lived twelve years in Iran, where he obtained a PhD in Persian literature at the University of Tehran. He was one of the co-founders of *Luqmân*, a journal of iranology. Michel Cuypers left Iran in 1986 and, after studying Arabic, he became a researcher at IDEO (Cairo), where he focuses on the rhetoric analysis of the Qur'an. He published « Le Festin. Une lecture de la sourate al-Mâ'ida » (English translation: *The banquet: A reading of the fifth Sura of the Qur'an*, Convivium Press, 2009) ; « La Composition du Coran. القرآن نظم (English translation: *The composition of the Qur'an*, Bloomsbury, 2015) and « Une apocalypse coranique. Une lecture des trentetrois dernières sourates du Coran » (éd. Gabalda, 2014) in which he summarizes and develops his previous articles on the latest chapters of the Qur'an.

## Samy Larbès, Algeria

Samy Larbès is an independent scholar. His research focuses on the rhetoric analysis of the Qur'an.

### *Cuypers and Larbès Abstract*

*L'analyse rhétorique de la sourate 9, al-Tawba*

*Après une brève présentation générale de la méthode de l'analyse rhétorique, le détail en sera explicité sur un court extrait de la sourate. Cet exposé sera suivi d'une présentation de la structure générale de la sourate aux niveaux textuels supérieurs. En finale, un aperçu sera donné de la structure de la sourate 8, al-Anfâl, suggérant une unité entre les sourates 8 et 9 ; les sourates 5 (al-Mâ'ida) et 9 seront également comparées du point de vue de leur ordre chronologique, discuté dans la tradition exégétique islamique.*

## Rufino Enno H. Dango, University of Notre Dame, U.S.A.

Rufino Enno H. Dango is Ph.D. Candidate, World Religion World Church, University of Notre Dame.

### **Abstract**

*lahā mā kasabat wa-lakum maa kasabtum (Q. 2:134), Exploring the Qur'anic Concept of Individual Responsibility as an Allusive Critique to the Alleged Concept of Predestination of its Jewish and Christian Audience.*

*(continued on next page)*



# Abstracts and Bios

## *Enno H. Dango Abstract Continued*

*In the context of the Final Judgment, the Qur'anic excerpt from Surat al-Baqarah v.134, *laha ma kasabat wa-lakum maa kasabtum* (unto them shall be accounted what they have earned, and unto you, what you have earned) and its cognate verses signify the fundamental Islamic tenet of individual responsibility. As such, it stands as an allusive polemical assertion against the doctrine of Zechut Avot, which is allegedly claimed by its Jewish audience, that they are immune from the punishment of hell citing the merits of their forefathers. This notion of 'predestination' is categorically refuted and denied by the Qur'an when it declares *laha mā kasabat wa-lakum maa kasabtum*. In other words, the Qur'an asserts that at the Last Day one will be judged solely according to one's actions regardless of any merit of one's affiliation with a community. The same Qur'anic concept of 'individual responsibility' is expressedly echoed by Surat al-Baqarah v.48 which says, "and remain conscious of [the coming of] a Day when no human being shall in the least avail another, nor shall intercession be accepted from any of them, nor ransom taken from them, and none shall be succoured."*

*Obviously alluding to the doctrines of 'intercession' and of 'vicarious suffering' which are allegedly subscribed by its Christian audience, the Qur'an likewise challenges the notion of the sweeping effect of the crucifixion and death of Jesus as vouchsafing a blanket salvation to all his followers.*

*This paper intends to explore textual evidence in the Qur'an along with consultation with classical and modern commentaries, related to the Islamic theme of "individual responsibility" vis-a-vis the event of the Final Judgment. It will also explore textual and historical evidences during the Late Antiquity on which the alluded Jewish and Christian doctrines may hinge on as the appropriate objects of the Qur'anic polemics of 'Individual Responsibility.' Finally, the conclusion this paper hopes to draw will be based on whether this Qur'anic assertion is viable or defensible as it claims to be after consideration of the foregoing perspectives.*

## **Fred M. Donner, University of Chicago, U.S.A.**

Fred M. Donner is Professor of Near Eastern History in the Oriental Institute and Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at the University of Chicago. His main field of research is the origins of Islam and early Islamic History. He is the author of *Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam* and *Narratives of Islamic Origins: The Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writing*.

