

Abstracts and Bios

Keynote Lecture
Asma Helali
(University of Lille)

***Reading between the Words: Recovering the Islamic Sources
through the Paratext***

Most scholarship in the past several decades has remained committed to topics first established by the Orientalists of the 19th and 20th century: establishing, authenticating, and dating the two so-called “foundational texts of Islam”, the Qur’an and hadith. It is true, there has been a turn: rather than focus on the texts themselves, they have moved to elaborating concepts and frameworks that generated these sources. After reviewing these two phases of historiography, this lecture suggests switching the focus from textual studies to paratextual studies. Inspired from the new philology, this method entails first, prioritizing the manuscript page and codex as the object of inquiry, and second, prioritizing the marginal comments and other paratextual features of the manuscript page and codex.

Asma Helali is an associate professor of Islamic studies at the University of Lille, France. Dr Helali has worked in various research centers in the Arab world, U.S, Europe and the United Kingdom. Her main interest is the transmission of religious texts in early and medieval Islam. She is currently member of the *Templeton Religion Trust* project, *Paratexts Seeking Understanding*, University of Glasgow and she is director of *The Kairouan Manuscript project* (KMP), University of Hamburg, Center for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC). She is the author of *The Sanaa Palimpsest: The Transmission of the Qur'an in the First Centuries AH* (Oxford University Press, 2017).

Mushegh Asatryan
(University of Calgary)

What do we study when we study medieval Muslim sects?

In this paper, I offer some historiographic remarks on the study of medieval Muslim sects. I discuss, both, how this phenomenon has been studied in the past, and how it could be studied more fruitfully in the future. First, what do I mean by “sect”? By this term I mean any religious group identity below the level “religion.” For example, “Islam” and “Christianity” are religions, but Sunnism, Shi’ism, Kharijism, Catholicism, and so on, are sects. Thus my definition is deliberately broad, because it aims to capture the broad uses of the term and ideas associated with it in existing scholarship.

The main unexamined historiographic assumptions that appear in studies of medieval Muslim sects are the following. The main one assumes that all or most Muslim sects were in existence almost from the very beginning of Islam’s existence. Thus, one speaks of “Sunnis” and “Shi’is” during the Umayyad caliphate, which is anachronistic. The second one assumes that other than the major “minority” sectarian groups in Islam, i.e. Shi’is, Kharijis, etc., everyone else was a Sunni by default. Or, alternatively, that all Muslims were Sunnis, and the Shi’is, Kharijis, etc., simply split from them. The third one assumes that sectarian groups were bounded entities, with clearly marked boundaries, including a learned and/or wealthy elite and commoners, all of whom shared the same sectarian identity and set of beliefs. While in the contemporary world this may partially be true, whereby most religious people (from whatever social class) have a clear idea about whether they are Catholic or Protestant, Sunni or Shi’i. Meanwhile when it comes to the middle ages, we have no idea whether, if you entered a village in Iraq or Egypt in the year 1000, the villagers would clearly know that they are Sunnis, Imami Shi’is, or Ismailis. We know of the religious affiliations of scholars and rulers, but the sources rarely tell us anything about the sectarian affiliations of peasants, cobblers, and bakers. And even when they do, they present them as a homogeneous multitude.

With all of this in mind, I will offer two case studies of how medieval Muslim sects could be studied fruitfully, while bypassing all of the above pitfalls. I will look at two different sects and the history of their emergence:

the Sunnis and the Imami (or Twelver) Shi'is. I will argue for a more dialectical view of how sectarian groups emerge through time, by looking at them not as ready-made entities but as the result of social, cultural, political, and other forces. I will also argue for a more nuanced definition of what we mean sect, by disentangling its various constituent elements, such as (1) a learned elite and/or political elite, (2) a popular following, (3) a set of texts and theological teachings, (4) institutions which sustain all of these, and so on (while keeping in mind that all or some of these may be present in different sects to a different extent in different circumstances). Finally, I argue that the very idea of sectarian group identity may mean different things in different contexts.

Mushegh Asatryan is an Associate Professor of Arabic and Muslim Cultures and Director of the Language Research Centre at the University of Calgary. His research interests include medieval Islamic sectarianism, Muslim constructions of heresy and orthodoxy, Shi'ism, Nusayrism, and the Abbasid culture of debate. He is the author of the books *Controversies in Formative Shi'i Islam* and *The Nusayri Path of Knowledge* (the latter with David Hollenberg), and of the forthcoming article "The Emergence of Sunnism: When did the Sunnis Become a Sect?"

Khodadad Rezakhani
(University of Leiden)

***Islam in Eranshahr: Re-Placing the Sasanians
in the Story of Islam***

The rise of Islam in the early seventh century is often labeled a “watershed” in the history of the world, one that put a definite end to the ancient world and ushered the Medieval world. From Henri Pirenne’s famous theorem to the new studies of Islam in its late antique context, this event has been studied as the main impetus for the rise of the mediaeval world. However, many of these studies concentrate specifically on the rise of mediaeval Europe and neglect the role of Islam in the regions outside the Mediterranean world. This includes the rise of Islam in its West Asian context where it in fact put down roots the longest and contributed to the creation of an Islamic age. In this

Middle Eastern context, the Islamic world in fact replaced another imperial entity, one that rivals Rome in the previous period. This is specifically the Sasanian Empire that ruled Central and West Asia between the third and seventh centuries. Despite its territorial extent, political strength, and military and economic importance, however, the Sasanian world is not studied at the same level as the Roman Empire. In the same vein, they have been neglected in the study of the rise of Islam in its geographical, west Asian setting. In fact, the centre of the Islamic world, after an initial sojourn in Damascus, returned to Iraq, known as *Dil-i Eranshahr*, and established itself near the Sasanian capital of Ctesiphon, in Baghdad.

It is for this reason that this paper wants to understand the rise of Islam in a Sasanian setting. Sasanian actions immediately preceding the rise of Islam, particularly in its competition with the Byzantine Empire in Eastern Mediterranean and the conquest of the region between 610-630 CE provides the most likely context for the establishment of Islam and the involvement of the Islamic actors in the events that precede the rise of the Medinan system. In this paper, I will study the events in central and west Asia from 500 CE onwards and consider the contribution of the Medinan system in western Arabia after 600, leading towards its takeover of the Near East and North Africa, in what is known as the rise of Islam.

