

INEKAS 3<sup>rd</sup> Summer School | 2023

# Muhammad

Life, Society, and Legacy

August  
24, 25, 31

September  
1, 6, 7, 8



## Coordinators

The 2023 Inekas International Summer School has been possible thanks to the enthusiasm and efforts of all speakers and hosts who kindly accepted our invitation.

Colleagues from **Inekas, Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies at the University of Exeter (UK), Hanif Center for Religious Studies (Iran), and Hikmat International Institute** have tried jointly towards coordinating this school.

(Names sorted alphabetically)



Mohammad Baqeri  
Mohammad Sajjad Entezari  
Mohsen Feyzbakhsh  
Mohammad Ghandehari  
Farhad Ghoddoussi  
Reyhane Sadat Khorramshahi  
MohammadReza Moini  
Mohammad Hossein Naraghi  
Mahdi Saleh  
Razieh Sharifzadeh  
Fatemeh Zakeri



**Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies**

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**Hanif Center for Religious Studies**

Reza Akbari  
Mohammad Hasan Firoozbeh



**HIKMAT**  
INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE

Morteza Rezazadeh

## ABOUT THE SUMMER SCHOOL

In collaboration with the **Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies at the University of Exeter (UK)** and **Hanif Center for Religious Studies (Iran)**, and **Hikmat International Institute**, Inekas will host a summer school on "Muhammad: Life, Society and Legacy".

Taking place on 24, 25, 31 August and 1, 6, 7, 8 September, the summer school will run in seven days from 11:30 to 18:00 BST (6:30 to 13:00 EDT).

The summer school aims to provide students interested in Islamic studies with a glimpse into recent scholarship on the life of Prophet Muhammad and his family members, the social and cultural context of his society, and his cultural legacy in Muslim societies.

There will be presentations in both English (17 presentations) and Persian (7 presentations). Hence, students interested in Islamic or Middle Eastern studies who intend to improve their Persian for academic purposes can also use the summer school as a training course.



## Educational Approach

### International Event

This program was held in collaboration with the University of Exeter. In it, all of the presenters who gathered from 9 countries have previously presented their scholarship on Prophet Muhammad in prestigious international journals or conferences.

### Innovative and Interdisciplinary

This School seeks to approach Prophet Muhammad and Islam using interdisciplinary approaches and modern methods. These approaches include literary criticism, textual criticism, and source criticism and cultural analysis.

### Familiarity with Specialized Language

Participating in specialized presentations in the historical studies of Islam and the Qur'an, along with reviewing related articles, can provide a basis for those students and those interested in Islamic studies who want to strengthen their specialized Persian in this field.

### Networking and Communication

In this course, all participants can join the course's telegram group, engage in discussion and networking with other researchers, and, in addition to creating new connections, use the course's exclusive supplemental content.



# Schedule of Inekas Third Summer School | 2023

## August 24th



Rasul Jafarian University of Tehran

### Opening Speech



Ilkka Lindstedt University of Helsinki

### The Religious Situation in Arabia Around the Time of the Birth of the Prophet Muhammad



Mohsen-Hesam Mazaheri Independent Scholar

### Honoring the "Founder" and the Sectarian Identity: Prophet's Place in Shī'i Rituals

## August 25th



Adam Bursi Independent Scholar

### Prophetic Pieces and Places: Relics of the Prophet Muhammad in Early Islam



Ehsan Roohi Independent Scholar

### New Trends in Western Sira Studies: The Case of Caravan Looting Narratives in Sira



Shari Lowin Stonehill College

### "A Prophet Like Moses"?

What Can We Know About the Early Jewish Responses to Muḥammad's Claims of Mosesness?

## August 31st



Joshua Little Independent Scholar

### Reconstructing the Life of Muhammad: Problems and Solutions in Critical Scholarship



Andreas Görke University of Edinburgh

### Between History and Exegesis: The Origins and Transformation of the Story of Muḥammad and Zaynab bt. Ḡaḥṣ



Aila Santi SOAS University of London

### The House of the Prophet and the Mosque of the Prophet: Urbanism and Architecture in Early Islamic Medina





## September 1st



**Mahsheed Ansari** Charles Sturt University

The Metaphysical Aspects of Prophet Muhammad's Prophethood in the Face of Modern Critiques



**Emran El-Badawi** University of Houston

How Khadijah shaped Muhammad's prophetic ministry



**Ghasem Darzi** Shahid Beheshti University

Typology of the Aesthetic Components of the Quran: Emphasizing the Role of Muhammad in the Aesthetic Perception of the Quran



**Juan Cole** University of Michigan

The Heart of Mecca: Muhammad and Suft Power

## September 6th



**Ali Bahramian** CGIE

Abū Tālib and the Early Islamic Historiography



**Mehdy Shaddel** Leiden University

Genre Criticism in the Study of Prophetic Biography:

*Maghāzī, ta'rīkh, and the Historical Muhammad*



**Ahmad al-Jallad** Ohio State University

Arabia's religious landscape in the first half of the first millennium CE

## September 7th



**Ibrahim Zain**  
Hamad Bin Khalifa University



**Halim Rane**  
Griffith University



**Ahmad el-Wakil**  
Independent Scholar



**Gayane Mkrtumyan**  
Independent Scholar

Panel:

An Introduction to the Covenants of the Prophet Muhammad



**Sean Anthony** Ohio State University

Revising Modern Historical Approaches to the Life and Times of the Prophet Muhammad



UNIVERSITY OF  
**EXETER**





September 8th



Abdulla Galadari

Khalifa University

The Qibla: An Allusion to the Shema'



Marion Holmes Katz

New York University

What We Can Learn from Studying Mawlid



Mohsen Goudarzi

Harvard University

The Constitution of Medina and Sūrat al-Mā'idah:

Similarities and potential connections between two texts from early Islam



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**Rasul Jafarian**

**University of Tehran**

Rasul Jafarian is an Iranian scholar and researcher in field of Islamic and Iranian history. He is currently Professor at the Department of History at the University of Tehran and the Director of The specialized library on Islam and Iran.

