

Islamic Traditions in 'Greater Khurāsān': Ismailis, Sufis and Sunnis

Online Conference Programme
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Convenor:

Dagikhudo Dagiev, Senior Research Associate
The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London

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Islamic Traditions in 'Greater Khurāsān': Ismailis, Sufis and Sunnis
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Cover image:

The entrance to Magok-i-Attari Mosque, Bukhara. The mosque was originally built on the site of a Zoroastrian temple (Temple of the Moon). It was one of only two buildings in Bukhara to survive the Mongol invasion in 1320.

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Islamic Traditions in ‘Greater Khurāsān’: Ismailis, Sufis and Sunnis

The goal of this international conference is to explore a variety of manifestations of Islamic culture over a vast geographical area situated in the easternmost part of the Islamic world, including contemporary Central Asia, Afghanistan, north-eastern Iran, the Xinjiang region of western China, and northern and western Pakistan. We have chosen to use the medieval geographic term ‘Greater Khurāsān’ to refer to this area.

The conference covers cultural and intellectual expressions of Islam in its philosophical, theological, mystical and artistic interpretations, as well as in its political and legal theories, linguistic aspects, social practices and rituals, some of which are unique to various locations within ‘Greater Khurāsān’. It is hoped that this conference will contribute to deepening current understanding of the role played by this region in Islamic history.

The following themes will be explored during the conference:

- 1. Global Khurāsān: Khurāsānians in the Islamic World and Beyond**
- 2. Rituals**
- 3. Philosophical and Theological Debates related to Ismaili Doctrines**
- 4. Sufism and Sufi Literature**
- 5. Sufi–Ismaili Interactions, the Arts and Material Culture**
- 6. Law, Political Theories and Social Transformations**
- 7. The Persian Language as a Cultural Vehicle**

The contributors include: Eyad Abuali, Belal Abu-Alabbas, Snejana Atanova, Daniel Beben, Philipp Bruckmayr, Dagikhudo Dagiev, Devin DeWeese, Leila Dodykhudoeva, Maxime Delpierre, Janis Esots, Abdulmamad Iloliev, Fâres Gillon, Chorshanbe Goibnazarov, Jo-Ann Gross, Tatiana Korneeva, Otambek Mastibekov, Toby Mayer, Shin Nomoto, Nourmamadcho Nourmamdchoev, Alexandre Papas, Aslisho Qurboniev, Yuri Stoyanov, Paul Walker, Thierry Zarcone.

The conference will be followed by the publication of an edited volume.

Day one: Wednesday, 24 February

11:30	Enter Zoom lobby
12:00-12:20	Welcome Address Farhad Daftary, The Institute of Ismaili Studies
12:20-12:30	Exploring Shi'i Heritage at The Institute of Ismaili Studies Orkhan Mir-Kasimov, The Institute of Ismaili Studies
Session I:	Global Khurāsān: Khurāsānians in the Islamic World and Beyond Chair: Wafi Momin
12:30-13:00	The Khurāsānians: Mapping the Presence of Eastern Iranians in Medieval Islamic Society and Thought Aslisho Qurboniev, Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations
13:00-13:30	Central Asian Turkic Carriers of Manichaean-Islamic Symbioses — Revisiting a Hypothesis of Eurasian Religious Mobility Yuri Stoyanov, Albright Institute of Archaeological Research, Jerusalem and SOAS
13:30-14:30	Break
Session II:	Rituals Chair: Jo-Ann Gross
14:30-15:00	'Sacred Spaces' turned into Museums: The Transformation of Shrine Culture in Tajikistan Abdulmamad Iloliev, The Institute of Ismaili Studies
15:00-15:30	Sufi Orders, Shrines, and Lodges in Contemporary Khurāsān-e Raḡavī Alexandre Papas, CNRS: Islamic Studies

