

**Heresy and Infidelity: Islamic Politico-Religious and Legal Discourses (10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> century)**  
**International Conference held at the University of Lausanne**  
**(June 2-3, 2022)**

*Convenors*

Prof. Dr. Blain Auer, Department of South Asian Languages and Civilisations, University of Lausanne

Prof. Dr. Wissam Halawi, Institute of History and Anthropology of Religions, University of Lausanne

*Background and Objectives*

The 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries in the history of the Muslim world is a time of great religious and political changes and developments. A period of major rivalries in the development of Sunni and Shia ideologies. Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh al-Mahdī Billāh (873-934) help found the Fatimid Caliphate, based on the Isma‘ili faith. This would develop into the most successful Shi'a political religious movement in Islamic history. The 10<sup>th</sup> century also saw the decline of the Abbasid caliphate as the Iranian Intermezzo led to the development of Samanid, Tahirid, Saffarid and Buyid polities in the eastern Islamic world. These changes in governance and political systems produced a new set of competing religious and political discourses. Some of these discourses pitted Sunni and Shia communities in relationships of rivalry in search of claims of authority and legitimacy. Intra religious rivalry was also a feature of these historical developments. This was the period of the compilation of the major collections of Shia hadith and the beginning of the formulation of Shia law through the efforts of the rationalists. In this context, esoteric tendencies within the Twelver Shia community were criticized as heretical. Heresiographies of the time placed the accusations of heresy (*zandaqa*), extremism (*ghuluww*), innovation (*bida‘*) and infidelity (*kufr*) at the center of their religious debates. These historical conditions also produced major parallel disputes concerning Mutazili and ‘Ashari theology. Later, the baton of the Sunni revival was carried by the Ghaznavid ruler Sultan Mahmud (r. 997-1030). In the first decades of the 11<sup>th</sup> century Sultan Mahmud carried his empire from Khwarazm to the Punjab. He carefully cultivated diplomatic ties with the caliph al-Qadir (r. 991-1031) in Baghdad to promote his Sunni vision of Islam, receiving the title *Yamīn al-Dawla wa Amīn al-Milla*. As Sultan Mahmud brought his conquests to India, his political ambitions were confronted with a variety of different non-Muslim communities subsumed in Islamic political discourses as the “infidels” (*kuffār*). Also, during his conquests, he encountered the Ismaili emirs of Multan which were targeted with accusations of heresy. In the religious exchange of ideas and the consolidation of theological, juridical, and political systems the boundaries of faith and disbelief were increasing being drawn with precision. Accusations of heresy, infidelity and apostasy were rife within the religious and political discourses of the period.

This international conference is organized to interrogate emerging discourses on heresy and infidelity in the historical contexts of the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. The goal is to identify major developments and trends in the historical disputes over religious and political legitimacy either through theological, juridical, or political discourses. During this period, Fatimid missionaries extended their religious teaching in Iran and Central Asia, in Samanid realms, and in the Punjab in Multan where Ismaili emirs ruled a city-state from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the early 11<sup>th</sup> century. The regions of principle concern for this conference range from Egypt in the West to India in the East. Contributions are welcome from scholars treating the subjects of heresy and infidelity in historical perspective through the study of theological, juridical, and political discourses.

# Programme

THURSDAY 2 JUNE

Welcome (9:00-9:15 am)

Blain Auer and Wissam Halawi

Morning Session 1 (9:15-10:30 am)

Chair: Blain Auer

Ahmed El-Shamsy (University of Chicago), The Missing Sunnis

James Weaver (University of Zurich), Iraq's heretics in the East

Coffee (10:30-11:00 am)

Morning Session 2 (11:00-12:30 pm)

Chair: Asma Afsaruddin

Ali Anooshahr (University of California – Davis), Beautiful Idols

Blain Auer (Université de Lausanne), *Kuffār-i Hind* in Early Ghaznavid Writings

Viola Allegranzi (Institute of Iranian Studies of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna), Religious policy and practice in Medieval Iran and Central Asia through the lens of epigraphic sources

Lunch (12:30-2:30 pm)

Afternoon Session (2:30-4:00 pm)

Chair: Christian Lange

Yokota Gobran (Cermom-Inalco-Sorbonne Paris Cité), Les sermons d'Abū l-Naṣr al-Quṣayrī (m.514H/1120) à Bagdad en l'an 469H/1076 sous l'abbaside al-Muqtadī : ingénierie seljoukide ou tactique abbaside ?