He served previously as the Director of the Central Library of the University of Tehran. Rasul Jafarian became a permanent member of the Academy of Sciences of Iran in June 2018 with the vote of the members of the General Assembly of the Academy of Sciences.

afarian is a prolific writer and has many works in the science of history. He started writing in 1985 with a book entitled An Introduction to the History of Islam. He has authored and translated more than 140 works, some of which are voluminous.

What doubles the importance of his work is the impact of his pen; In a way, some of his works are among the academic curriculum resources and the resources of master and doctorate in history in Iran

## **The Religious Situation in Arabia Around the Time of the Birth of the Prophet Muhammad**

Pre-modern and modern accounts of pre-Islamic Arabia conventionally emphasize the pagan and immoral nature of that time and place. For instance, pre-Islamic Arabs are portrayed

as burying alive their baby daughters, and the majority of them are said to have been polytheist.

On the other hand, archaeological and epigraphic evidence – much of it rather recent – suggests that Jews and Christians were abundantly present in Arabia on the eve of Islam. Indeed, what is lacking in material evidence from the fifth and sixth centuries CE is any indication of surviving polytheist views.

In my presentation, I suggest that we should use the material evidence hand in hand with other contemporary evidence, such as the jahiliyya poetry and the Qur'an. The sources indicate that many Arabians had adopted monotheist or, at least, henotheist belief systems.



**Ilkka Lindstedt**

University of Helsinki

Ilkka Lindstedt holds a PhD and title of docent in Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Helsinki.

He has published studies on early Islam, Arabic historiography, and Arabic epigraphy. Recent edited volumes in English include the co-edited Case Studies in Transmission [Ugarit-Verlag (2014)] and forthcoming Translation and Transmission in the First Millennium, also with Ugarit-Verlag.

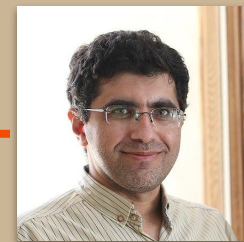
Ilkka Lindstedt is currently a Lecturer in Islamic theology at the Faculty of Theology, University of Helsinki.



## Honoring the "Founder" and the Sectarian Identity: Prophet's Place in Shī'i Rituals

This presentation examines the rituals honoring the “first person” of a religious group, such as a goddess, a great saint, a prophet, or a similar role. This person is usually the founder of the religious group and has a special sanctity for their followers. Their life history is also considered sacred, and their important milestones and events are celebrated by holding mass rituals. This is the case in Islam, where the life history of the “founder”, Prophet Muhammad, has been of interest to Muslims since the first centuries as sacred history. This interest has resulted in the emergence of branches such as “Sirah” and “Maghazi” in Muslim historiography. Another example of the significance of the life history of the Prophet of Islam is the recording of its important events in Islamic calendars and the commemoration of some of them by establishing specific rituals. The most important of these rituals is the celebration of Mawlid (the birth of Prophet Muhammad), which has been prevalent in almost all Islamic countries, and it can be said that it ranks third in terms of importance and scope in the Islamic world, after Eid. In addition to Mawlid, there are other rituals associated with Prophet Muhammad in the Islamic world, such as Me’raj/Mabaath, Hijrat, Shaq al-Qamar, Battle of Badr, and the Conquest of Mecca.

The presentation notes an interesting point that among the Islamic sects and schools, Sunnis have shown much more attention to the rituals of honoring the Prophet of Islam, while in Shia societies (specifically, the Imamiyya), these rituals are ranked second in importance. On the other hand, Shiites, from the first centuries until today, have paid special attention to exclusively Shiite rituals in honoring Imam Ali (like Ghadir). The author argues that such a difference is natural and expected from a phenomenological perspective and considering the historical position of Shias as a minority and rejected group. In other words, the necessity of the position of this religion/school has been the creation of identity and the use of alienating and differentiating mechanisms for the survival and preservation of the community of followers. In this regard, the definition of specific Shiite rituals as an alternative to public and official Islamic rituals is one of the mechanisms that Shiites have taken advantage of. In such a situation, the rituals related to the Prophet of Islam are only given serious attention by Shiites when they are derived from a Shiite reading and possess identity features. As an example, the highlighting and development of the mourning ritual of the Prophet of Islam in recent years following the promotion of the Shiite concept of unnatural death and his “martyrdom” can be mentioned



**Mohsen-Hesam  
Mazaheri**

**Independent Scholar**

Mohsen Hossam Mazaheri studied sociology at University of Tehran. He is a prolific writer and researcher of sociology of religion. The focus of his scholarship has been the Shiite rites and rituals. He also has works in the field of social studies of the Iran-Iraq war.

He has published several works in the field of religious studies, including: *Shia Media* (2008), *Arbaeen Walk: Sociological Reflections* (Ed, 2018), *Tragedy of the Islamic World* (2019), *Religious Assemblies in Contemporary Iran* (2019) and *Celebrations Shiite Islam in Iran* (1401).