Day two: Thursday, 25 February

Session I: Philosophical and Theological Debates related to Ismaili Doctrines

Chair: Maria De Cillis

12:00-12:30	Al-Sijistānī and the Western da'wa: is there a common Qur'ānic ta'wīl? Fâres Gillon, The Institute of Ismaili Studies
12:30-13:00	The Nizārī Reception of Avicennism: Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī between Avicennism and Ismailism Maxime Delpierre, Versailles Academy
13:00-13:30	Al-Ghazālī as a Key Historical Witness to the Ismaili Doctrine of Ta'lim Paul Walker, University of Chicago

13:30-14:30	Break
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Session II: Sufism and Sufi Literature [Panel 1]

Chair: Toby Mayer

14:30-15:00	Al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī's teaching on Walāya and its Reception in Later Islamic Gnosis Janis Esots, The Institute of Ismaili Studies
15:00-15:30	The Treatise of Ibrāhīm Qavghānī: A 17th-Century Source on the Yasavī Sufi Tradition in Central Asia Devin DeWeese, Indiana University
15:30-16:00	The Faqarāt of Khwājah 'Ubayd Allāh Aḥrār and His Legacy in the Perso-Islamicate Sphere and Beyond Jo-Ann Gross, The College of New Jersey

Day three: Friday, 26 February

Session I: Sufism and Sufi Literature [Panel 2]

Chair: Alessandro Cancian

12:00-12:30	The Mystic as Theurgist? A Theme in the Sufism of Najm al-Din Kubrā (d. 618/1221) Toby Mayer, The Institute of Ismaili Studies
12:30-13:00	Music and Meditation: Kubrawī Sufi Thought and Identity between Sound and Vision Eyad Abuali, Utrecht University
13:00-13:15	Break
13:15-13:45	An Aspect of the Practice of Naqshbandī Sufism in Yarkand, Xinjiang, in the 20th Century: Ishan Abdullah Khan Haji Tura and its legacy Thierry Zarcone, CNRS
13:45-14:15	The Study of Sufism and Sufi literature in Bertels's Work Dagikhudo Dagiev, The Institute of Ismaili Studies
14:15-15:00	Break

Session II: Sufi-Ismaili Interactions, Arts and Material Culture

Chair: Katherine Hughes

15:00-15:30	The Legacy of Abū'l-Ḥasan Kharaqānī (d. 1033) and Sufi-Ismaili Relations in Central Asia Daniel Beben, Nazarbayev University
15:30-16:00	Mubārak-i Wakhānī, a Sufi-Ismaili Musician from Badakhshan Chorshanbe Goibnazarov, University of Central Asia
16:00-16:15	Break
16:15-16:45	The Spiritual Dance of the Badakhshani Ismailis through Rūmī's Poetry Otambek Mastibekov, The Institute of Ismaili Studies
16:45-17:15	Islam and Turkmen Material Culture: an Overview of Carpet Iconography and Silver Ornaments Snejana Atanova, Institute of Oriental Studies (Moscow)

Day four: Saturday, 27 February

Session I: Law, Political Theories and Social Transformations	
Chair: Daryoush Mohammad Poor	
12:00-12:30	Şadr al-Sharī'a al-Thānī al-Maḥbūbī al-Bukhārī (d. 747/1346) as the pivotal figure in synthesising Ḥanafī uṣūl al-fiqh and Māturīdī kalām Philipp Bruckmayr, University of Vienna
12:30-13:00	Schisms and their Effect on the Ismaili Communities of Badakhshan Nourmamadcho Nourmamadchoev, The Institute of Ismaili Studies
13:00-13:15	Break
13:15-13:45	Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī Şāhib al-Şaḥīḥ: A Critical Biography Belal Alabbas, Al-Azhar University
13:45-14:15	Break
Session II: The Persian Language as a Cultural Vehicle	
Chair: Abdulmamad Iloliev	
14:15-14:45	An Early Ismaili Thinker on Language: A Preliminary Study of Thought of Language from Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī's Kitāb al-Zīna Shin Nomoto, Keio University, Tokyo
14:45-15:15	Nāṣir-i Khusraw's Persian Discourse as a Cultural Code for Badakhshan: Cognitive and Lexical Perspectives Leila Dodykhudoeva, Russian Academy of Sciences
15:15-15:45	The Persian Language and Ismaili Philosophy Tatiana Korneeva, Russian Academy of Sciences
15:45-16:00	Closing Remarks Dagikhudo Dagiev, The Institute of Ismaili Studies