### **Abstract**

*An inscriptional context for the Qur'an? (continued on next page)*

# Abstracts and Bios

## *Donner Abstract Continued*

*The paper considers in a general way the extant evidence provided by inscriptions found in North Arabia in the centuries preceding the rise of Islam, which seems to imply a chronological gap or hiatus in the record. Although the evidence is ambiguous, and many puzzles about the emergence of the Arabic script remain, it is suggested that this gap might be closed by redating to the sixth century some graffiti hitherto considered seventh century. This would make them part of the conceptual and rhetorical context in which the Qur'an first appeared.*

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

Farid Esack is a South African scholar of Islam and public intellectual who completed the Darsi Nizami in traditional madrasahs in Karachi, Pakistan, and his Ph.D. at the University of Birmingham, UK. Since 2000, Esack has been teaching at the University of Johannesburg (UJ), where he is Professor in the Study of Islam and head of its Department of Religion Studies. In addition to serving as a Commissioner for Gender Equality in the first South African democratic government (appointed by President Mandela) and heading a number of leading national and international not-for-profit entities, he has taught religion, Islamic Studies, and Qur'anic Studies in South Africa (University of Western Cape, Cape Town and UJ), Europe (Universities of Amsterdam and Hamburg), the United States (College of William and Mary, Union Theological Seminary, Xavier University, and Harvard Divinity School) and in Asia (International Islamic University of Islamabad and Gaja Mada University in Yogyakarta). In addition to many peer-reviewed articles, Farid Esack is the author of several monographs, including *Qur'an, Liberation & Pluralism: An Islamic Perspective of Interreligious Solidarity Against Oppression*, *On Being a Muslim: Finding a Religious Path in the World Today*, and *An Introduction to the Qur'an*. His current research interests (Jews in the Qur'an and socio-economic justice in the Qur'an) reflect his scholarly interest both in contemporary Islam and in the classical tafsir tradition.

## **Abstract**

*The Qur'an on Black and White – Searching for Germs or Traces of Race and Racism in Tafsir Literature*

*Colours are interpreted in various ways and the words used to denote them can range from the exotic, particular when used for humans, to the outrageous. There are several colours mentioned in the Qur'an such as white, black, yellow and blue. White and black in some verses of the Qur'an are mentioned side-by-side and in other verses they are mentioned separately... (continued on next page)*

# Abstracts and Bios

## *Esack Abstract Continued*

... This paper examines the subject of colour in the light of the Qur'an and how some of the classical mufasssirin of the Qur'an comment on the verses of the Qur'an in which some colours are mentioned. The focus of this paper is on the distinctive nature of two colours in the Qur'an: black and white and examines how these may be or not be read with a view to examining the question of pigmentation and the related question of race and racism. More specifically, this paper considers whether the qur'anic privileging of whiteness over blackness may have implications offfor anti-Black racism.

Gerald Hawting, University of London, U.K.

Gerald Hawting is an Emeritus Professor in the Department of History at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London since 2009. He specializes in the study of the emergence and early development of Islam, and among his publications are *The Idea of Idolatry and the Emergence of Islam* and "Pilgrimage to Mecca: Human Responses to a Divine Command" in Klaus Herbers and Hans Christian Lehner (eds.), *On the Road in the Name of Religion: Pilgrimage as a Means of Coping with Contingency and Fixing the Future in the World's Major Religions*.

## **Abstract**

*"Al-Safā and al-Marwa are among God's signs": Q2: 158 and its problems*

Q2: 158 is notable as one of the few instances where the Qur'an refers by name to features of the Muslim sanctuary at Mecca. Elsewhere, with one or two exceptions, the sanctuary material in the Qur'an uses more general and allusive expressions when referring to things that the tafsir tradition identifies for us as the Ka'ba and its related institutions such as the sacred mosque and the stone on which Abraham stood. Indeed most of the significant features of the Meccan sanctuary, notably the Black Stone of the Ka'ba, do not even seem to be alluded to in the Qur'an. Q2: 158, therefore, seems to be a key element in persuading the reader that all of the Qur'an's sanctuary material relates to the Meccan sanctuary.