He is the director and editor-in-chief of the specialized encyclopedia "Shia Mourning Culture" and the editor of the "Sarv Books" collection (Shia social studies) and the "Hilal Books" collection (social studies of the Islamic world).

## Prophetic Pieces and Places: Relics of the Prophet Muḥammad in Early Islam

Modern scholarship frequently imagines early Muslims as iconoclastic monotheists, whose religious practices did not include the sorts of relic and tomb veneration that were central to the ritual lives of other late antique groups like Christians and Jews. This paper brings together evidence of the importance for Muslims in the seventh to ninth centuries of several objects and spaces associated with the Prophet Muḥammad, such as his hair and minbar, and the places where he prayed and was buried. In early reports, Muslims visit and pray at these locations, often commemorating the Prophet's remembered presence by scenting such spaces with perfume. Not only objects or texts, but also places were thus transformed into sacred "traces" through their association with the Prophet Muhammad. Utilizing early ḥadīth and historical texts, this paper outlines how these sanctified sites were ritually and materially venerated—and debated—in the seventh, eighth, and early ninth centuries. In addition to the venerational postures and attitudes that were considered acceptable by early Muslims, we will also consider how early Muslims' understood the meaning of the ritual practices in these sacred cities.



**Adam Bursi**

**Independent Scholar**

Adam Bursi (PhD, Cornell University) is a researcher studying early Islam in dialogue with other late antique religions. His work focuses on the ways that rituals related to relics, pilgrimage, and healing were interwoven with the formation and performance of communal identity among early Muslims. He has held research and teaching positions at Utrecht University, the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library, and the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. His writing has been published in the journals *Medieval Encounters*, *Studies in Late Antiquity*, the *Journal of the International Qur'anic Studies Association*, *Arabica*, and elsewhere. He is currently completing a monograph, tentatively titled *Traces of the Prophets: Relics and Sacred Spaces in Early Islam*.



## New Trends in Western Sira Studies: The Case of Caravan Looting Narratives in Sira

The quest for the historical Muḥammad is no longer tantamount to the appreciative and uncritical reproduction of the late sīra-maghāzī literature. An array of contemporary evidence (including the Qur'an, non-Muslim sources, and numismatic/epigraphic materials) has been reckoned as capable of shedding light on the Prophet's era. Besides, rigorous source-, form-, and literary-critical practices have been brought to bear on the study of the Prophet's traditional biography. The present talk briefly surveys both the novel source material and methodological tools for the study of the historical Muḥammad. As a case study, the authenticity of the sīra account of caravan looting is then appraised using some of the aforesaid sources/methodologies.



**Ehsan Roohi**

**Independent Scholar**

He is an Independent scholar of Islamic origins and Arab-Byzantine relations. His publications include a monograph (in Persian) on ḏū al-Qarnayn, and several articles (in English) including "The Murder of the Jewish Chieftain Ka'b b. al-Ashraf: A Re-examination," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (2020); "Between History and Ancestral Lore: A Literary Approach to the Sīra's Narratives of Political Assassinations," *Der Islam* (2021); "Muḥammad's disruptive measures against the Meccan trade: A historiographical reassessment", forthcoming in *Der Islam* (2023/1); "The Form-Critical Analysis of the al-Rajī' and Bi'r Ma'ūna Stories: Tribal, ideological and legal incentives behind the transmission of the Prophet's biography", forthcoming in the *Journal of Middle East Medievalist* (Al-'Usur al-Wusta); "Caesar Bardas and the accusation of an illicit affair," *Byzantinoslavica* (2019), "An Ignored Arabic Account of a Byzantine Royal Woman," *Al-Masāq Journal of the Medieval Mediterranean* (2020); and "Caesar Bardas and the Earthquake of Constantinople: The Rival Depictions of the Event in the Arabic and Byzantine Sources," *Al-Masāq Journal of the Medieval Mediterranean* (2022).

## **“A Prophet Like Moses”?**

### **What Can We Know About the Early Jewish Responses to Muḥammad's Claims of Mosesness?**

While Islam echoes the Jewish characterization and adoration of Moses as God’s messenger, interlocutor (al-kalīm), and right-hand man, Islam rejects the Jewish teachings regarding Moses’s everlasting prophetic uniqueness. For Islam, Moses was matched by a subsequent prophet whose life paralleled his but was ultimately exceeded by him: Muḥammad.

This session analyzes the nature of the Jewish reaction to the Muslim claim of Muḥammad’s superiority over Moses. We will begin with a discussion of Jewish polemics against Muhammad in the early Islamic era. Problematically, these polemics are preserved only in the Islamic sources themselves, sources that are non-contemporaneous to Muḥammad’s lifetime. The analysis then compares these early Jewish responses to later medieval Jewish writings on Muḥammad’s Mosesness, as found in the writings of Maimonides, Samaw’al al-Maghribi, Ibn Kammuna and others. Intriguingly, we find that the ways in which the (possibly) contemporary Jews are reported to have reacted to Muḥammad are the same reactions found in the medieval Jewish sources. This finding suggests that, contrary to scholarship that denies any historical value to the early Islamic texts, perhaps the Muslim depiction of the early Jewish response was in fact rooted in some historical truth. And perhaps we can thus know more about the Jews who interacted with Muḥammad than was earlier thought.