Abstracts and Biographies

Eyad Abuali

Music and Meditation: Kubrawī Sufi Thought and Identity between Sound and Vision

This paper considers the ways in which the auditory and visual experiences inherent to the mystical practices of musical audition (*samāʿ*) and meditative recollection (*dhikr*) functioned as occasions for Sufis to foster networks of authority and belonging in Iran and Central Asia from the 10th to the 14th centuries. Relying on the works of thinkers such as al-Sulamī (d. 412/1027), al-Qushayrī (465/1073), and al-Hujwīrī (d. 469/1077), this paper will argue that early Sufis constituted themselves, in distinction to other mystical movements and wider society, through the practice of audition. However, by analysing the works of later medieval Kubrawī Sufis such as Najm al-Dīn Kubrā (d. 617/1220), Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 654/1256), and Majd al-Dīn al-Baghdādī (d. 616/1219), I will show that musical audition was gradually displaced by recollection as the primary ritual through which one's Sufi identity was constituted.

I will show how these auditory rituals came to be intertwined with Sufi clothing practices that came to act as tactile and visual markers of belonging. I will also draw on Sufi theories in order to highlight competing attempts to reframe and redefine the Sufi episteme in terms of ocular-centrism or phono-centrism. Analysis of the interconnection of meditation and visions in 12th and 13th century Sufism shows that debates regarding the senses had wider implications for the intra-Sufi distinctions which emerged in this period, as well as for the wider Sufi-publics.

Eyad Abuali received a BA in religious studies and an MA in medieval studies from King's College London. He was awarded a PhD in Middle Eastern Studies from SOAS where he focused on Kubrawī Sufi thought and institutions in medieval Iran. He joined Utrecht University in 2017 as a post-doctoral researcher, working on the SENSIS project. He is particularly interested in exploring questions pertaining to Sufism and mysticism within this project. Currently his work considers the place of auditory and visual experiences within Sufi thought. He is also interested in the role that synaesthesia plays in these mystical experiences.

Belal Abu-Alabbas

Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī Ṣāḥib al-Ṣaḥīḥ: A Critical Biography

By the end of the 4th/10th century, Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870) became recognised as the most highly regarded hadith scholar, and his Ṣaḥīḥ as the most authoritative collection of Prophetic words and actions in Sunni Islam. Today, al-Bukhārī enjoys unprecedented recognition and his work is considered a source of blessings and Prophetic presence. In this paper, I provide a comprehensive overview of al-Bukhārī's life and contributions to Sunni hadith, legal theory, and jurisprudence. In doing so, I examine three stages of his career: early education under ra'y authorities, his conversion to hadith-based scholarship, and his critique of the ra'y-based scholars in Transoxiana. Finally, I provide a general assessment of modern scholarship on al-Bukhārī, highlighting modern Arabic scholarship that may otherwise be inaccessible via European literature.

Belal Abu-Alabbas is a lecturer at Exeter University as a British Academy Newton Fellow. His PhD thesis from the University of Oxford is titled *Between Scripture and Human Reason: An Intellectual Biography of al-Bukhārī*. His current book project is on al-Bukhārī. He has recently authored and edited: B. Abu-Alabbas, C. Melchert and M. Dann, *Modern Hadith Studies: Continuing Debates and New Approaches* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020). He is also the author of a number of articles in academic journals.