The verse, nevertheless, was problematic to commentators, especially since it seems to be not consistent with established Muslim ritual at the Muslim sanctuary. The verse informs us that there is "no harm" (*la junah*) if anyone visiting the sanctuary for ritual purposes circumambulates al-Safa and Marwa. In practice, and in the opinion of most legal authorities, however, the ritual of passing between the two hills thus named (usually referred to as "running", *sa'y*) is regarded as obligatory or at least as *sunna*. Why, then, does the Qur'an appear to regard the ritual as a concession, something that is "harmless", rather than as a required or desirable ritual?... (continued on next page)

# Abstracts and Bios

## *Hawting Abstract Continued*

*...Muslim tradition provides several stories and arguments that attempt to explain why the Qur'an is as it is in this passage. It is questionable, however, whether they have independent value or are simply ways to make the wording compatible with normative practice. Is there an alternative way of accounting for the Qur'an's words at this point?*

*Other questions that pertain to Q 2: 158 are:*

- What is the relationship of the verse to its context?*
- What is meant by saying that al-Safa and al-Marwa are "among God's signs"? What is the meaning of sha'a'ir?*
- What is the significance of the phrase man hajja l-bayt aw i' tamara?*
- Why does the Qur'an talk of tawaf of al-Safa and al-Marwa, rather than sa'y between them?*

*In discussing some of these issues, I shall refer to legal dicta and historical works on Mecca, as well as tafsir, although the genres exhibit considerable overlap.*

## **Asma Hilali, Institute of Ismaili Studies, U.K.**

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

### **Abstract**

*The Sanaa palimpsest, 40 years after...*

*The Sanaa palimpsest is one of the oldest vestiges of the Qur'an discovered so far. It continues to raise various problems related to the Qur'an history and to the ancient Arabic writing. The paper presents the various paths of investigation explored in studying of the manuscript and focuses on my recent publication: *The Sanaa palimpsest. The Transmission of the Qur'an in the first centuries AH.* OUP, 2017.*

# Abstracts and Bios

Thomas Hoffmann, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

Thomas Hoffmann holds a MA in comparative religion from the University of Copenhagen and received his Ph.D. in 2005 for the dissertation "The Poetic Qur'an: Studies on Qur'anic Poeticity" (later published by Harrassowitz 2007). He is now professor MSO (i.e. with special responsibilities) in Qur'anic and Islamic Studies at The Faculty of Theology, University of Copenhagen, Denmark. This position is intended to broaden the scope of standard theological studies and prove the relevance for historical, intertextual, and theological ties between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. He has recently edited the anthology *Muslims and the New Information and Communication Technologies* (2013). His main research interest is in the exploration of literary and critical theories and their transference to Qur'anic studies.

## Abstract

*Loopholes and Invitations in Qur'anic Polemic*

*In Qur'anic studies the Qur'an is frequently described as a text that operates in clear-cut antitheses, contrasts, symmetries and pairs, frequently expressed in sweeping generalizations, for instance between this world and the next, between Paradise and Hell, between believers and disbelievers and so forth. This does not only appear in terms of themes and vocabulary, but even comes across in syntactical and grammatical forms (e.g., use of the dual, contrastive parallelisms and graphic scenarios) Hence, the Qur'an is all too easily characterized as a text betraying an uncompromising, antithetical, black-and-white outlook, what Izutsu calls the basic moral dichotomy of the Qur'anic Weltanschauung. To aggravate this text's image as obdurate and adamant, it is furthermore characterized as a highly polemical and disputatious work, excelling in exhortation, rebuke, arguments, challenges, threats, curses and woes.*

*In my paper, I will demonstrate that this characterization of the Qur'an disregards an important aspect of the Qur'anic style and modus operandi, namely its frequent use of dispensations and exempted specifications (e.g. illa-phrases, conditionals, and so-called theological riders). Thus, the Qur'an ...is not only a text of sweeping generalizations, antithetical, and antagonistic worldviews, but also a text that repeatedly and subtly subverts and modifies its many self-assured and uncompromising stipulations. To put forward one example: there are indeed numerous passages that suggest an escalating conflict between the Muslim believers and their religious opponents, some of who are the Jews and the Christians. However, this conflict and its seemingly irreconcilable parties are very often circumscribed with words and phrases that alleviate the conflictual standoff that was flagged initially For instance: instead of stating that 'the People of the Book would dearly love to lead you [i.e., the believers] astray...' the Qur'an in fact specifies that "Some of [ta' ifatun min] the People of the Book would dearly..." (Q 3:69) ... (continued on next page)*

# Abstracts and Bios

## Hoffman Abstract Continued

... Formulations like these add nuance in the middle of polemical exchange. Phrases like these are in fact specifications and exemptions and the opposite of a sweeping generalization. Thus, it works to the effect of a rhetorical loophole that prevents potential converts among the People of the Book from feeling alienated and offended tout court by a seemingly generalizing and antagonistic Qur'anic rhetoric. It is a tacit invitation in the midst of polemics.