**Shari Lowin**

**Stonehill College**

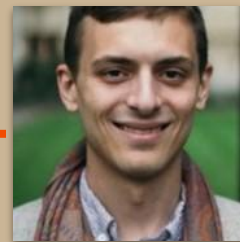
Shari L. Lowin is Associate Professor in the Religious Studies Department at Stonehill College, teaching Islamic and Jewish Studies. Her research focuses on early Islamic intellectual thought, and its interplay with midrashic and rabbinic materials.

Her research centers on the interplay between Judaism and Islam in the early and early medieval Islamic periods, c. 800-1200 CE, focusing mainly on the development of Jewish and Muslim exegetical narratives.



## Reconstructing the Life of Muḥammad: Problems and Solutions in Critical Scholarship

The last century and a half of secular, critical scholarship (often known as “Orientalism” or “Western scholarship”) has argued that the Islamic historical sources, including Hadith and isnads, are extremely unreliable when it comes to the life and times of Muḥammad. According to such scholarship, these sources are highly contradictory, implausible, anachronistic, etc., which makes it very difficult to reconstruct the true life and times of Muḥammad. To get around this problem, critical scholars have focused on analysing matns, and have developed a variety of matn-based methods and criteria for identifying “historical kernels” or authentic data. To illustrate all of this, I have collected and analysed all of the reports concerning Muḥammad’s marriage to ‘Ā’ishah bint ‘Abī Bakr: I first outline all of the problems with these sources, and then I apply the matn-based solutions that have been proposed. By doing this, I argue that we can reconstruct a number of basic facts—a genuine historical core—about Muḥammad’s marriage. The number of reports required for this kind of research is vast, but by applying these methods and criteria, I argue that we will be able to reconstruct a sizeable biography of Muḥammad, despite the problems with the sources.



**Joshua Little**

Independent Scholar

Joshua Little received his MPhil in Islamic Studies & History and DPhil in Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, both from the University of Oxford.

His dissertation, “The Hadith of ‘Ā’ishah’s Marital Age: a study in the evolution of early Islamic historical memory” (2022), explores the origins and development of one of the most famous traditions within the Islamic Hadith corpus: the hadith of ‘Ā’ishah bt. ‘abī Bakr’s marriage to the Prophet at a young age. He is the author of Islamic Origins weblog:

[islamicorigins.com](http://islamicorigins.com)

## **Between History and Exegesis: The Origins and Transformation of the Story of Muḥammad and Zaynab bt. Ġaḥš**

This paper sheds light the origins of the story of the Prophet Muḥammad's controversial marriage with Zaynab bt. Jaḥsh as well as its transformation and reinterpretation through the centuries. The fact that the story features in different genres of Islamic literature as well as in non-Muslim sources allows for a reconstruction of how and where the story emerged, how it spread and to what extent it was transformed over time. In the course of this reconstruction, the paper also looks at different approaches to the historicity of reports on the life of Muḥammad. With its analysis of later Muslim sources, it also illustrates different strategies of reinterpreting and recasting traditions and shows how societal change and different ideologies influenced the interpretation of the story.



**Andreas Görke**

**University of  
Edinburgh**

Andreas Görke is Senior Lecturer in Islamic Studies at the University of Edinburgh. He received his PhD from the University of Hamburg in 2001 and his Habilitation from the University of Basel in 2010.

Before coming to Edinburgh in September 2011, he worked as a postdoctoral research assistant at the Universities of Hamburg (2001-2002), Basel (2002-2005), the Social Science Research Center Berlin (WZB) (2005-2006), and Freie Universität Berlin (2006) and as Lecturer in Islamic studies at the University of Kiel (2007-2011).

In 2009/10 he served as acting professor for early and classical Islam at the University of Hamburg.



## **The House of the Prophet and the Mosque of the Prophet: Urbanism and Architecture in Early Islamic Medina**

By applying a focus on topography, geography, and architectural history to the study of the source material on Medina, this lecture will provide a picture of the urban landscape of the Prophet's City in the early Islamic period with a focus on the Mosque of the Prophet and its immediate surroundings. The first part will involve a critical examination of the "Orientalist" myth of the "House of the Prophet", i.e., the belief that the mosque type in Islam originated from the private dwelling of Muḥammad and his household in Medina. This will be followed by a meticulous topographical reconstruction of the Mosque's Prophetic boundaries based on the oldest local histories of the city. The resulting picture will serve as a platform to explore a number of topics including the spatial relationship between the "house of the Prophet" and the "mosque of the Prophet", antiquarian trends linked to the Prophet's memory during the Umayyad era, and the role of Medinan topography in the construction of legitimisation narratives in the early Islamic period.

The lecture will also address methodological considerations related to Islamic written sources and analyse the oldest extant visual material on the Prophet's Mosque, providing a well-rounded and insightful analysis of the site and its significance.



**Aila Santi**

**SOAS University of  
London**

Aila Santi is an archaeologist and architectural historian of the early Islamic world, currently completing a Newton International Postdoctoral Fellowship at SOAS University of London.

Her research, combining archaeological research methods with in-depth study of historical sources, explores the formation and development of the Muslim elite's monumental language in the central lands of the caliphate between the rise of Islam and the decline of the Umayyad power (ca. 622-750). A PhD graduate in archaeology from Sapienza University of Rome, she has participated in several archaeological missions in Italy and abroad, including in Uzbekistan, Oman, Lebanon, and Iraq.

## The Metaphysical Aspects of Prophet Muhammad's Prophethood in the Face of Modern Critiques

In the context of modern Muslim intellectual discourse, the contributions of Muḥammad Iqbal (1877-1938) and Said Nursi (1877-1960) stand out as they delve into the metaphysical aspects of Prophet Muhammad's prophethood.