Khodadad Rezakhani is a Global historian of late Antiques central and West Asia concentrating on the late Sasanian and early Islamic social and economic history. He is the author of *ReOrienting the Sasanian: East Iran in late antiquity* (Edinburgh University press 2017) and the author and translator of the Anonymous Syriac Chronicle Known as the *Chronicle of Khuzistan* (Tehran 2016). He is currently the principal investigator of the project *A City of Many Cities: Ctesiphon and Baghdad* at Leiden University. He has taught late antique and Islamic history as well as Iranian history at UCLA, London School of Economics, Freie Universität Berlin, Princeton University, and Leiden University.

Mikayel Hovhannisyan
(Yerevan State University)

***The Social and Sacral Grounds of ‘Umar’s Shura as a
Legitimizing Source for Power Transfer***

The issue of justification of authority that arose after Prophet Muhammad’s death is probably one of the most conceptual and problematic ones in Islam. Lack of guiding principles on governing the Muslim community, as well as filtering the changing reality through major principles of Islam was strongly connected with the perception of the essence of leadership within the Ummah. In this regard, the justifications, mechanisms, and approaches applied during the election of the four rightful Caliphs are worth particular analysis from the point of view of sources of justification. It is worth mentioning that four different approaches were applied in the case of Abu Bakr, Umar, Usman and Ali, until the Umayyad Dynasty was established with the application of hereditary principle of succession. All four cases were attempting to merge both sacral and social arguments in justifying the right of each candidate to power. The paper attempts to analyze the sacral and social arguments in Umar’s shura within the context of the ideological discourse in early Islam and reveal the major components used by Umar in appointing Shura members.

Mikayel Hovhannisyan is a Professor at the Yerevan State University, Faculty of Oriental Studies. He earned his BA, MA, and PhD degrees from YSU, specializing in Medieval Muslim Social Philosophy and Ismaili Studies. His doctoral dissertation focused on the structural, textual, and metatextual analysis of the *Epistles of the Brethren of Purity*. Dr. Hovhannisyan currently teaches in the BA and MA programs of Arabic Studies at YSU, where he offers courses on History of Medieval Muslim Socio-Political Philosophy and Shia Religious-Ideological Thought in the Middle Ages.

Mehdy Shaddel
(Aga Khan University)

Islam and the Rhetoric of Universal Empire

The majority of modern scholars consider Islam to have been a universal and supersessionist creed from the outset, with many believing that the universal nature of Muhammadan kerygma played a key role in the early Islamic

polity's first wave of expansion. The present talk argues that the message of the Quran is in fact non-supersessionist, and that the transition to supersessionism took place under early Umayyad rule, when the early Islamic empire came to espouse unequivocal ambitions of universal rule. After interrogating the evidence—coming from a host of source material: legal, eschatological, art historical, etc—for such universalist aspirations and the supersessionist rhetoric surrounding them, I will conclude by observing that supersessionism is a virtually inevitable condition of the ruling ideology of universal empires across history.

Mehdy Shaddel is a scholar of Near Eastern history specializing in Islamic origins and the socio-economic, political, and religious history of the early Islamic empire. His broader interests, however, are interdisciplinary and include apocalypticism and eschatology and comparative empires and state formation, usually with early Islam as a case-study. His publications have appeared in such venues as *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, *Arabica*, *Der Islam*, *Journal of Semitic Studies*, and *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*. He is currently working on a monograph, tentatively entitled *Fiscal Regime and Social Transformation in Early Islam: The Emergence of the Classical Islamic World*, and critical editions and translations of the *Kitāb al-wuzarā' wa-l-kuttāb* of Muḥammad ibn 'Abdūs al-Jahshiyārī with Robert Hoyland and the section on political and religious offices amongst the pre-Islamic Arabs in al-Maqrīzī's *al-Khabar 'an al-bashar* with Ahmad Al-Jallad.

Benedetta Contin

(Austrian Academy of Sciences)

Facing Muslim Criticism of the Doctrine of the Trinity: Matt 'ēos Ĵulayec'i and His Reply to the Followers of the Prophet

In my talk, I will focus on two unedited apologetic and dogmatical works penned by the Armenian scholar Matt'ēos Ĵulayec'i (d. 1422), the *Reply to the Seven Questions Posed by the Muslims* (heretofore, Reply) and *On the False Prophets*. The former was composed around 1393 at the monastery of Ałt'amar on request of a local Armenian landowner in response to the increasing and sometimes violent challenges posed by local Muslims to their

Christian neighbours. The brutal death of Catholicos Zak ‘aria II (in officio, 1369-1393) caused by the wayward and capricious behaviour of a local Dānishmed Mollā, shocked the Armenian community of Van and prompted Matt‘ēos to compose a sort of manual for the use of the common people, the *Reply*. The manual was meant to facilitate and support Christian Armenians when questioned by less learned Muslim individuals about Christian faith and targeted with false accusations, challenging provocations, and violent altercations. Matt‘ēos’ literary activity has drawn the attention of prominent scholars like Levon Khachikyan and Seta Dadoyan, who demonstrated its significance for reconstructing the social and religious history of the Armenians and Muslims in Vaspurakan and Upper Mesopotamia. Though acknowledging the monumental and founding work of both scholars, my analysis will try to approach the texts in a comparative manner, by pointing at the literary strategies and modalities by which the author adapts complex theological concepts (belonging to both faiths) to his target audience. I will argue that Matt‘ēos, in his intent of explaining the Oneness of the Trinity and the Christological mystery, modulates his language in a way which is understandable not only to his Christian audience but also to the Muslim counterpart. To achieve his goal, Matt‘ēos makes use of and recasts a set of metaphorical images that appeal both parties and rely on common philosophical views and poetical imagery that, in turn, depend on Christian and Islamic mysticism.

Benedetta Contin holds a PhD in Armenian Studies from the University of Geneva and a PhD in Oriental Studies from the University Ca' Foscari Venice. Her research focuses on late ancient, medieval and early modern Armenian intellectual history in its entanglements with other coeval cultural traditions of the Mediterranean world. She authored two monographs on David the Invincible and the Neoplatonic School of Alexandria. She has also published several articles and studies on the literary and educational activity of Armenian authors and scholars in the period of the Constitutional Reforms within the Ottoman Empire. Currently, she works at the Austrian Academy of Sciences within the ERC Project *RevIdEm* “Reviving Ascetic Ideal in the Eastern Mediterranean: Entangled Memories of Early Egyptian Monasticism in Medieval Saric, Copto-Arabic and Armenian Christianity (969-1375 CE).”