## Andrew J. O'Connor, University of Notre Dame, U.S.A.

Andrew J. O'Connor is a Ph.D. student in the World Religion area of the Theology Department at the University of Notre Dame. He also holds a B.A. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a M.A. in Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Chicago. His research interests include the Qur'an and the historical development of Islamic theology.

### Abstract

*When is this victory, if you are truthful?": Apocalyptic as Polemic in the Quran*

One feature of the Qur'an that is receiving increased attention and traction in recent scholarship is the apocalyptic character of the Qur'an's message. That is, numerous passages of the text seem to imply that the eschaton is imminent—that its initial audience would witness the arrival of the Day of Resurrection. Indeed, apocalyptic language pervades much of the text, which frequently speaks of the impending 'Hour' (al-sa'a). This approach to the Qur'an was first developed by Paul Casanova in the early twentieth century, who argued that the Prophet's "fundamental doctrine" was that the apocalyptic times announced by the prophet Daniel and Jesus had arrived. Recent scholars have followed Casanova's lead and have begun to explore the possible origin of Islam as an apocalyptic movement, or at least indicative of a certain degree of apocalyptic fervor or expectation in the period of the text's genesis.

Medieval mufasssirin have, for their part, often interpreted much of this material (particularly that which emphasizes the imminence of the punishment of unbelievers) as referring to the conquest of Mecca (al-fath). This can be seen, for example, in some interpretations (e.g., Ibn Qutayba and al-Tabari) of the final verses of Q 32 al-Sajda. For most exegetes, the conquest of Mecca and subjugation of unbelievers was the punishment allotted to those who rejected Muhammad's message, whereas the Day of Judgment continued to reside in the indeterminate future. Without precluding any of these possibilities (that some of these seemingly apocalyptic passages might indeed refer to the conquest of Mecca or, alternatively, to the belief in the impending eschaton), I propose that it is more fruitful to understand such material as a polemical or rhetorical tool. That is to say, the eschatological... (continued on next page)

# Abstracts and Bios

## Andrew J. O'Connor Abstract

*...fervor of the Qur'an is less concerned with what the impending worldly punishment would be, or when it would befall the text's opponents. Rather the Qur'an utilizes this motif to encourage an immediate response on the part of its audience, deliberately exaggerating the proximity of punishment to incite angst or even fear among its interlocutors to encourage a reaction leading to belief in the Messenger. Issuing eschatological warnings was a well-established polemical device in antiquity. Indeed, several scholars have already striven to indicate instances in which the Qur'an has appropriated and re-worked earlier apocalyptic texts and motifs for its own theological purposes, and even polemicizes against Christian and Jewish interpretations thereof. The structure of the proposed paper is as follows. First, I outline the prominence of the apocalyptic theme of the Qur'an. Second, I highlight some of its interpretations by classical and modern exegetes (along with the presuppositions inherent therein), followed by its construal by contemporary scholars as signifying an expectation in the imminent End of Days. I then indicate the manner in which this material is best understood as polemical, more concerned with rhetorical effect than particulars. In this I draw upon the Qur'an's use of earlier biblical and para-biblical texts.*

## Johanna Pink, Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, Germany

Johanna Pink received her MA degree from the University of Bonn in 1998 and her PhD from the same university with a dissertation on new religious communities in Egypt in 2002. She held positions as a postdoctoral fellow, researcher and lecturer at the University of Tübingen and the Free University Berlin from 2002 to 2009. Between 2009 and 2011 she acted as a visiting professor at these two universities and was then granted a Heisenberg fellowship by the German Research Foundation (DFG). She has been Professor for Islamic Studies and the History of Islam at the University of Freiburg since 2012. Her research interests include early modern and modern Qur'anic exegesis, Qur'an translations with a special focus on Indonesia, the status of non-Muslims in Muslim majority societies and religious discourses, and the recent history of Egypt.