Amidst the prevalence of rational thought in discussions surrounding Prophet Muhammad, an oversight of the metaphysical and inner dimensions of his prophecy has occurred. This oversight led to questioning various facets of Prophet Muhammad's life and mission, predominantly focusing on logical explanations, particularly concerning his miracles which faced increasing scepticism. This paper critically examines the discussions presented by Iqbal and Nursi regarding the metaphysical dimension of Prophet Muḥammad's ascension, commonly known as the mi'rāj. By deploying both 'aql (rationality) and kashf (spiritual unveiling), Iqbal and Nursi provide responses to the rationalist critiques. Additionally, this study explores their choice of genre, methodologies, and arguments employed in defence of the spiritual dimensions of mi'rāj as an integral facet of nubuwwa (prophethood). Furthermore, this paper underscores the innovative juxtaposition of rationality and metaphysics in Iqbal's and Nursi's works, with a specific focus on Javid Nama and Ayat al-Kubra. Their approach not only serves as a response to the prevailing rationalized climate but also emphasizes the retention of the spiritual essence of their faith and Prophet Muhammad's mi'rāj within their literary compositions. Through this exploration, a nuanced understanding of the intricate interplay between reason and spirituality emerges, shedding light on the enduring significance of Prophet Muhammad's prophethood in the modern world.



**Mahsheed  
Ansari**

**Charles Sturt University**

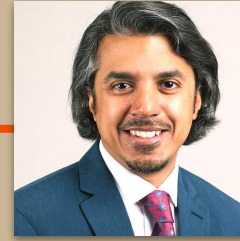
Dr Mahsheed Ansari is lecturer in Islam and Contemporary Islamic Studies and the Higher Degrees Research Coordinator at the Centre for Islamic Studies & Civilisation, Charles Sturt University. She is also a Researcher (Trans-disciplinary Stream), Public and Contextual Theology (PACT), Charles Sturt University. Mahsheed has been a reader in Islamic thought for over 15 years. She is also community activist working in the areas of interfaith dialogue, social harmony and leadership-mentoring programs with Muslim youth and Muslim women for over a decade. Her research interests include the history of Islamic thought, spirituality and culture. Her recent book (2023) is titled: Modern debates in Prophecy and Prophethood in Islam: Muhammad Iqbal and Said Nursi.

## How Khadijah shaped Muhammad's prophetic ministry

How did the religious, economic and genealogical influence of Khadijah bt. Khuwaylid shape the prophetic ministry of Muhammad? This presentation examines the development of the prophet 'under the wing,' so to speak of the Lady of Quraysh and her kinsfolk. Based on a critical reading of the Arabic sources and secondary literature, I argue that Khadijah was the bringer of monotheism, wealth, and tribal status to Muhammad's life, launching his career as a prophet.

The story of the two figures is that of a wealthy, widowed, noblewomen marrying a younger man unilaterally, against the will of Mecca's noblemen, using her wealth and status as leverage over them. 'Abd al-'Uzza, the tribal bloc of Quraysh to which Khadijah belonged, was largely Christian/Hanif; and its members became Muhammad's mentors after marriage. Over the course of three decades, including 24 years of monogamous marriage, the noblewoman became the orphan's boss, mother figure, and best friend.

To conclude, I demonstrate the influence exercised by Khadijah in shaping Islam's prophet continues a tradition of pre-Islamic Arabian female power, subsequently dismissed by medieval Muslim apologists.



**Emran El-Badawi**

**University of Houston**

Dr. Emran El-Badawi is program director and associate professor of Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Houston. He founded the Arab Studies program at UH and he has designed, implemented and assessed degree programs in the Humanities and Sciences.

El-Badawi also served as founding executive director and treasurer of the International Qur'anic Studies Association (IQSA).

His research examines Middle Eastern and Islamic civilization broadly, including subjects such as late antique Arabia, Qur'an and Bible, Syriac churches and classical Islam, and interdisciplinary discourse on modernity, gender and sustainability.



## Typology of the Aesthetic Components of the Quran: Emphasizing the Role of Muhammad in the Aesthetic Perception of the Quran

The evidence of this research largely shows the beauty of the Qur'ān based on the reader of the text. At the end, based on the most important theories of literary miracles, the main aesthetic components are suggested; These theories also show the aesthetic components of the Qur'ān based on the text. In this research, an attempt was made to extract the most important aesthetic aspects of the Qur'ān based on the textual evidence of the Qur'ān, the audience's reaction, and also based on the theories of the literary miracles of the Qur'ān. The textual evidence shows that the Qur'ān has been surprising and beautiful for various audiences, including believers, infidels (and polytheists), people of the book, and other creatures such as demons. Some of these evidences show that the recitation of the Qur'ān by the Prophet (PBUH) was very effective and was considered a factor in its greater beauty. These textual evidences related to the significant impact of the Qur'ān on the audience are confirmed by numerous historical and contextual evidences, especially the 7th and 8th centuries AD, which generally belong to the period after the death of the Prophet (PBUH). The explanation of these reactions are considered important because they show the necessity of knowing the main aesthetic components of the Qur'ān, which are the main cause of these reactions.



**Ghasem Darzi**

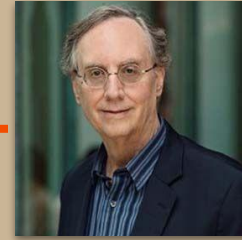
**Shahid Beheshti  
University**

GHASEM DARZI, Qur'ān researcher, faculty member of Shahid Beheshti University, Vice Chancellor for Research and Postgraduate Studies, Institute of Interdisciplinary Studies of the Qur'ān and cofounder of TEHRAN INTERDISCIPLINARY CIRCLE, which has focused on interdisciplinary studies for more than a decade. He currently conducts his studies on theoretical and methodological issues arose in this field.