Snejana Atanova

Islam and Turkmen Material Culture: an Overview of Carpet Iconography and Silver Ornaments

Material culture is an everyday art which has long traditions in Central Asia—a region with rich cultural and artisanal diversity. Religious beliefs together with political systems, including both celestial and earth rulers, sharpened this diversity. Religious beliefs have passed through the region over the centuries—Christianity, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism and Islam—with each of them having influenced the material culture of Central Asia in one way or another. Islam left its traces in textile, jewellery and clothing, *inter alia*. Objects of material culture were made for a wide variety of utilitarian and symbolic purposes, but they are also pieces of art. Even though this art might be called ‘popular’, it has been created by the ingenious artisans of a geography of steppes and deserts.

It has been argued that in comparison to nomads, sedentary people are more successful in artisanal crafts. However, the nomadic peoples of Central Asia, now known as Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Turkmen, were still the creators of masterworks of material culture that speak eloquently to us of the distinguished artistry of nomadic peoples.

This paper explores Turkmen material culture with a focus on the influence of Islam on Turkmen carpet design together with the emergence of new silver ornaments following the advent of Islam. The most highly appreciated Turkmen carpets are attributed to the Salor tribe, whose carpet patterns were elaborated in the 10th century, and thus contain motifs influenced by both Zoroastrianism and Islam, such as *mihrābs* and fire altars. Islam had an influence not only on the ornament repertory but also on the formation of new designs in carpet- and jewellery-making. This influence can be seen in prayer rugs and Qur’ān stands, *inter alia*.

Using examples of exhibits from the carpet collection of the George Washington University Textile Museum and the jewellery collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, this paper is an attempt to shed light on the Islamic influence on Turkmen carpets and silver ornaments.

Snejana Atanova is a PhD candidate at the National Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilisations, Paris (INALCO). She obtained an MA in History from INALCO. She is also researcher at the Research Centre on Central Asia and the Caucasus, Institute of Oriental Studies of Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russia. She is the curator of the ‘CESS 2019 Festival Arts and Culture from Central Asia’, at the Institute for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies, GWU, Washington DC. She has published several articles in academic journals.

Daniel Beben

The Legacy of Abū’l-Ḥasan Kharaqānī (d. 1033) and Sufi-Ismaili Relations in Central Asia

This paper will explore the legacy of the renowned 11th-century Sufi figure Abū’l-Ḥasan Kharaqānī (d. 1033) and his significance for the history of Islam in Central Asia. In particular, I will explore a series of legendary narrative traditions depicting a master-disciple relationship between Kharaqānī and the Iranian poet, philosopher, and Ismaili missionary Nāṣir-i Khusraw (d. after 1071). This narrative first appears in the late-15th century work of Dawlatshāh Samarqandī and is reflected in a series of literary anthologies and hagiographical works thereafter, down to the 19th century. While the relationship depicted in these narratives is almost certainly apocryphal, I find that these accounts nonetheless hold great significance for understanding the relationship between the Sufi and Ismaili communities in early-modern Iran and Central Asia, among which these narratives circulated. In this paper I will investigate both the rationale behind the selection of Abū’l-Ḥasan Kharaqānī as the protagonist in these narratives, examining his place within the historical memory of the Eastern Sufi orders, as well as the dialogic content of the narratives, which depict Kharaqānī as guiding Nāṣir-i Khusraw to abandon his intellectual pursuit of philosophy and instead to embrace the Sufi path of love. This dialogue is rooted in a long-standing anti-Ismaili polemic reflected most prominently in the works of al-Ghazālī, but is also part of a broader narrative effort by which various Sunni constituencies in the early modern period sought to appropriate the legacy and charismatic authority of Nāṣir-i Khusraw in the Persianate world. Most importantly, I argue that this tradition in turn served as the model for a later narrative sequence that was developed among Nizārī Ismaili communities in the 18th and 19th centuries, depicting Nāṣir-i Khusraw as the disciple of the renowned Nizārī missionary Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ, reflecting the degree to which Ismaili narrative traditions emerged in engagement with Sufi communities and others in this period.