### Abstract

*Bringing the Bible and the Qur'an into Conversation: From Interreligious Polemics to Scriptural Exegesis*

*Muslim polemics against Judaism and Christianity were – and still are – intimately linked with scriptural exegesis, both of the Qur'an and the Bible. The Qur'an serves to demonstrate the veracity of Muhammad's prophethood, of course, but is also taken to provide the truth about fundamental tenets of Christian faith such as the nature of Christ and his crucifixion... (continued on next page)*

# Abstracts and Bios

## *Pink Abstract Continued*

*... The Bible may serve a number of purposes; for example, it is mined for evidence of the legitimacy of Muhammad's prophethood or for inconsistencies with Christian dogma.*

*This paper proposes to take a close look at the historical processes through which the Bible was both interpreted and integrated into the exegesis of the Qur'an by Muslims who were engaged in interreligious polemics. Often, these processes had paradoxical effects: the attempt to delegitimize the other faiths also led to an intense engagement with their scriptures, which in turn sometimes ended up as important resources for interpreting the Qur'an. Often, the polemical work of Ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328), al-Jawab al-sahih, takes a prominent role in these processes. As Younus Mirza has shown, Ibn Taymiyya, while not having authored a Qur'anic commentary, produced substantial exegetical material. This is also true for his anti-Christian polemic. Some of his Qur'an interpretations were quoted by Ibn Kathir; others were taken up by the new proponents of Ibn Taymiyya's legacy at the beginning of the 20th century, especially Rashid Rida (1860–1935), Muhammad Tawfiq Sidqi (1881–1920) and Jamal al-Din al-Qasimi (1866–1914). These gave Ibn Taymiyya unprecedented prominence and served to incorporate his views into the tradition of Qur'anic exegesis. However, early 20th-century Muslim intellectuals had their own concerns about Christianity. Some of them were informed and influenced by the critical scholarship on the life of Jesus that emerged around the turn of the century and sometimes even by the increasing amount of information on other religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism.*

*By taking a close look at a number of verses from the Bible and their use in Muslim exegetical literature, this paper hopes to shed light on the precise motivations of incorporating Biblical material into Qur'anic exegesis, their background in polemics, and the reception processes behind such moves. It will thereby elucidate how Muslim scholars and intellectuals, from Ibn Taymiyya to the 20th century, have read the Bible and how they have used the Bible to read the Qur'an, highlighting the creativity that often resulted from these efforts. I argue that even where a polemical interest was at the forefront, the reference to the Bible engendered an increased need to engage with it as well as a heightened awareness of the textual links between Islam and other religions, besides the differences, and thereby significantly transcended the self-referentiality of Qur'anic exegesis.*

## **Yusuf Rahman, State Islamic University, Indonesia**

Yusuf Rahman is a lecturer at the Faculty of Usuluddin and Graduate School, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University in Jakarta, Indonesia. He received his Ph.D. from Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University Montreal Canada in 2001 on "The Hermeneutical Theory of Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd: An Analytical Study of His Method of Interpreting the Qur'an."



# Abstracts and Bios

## Yusuf Rahman Abstract

*The Transformation of Western Qur'anic Scholarship to the Academic Study of The Qur'an and Tafsir In Indonesia*

Western scholarship on the Qur'an and tafsir (Qur'anic interpretation) has grown and developed rapidly in recent years. Gabriel Said Reynolds (2011) in his article even describes this development of Qur'anic studies in the West as "The Golden Age of Qur'anic Studies," since Western scholars have published many reference books and held conferences on the Qur'an and tafsir studies, involving not only non-Muslim scholars but also Muslim scholars. The approaches used and the conclusions reached in their studies are also quite varied, some even conflicting to each other, because of which Fred Donner (2008) depicts Qur'anic studies "in a state of disarray."

This academic study of the Qur'an is virtually completely unknown in most Muslim countries, and maybe also unviable because of the sacred status they attach to the Qur'an. The state of Qur'anic studies in most Muslim countries, and especially in Indonesia, still have been dominated by the normative and traditional approaches, or as Majid Danesghar (2016) calls it "da'wa program." One of the reasons for this is that most of the scholars and lecturers who teach and study Qur'anic studies are the products of the Middle Eastern universities. In Indonesian context, most of studies on the Qur'an follow the model of thematic interpretation (tafsir maudū'i), which according to Ahmad Najib Burhani (2013) rarely use social sciences. It can be said that the majority of studies on the Qur'an and tafsir in Indonesia are not academic study, but normative study of the Qur'an and Tafsir, because of the apparent religious motives behind this study. They are written by Muslims for Muslim readers (not academic readers) and for attaining Islamic purposes.