The translation of "Oxford Interdisciplinary Handbook" as well as the authorship of the book "Methodology of Interdisciplinary Qur'ānic Studies" are among his most recent works.

## Conflict in Mecca: Muhammad and Soft Power

This chapter surveys the period from 627 to early 630, setting the Prophet Muhammad's role in the geopolitical events of that time. It is argued that the pagans of Mecca and its environs, who were allied with the Sasanian Empire, had by this point failed to take Mecca in three campaigns. Then in 628 with the defeat of Khosrow II by Roman Emperor Herakleios, the pagans lost their external sponsor. It is suggested that the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah was concluded in the wake of these developments. It is argued that Muhammad's religion spread peacefully in this period. Later accounts allege that the Iranian ruling caste in Yemen adopted Islam and swung toward Muhammad. There is also evidence for Meccan clans covertly converting to Muhammad's religion under the noses of their pagan chieftains. Then, when Quraysh violated the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah, Muhammad and his believers staged a march to Mecca. This event is read through Qur'an 48, al-Fath. The chapter innovates in taking the Qur'an's account as the primary source and reading it against the later Abbasid narratives, which configure the taking of Mecca as a battle. The Qur'an, in contrast, maintains that there was no fighting but that the pagans acquiesced. The Qur'an's account, in fact, says that the Prophet and his followers could not have fought in the city because there was a danger they would harm the covert believers. It is argued that in the Qur'an the taking of Mecca is seen as a spiritual pinnacle, allowing the believers to exemplify the virtues both of the Hebrew Bible and of the New Testament. This period shows Muhammad as unyielding in his principles but willing to compromise on formalities, as a peacemaker in search of reconciliation, and as a magnanimous victor. It also shows his ability to deploy the soft power of his new religion to attract the loyalty of a wide range of groups in the Hijaz.



**Juan Cole**

**University of  
Michigan**

JUAN COLE is the Richard P. Mitchell Collegiate Professor of History at the University of Michigan and the Director of the program in Arab and Muslim American Studies in the Department of American Culture. He is past president of the Middle East Studies Association of North America. Over a more than 40-year career he has written about a wide range of topics covering the Middle East, South Asia and Islam. His recent work has focused on the Qur'an and the biography of the Prophet Muhammad, the subject of his 2018 monograph at the Bold Type imprint of Hachette, *Muhammad: Prophet of Peace amid the Clash of Empires* and of a series of recent journal articles.

## Abū Ṭālib and the Early Islamic Historiography

The role of Abu Talib, the father of Ali, was subject to changes during the emergence of Islam in the context of the rivalries and hostilities among the Quraish clans over the acquisition of power in the first centuries. During this time, people's stance towards Ali was not dependent on his paternal relation with Abu-Talib. This matter gained particular importance during the establishment of the Abbasid caliphate and the rise of the Alavi dynasty; contesting over the legitimacy of the authority had a significant impact on the historical "narrative" and accounts of this period of the emergence of Islam, whose traces can be found especially in NAQL and writing, of the narrative of TADWIN stage. In this period, what was the main focus of Abu Talib's narrative was not the denial of his records of supporting and defending the Prophet and the Muslims, but his "faith". The adversaries and foes of the Alawites, especially the Abbasids, were able to make Abu Talib's faith the most crucial aspect of his "narrative" throughout history.



**Ali Bahramian**

**CGIE**

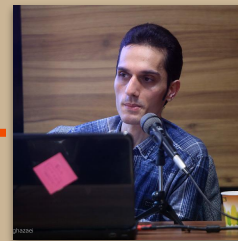
Ali Bahramian has served as a researcher, author, editor, scientific deputy and director of various sections of the Center of Great Islamic Encyclopedia (CGIE) since 1999. He is currently the scientific deputy of that centre.

In addition to that, he has collaborated in the Encyclopedia of the World of Islam, Encyclopedia of Persian Literature in the Subcontinent, Encyclopedia of Persian Language and Literature, Shi'ite Encyclopedia, and EI<sup>2</sup>, which has led to the publication of numerous articles on historical and Islamic figures and events, such as: Hajjaj Ibn Yusuf Taqfi, Abu Hanifa Skafi, Bayhaqi Abul Hasan, Tabuk, 'Abbāsids, etc.



## Genre Criticism in the Study of Prophetic Biography: *Maghāzī*, *ta' rīkh*, and the Historical Muhammad

Genre criticism is a powerful tool that despite its potential has been neglected in scholarship on the historical Muhammad. Given that a work's genre imposes particular structural constraints on it, the examination of genre holds significant potential for a better understanding of the nature of available sources on the life of Muhammad. The present contribution aims to re-examine the genres of *maghāzī* and *ta' rīkh* in their early days (namely the final quarter of the 1st century AH and first half of the 2nd century AH) and the role of Ibn Ishāq and his *Kitāb al-maghāzī* in expanding the conceptual boundaries of *maghāzī*. It is shown that in the first decades of the genesis of this genre, *maghāzī* was not synonymous with 'prophetic biography', but rather dealt with the initial military campaigns that facilitated the spread of Islam, from Muhammad's migration to Medina until the beginning of the First Civil War. In conclusion, it is argued that it is the influence of this early conception of the genre on certain non-Muslim accounts of the rise of Islam that has prompted some scholars to revisit the date of Muhammad's death.