Daniel Beben is Assistant Professor of History at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Nazarbayev University, Kazakhstan. He received his PhD from Indiana University Bloomington with a dissertation entitled "The Legendary Biographies of Nāṣir-i Khusraw: Memory and Textualization in Early Modern Persian Ismailism". His research focuses on the history of Ismaili and Sufi communities in pre-modern Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asia. His current projects include a monograph on the history of Ismailism in Central Asia and a co-authored work on genealogical traditions in the Badakhshan region.

Philipp Bruckmayr

Ṣadr al-Sharīʿa al-Thānī al-Maḥbūbī al-Bukhārī (d. 747/1346) as the pivotal figure in synthesising Ḥanafī uṣūl al-fiqh and Māturīdī kalām

Ṣadr al-Sharīʿa's *al-Tawḍīḥ* represents a watershed in the history of Ḥanafī legal theory. Even though earlier Transoxanian *uṣūl* works exhibited a certain degree of influence from Māturīdī *kalām*, not least due to the fact that their authors were often either themselves also *mutakallimūn* or otherwise students of major Māturīdī scholars, the local Ḥanafī *uṣūl* tradition apparently initially remained untouched by the so-called *mutakallimūn* approach in legal theory and the ground-breaking contributions of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and other Shāfiʿī-Ashʿarī scholars writing in his wake. Thus, Ṣadr al-Sharīʿa was the first Transoxanian Ḥanafī scholar to explicitly acknowledge and thoroughly engage with this new style of *uṣūl al-fiqh* writing, thereby taking Ḥanafī *uṣūl al-fiqh* to a new level. What is more, his *al-Tawḍīḥ* would become the prime text in the field in Ottoman madrasas and would form a template that came to be widely emulated by Ottoman *uṣūl* scholarship. Strikingly, however, *al-Tawḍīḥ* came to exert a similarly strong influence in the field of *kalām*, especially due to the fact that the work contains a highly sophisticated refutation of Ashʿarī doctrine on the nature of good and evil and the related question of free will. Thus, Ṣadr al-Sharīʿa's chief work on legal theory would also become a major reference in Ottoman *kalām*. In addition, through the convergence of these two factors, it seems to have played an instrumental role in the emergence of a proclaimed distinctively Ḥanafī-Māturīdī identity, regarded by Ottoman scholars as on a par with, or even superior to, late Ashʿarism.

The present contribution will highlight Ṣadr al-Sharīʿa's pivotal and lasting role in establishing a synthesis of Ḥanafī *uṣūl al-fiqh* and Māturīdī *kalām* by focusing on: the production of commentaries and glosses to *al-Tawḍīḥ* in general, and to its sections dealing with matters relevant to *kalām* specifically, in Anatolia, Syria, Egypt and India; the place of *al-Tawḍīḥ* in Ottoman madrasa curricula and *uṣūl* works; and its role in the Ottoman genre of Māturīdī/Ashʿarī differences in the field of *kalām*.

Philipp Bruckmayr has studied Arabic and Islamic Studies, Turkish Studies and History at the University of Vienna. He has published on Islam in Southeast Asia, Arab and Islamic communities in the Americas, post-classical Islamic theology and on religion and politics in Syria. Currently a lecturer at the University of Vienna in Arabic and Islamic Studies, he has held fellowships and lectureships at the International Research Center for Cultural Studies (Vienna), Passau University, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and the University of Exeter. He was awarded the Dissertation Prize of the *German Association of Middle Eastern Studies* (DAVO) in 2015 and the Dr. Hermann Stieglecker-Scholarship for Christian-Islamic Studies of the *Forum of World Religions* (FWR) in 2017. He is a member of the scientific advisory board of the *German Association of Middle Eastern Studies* (DAVO).