The purpose of this paper is to study and analyse the current development of Qur'anic studies in Indonesia and its relation to Western scholarship. The main sources of this paper are the published printed works and on line on Qur'anic studies. These sources are then studied historically and thematically to survey the development of Indonesia Qur'anic studies, and the themes as well as approaches used in the studies.

## Gabriel Said Reynolds, University of Notre Dame, U.S.A.

Gabriel Said Reynolds did his doctoral work at Yale University in Islamic Studies and is currently Professor of Islamic Studies and Theology in the Department of Theology at the University of Notre Dame. Among his works on the Qur'an is *The Qur'an and Its Biblical Subtext*. In 2012–13 he directed, along with Mehdi Azaiez, "The Qur'an Seminar," a year-long collaborative project dedicated to encouraging dialogue among scholars of the Qur'an, the acts of which will appear as *The Qur'an Seminar Commentary...* (continued on next page)

# Abstracts and Bios

## Reynolds Bio continued

...He is currently a Fellow at the Institute of Advanced Studies in Nantes (France), Chair of the Executive Board of the International Qur'anic Studies Association, and completing a brief commentary on the Qur'an for Yale University Press. At Notre Dame, he teaches courses on theology, Muslim/Christian relations, and Islamic origins.

## Reynolds Abstract

### *More Problems with Qur'anic Chronology*

*In a 2011 paper ("Le problème de la chronologie du Coran") I highlight a number of problems with the common method of interpreting the Qur'an through the categories of "Meccan" and "Medinan". In particular I point out that the chronological labels given to Qur'anic passages are often based on akhbar from the biography of the Prophet while these akhbar often prove to be based on those passages (what Blachère calls "un cercle vicieux"). In the present paper I address the contention of scholars who seek to develop a chronology on the basis of Qur'anic vocabulary instead of extra-Qur'anic akhbar. Scholars who take this approach (which often involves a reliance on akhbar nevertheless) hold that certain terms, or turns of phrase, mark Suras as "Meccan" or "Medinan." In the present paper I highlight the problems with this approach by showing that many of these terms or turns of phrase – including for example asaṭir al-awwalīn, ḥanīf, jāhada bi-, kun fa-yakun, and nabī -- in fact appear in both "Meccan" and "Medinan" Suras. One solution to this problem is to identify certain appearances of these terms as insertions: thus the appearance of asaṭir al-awwalīn in 8:31 is explained as a Meccan insertion and the appearances of jāhada bi- in 16:110 or 25:52 are explained as Medinan insertions. This solution, however, risks rendering the very idea of "chronology" contrived. One interprets Suras in light of the categories of Meccan or Medinan and explains away as an insertion the very thing which suggests that these categories are problematic. In other words, instead of seeing such cases as "insertions," we might see them as evidence against the idea of chronology. Thereby academic scholars might appreciate the importance of developing new, non-chronological, models for the development of the Qur'anic text.*

## Abdullah Saeed, University of Melbourne, Australia

Abdullah Saeed is currently the Sultan of Oman Professor of Arab and Islamic Studies and Director of the National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies at the University of Melbourne, Australia. He is also a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Humanities. His research focuses on the negotiation of text and context, ijthad, and interpretation. Among his publications are: *Islamic Banking and Interest*; the coauthored *Freedom of Religion, Apostasy and Islam*;... (continued on next page)

# Abstracts and Bios

## *Saeed Bio Continued*

*...Interpreting the Qur'an: Towards a Contemporary Approach; The Qur'an: An Introduction; Islamic Approach.* He is currently working on a major research project on the reception of ideas associated with critical historical approaches to the Qur'an in Muslim higher education institutions... Saeed works closely with various government departments and international organizations and contributes to their projects relating to Islam and Islamic thought. He is currently a member of the UNESCO Commission of Australia of the Department of Foreign Affairs of Australia. He contributes to print and electronic media on Islamic issues. He has a wide range of professional and research relationships around the world, and is on the editorial board of several international refereed journals. He is also well-known for his interfaith activities in Australia and overseas, and for his contributions to this area, he was awarded the Order of Australia in 2013.