Andrew Peacock (University of St. Andrews), 'Heresy' and Politics in the Seljuk Empire

Mushegh Asatryan (University of Calgary, Canada), Who Gets to be Sunni? The Making of a Heresiological Category

Dinner 7:00 pm

FRIDAY 3 JUNE

Morning Session 1 (9:30-11:00 am)

Chair: Wissam Halawi

**Livnat Holtzman** (Bar-Ilan University), The Discourses of *Tashbīh* and *Takfīr* among the Ḥanbalīs of Baghdad: The Case of Abū Ya‘lā ibn al-Farrā’ (d. 458/1066) and *Ibtāl al-Ta’wīlāt*

**Christian Lange** (Utrecht University), The Smell of Heresy

**Asma Afsaruddin** (Indiana University Bloomington), Fighting and Communal Belonging: The Military *Jihād* and Its Invocation in 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> Century Treatises

Coffee (11:00-11:30 am)

Morning Session 2 (11:30-12:30 pm)

Chair: Viola Allegranzi

**Maribel Fierro** (Institute of the Languages and Cultures of the Mediterranean-CSIC, Madrid), Religious Authority in al-Andalus in the 5th/11th Century: Who Decides what is Proper Islamic Behavior?

**Athina Pfeiffer** (Agrégeée d’histoire, Académie de Versailles), Hérétiques et Gens de la Vérité dans l’Ifriqiya fatimide

Lunch (12:30-2:30 pm)

Afternoon Session (2:30-4:30 pm)

Chair: Ali Anooshahr

**Sumaiya Hamdani** (George Mason University), ‘*Man yahduruhu al-Imām:*’ Establishing Fatimid Religious Authority in al-Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān’s *Ikhtilāf uṣūl al-madhāhib*

**Wissam Halawi** (Université de Lausanne), Rigorism and Heresy under the Fatimid Caliph al- Ḥākīm

**Jamel Velji** (Claremont McKenna College), Defining Contours of Right Belief: Eschatology, *ta’wīl*, and the Law among the Early Fatimids

Dinner 7:00 pm

## Abstracts

### **Afsaruddin, Asma** (Indiana University Bloomington), *Fighting and Communal Belonging: The Military Jihād and Its Invocation in 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> Century Treatises*

In the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries of the Common Era, legal treatises composed by prominent jurists treated participation in the military jihād as practically a religious requirement, and, at a minimum, as a marker of superior faith and belonging in the Muslim community. The zealous warrior is frequently compared to the pious non-combatant and the former is extolled as surpassing the latter in religious merit and standing within the Muslim community. Specific *faḍā'il al-jihād* reports (*ḥadīths* that praise the military jihād) are invoked to establish the superiority of the one who fights over the one who abstains from fighting. The non-martial Muslim is never explicitly designated as a “heretic” or “unbeliever/infidel” but the warrior, by comparison, is clearly the more “complete” and “authentic” Muslim, and, therefore, the former by default suffers considerable diminution in his moral and overall religious standing. Among the treatises I will discuss is the *Da‘ā'im al-Islām* of the Ismā'īlī jurist al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān (d. 363/974), the *Kitāb al-Mabsūṭ* by Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Sarakhsī (d. 490/1096), and the *al-Hāwī al-Kabīr* by al-Māwardī (d. 450/1058). A close reading of these legal texts allows us to reach certain conclusions about the linkage between the military jihād and conceptualizations of communal belonging and religious status of the (male) individual that had developed by the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### **Allegranzi, Viola** (Institute of Iranian Studies of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna), *Religious policy and practice in Medieval Iran and Central Asia through the lens of epigraphic sources*