Dagikhudo Dagiev

The Study of Sufism and Sufi literature in Bertels's Work

The third volume of E.E. Bertels's *Selected Works* consists of studies on Sufism and Sufi literature, including poetry, which he completed mainly in the 1920s. The volume also includes works on Sufi terminology and studies devoted to individual Sufi authors. These works summarise the prehistory of Sufism in Iran and Central Asia, as well as the history of its development and influence on Persian-Tajik literature up to the 10th century.

The interest in Sufi literature shown by Bertels is explained by the state of scholarship of that time. The prominent foreign and domestic authorities in the field of oriental studies believed that all medieval 'Persian poetry', as they called it at the time, boiled down to a heroic epic, court poetry, full of technical tricks which are inaccessible to a European understanding, and mystical poetry, primarily Sufi.

In studying Sufism and Sufi poetry, Bertels faced a number of problems that required resolution. He found it necessary to: identify the origins of Sufism and Sufi ideas; decipher Sufi terminology and thus put the interpretation of Sufi texts on a scientific basis; try to determine the main lines of development of Sufi poetry and the continuity of the various schools of Sufism.

Moreover, there were other issues to take into account such as the nature of the composition of the Sufi treatises and Sufi poems, and problems linked to the understanding of the Sufi sheikh's personality and its correlation with legendary biographies. Bertels made many valuable observations and conclusions that have been demonstrated to be major scholarly achievements, and highlight the value of these works from the 1920s.

The names of the greatest Persian poets such as Sanā'ī, Nizāmī, Jalāl ad-Dīn Rūmī, Ḥāfiẓ and others were directly associated with Sufism and it was believed that the key to understanding their work could be found exclusively in Sufi teachings. At the same time, the serious, in-depth study of Sufism was in its incipient stages. (The classical works of R. Nicholson and L. Massignon belong to the first decades of the 20th century.)

For a better understanding of the complex literature created over many centuries in the Persian language, it was necessary to comprehend what Sufism really was, and what role it played in the development of these literatures.

Dagikhudo Dagiev is a Senior Research Associate in the Department of Academic Research and Publications of The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London. He obtained his PhD in the Department of Political Science at University College London (UCL). His PhD thesis was entitled *The Process of Transition in Post-Soviet Central Asia and its Challenges*. His research areas include contemporary societies in post-Communist Central Asia, their history and religion, the re-emergence of Islam as a faith, and the appearance of Islamist ideologies and nationalism. His recent publications: *Identity, History and Trans-Nationality in Central Asia: The Mountain Communities of Pamir* (London, 2019), with Carole Faucher; *Regime Transition in Central Asia: Stateness, Nationalism and Political Change in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan* (London, 2014).

Devin DeWeese

The Treatise of Ibrāhīm Qavghānī: A 17th-Century Source on the Yasavī Sufi Tradition in Central Asia

The 17th century saw the production of two key sources on the history of the Yasavī Sufi tradition in Central Asia, the *Lamaḥāt min nafaḥāt al-quds* of 'Ālim Shaykh 'Alīyābādī, completed in 1035/1626, and the *Hujjat al-dhākirīn* of Muḥammad Sharīf Bukhārī, completed in 1080/1670. These two literary 'bookends' from the early and late 17th century have been the only 'internal' sources available from this late period in the Yasavī tradition's development, and the *Lamaḥāt* itself remains by far the most important hagiographical source on that tradition.

A recent discovery in Kazakhstan, however, adds another source to the repertoire of Yasavī literature. It is shorter than the other 17th-century works, but of special value for standing outside the continuities represented by those two works, and offering an alternative vision of the reconstruction of Yasavī history offered in the *Lamaḥāt* and continued in the work of Muḥammad Sharīf.