Federico Montinaro
(University of Tübingen)

***We need to talk about the Paulicians: A historiographical
Conundrum amidst Byzantine Fears, Muslim Distortions and
Armenian Oblivion***

The singular position of the Paulician movement (ca. 650-900) in history, at the crossroads between Byzantine, Armenian, and Muslim interests, is reflected in the polarizing attitude of modern historiography. Disciplinary borders and the emphasis placed alternatively on Byzantine and Armenian sources have contributed to exacerbating this polarization. This is best represented by the studies of Nina Garsoïan, who was hyper skeptical of the Byzantine tradition, and Paul Lemerle, who completely disregarded the Armenian side of the story, with each holding irreconcilable views. Moreover, there is a lack of independent historical theological investigation. The time is ripe to abandon taking ‘sides’ and to approach the history of the Paulicians from an inclusive and multidisciplinary perspective.

Federico Montinaro studies Ancient, Byzantine and Islamic History. He was awarded a Ph.D. in Byzantine History in 2013 at the École Pratique des Hautes Études (EPHE)-Sorbonne. Dr. Montinaro has been in Tübingen since 2015, first as a postdoctoral researcher in the *Collaborative Research Centre 923 “Threatened Orders”*, then as a substitute chair for Ancient History. Currently he is a leader of his own research group with the theme on *Religious Conflict and Mobility: Byzantium and the Greater Mediterranean, 700–900*.

Camille Rouxpetel
(French Scientific Research National Center)

***The Archives of the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem:
resituating the History of Miaphysite Christianities within the
Islamicate world (13th-16th centuries)***

While each Church present in Jerusalem has been studied individually, no analysis of the interactions between the various Churches, nor with the sovereign powers, has yet been carried out. This shortcoming in a well-

established field of research can partly be explained by the wide range of written languages involved. Yet the academic compartmentalization of Eastern Christian and Islamic studies may have been the major factor. The ERC project *ChrIs-cross* will address this issue through a Connected History approach and a re-evaluation of Hodgson’s concept of the ‘Islamicate world.’ The unpublished archives of the Christian institutions of Jerusalem, which consist exclusively of Islamic legal documents, make it possible to study the ways in which non-Muslims were integrated into the Islamic(ate) world. Among these, the archives of the Armenian Patriarchate are particularly rich in information, not only on the Armenian communities, but also on other Miaphysite communities, especially the Ethiopians and the Copts, making it possible to reconstruct the networks that linked them in the wider context of Ayyubid and Mamluk societies.

Camille Rouxpetel is a research fellow at the CNRS (French Scientific Research National Center) and the PI of the European Research Council Consolidator Grant project *ChrIs-cross, Entangled Christianities in Jerusalem and the Middle East: A transcultural bottom-up approach (12th-16th centuries)*. She is a specialist in transcultural studies and Christianities in the Middle East, especially in Jerusalem.

Vahan Ter-Ghevondian (Matenadaran)

King Levon I's diplomatic Correspondence with the Ayyubids (1208-1209)

Cilician Armenia was declared a kingdom at the end of the 12th century (1198). The newly established Armenian state was experiencing a great military and political rise. Levon the Great (1198-1219) was trying to place his nephew Raymond-Ruben on the vacant throne of Antioch. The countries of the region tried to prevent the unification of Cilicia-Antioch, so the main opponent of Levon, Count Bohemond IV of Tripoli (1187-1233), received tangible help from both the Sultanate of Iconium and the Ayyubids of Aleppo. During the long struggle for possession of Antioch (“Antiochian War – 1201-1216”), the new attempt of King Levon to elevate Raymond-Ruben to the throne took place in 1208. An attack by the states of the region

against Cilician Armenia immediately followed. The only ally of cilicians in the matter of Antioch was Pope Innocent III (1198-1216), which made it possible to have supporters also within the elite of Antioch. However, it was not enough to withstand the simultaneous pressure of three neighboring countries. Therefore, the Armenian king took a bold step by writing to al-Malik al-Adil (1200-1218), the Sultan of Egypt and the elder of the Ayyubid dynasty. Arab and Syrian historians of the XIII century provide important information about this fact. Kamal al-Din Ibn al-Adim, Ibn Wasil and Anonymous of Edessa not only provide exceptional information on Levon's letter, but also on the diplomatic initiatives and writings of the Sultan of Egypt sent to Iconium and Aleppo based on the request of the Armenian king. Finally, as a result of diplomatic correspondence and thanks to the mediation of al-Malik al-Adil, peace on certain terms is established between Cilicia and its opponents, by which the Armenian kingdom is freed from hostile encirclement.

Vahan Aram Ter-Ghevondian is a senior researcher in the Institute of Ancient Manuscripts “Matenadaran” and in the Institute of History (National Academy of Sciences). He started his career in the “Matenadaran” as Head of the newly created “Oriental studies” department (2012-2024), as academic secretary (2014-2016), acting director (2016-2018), and was elected as Director of the “Matenadaran” to a five-year term (2018-2023). His scientific interests include the history of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia, and its relationships with countries of the Middle East, especially in 12-13th cc. He is the author of two monographs - “The Cilician Armenia and Arab countries of the Middle East (1145-1226)”, (scientific advisor academician Hrach Bartikian, publ. in 1994), and “The Cilician Armenia and the Ayyubid states (1171-1260) (publ. in 2017)”. Dr. Ter-Ghevondian has published about 40 articles in scientific magazines in Armenia and abroad. These articles deal with relationships of Armenian principalities and kingdom with crusader states (Kingdom of Jerusalem, County of Edessa, Antioch principality and Duchy of Tripoli), Zengids of Mosul, the state of Nur ad-Din in Syria and the Ayyubid sultanate, starting from Salah ad-Din and his successors up to the fall of this state. Some of the articles concern the contacts of Cilician Armenia with the Roman church, especially the period

of Pope Innocent III (1198-1216). Besides academic work, Ter-Ghevondyan has a diplomatic career; the diplomatic rank of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary representing Armenia in France, Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil and Lebanon.

Venera Makaryan
(Matenadaran)

The Legal and Socio-Economic Status of Armenians in Ottoman Syria between 16-18th according to the Archival Documents of the Matenadaran

During the 16th-18th centuries, the Ottoman Empire's policy towards the Armenians of the empire was based on religious principles rather than national ones. Consequently, the legal and socio-economic status of the Armenians in Ottoman Syria was shaped by three main factors: the norms of the dhimmi tradition, the acknowledged communal identity of the Armenian Millet (nation) and the policy of local administration.