Medieval sources depict the Samanid and Ghaznavid dynasties as champions of Sunnism and opponents of heterodox movements in the Eastern Islamic lands, while their most renowned exponents, Ismā'īl (279-295/892-907) and Maḥmūd (388-421/998-1030), traditionally epitomise the *ghāzī* ruler. Historical research has unveiled the utilitarian reasons behind this myth of orthodoxy, which was at least partly built retroactively. A more nuanced view of the religious landscape of Medieval Iran and Central Asia can be gained through the study of material culture: this paper attempts to provide some insights into the religious policy and practices in the Islamic East, making use of epigraphic sources. Inscriptions having a religious content (Quranic quotations, *ḥadīths*, prayers, doxologies, etc.) have so far received little scholarly attention and their proper interpretation demands for a thorough textual and contextual analysis. Nonetheless, several documents produced within the Samanid and Ghaznavid domains allow for meaningful observations about the co-existence, interaction, and political endorsement of various religious groups, which are worth investigating in a broader comparative perspective.

### **Anooshahr, Ali** (University of California – Davis), *Beautiful Idols*

This paper seeks to investigate an apparent contradiction in the literature of the Ghaznavid court (especially Persian court poetry) where the word 'idol' was used to both denominate false gods as well as beautiful youth. How did the Ghaznavids reconcile this contradiction? What does it reveal about their particular version of heresiography?"

### Asatryan, Mushegh (University of Calgary), Who Gets to be Sunni? The Making of a Heresiological Category

My paper will examine the history of the term “Sunni” (or “Ahl al-Sunna”) and the religio-political conditions that led to the crystallization of its usage, which became accepted after the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Today the term Sunni is applied to the majority of Muslims living in the world, chiefly in opposition to the Shi‘is and some other Muslim groups. As such, the default referent of “Muslim” is Sunni, unless otherwise specified. The contemporary usage of the term is sometimes un-historically projected into the past, such that everyone who was not a Shi‘i, a Khariji, a Murji‘i, a Mu‘tazilite, etc. is often called by scholars “Sunni.” However, the historical record shows that such a usage of the term is uncritical and inaccurate. Not only did “Sunni” or “Ahl al-Sunna” not mean the same thing in the early centuries of Islam, but its meaning was often so fluid that authors of diametrically opposed orientations (a *hadith* scholar, a Mu‘tazili, and an Ismaili, no less) each claimed the term to represent *his* community. It took much time and sectarian wrangling for the meaning of “Sunni” to crystallize, around late 10<sup>th</sup>-early 11<sup>th</sup> century, into how we use it today.

### Auer, Blain (Université de Lausanne), *Kuffār-i Hind* in Early Ghaznavid Writings

In the late 10<sup>th</sup> and early 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, first under Sebuktegin (r. 977-997) and then his son Mahmud (r. 998-1030), the Ghaznavid dynasty established its authority from Ghazna to Khurasan and the Punjab. Their major rival on the eastern frontier in Afghanistan and in the Punjab was the Hindu Shahi kings. In the span of their diplomatic and military encounters that lasted for more than a half a century, courtiers serving the court at Ghazna developed a language of infidelity to describe their Indian rivals. *Kāfir* or “infidel” was the term used broadly to refer to non-believers and particularly worshippers of idols. The *kuffār-i Hind* was a general manner that historians discussed the various Indian kings and their subjects that populated India. This paper seeks to unravel the language of infidelity in the history of encounters between the early Ghaznavids and different Indian kings. What does the language of infidelity reveal about Muslim perceptions of Indians? How was infidelity conceptually used as a form of propaganda in the Ghaznavid conquests of India? What does it reflect of historical religious and political conditions of the time?