## **Mun'im Sirry, University of Notre Dame, U.S.A.**

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

## **Abstract**

*"Christian Favoritism" in the Qur'an and Its Exegesis*

*The Qur'an is, undoubtedly, critical of Jews and Christians on both theological issues and social interactions. However, on a number of occasions the Qur'an seems to offer its sympathetic approach to Christians and even shows its favoritism of Christians over Jews. Despite the fact that the Qur'an's conception of monotheism is closer to that of the Jews than the Christians, the Qur'an tells its followers that Jews are the most violent people in enmity for those who believe while Christians are the nearest in friendship (Q. 5:82). This paper discusses issues on which the Qur'an seems to favor Christians over Jews and what this can tell us about the environment in which it emerged into history. It also examines the ways in which this Qur'anic favoritism of Christianity is understood by Muslims through the centuries. It will be argued... (continued on next page)*

# Abstracts and Bios

## *Sirry Abstract Continued*

...that scriptural interpretation can serve a number of theological as well as political purposes.

## Devin Stewart, Emory University, U.S.A.

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

## Abstract

*A Comparison of John Wansbrough's The Sectarian Milieu and Rudolf Bultmann's Das Urchristentum im Rahmen den antiken Religionen*

I recently suggested that John Wansbrough wrote his paired works *Quranic Studies* (1977) and *The Sectarian Milieu* (1980) on the model of Rudolf Bultmann's seminal New Testament studies *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition* (*The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 1921) and *Das Urchristentum im Rahmen den antiken Religionen* (*Original Christianity in the Frame of the Ancient Religions*, 1949). Wansbrough's theory of variant traditions, put forth in *Quranic Studies*, is arguably based on Bultmann's similar theory regarding the synoptic gospels (See also Witztum 2015 and a forthcoming study in *JQSA* I). Wansbrough's works are based on the assumption that the composition of the Qur'an recapitulates that of the New Testament as this was explained by Rudolf Bultmann and the German proponents of *Formgeschichte*. [Devin J. Stewart, "Wansbrough, Bultmann, and the Theory of Variant Traditions in the Qur'an," *Qur'anic Studies Today* (2015)]. Similarly, *The Sectarian Milieu* addresses the formation of the nascent Islamic community in contact with the established religions of Judaism and Christianity and thus generally parallels Bultmann's *Das Urchristentum im Rahmen den antiken Religionen*, which discusses the formation of the nascent Christian community in contact with Judaism and Greek religion. Though *The Sectarian Milieu* has been the addressed in a number of reviews—by Michael Cook, Simon Hopkins, Andrew Rippin, and others—its connection with Bultmann's work has not been explored. This study undertakes a thorough comparison, showing that they are indeed quite similar in conception and bringing the importance for Wansbrough of Bultmann's concept of *Gemeindebildung* "the formation of community." Like Bultmann's work, *The Sectarian Milieu* is not simply a "literary" study but has an important theological component, a point that Norman Calder... (continued on next page)

# Abstracts and Bios

## *Stewart Abstract continued*

...made in his perceptive study "History and Nostalgia: Wansbrough's *The Sectarian Milieu*" (*Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 9.1 (1997): 47-73).

## Sarra Tlili, University of Florida, U.S.A.

Sarra Tlili is Associate Professor of Arabic Language and Literature at the University of Florida, Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures. She obtained her Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations in 2009. Her main areas of research are animals in Islam, stylistics of the Qur'an, and Tunisian literature. Her publications include *Animals in the Qur'an*, "All Animals Are Equal, or Are They: The Ikhwan al-Safa's Animal Epistle and its Unhappy End" in the *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, and "Innocence, Experience, and Liberation: The Maturation Process in al-Midani ibn Salih's Work" in *Arabica*.