**Mehdy Shaddel**

**Leiden University**

His work has covered such ground as the Arabic historical tradition, non-Muslim sources for early Islam, the Muslim conquests, the Quran, the monetary and numismatic history of the early Muslim empire, Arabic epigraphy and papyrology, and apocalypticism in early Islam.

At Leiden, he is part of a project entitled, 'Keepers of the Flame: The Reconfiguration of the Zoroastrian Priesthood in Sasanian and Early Islamic Times'. his responsibility within this project is mapping the metamorphosis of Zoroastrianism, and especially the Zoroastrian priesthood, over the course of the first four Islamic centuries (roughly 651-1078 CE).

## Arabia's religious landscape in the first half of the first millennium CE

This talk will outline the religious geography of Arabia based on the epigraphic evidence from the 1st to 6th c. CE, with a special focus on the transition to monotheism beginning in the 4th century.



**Ahmad al-Jallad**

Ohio State University

Ahmad al-Jallad is M.S Sofia Chair in Arabic Studies at the Ohio State University, where he specializes in the early history of Arabic and North Arabian. He has done research on Arabic from the pre-Islamic period based on documentary sources, the Graeco-Arabica (Arabic in Greek transcription from the pre-Islamic period), language classification, North Arabian epigraphy, and historical Semitic linguistics. He has written the first grammar of Safaitic, a corpus of Ancient North Arabian inscriptions from northern Jordan and southern Syria, and is currently completing a comprehensive study of pre-Islamic Arabic based on documentary sources from the 6th century CE and earlier.

He is a philologist, epigraphist, and historian of language. His work focuses on the languages and writing systems of pre-Islamic Arabia and the ancient Near East.

His latest book reconstructs the religion and rituals of Arabia's pre-Islamic tribespeople: "The Religion and Rituals of the Nomads of Pre-Islamic Arabia A Reconstruction Based on the Safaitic Inscriptions" Brill, 2022.



## **Halim Rane**

**Griffith University**

Halim Rane is a leading scholar of Islamic Studies, specialising in Islam-West Relations, and recognised for innovative and transformative teaching, research, and community engagement.

His work addresses security and coexistence challenges, producing and transferring knowledge and understanding that benefits students, scholars and society. The issues he addresses concern Islam and Muslims in contexts of geopolitical conflicts, media representations, religious/ideological extremism, and interreligious relations.

one of his main research focuses is on covenants ('ahd and mithaq) in the Qur'an, including the historicity and contemporary reception of covenants and treaties of early Islam, and implications for interreligious relations, peacebuilding and human security.



## **Ibrahim Zain**

**Hamad Bin Khalifa  
University**

Dr. Ibrahim Zain is a Professor of Islamic Studies and Comparative Religion at the College of Islamic Studies, Hamad Bin Khalifa University (Doha, Qatar). His various academic postings include Dean of the Kulliyyah (Faculty) of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences (KIRKHS) and Dean of the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). He writes extensively on the history of religions and reform of Islamic education and has authored over 50 publications, including several books, in English and Arabic. Dr. Zain is a leading scholar on the study of the Covenants of the Prophet Muḥammad.





**Ahmad el-Wakil**

**Independent Scholar**

Ahmed El-Wakil is a researcher on the covenants of the Prophet Muḥammad at the College of Islamic Studies, Hamad Bin Khalifa University (Doha, Qatar).

He has recently co-authored a monograph titled “The Covenants of the Prophet Muḥammad: From Shared Historical Memory to Peaceful Co-existence” (2022) with Ibrahim Zain. This book, through analysis of the Covenants of the Prophet Muḥammad, which pledge protection to diverse faith communities, makes a profoundly important contribution to research on early Islam by determining the Covenants’ historicity and textual accuracy.



**Gayane Mkrtumyan**

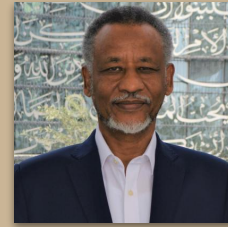
**Independent Scholar**

She was formerly a Faculty member of Oriental Studies at Yerevan State University, Armenia.

Her recent publication “An Historical Evaluation of the Covenants of the Prophet Muḥammad and ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib in the Matenadaran” (2021), analyzes the manuscripts in the Matenadaran in Yerevan, Armenia that are ascribed to the Prophet Muḥammad and ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and their translations into Farsi and Armenian

## **An Introduction to the Covenants of the Prophet Muhammad**

The speakers will introduce the Covenants of the Prophet Muhammad which he gave to diverse faith communities, such as the Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians and Samaritans. They will demonstrate how these were renewed after his death by his successors, including Imam 'Ali bin Abi Talib, and tackle issues pertaining to their historicity within the framework of the official writings of early Islam. Their impact for interfaith relations and religious diplomacy will also be discussed.



**Ibrahim Zain**

Hamad Bin Khalifa  
University



**Halim Rane**

Griffith University



**Gayane  
Mkrtumyan**

Independent Scholar



**Ahmad el-Wakil**

Independent Scholar

## Revising Modern Historical Approaches to the Life and Times of the Prophet Muhammad

In this talk I discuss my recent book, *Muhammad and the Empires of Faith*, which explores how critical readings of non-Muslim and Muslim sources in tandem can breathe new life into the historical study of Muhammad and how his message transformed the world. The book argues that, by placing these sources within the intellectual and cultural world of Late Antiquity, one might offer a fresh assessment of the earliest sources for Muhammad's life, and it also explores what new insights stand to be gained from examining anew the multilayered traditions surrounding his life.