As an Islamic state, the Ottoman Empire regulated the legal status of its subjects primarily in accordance with Sharia. Consequently, all monotheistic non-Muslim subjects of the empire were accorded the status of dhimmi. While Sharia is the only law recognized by Islam, the Ottoman authorities also made way for the Sultan's legislative power by promulgating secular laws. Consequently, Ottoman justice was predicated on two dynastic and Islamic laws, the significance of which is not explicitly delineated. In this context, the Millet system represented the most effective method for the Ottoman authorities to control the limited rights of non-Muslim subjects and to conceal the discrimination against them.

The rights and norms pertaining to the Armenian Millet, including those pertaining to Armenians in Greater Syria, were articulated in the form of *firman* and *berats* issued by Ottoman sultans, as well as in correspondence documents, a sufficient number of which are housed in Matenadaran (Mesrop Mashtots Research Institute of Ancient Manuscripts). Nevertheless, due to the particularities of the local administration of Syria, a number of issues pertaining to the status of non-Muslims, including Armenians, took a different course.

Venera Makaryan is a Senior Researcher, Arabist, Codicologist-Cataloguer in Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts-Matenadaran, Dep. Oriental Studies. She has a PhD in History in the field of “World History, International Relations”. Her main fields of interest are Arabic Manuscript Studies, Archival Documents, Manuscript Collections, Medieval History of Greater Syria, and the History of the Ottoman Empire. She is the author of the monograph entitled *The Armenians of Greater Syria in the Ottoman Period (16th-18th Centuries)* (Yerevan, 2023) and the co-author of *Catalogue of the Qur’an Manuscripts of the Matenadaran* (Yerevan 2016).

Sebouh Aslanian
(UCLA)

Between Indo-Islamicate and Franco-Mediterranean: Armenian Commercial Culture in the early Modern Period

In the preface to the *Astrakhan Code of Laws* compiled for use by Armenians in the Russian port city in 1759, the authors claim that the *lex mercatoria* (law merchant) expounded in their codes were drafted according to the prevailing laws of Safavid Iran. The reliance of Christian Armenian merchants on Safavid Shari’a law in commercial matters should come as no surprise. After all, Julfan merchants had been living under Iranian and Muslim influence long before they were resettled in Iran. They were, in a sense, ideal typical bearers of a culture that Marshal G.S. Hodgson famously described as “Islamicate,” that is, possessing cultural markers and practices that referred “not directly to the religion, Islam, itself, but to the social and cultural complex historically associated with Islam and the Muslims, both among Muslims themselves and even found among non-Muslims.” Islamicate elements of Julfan culture include their sartorial customs, architecture, dialect, culinary practices, and *especially commercial law*. Most Julfan mercantile terminology was directly borrowed either from India or from the larger Islamicate world encompassing Safavid Iran. The overlap of Julfan and Indo-Islamicate commercial terminology is evidenced by a host of commercial terms, including *muzarba* (from Persian *ruzname*), *sanad* (Arabic/Persian/Turkish *sanad*), *barat* (derived from Persian/Turkish *berat*), *amanat* (Persian *amānatī*), *enalmal* (from Persian/Arabic *‘ayn al mal*),

avak/g (from Indic *Awg*), *Hundi/Hndvi* (from Indic *Hundi/Hndwi*), *Sitami* (from Gujarati *Sitami*). Relying on a close analysis of several key Julfan commercial and credit instruments, this paper will argue that while trace elements of both Franco-Mediterranean commercial terminology and practice exist in Julfan *lex mercatoria*, the evidence suggests that both in terms of terminology and *especially commercial practice*, the Julfans operated in an atmosphere that was overwhelmingly Indo-Islamicate.

Sebouh Aslanian is Professor of history and the Richard Hovannisian Endowed Chair of Modern Armenian History at UCLA, he is also the Director of the Armenian Studies Center within the UCLA Promise Armenian Institute. Professor Aslanian is the author of the award-winning book, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa* (University of California, 2011) and *Early Modernity and Mobility Port Cities and Printers across the Armenian Diaspora, 1512-1800* (Yale, 2023) as well as numerous scholarly articles on global and Armenian history and Armenian Studies. Aslanian has published in the *American Historical Review*, *Annales: Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, *The Journal of World History*, and *The Journal of Global History*, among others.

Sona Tajiryan **(Independent Scholar)**

Pearl Manual Written by an Armenian Merchant in Basra

Armenian merchants were heavily involved in the lucrative trade of saltwater pearls between the Gulf of Mannar, the Bay of Bengal, the Persian Gulf, and the Mediterranean during the early modern period. As a result, these gem merchants became producers and brokers of pearl knowledge that connected the different “microworlds” of the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean. Despite the importance of their involvement in this trade, the available scholarly literature on that history is scarce.

This paper analyzes an early eighteenth-century unpublished manuscript entitled *Concerning the Trade of Pearls in India (Called Chevay Khsep by Merchants) in India*,^[1] written by Aghamal Khwāja Minasian, as an early example of a shared commercial knowledge production in the Indian Ocean

world. It argues that Armenian merchants were embedded in the commercial fabric of knowledge production and circulation in the Indian Ocean, thus transcending both local and global, oftentimes completely distinctive geographies of India, Iran, and the Mediterranean. Aghamal was the head of the New Julfan Minasian family firm of gem dealers in the 1740s most probably based in Basra. His pearl manuscript belongs to a broader set of texts, called “Book of Pearls” or “*chao*” manuals widely published in the beginning of the twentieth century in Mumbai in both Arabic and Gujarati. It contains detailed information on the intricate calculations of the value of pearls, called *chao*, still widely used in India and the Persian Gulf by pearl dealers today. Despite the widespread tradition of using *chao* in modern times, the history of the origins and significance of this value system for the trade are lost. Written in the obscure Julfan mercantile dialect, Aghamal’s detailed *chao* weight conversion charts predate other “*chao*” manuals by over 150 years, thus contributing to our knowledge of similar Indo-Arabic sources from the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Sona Tajiryan is a historian of the early modern global gem trade. She completed her PhD at the UCLA History Department in 2020 under the supervision of Dr. Sebouh Aslanian focusing on early modern world histories of New Julfan Armenian merchants in the long-distance trade between the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean. Her dissertation, entitled *The Early Modern Global Trade of Diamonds and Gems: An Armenian Family Firm on the Crossroads of Caravan and Maritime Trade (ca. 1670-1730)* analyzes the early modern global luxury commodity trade of gems conducted between South and Southeast Asia and European port cities during the 1670s and 1730s. As an independent researcher, Dr. Tajiryan is currently working on her first book project based on her dissertation, as well as various smaller projects focusing on the history of pearl trade in the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Mannar in the early modern period. Tajiryan has delivered extensive talks on the history of global gem trade and gem dealing techniques in the 1600s and the 1700s to a broad group of audiences, including academics, as well as the gem and jewelry industry.