**Abstract:** *Qur'anic Creation: Anthropocentric Readings and Eco-Centric Possibilities*

## David Vishanoff, University of Oklahoma, U.S.A.

David Vishanoff is associate Professor in the University of Oklahoma. He earned his Ph.D. in West and South Asian Religions, with a focus on Islamic thought, at Emory University, after completing an M.A. in Religious Studies at the University of Colorado. His research is principally concerned with how religious people interpret and conceptualize sacred texts—both their own, and those of other religious traditions. His publications have dealt with Islamic thought, including the early history of Islamic legal theory (*The Formation of Islamic Hermeneutics: How Sunni Legal Theorists Imagined a Revealed Law*), and with interactions between religious communities, including Muslim rewritings of the Psalms of David. He is presently studying modern Qur'anic hermeneutics, beginning with recent developments in Indonesia, where he spent the spring of 2013 as a Fulbright senior scholar. He teaches upper-level courses on The Qur'an, Islamic Law, and Islamic Theology, as courses such as Jesus in the World's Religions.

### **Abstract**

*An Anthropological Turn in the Qur'anic Sciences: European and Islamic Contributions to Aksin Wijaya's Indonesian Hermeneutic*

*An "anthropological turn," like that in modern Christian theology and in the humanities more broadly, is becoming increasingly explicit in Qur'anic interpretation... (continued on next page)*

# Bios and Abstracts

## *Vishanoff Abstract Continued*

...The question "what does eternal God mean to convey through this Qur'anic verse?" is being replaced in some quarters by the question "what meaning may a historically and culturally located human being construct out of that verse?" This paper introduces the contemporary Indonesian thinker Aksin Wijaya, his call for an anthropocentric Islamic epistemology, and its consequences for the Qur'anic hermeneutic articulated in his book *Arah Baru Studi Ulum Al- Qur'an: Memburu Pesan Tuhan di Balik Fenomena Budaya* (A New Direction for the Study of the Qur'anic Sciences: Searching for God's Message behind the Phenomena of Culture). The paper then traces Muslim and non-Muslim contributions to three aspects of his thought. First, in line with the turn from metaphysics to the structures of human consciousness stemming from Kant and Heidegger, Wijaya argues that Qur'anic interpretation must begin and end with human experience. For this he finds support in Ibn Rushd, Suhrawardī, Mulla Sadra, and Mehdi Haeri Yazdi. Second, following a logic that goes back to Kant and Herder, Wijaya joins Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd in arguing that Islam and the Qur'an itself are largely cultural constructs, and he finds support for this in several aspects of the classical Qur'anic sciences. However, like Rahner and many others, Wijaya wishes to avoid the potentially relativistic consequences of his "anthropological turn," so he affirms a transcendent but objectively knowable dimension of Qur'anic meaning. For this he finds support in the classical Ash'ari doctrine of divine speech and in the modern writings al-Khuli, Izutsu, Yazdi, and Shahrur. While acknowledging and defending his debt to modern European thought, Wijaya is especially keen to find precedents and justifications for his creative proposals in the classical Qur'anic sciences, which he reinterprets in an anthropocentric mode.

## **Hamza M. Zafer, University of Washington, U.S.A.**

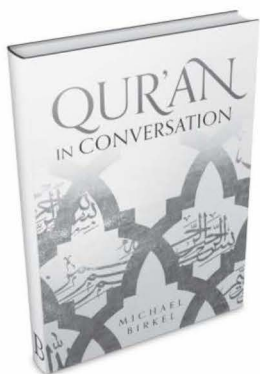
Hamza M. Zafer is the Assistant Professor of Islamic History and Classical Arabic at the University of Washington in Seattle. His research expertise is in early Islamic political and intellectual history (pre- 900 CE). He works primarily on early and pre-Islamic Arabian sources in Arabic, Aramaic, Syriac, Hebrew, Greek, and Ge'ez. He is currently finishing work on a book titled *The Mother of Cities: A pre-history of the Islamic Empire*.

### **Abstract**

#### *The Quran's "News of the Cities" as a Historiographical Genre*

*The vision of history encapsulated in the Quran's "news of the cities" narratives is reiterative and cyclical. Indeed, it is this cyclical quality of Quranic historicism that sets it apart from the teleological and linear Caliphal vision of history. The "News of the Cities" emphasize prophetic universalism; the notion that prophecy occurs among all peoples and in all times.*

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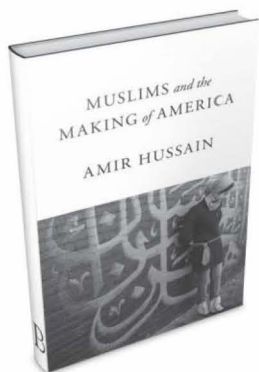


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