### El-Shamsy, Ahmed (University of Chicago), The Missing Sunnis

Any introduction to Islam will make reference to Sunnis, yet the surviving Muslim heresiographical works do not use Sunnism as a category of analysis. Its curious absence from this literature is reflected in recent scholarship on Sunnism. Whereas advances in the availability and study of early texts have yielded a much clearer image of Shi‘ism and Ibadism in the second century of Islam, treatments of Sunnism before the fourth century have resorted to classifying it as proto-Sunnism, a term that is both nebulous and unsatisfactory given that the underlying Arabic terms, such as *ahl-sunna* and *ahl al-sunna wa-l-jamā‘a*, are attested already in the second century AH. My presentation considers the factors that made Sunnism so hard for heresiographers to tackle, with the aim of laying the groundwork for a clearer chronology of Sunnism as a historical phenomenon.

**Fierro, Maribel** (Institute of the Languages and Cultures of the Mediterranean-CSIC, Madrid), *Religious authority in al-Andalus in the 5th/11th century: who decides what is proper Islamic behaviour?*

In early 5th/10th century Cordoba, a man started calling his neighbours to remember God. He did that from the roof of his house and during the night. Some neighbours were unhappy with his actions and brought the case to the judge. As studied by Manuela Marín, the judge consulted a number of jurists who gave different legal opinions: some insisted that the man should be stopped as what he was doing was an innovation, while others thought that what he was doing was something commendable for which there were precedents and therefore it should not be forbidden, nor the man punished. This legal case and others from the same period that deal with the boundaries between what is religiously acceptable and what is not raise a number of questions: should cases like this be brought to the judge? how the fact that religious scholars could not agree on what a religious innovation was affected the laypersons' conceptions of what proper Islamic behaviour was? what happened with similar issues in those localities where no religious scholars can be identified? was the political fragmentation of 5th/11th century al-Andalus accompanied by trends towards local ways of being Islamic leading to religious fragmentation and to discourses of exclusion of resulting divergences?

**Gobran, Yokota** (CERMOM-Inalco-Sorbonne Paris Cité), *Les sermons d'Abū l-Naṣr al-Quṣayrī (m. 514H/1120) à Bagdad en l'an 469H/1076 sous l'abbaside al-Muqtadī : ingérence seljoukide ou tactique abbaside ?*

Sur la route de son pèlerinage à La Mecque, le traditionniste, théologien et sermonnaire aṣ'arite Abū Naṣr b. al-Quṣayrī (m. 514/1120) fit halte en 469H à Bagdad, alors sous le règne du jeune calife abbaside al-Muqtadī, âgé d'à peine vingt-et-un an.

Lors de son séjour, et suite à la demande du célèbre vizir seljoukide Niẓām al-Mulk, le théologien y anima des séances de sermons (*wa'z*) à l'école al-Niẓāmiyya, exaltant la doctrine aṣ'arite et vilipendant les thèses anthropomorphiques assimilant Dieu à un corps, alors en circulation dans certains milieux ḥanbalites. Ceci donna lieu à une grave *fitna*.

Nous reviendrons au cours de la présente communication sur les détails de cette célèbre querelle, souvent justifiée jusqu'ici par une volonté du pouvoir seljoukide "d'imposer" l'aṣ'arisme dans la capitale abbaside, que l'on croyait "acquise" au ḥanbalisme que "soutenaient" les Abbasides. Plusieurs éléments cependant indiquent que le calife al-Muqtadī ne favorisa point l'aṣ'arisme sous une quelconque pression des Seljoukides, mais plutôt sous leur couvert : soutenir ouvertement l'aṣ'arisme, c'était soutenir une doctrine jugée "hétérodoxe" par certains ḥanbalites menés qui plus est par le cousin du jeune calife, lesquels auraient pu y trouver un solide motif permettant de s'insurger contre la légitimité de ce dernier.