David Hovhannisyan
(Yerevan State University)

On the Essence and Content of Adab

Adab originated in the 8th century in response to the challenges that arose while facing an environment familiar to monotheistic religions, but presented in a fundamentally different cultural code, which was based on an alien system formed by a civilizational system that was new to the inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula. Adab became the set of tools, knowledge, skills and abilities that were necessary for their adaptation to this new system and which, along with solving the problem of mutual syncretization, also prepared the subject of the emerging new reality – the adib. The purpose of this paper is to consider these processes. In addition, as a result of all the discussions and clash of opinions about what adab is and what purposes it should serve, a notion of a certain sum of knowledge that a person claiming a status in the ummah and the caliphate should possess emerges. The triad of 'ilm-amal-adab, which ensures the unity of the cultural universe, is also formed in parallel.

During the heyday of the Abbasid Caliphate, several prominent thinkers of the 9th century formulated their views on the essence and content of adab. In this presentation, I consider the approaches of al-Jahiz, Ibn Abi Shayb, and Ibn Qutayba.

Davit Hovhannisyan is currently the Director of the Center for Civilization and Cultural Studies at Yerevan State University and also serves as a professor at Yerevan State University's Department of Arabic Studies. He teaches several courses, including History of Islam and History of Arab-Muslim Civilization.

In 1998-2003, he served at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia as an Ambassador at Large and was awarded the diplomatic range of Ambassador Plenipotentiary and Extraordinary. In 1992-1998, Prof. Hovhannisyan was posted to the Embassy of the Republic of Armenia to Damascus, Syria as an Ambassador.

Prof. Hovhannisyan is the author of the books "Ibn Qutaybah's Kitāb al-Shi'r wa-al-Shu'arā'" (1986, in Russian), "The Relations of Armenian

Medieval Philosophical Thought with Arab-Islamic Philosophy" (1989, in Arabic) and "Arab-Israeli Conflict: The Jerusalem Issue" (2002, in Armenian), "Introduction to Islamic Studies" (2020, in Armenia), as well as over 110 articles on issues of Philosophy, Methodology, Political Science, and International Relations..

Nuha Alshaar

(American University of Sharjah/Institute of Islamic Studies)

Aretuic Theory in Arabic Studies: The Interplay between Adab, Morality, and Religion

The paper attempts to deconstruct the notion of *adab* in Western and Arabic scholarship. It engages with methodological concerns and key challenges encountered in the study of *adab*. The proposed framework for this type of study will bring together philosophy, ethics, religion, and *adab*, which are often addressed separately. By doing so, a new reading of *adab* texts will approach them as a cultural and intellectual sphere, moral habitus, or a nexus of embodied practices, habits, and sensibilities. Such reading will enrich our understanding of the diverse forms and contents of *adab* traditions as well as the literary, intellectual, and religious elements that were at play in shaping them.

Nuha Alshaar, (Phd University of Cambridge) is an Associate Professor of Arabic and Islamic studies. She has been teaching at the American University of Sharjah, The University of Lisbon, and the Institute of Ismaili Studies. Nuha focuses on Islamic intellectual history, ethics, political thought, the Qur'an and ethics, the philosophy of religion, and classical literary traditions (*adab*). She is the author of *Ethics in Islam: Friendship in the Political Thought of Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī and his Contemporaries* (Routledge 2015). With Wilfred Madelung, Carmela Baffioni, and Cyril Uy, she co-authored *On God and the world: An Arabic critical edition and English translation of Epistles 49-51* (Oxford University Press, 2019). She is also the editor of *The Qur'ān and Adab: The Shaping of Literary Traditions in Classical Islam* (Oxford University Press in Association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2017), and with Verena Klemm, she edited

Sources and Approaches across Disciplines in Near Eastern Studies: Proceedings of the 24th Congress of the L Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants (Leuven: Peeters, 2013). She is currently publishing an edited volume titled *Muslim Sicily: Encounters and Legacy* to appear with Edinburgh University Press in December 2024.

Zoltán Szombathy
(Eötvös Loránd University)

***The Ethics of Praise: Discussions of Panegyric Poetry in
Premodern Islamic Jurisprudence***

The act of praising another person may at first appear morally unproblematic, yet on closer scrutiny it is fraught with quite a number of ethical ambiguities. It certainly raised quite a few moral and juridical issues for premodern Muslim religious scholars, whether praise took the form of flattery in everyday speech situations or that of formal panegyrics (*madīḥ*) composed about powerful and esteemed individuals. This paper will review the main currents of opinion among Muslim jurists concerning praise poetry in particular, and their typical argumentations about the admissibility or otherwise of this important literary genre. In so doing, it seeks to analyze the way in which the practice of public praise served as a key stage for the interaction of various types of discourse (legal, literary and ethical), and especially for juridical reflection on literary texts.

Zoltan Szombathy is currently Head of the Department of Arabic Studies at Eötvös Loránd University (Budapest), and research fellow at the Avicenna Institute of Middle Eastern Studies (Hungary). He has been a visiting scholar at various research institutions in Europe and elsewhere, including the Institute for Advanced Study (Princeton), the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities (Edinburgh), the CSIC (Madrid), the Institut Dominicain d'Études Orientales (Cairo) and Oxford University. His main research interests are premodern Muslim social history and folk religion; he has also published studies on Muslim societies in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia. He is author of *The Roots of Arabic Genealogy: A Study in Historical Anthropology* (Piliscsaba: The Avicenna Institute of Middle Eastern Studies,

2003), *The History of Bidyini and Kaabu: Two Chronicles in Arabic from Guinea-Bissau* (Piliscsaba: The Avicenna Institute of Middle Eastern Studies, 2007), and *Mujūn: Libertinism in Mediaeval Muslim Society and Literature* (Oxford: Gibb Memorial Trust, 2013), as well as nearly a hundred articles and book chapters.