**Sean Anthony**

Ohio State University

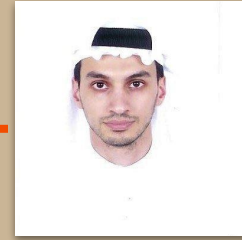
Sean W. Anthony is Associate Professor of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at Ohio State University and author of *The Caliph and the Heretic: Ibn Saba and the Origins of Shiism* and *Crucifixion and Death as Spectacle: Umayyad Crucifixion in its Late Antique Context*.

In his recent publication “*Muhammad and the Empires of Faith: The Making of the Prophet of Islam*” (2020), Anthony demonstrates how critical readings of non-Muslim and Muslim sources in tandem can breathe new life into the historical study of Muhammad and how his message transformed the world. By placing these sources within the intellectual and cultural world of Late Antiquity, Anthony offers a fresh assessment of the earliest sources for Muhammad's life, taking readers on a grand tour of the available evidence, and suggests what new insights stand to be gained from the techniques and methods pioneered by countless scholars over the decades in a variety of fields.



## The Qibla: An Allusion to the Shema<sup>١</sup>

In this article it is argued that the Qibla passages in the Qur'an, which are commonly understood as referring to the direction of the prayer, are directly engaging with and interpreting the Shema<sup>١</sup> passages in Deuteronomy and their Talmudic commentaries. By defining and applying the method of intertextual polysemy, nine points of intertextuality are identified between the various Quranic, Biblical, and Talmudic passages. Against this background, the article implies that narrations from traditional Quranic commentaries are lacking in their interpretation of these passages, since they do not employ any extra-Quranic contexts to explain their meaning. Through the method of intertextual polysemy, the alternative thesis propounded here is that the historical reference for the Qibla passages is the Shema<sup>١</sup>.



**Abdulla Galadari**  
Khalifa University

ABDULLA GALADARI is an Associate Professor of Islamic Studies at Khalifa University. His field is in Qur'ānic hermeneutics and the Qur'ān's possible engagement with Near Eastern traditions in Late Antiquity. He uses a multidisciplinary approach towards the Qur'ān, such as using cognitive science of religion and philology.

He is the author of "Qur'ānic Hermeneutics: Between Science, History, and the Bible" (2018), "Metaphors of Death and Resurrection in the Qur'ān: An Intertextual Approach with Biblical and Rabbinic Literature" (2021), and "The Spiritual Meanings of the Ḥajj Rituals: A Philological Approach" (2021).

## What We Can Learn from Studying Mawlid

Based on the number of preserved manuscripts, mawlid (devotional works commemorating the birth of the Prophet Muhammad) are a significant genre. However, many of them are undistinguished in literary terms and humble in their material presentation. Similarly, historical records demonstrate that the celebration of the Prophet's birth has historically been a widespread form of piety, but such ceremonies are only rarely described in detail. Thus, mawlid have only recently begun to receive the attention they deserve among academic scholars of Islam in the West. This talk argues that mawlid have historically thrived in the interstices of the religious disciplines that have traditionally structured the academic study of premodern Islam, usefully challenging our categories and assumptions. By reflecting the contributions of ritual practitioners who were not always 'ulama', mawlid also enrich our understanding of the different forms of Islamic ritual authority and expertise.



**Marion Katz**

New York University

Marion Holmes Katz is a Professor of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at New York University. Her research focuses on pre-modern Islamic law, gender, and ritual. She is the author of books including *Body of Text: The Emergence of the Sunni Law of Ritual Purity* (2002) and *Women in the Mosque: A History of Legal Thought and Social Practice* (2014).

Her book "The Birth of the Prophet Muhammad," looks at the religious goals and assumptions driving the development of rituals commemorating the Prophet's birth. It seeks to go beyond the conventional focus defined by the controversy over *bida'* (religious innovations) to interpret mawlid ceremonies as coherent and powerful forms of religious expression in themselves, drawing extensively on the voluminous devotional literature associated with them.

## **The Constitution of Medina and Sūrat al-Mā'idah: Similarities and potential connections between two texts from early Islam**

Abstract: Most scholars of early Islamic history consider both the Qur'an and the so-called "Constitution of Medina" as ancient texts that originated in prophetic times. However, there seems to be no explicit qur'anic reference to the Constitution. Partly as a result of this lack of explicit reference, there is no detailed investigation of the potential relationship between the Qur'an and the Constitution. This presentation provides an overview of the Constitution and Sūrat al-Mā'idah and shows that there are considerable similarities between the two documents. Both concern the relationship between the Believers and the People of the Book (the Jews in particular), emphasize the gravity of murder, and insist on the need for retaliation against violent offenders. Furthermore, the two documents have a number of notable lexical overlaps. In addition to pointing out these similarities, the presentation addresses the question of whether and how the Constitution and Sūrat al-Mā'idah are related to each other.



**Mohsen  
Goudarzi**

**Harvard University**

MOHSEN GOUDARZI is Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies at the Harvard Divinity School.

A scholar of the Qur'an and early Islamic history, he has published on the Qur'an's theological and legal dimensions, its relationship to the Bible and post-biblical literature, its reception in Muslim exegesis, and its textual genesis. His current projects include an article on the Qur'an's fifth surah and a monograph that explores the Islamic scripture's historical vision.