**Halawi, Wissam** (Université de Lausanne), *Rigorism and Heresy under the Fatimid Caliph al-Ḥākīm*

La politique religieuse du sixième calife fatimide al-Ḥākīm (r. 386-411/996-1021) est marquée par des relations conflictuelles avec les communautés sunnites, shī'ites et chrétiennes au sein de l'espace égypto-syrien. Mais le nom de ce calife est demeuré dans l'histoire associé à un groupe de sectateurs d'un islam ismaélien profondément original, connu pour son rigorisme doctrinal comme pour son rejet des doctrines juridiques islamiques sunnites, shī'ites et fatimides. Appelés « al-durūz » par leurs contemporains, ils se considéraient comme les seuls *muwaḥḥidūn* (unitaires) en Islam, adeptes du véritable *tawḥīd* (Unité de Dieu), tout en

accusant les autres groupes islamiques d'anthropomorphisme (*tashbīh*). Leur doctrine du *nāsūt* (humanité de la forme humaine de Dieu) leur valut pourtant les critiques les plus acerbes par leurs contemporains de tout bord, en premier chef les savants fatimides, défenseurs d'une orthodoxie ismaélienne dépourvue d'éléments ésotériques non rationnels. C'est ainsi que dans sa *Risāla al-wā'izā*, l'illustre missionnaire Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī (m. apr.411/1021) les accusa de *kufr* (hérésie, incroyance) et les enjoignit de se réformer en renonçant au dogme de la divinisation d'al-Ḥākim. Cette communication examine l'accusation de *kufr* dans les discours savants à l'époque d'al-Ḥākim témoignant de fortes tensions sociales et politiques au sein de l'empire fatimide de l'époque. L'implication du calife dans le développement de sa propre figure d'imam tout-puissant, incarnant la Volonté divine sur terre, est ensuite examinée à la lumière de son évolution personnelle d'un calife légaliste et sanguinaire à un ascète pénétré par les pratiques soufies et partisan d'un rigorisme excessif. Cette attitude califale ambiguë est enfin analysée dans le cadre d'une production historiographique contradictoire, l'une farouchement hostile au calife, faisant de lui le calife le plus hérétique dans l'histoire de l'Islam, l'autre de nature hagiographique devenue le fondement de la doctrine spirituelle druze.

**Hamdani, Sumaiya** (George Mason University), '*Man yahduruhu al-Imam*': Establishing Fatimid religious authority in al-Qadi al-Nu`man's *Ikhtilaf usul al-madhahib*.

The vexed question of religious authority in the 10th-11th centuries not only generated political competition in the Islamic world, but also multiple discourses that addressed what was acceptable versus heretical, one of which was juridical. The architect of the Ismaili Shii juridical discourse was al-Qadi al-Nu`man (d. 974). Among his many legal works were efforts to defend the Ismaili legal madhhab against detractors from among competing Sunni and Shii groups, in a manner that adhered to the conventions of legal theory developed since the mid- 9<sup>th</sup> century. These efforts culminated in the *Kitab ikhtilaf usul al-madhahib*, likely produced a few years before his well-known and definitive work of the Ismaili madhhab, the *Da`a'im al-Islam* in 960. In the *Ikhtilaf*, al-Nu`man not only presents the reason for his work as arising from disagreements over *usul*, but also systematically argues against the competing *usul* used to derive authoritative guidance ranging from *ijma`* to *qiyas* to *ijtihad*. This paper will review al-Nu`man's arguments, suggesting the need to reconsider the overlooked importance of this work as an original work, in chronology as well as content, of Shii legal methodology, necessitated by the founding of the Ismaili Shii Fatimid caliphate.