José Ignacio Sánchez
(University of Castilla-La Mancha)

***Ibn al-Jawzī on Subduing Passions: Revelation, Adab, and
Medicine***

Among the numerous books written by the Ḥanbalī polymath Abū l-Faraj Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 1201), the condemnation of passions entitled *Dhamm al-hawā* stands out for its magisterial blending of genres and its use of *adab*. In contrast with cognate works on this topic, Ibn Al-Jawzī transforms a conventional condemnation of human passions into a work that combines Qur’anic quotations and *hadīths* with poetry and a large collection of entertaining—and often striking—*ḥikāyāt*. Ibn al-Jawzī also deals with passions in other two significant treatises: *Luqaṭ al-manāfi*⁶, a medical work based on both the prophetic and the Hippocratic-Galenic traditions; and *al-Ṭibb al-rūḥānī* a work on “spiritual medicine” inspired by Abū Bakr al-Rāzī’s (d. 925) homonymous treatise.

In this paper I will discuss *Dhamm al-hawā* vis-à-vis Ibn al-Jawzī’s other works on passions, paying special attention to the mixture of genres, the use of *adab*, and the influence of medical traditions.

Ignacio Sánchez (PhD Cambridge 2012) is a Distinguished Research Fellow at the Toledo School of Translators (University of Castilla-La Mancha). He has previously worked at the University of Warwick, the Humboldt University of Berlin, and the Cambridge University Library. His main research interests are medieval Islamic intellectual and cultural history, Arabic literature, and history of medicine and science. He has published in a variety of topics including the edition and translation of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’⁷’s *Epistle 4: On Geography* (with J. Montgomery) and Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘ah’s *The Best Accounts of the Classes of Physicians: Ibn Abī*

Uṣaybi‘ah’s ‘Uyūn al-Anbā’ fī Ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā’ (with E. Savage-Smith et al.). He is section editor of Brill’s *Encyclopaedia of Islam Three* (in charge of the section on History of Science), founder and executive editor of the journal *Endowment Studies* (Brill), and executive editor of the new book series *Al-Andalus. Vergangenheit und Gegenwart* (Ergon Verlag).

Martino Diez

(Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, Milan)

The Impact of Religious Pluralism on Abū l-‘Alā’ al-Ma‘arrī

For much of its history, the *Bilād al-Šām* was—and partially still is—a religiously plural region. In al-Ma‘arrī’s epoch Christian communities, in the variety of their denominations, continued to make up about half the population. Moreover, the region was under constant threat from the Byzantines, who had established a protectorate over the Aleppo emirate. The Islamic community was equally divided, both religiously (Shi‘a groups vs. Sunni schools) and politically (Abbasid clients vs. Fatimids). This pluralistic condition, which was far from exceptional in the premodern Islamicate world, posed a challenge to the truth claim of both Islam and Christianity. While the most common reaction was polemical, some élite groups tried to create an intellectual synthesis between the two historical religions. By contrast, only a limited number of people seem to have been able to appreciate the faith commitment of the religiously other, while retaining his or her own.

Like his contemporaries, al-Ma‘arrī was exposed from his youth to the Syrian pluralistic ambience and some of his correspondents, such as the vizier al-Mağribī, displayed a strong interest in interreligious conversations. In this contribution, I will argue that al-Ma‘arrī’s ambiguity (“intentional ambivalence,” as Sona Grigoryan calls it) was a reaction to the challenge of pluralism and is best understood against the backdrop of religious diversity. In this sense, al-Ma‘arrī’s condition deeply resonates with ours. This helps explain his success among Arab intellectuals after centuries of quasi-oblivion.

Martino Diez is an Associate Professor of Arabic Language and Literature at the Catholic University of Milan. He is also scientific director of the Oasis International Foundation, established in 2004 to advance Christian-Muslim understanding. In 2019 he was a visiting member to the school of historical studies at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton. His main research interest is the intellectual history of the pre-modern Islamic world, with a special focus on inter-religious exchanges and reason's questioning of faith. He has recently edited the first section of al-Makīn Ibn al-'Amīd's *Universal History (From Adam to the End of the Achaemenids)*, Brill 2023). He has translated into Italian al-Ma'arrī's *Epistle of Forgiveness (The Journey in the Afterlife)*, Einaudi 2011) and al-Mutanabbī's odes to Sayf al-Dawla (Ariele 2009). He has also published on Arabic Linguistics (*Introduzione alla lingua araba*, Vita e Pensiero 2018), Arab Christianity, and Islamic-Christian dialogue (*The Profession of Monotheism by Elias of Nisibis*, 2017).

Sona Grigoryan

(Central European University)

The Fusion of this and the Otherworld in al-Ma'arrī's Epistle of Forgiveness (Risālat al-Ghufrān)

The talk explores Paradise and Hell as depicted in Abū l-'Alā' al-Ma'arrī's (d. 447/1057) *Epistle of Forgiveness (Risālat al-Ghufrān)*. In order to show the relationship between this and the Otherworld, I will examine al-Ma'arrī's employment of parody as a literary tool. Parody is seen here as a repetition with difference. One of its effects is that al-Ma'arrī designates such an Otherworld that, on the one hand, echoes the traditional Muslim afterlife and has all of its attributes. On the other hand, al-Ma'arrī's afterlife is as doubtful and contingent as the earthly like, and where, as opposed to the traditional belief, divine justice is not established. Thus, al-Ma'arrī challenges the traditional image of the Muslim Otherworld where one meets the final justice and final truths. However, al-Ma'arrī uses the notion of the otherworld to preach moral and pious life, and, above all, sincere repentance, directed specifically to his addressee, a certain Ibn al-Qāriḥ, thus enhancing the essential religious meaning of the Otherworld. Parody thus serves as a tool

to establish a complex relation with tradition at once questioning and confirming it, a typical way of engagement for al-Ma‘arrī.

Sona Grigoryan is a visiting lecturer at the University of Vienna and research coordinator at CEU’s Center for Eastern Mediterranean Studies. His research interests are critique of religion, religious polemics, as well as secularism and modernity in relation to Islam. Her doctoral research at CEU explored notions of unbelief and freethinking in the writings of the eleventh-century Syrian poet Abū l-‘Alā’ al-Ma‘arrī (d.1058). She is the author of *Neither Belief nor Unbelief: Intentional Ambivalence in al-Ma‘arrī’s Luzūm* (De Gruyter, 2022).