**Holtzman, Livnat** (Bar-Ilan University), *The Discourses of Tashbīh and Takfīr among the Ḥanbalīs of Baghdad: The Case of Abū Ya`lā ibn al-Farrā` (d. 458/1066) and Ibtāl al-Ta`wīlāt*

11th century Baghdad witnessed heated theological disputes between the two powerful wings of the Sunni community, namely the ultra-traditionalistic Ḥanbalīs and the rationalistic-traditionalistic Ash`arīs. The foremost dispute regarded the reception and interpretation of the massive corpus of *aḥādīth al-ṣifāt*, the traditions about the divine attributes which often describe God in an anthropomorphic language. The Ash`arīs who called for a selective acceptance of *aḥādīth al-ṣifāt* and a metaphorical interpretation (*ta`wīl*) of these texts, accused the Ḥanbalīs of anthropomorphism (*tashbīh*). The Ḥanbalīs on their part stated that whoever rejected the veracity of *aḥādīth al-ṣifāt* was a heretic. This accusation of disbelief and heresy (*takfīr*) which is recorded in numerous Ḥanbalī writings, remained theoretical.

The Ḥanbalī community in Baghdad is often described in the sources as ultra-traditionalist; however, it was not homogenous. The case of the esteemed Ḥanbalī theologian Abū Ya`lā ibn al-Farrā` (d. 458/1066) and *Ibtāl al-Ta`wīlāt* surfaced the inherent schism of this community. *Ibtāl al-Ta`wīlāt li-*

*akhbār al-ṣifāt* (Invalidating the Metaphorical Interpretation of the Anthropomorphic Ḥadīth) is one of the most controversial works in the history of Ḥanbalī theology. In this scandalous book, Abū Yaʿlā included hair-raising anthropomorphic descriptions such as the description of God laughing until His uvula is seen. Abū Yaʿlā was severely criticized by the pragmatic leaders of the Ḥanbalī community on the issuance of *Ibṭāl al-Taʿwīlāt*. This inner strife directly led to the reissuance of the Qādirī creed (*al-iʿtiqād al-qādirī*) by the caliph al-Qāʾim Bi-amri ʿllāh (r. 422-467/1030-1075).

*Ibṭāl al-Taʿwīlāt* was considered lost for decades. In 1989, the complete manuscript was retrieved and published in a partial edition which presents approximately two-thirds of the manuscript. Our discussion which is a follow-up to our forthcoming article on the Qādirī creed, is the first systematic attempt to analyse the overall structure and content of *Ibṭāl al-Taʿwīlāt*, to assess the two opposing trends in the Ḥanbalī community of 11th century Baghdad, and most importantly to reconstruct Abū Yaʿlā's motivation in writing this book.

### Lange, Christian (Utrecht University), *The Smell of Heresy*

In this paper, I examine how in a variety of Islamic texts from the 10th to the 12th century heresy and infidelity, as well as their opposite, i.e. orthodoxy, are construed through the sense of smell. The prophet of Islam is said to have loathed strong body smells, halitosis in particular. According to al-Ṭabarānī (d. 360/971), he stated that “garlic, onions, and leek are the devil’s perfume.” However, not only the devil stinks in Islam, but all those who follow his whisperings suffer from foul odours, a motif I trace in the pious, legal and political literature of the period. Ultimately, I hope to show how the smell of heresy maps onto the political, social and ethnic divisions that structured 10th-12th-century Muslim societies, and thereby to demonstrate the usefulness of sensory approaches in the study of Islamic history.

### Peacock, Andrew (University of St. Andrews), *'Heresy' and Politics in the Seljuk Empire*

The Seljuks' reputation as champions of Sunnism has been critiqued in much recent scholarship, which has suggested they had a more nuanced approach. Despite their generally laissez-faire attitude on matters of religion, on occasion the Seljuk authorities did launch religiously based persecutions (*mihna*) of other Muslims. Moreover, Seljuk historical texts are replete with accusations that senior members of the court were themselves heretics (*zindiq* or *mulhid*). Such accusations have generally been seen in the context of the struggle against Ismailism, but at the same time recent scholarship has drawn attention to the Seljuks' sometimes ambivalent attitude towards the former. This paper seeks to address the question of the extent to which these accusations can be seen as a rhetorical strategy inspired by court politics to discredit enemies, and to what extent evidence of genuine religious diversity in the heart of the Seljuk court.