Tatevik Mkrtchyan
(Yerevan State University)

Nahj al-Balāghah: Exploring Intersections between Poetics and Hadith

Nahj al- Balāghah, the renowned collection of sermons, letters, and aphorisms attributed to Imam ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (600-661), compiled by al-Sharīf al-Raḍī and (970 – 1015), a prominent Shi‘i scholar, poet, kātib, adīb, an exegete of the Buyid period (934-1062), stands on the one hand as a literary/adab text and a profound repository of Islamic wisdom, and on the other hand, it includes religious and hadith tradition raising the questions on the authorship and the subjectivity. In this talk, I suggest examining *Nahj al-Balāghah* within the holistic exploration of its text's multifaceted nature and its profound synthesis of diverse elements of poetics and hadith while contributing to a deeper understanding of *Nahj al- Balāghah*’s significance as a literary, philosophical, moral and religious masterpiece and highlighting its relevance in contemporary discourses of Islamic/Shia thought and culture.

Tatevik Mkrtchyan is a lecturer at the Faculty of Oriental Studies, Yerevan State University, and has been a research fellow at the Center for Culture and Civilization Studies (YSU) since 2007. Her fields of research interest are Arabic and Islamic Studies. Her current research interests include both Medieval Islamic sources (her ongoing PhD is on *Nahj al-Balāghah*), and contemporary issues such as the Shi‘a religious political governmental

system of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as Iran's relations with the South Caucasus countries. She has authored scholarly articles on above mentioned topics.

Mariam Elmasyan
(Yerevan State University)

***The Significance of Ibn Al-Muqafa's Adab Saghīr in
Transformation of Knowledge***

In medieval Muslim culture, knowledge (*ilm*) was deeply intertwined with religious beliefs and values. The origin of the concepts of *ilm* can be traced back to the Quran and Hadith, which provided a comprehensive system for understanding the world and regulating one's role in it. Knowledge was perceived both as divine revelations and moral responsibility encompassing religious, philosophical, and literary dimensions. The research explores the pivotal role of Ibn Al-Muqaffa's "al-Adab al-Saghir" in the transformation of knowledge in line with the new requirements of 8th-century Arab-Muslim multiethnic society and culture. Ibn Al-Muqafa's "al-Adab al-saghir" represents the synthesis of key concepts of Persian and Hellenistic thought into the Islamic intellectual tradition, which very much affected the knowledge paradigm of the new era. The study also focuses on the transformation of main concepts in Arab-Muslim culture represented in "al-Adab al-Saghir." By analyzing key passages of the text, the research will illustrate Ibn Al-Muqaffa's contribution to the evolution of core cultural and ethical values by making them accessible for a broader audience, promoting ethical reflection, and molding the cultural and intellectual tradition of the Islamic Golden Age.

Mariam Elmasyan is an Assistant Professor at the Arabic Studies Department of Yerevan State University, where she serves as a lecturer of Arabic and Modern Arabic literature. She has authored scholarly articles on medieval Arab-Muslim society and culture and in 2022 released a comprehensive textbook, *The History of Modern Arabic Literature*. Her scientific research focuses on adab and knowledge transformation and transmission as well as modern Arabic literature. She has also presented her research on various international conferences notably on topics related to

adab, non-formal education (the case of Ijazah), and feminist and postcolonial discourses in the Arab world.

Maxim Romanov
(University of Hamburg)

***Digital Humanities for Arabic and Islamic Studies:
what is it and why bother?***

Digital humanities is something that most scholars are still confused about. Even the active practitioners do not agree with each other on what this new area is about (see, for example, <https://whatisdigitalhumanities.com/> which contains over 800 ad hoc definitions that often have very little in common). Considering that our field is heavily reliant on texts produced by premodern Muslim scholars, I propose a vision of Islamicate DH that is corpus-driven. Relying on a properly constructed machine-readable corpus of Classical Arabic texts (and not only classical and not only Arabic), we can not only arrive at a better understanding of specific texts and their place in the Arabic written tradition but also pose research questions that deal with highly specific matters as well as large-scale issues, which otherwise are simply not feasible. In my presentation, I will briefly go over a few diverse yet methodologically interconnected cases that demonstrate 1) how we can trace word usage over time effectively shedding light on the chronological development of concepts; 2) how we can understand the place of a text within the written tradition at large, and 3) how we can model and study “genres” of the Arabic written tradition.

Maxim Romanov’s research focuses on the social history of the premodern Islamic world, the history of the Arabic written tradition, and computational methods and approaches relevant to the field of Islamicate studies (Islamwissenschaft). Until 2021, he held a joint position of a Universitätsassistent (similar to an Assistant Professor) of Digital Humanities at the University of Vienna, and of a senior research fellow at the KITAB Project at Aga Khan University, London London (AKU-ISMC). From 2021 onwards, he has been leading a DFG-funded Emmy-Noether project titled “The Evolution of Islamic Societies (c.600-1600 CE):

Algorithmic Analysis into Social History” (EIS1600) at the University of Hamburg. Maxim Romanov has played an important role in several international initiatives centered on the digitization of Near and Middle Eastern studies. The most important of which is the development of the OpenITI corpus of Islamicate texts. Currently, he is in the final stages of completing his book tentatively titled “A Digital Humanities for Arabic and Islamic Studies,” set to be published by Brill Publishers.

Marat Yavrumyan
(University of Salzburg)

Digital Humanities in Textual Criticism: The Back Translation of the Cilician Horse Book into Arabic

The Cilician Horse Book («Բժշկարան ձիոյ եւ սոհասարակ գրաստնոյ») is a short translation and compilation of Arabic horse and mule medicine into Armenian (around 1269), which was translated back from Armenian into Arabic two decades later and became known in the region as the Armenian Horse Tradition, entitled *Aqrābādīn al-ḥayl*. Some DH applications such as Calfa (HTR), T-PEN, ChrysoCollate, LERA, and Stemweb, which have been used to create a critical historical edition of this work, will be reviewed.

Dr. Marat Yavrumyan studied Oriental Studies, Arabic Studies and Philology in Yerevan, Cairo and Bayreuth. He received his BA in Arabic Studies (Yerevan, 1999), MA in Oriental Studies (Yerevan, 2001) and Dr. phil. in Arabic Studies (Bayreuth, 2006). He was Assistant Professor (2006-2011), then Associate Professor (2011-2022), Head of the MA programs "Arabic and Semitic Linguistics" (2007-2013) and "Cultural and Linguistic Anthropology of the Arab World" (2012-2014) at the Department of Arabic Studies, Yerevan State University. Since March 2022 he is a researcher in the FWF-project "MEETING IN THE BODY OF THE HORSE: Cultural Transfer and Knowledge Transmission between Christian West and Muslim East in Late Medieval Armenian Horse Books" at ZECO - Center for Research on the Christian East, University of Salzburg. His main research interests are the cultural and historical contexts of Arabic linguistic tradition (8th-14th centuries), corpus linguistics, and natural language processing (NLP).