### Pfeiffer, Athina (Agrégée d'histoire, Académie de Versailles, Paris), *Hérétiques et Gens de la Vérité dans l'Ifrīqiya fatimide*

Au-delà des persécutions fatimides rapportées par les hérésiarques sunnites, peu d'études se sont intéressées à la politique religieuse du nouveau pouvoir ismaélien en Ifrīqiya. Cette communication porte sur l'élaboration d'une orthodoxie juridique dans l'*Iḥtilāf* et les *Da'ā'im* du Qāḍī I-Nu'mān, à travers notamment la doctrine des gens de la Vérité (*madhab ahl al-ḥaqq*). Je montre d'abord que celle-ci permettait en fait au pouvoir fatimide d'écarter de l'administration ceux qui refusaient de se soumettre à l'Imam-calife, mais aussi les ismaéliens extrémistes (*ḡulāt*), adeptes de doctrines antinomistes. Les Fatimides condamnaient ainsi en toute légalité leurs opposants les plus virulents, tout en laissant la porte ouverte à certains hérétiques dont dépendaient leurs intérêts politiques. En m'appuyant sur les règles du droit ismaélien et sur les directives étatiques concernant le fonctionnement de la justice dans les provinces (juges, auxiliaires de justice, témoins instrumentaires), je montre ensuite que le pouvoir fatimide établit progressivement une catégorie sociale d'« hérétiques acceptables »

qu'il intégra au système judiciaire de l'État. Dans une troisième partie, j'interroge la normativité fatimide sur l'hérésie en tant que réponse au contexte social et aux enjeux politiques locaux de l'Ifrīqiya du milieu du Xe siècle. Régnant sur des populations majoritairement non-ismaéliennes, les Fatimides se reposaient en partie sur le bon fonctionnement de la justice pour préserver la stabilité de leur pouvoir jusque dans les territoires éloignés de l'État.

**Velji, Jamel** (Claremont McKenna College), *Defining contours of right belief: eschatology, ta'wil, and the law among the early Fatimids*

This paper will examine how Quranic eschatological transcripts were initially deployed to identify and delineate heresy as the Fatimids gathered momentum for their conquest of North Africa. As the movement gave rise to the formation of a successful state, I examine how a collection of texts of early ta'wil and the law treated heresy and unbelief. In focusing on the shifting symbolic construction of heresy in early "esoteric" texts and beyond, this paper aims to preliminarily address questions concerning the structure and function of ta'wil; how that ta'wil shifted over time; and connections between heresy and eschatology.

**Weaver, James** (University of Zurich), *Iraq's heretics in the East*

In the fourth/tenth century, there was a widespread reception in the eastern part of the Islamic world of heresiographical material that had ultimately been composed in Iraq, and which dealt primarily with groups that had existed in the second/eighth century. The origins of the material go back to the early third/ninth century and are difficult to determine with precision, but the main route of transmission was through the *Maqālāt ahl al-qibla* of Abū l-Qāsim al-Balkhī (d.319/931). In the East in the fourth/tenth century it then routinely appears both in bureaucratic settings (e.g., in historical works such as Muṭahhar b. Ṭāhir al-Maḡdisī's *Kitāb al-bad' wa-l-ta'rikh* and bureaucratic manuals such as al-Khwārizmī's *Mafātih al-'ulūm*), and in theological circles (e.g., in the *Ismā'īlī dā'ir* Abū Tammām's *Kitāb al-shajara* and in 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī's (d.429/1037)). Meanwhile, surprisingly little 'new' heresiography seems to have been produced. Why did this happen and what does it say about the conceptualization of heresy and infidelity in the East in this period that so many of the texts that deal with these themes primarily reproduce information of such apparently antiquarian interest?