Elizabeth Urban
(West Chester University)

***Putting Words in their Mouths: Digital Methodologies for
Analyzing Women's Reported Speech in Medieval Arabic-Islamic
Textual Sources***

This paper presents a preliminary stylometric analysis of direct speech—as reported in Ibn Sa‘d’s (d. 845 CE) *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*—with a focus on early Muslim women’s (purported) speech. Because early Islamic texts were exclusively written or compiled by men, I explore whether women’s reported speech can serve as a historical archive that reflects their own words and worldviews. Alternatively, I consider the possibility that this speech has been filtered through the male authors’ perspectives, making it as “male-authored” as the rest of the accounts. To address these questions, the first step is to better understand the nature of speech as presented in these texts.

I begin by constructing a discursive archive of the reported direct speech of select early Muslims. For the purposes of this archive, I do not consider the *matn* of transmitted reports as direct speech; rather, I only include speech or dialogue appearing within the *matn*. I record all instances of the purported direct speech of twenty women (ten freedwomen and ten freeborn women) from various generations and tribes; to identify any gendered differences, I also do the same for twenty men’s biographies of comparable length. Using the Stylo for R program, I then conduct a stylometric analysis of this corpus to identify patterns or groupings based on gender, legal status, age, tribe, transmitter(s), or other factors. Finally, I perform a qualitative analysis to highlight themes or trends related to context, reaction to the speech, and word choice. It is hoped that such analysis will shed light on the potential usefulness of women’s speech as a source for critical feminist history of the earliest Islamic period.

Elizabeth Urban is Associate Professor of History at West Chester University of Pennsylvania, where she specializes in the first two centuries of Islamic history. Her first book, *Conquered Populations in Early Islam* (Edinburgh UP, 2020) analyzes how Muslims of slave origins joined the Islamic community and articulated their identities within it. The book posits

that enslaved and freed persons provide a fruitful window onto early Islamic history because, as liminal figures, they sparked debates about the political, social, and religious boundaries of the expanding Islamic community. Her current research continues to explore early Islamic history through the lens of unfreedom or asymmetrical dependency. She is currently studying the depiction of unfree women's bodies in early Islamic historical sources, including descriptions of physical labor, corporal punishment, hair, clothing, and piercing.

Dmitri V. Mikulski

(Institute of Oriental Studies, RAS, Moscow)

***The Data Base of the themes and plots of the Arab-Muslim
Dynastical chronicles of the 9 – 10th centuries***

By the 9th century, the dynastic approach to organizing historical material became a productive method in Arab-Muslim historical scholarship. Most historical works from the 9th and 10th centuries were composed following this principle. The dynastic approach involves presenting historical events according to the reigns of ruling figures, particularly caliphs in the Arab-Muslim context.

The current database includes the following key works of Arab-Muslim historical scholarship:

- **Kitab al-Ma'arif** by **Ibn Qutayba** (Cairo, Matba'at Dar al-Kutub, 1960).
- **Kitâb al-Ahbâr at-Tiwâl** by **Abu Hanîfa ad-Dînaweri**, edited by V. Guirgass (Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1888).
- **Tarih** by **Ya'qub b. Ga'far b. Wahb b. Wadih al-Katib al-Ya'qubi al-'Abbasi**, Volume II (Beirut, Dar Sader Publishers, P.O.B. 10).
- **The Book of Creation and History** by **Motahhar b. Tahir al-Maqdisi** (often attributed to Abu Zaid Ahmad b. Sahl al-Balkhi), edited by Prof. Cl. Huart, offset reproduction from the *Publications de l'École des Langues Orientales Vivantes* (Paris, 1899), Vol. 4–6 (Tehran, M. H. Asadi's Publications Series, No. 3).

- **Kitab al-‘Unvan: Histoire Universelle by Agapius (Mahboub) de Menbidj**, edited and translated by Alexandre Vasiliev, Professor at the University of Dorpat (Юрьевъ). Second Part (II) // *Patrologia Orientalis*, Tome VII, Fascicle 4 (Paris, Firmin-Didot et Cie, [1912]).
- **Annales by Eutychius, Patriarch of Alexandria**, edited by L. Cheicko, S.J., B. Carra de Vaux, and H. Zayyat (Beirut, Paris, Leipzig: E Typographeo Catholico, 1909).

The database focuses specifically on the sections of these chronicles dedicated to Islamic history. It contains approximately 4,111 electronic entries, each providing a translation of specific textual units or a summary of their content. The database also categorizes the texts by genre, offering extensive opportunities for studying both the content and the form of these works, as well as the processes involved in their creation.

In the author’s view, this database is also valuable for the study of contemporary Arabic historiography, as the dynastic structure continues to influence historical writing even today

Dmitri V. Mikulski graduated from the Institute of Asian and African countries of the Moscow State University in 1978. In 1981 obtained his PhD degree in philology for a dissertation on the works of al-Mas‘udi (10th century) and the traditions of the Arab prose of the 9-10th centuries. Since 1993 he has been a research fellow at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences. In 2003 he obtained the Degree of Doctor of Science in History for the dissertation on the Arab-Muslim culture in the “Meadows of Gold” by al-Mas‘udi. He has published over 210 works.

Hayk Kocharyan
(Yerevan State University)

***“Islam” and “Iman”:* Digital Methodologies for Analyzing the Formation of the Value System in Islam**

The study of the formation, consolidation, and evolution of the value system within emerging worldviews, particularly within Islam, is of significant scholarly interest. What mechanisms cause specific values to crystallize and

gain prominence through daily preaching and practice, rather than others? What necessitates the articulation and explanation of these values? And what semiotic frameworks are employed in these explanations? Addressing these questions will help uncover deeper layers of inquiry.

This presentation aims to examine how digital methodologies (OpenITI, eScriptorium, Calfa, Stylometric tools) can facilitate a deeper understanding of how the fundamental concepts of "Islam" and "Iman" have been formed and developed.

Hayk Kocharyan is an Associate Professor of Islamic Studies and the Head of the Chair of Arabic Studies at Yerevan State University. His research focuses on the social history and adaptation mechanisms of the ummah in the premodern Islamicate world. His doctoral work focused on the concept of Ummah in the Quran and Hadiths. He is currently co-authoring a monograph with Mikayel Hovhannisyan, tentatively titled *"The Virtuous and Spiritual City: In Search of the Ideal Ummah."*