This work, known from a unique and incomplete manuscript preserved in the National Library of Kazakhstan in Almaty, is ascribed to 'Mullā Ibrāhīm Qavghānī,' whose nisba links him with a small town in the middle Syr Darya valley, in the region known as 'Turkistān'; this figure is not mentioned in either the *Lamaḥāt* or the *Hujjat al-dhākirīn*, but is shown in some 18th-century sources as a disciple either of 'Ālim Shaykh or of the latter's master Pīrim Shaykh (d. 1006/1597-98), thus placing his literary production most probably in the 17th century, although it is unfortunately impossible to be certain at what point during that century. (There is no colophon, and no real introduction explaining the reasons for the work's composition, in the only known manuscript.)

The work, referred to in a heading simply as the 'treatise' (*risāla*) of Mullā Ibrāhīm Qavghānī, runs to just 26 folios (the last four are substantially damaged), written in Persian, although the author freely cites sayings in Turkic without translation. Its overall focus is doctrinal, but it includes a considerable amount of hagiographical material, both in connection with particular sayings and in one section, in eight folios, that presents the Yasavī *silṣila* from Aḥmad Yasavī down to some successors of Khudāyḍād. (Qāsim Shaykh, d. 986/1579, is mentioned, although not in the section on the *silṣila*, and there is no mention at all of either Pīrim Shaykh or 'Ālim Shaykh.)

It is with this hagiographical material that the work departs from the presentation known from the *Lamahāt* and sources based on it, offering an alternative perspective on Yasavī history. Its differences from the better-known sources will be the subject of this paper.

Devin DeWeese is a professor Emeritus of Central Eurasian Studies at Indiana University, Bloomington. He received his PhD in 1985 at Indiana University, and his research on Central Asian Islam has focused on problems of Islamization, on the social and political roles of Sufi communities, and on Sufi literature and hagiography in Persian and Chaghatay Turkic. From 1997-2007, and 2018-2019, he served as the Director of the Sinor Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies at Indiana University. He received fellowships from the NEH (1992), ACLS (1998), Guggenheim Foundation (2003), and Carnegie Scholar program (2006).

Recent Publications: "Encountering Saints in the Hallowed Ground of a Regional Landscape: The 'Description of Khwārazm' and the Experience of Pilgrimage in 19th-Century Central Asia," in *Saintly Spheres and Islamic Landscapes*, ed. Daphna Ephrat, Ethel Sara Wolper, and Paulo G. Pinto (Leiden: Brill, 2021), "Sufis as the Ulama in Seventeenth-century Central Asia: 'Ālim Shaykh of 'Alīyābād and Mawlānā Muḥammad Sharīf of Bukhārā," in *Sufis and their Opponents in the Persianate World*, ed. Reza Tabandeh and Leonard Lewisohn (Irvine, California: Jordan Center for Persian Studies, 2020), "Re-Envisioning the History of Sufi Communities in Central Asia: Continuity and Adaptation in Sources and Social Frameworks, 16th-20th Centuries," in *Sufism in Central Asia: New Perspectives on Sufi Traditions, 15th-21st Centuries*, ed. Devin DeWeese and Jo-Ann Gross (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

Leila Dodykhudoeva

Nasir-i Khusraw's Persian Discourse as a cultural code for Badakhshan: Cognitive and Lexical Perspective

In the 10th century, Khurāsān, which included regions of modern Central Asia, became a place of revival of Iranian culture after several centuries of Arab control of the region. The shift of the cultural centre to Eastern Iran led to the Foundation of New Persian. Starting from the period of the Sāmānid dynasty, this language began to play a significant role in the administrative system, literature, and other aspects of the social and cultural life of the region and became established in the region as the language of international communication. The Persian language was established in the region by the outstanding masters of the word, such as Rūdakī, Firdawsī, 'Unsurī, Kisā'i Marwazī, 'Umar Khayyām, Nāṣir-i Khusraw and others, who shaped and developed this language, creating a unique body of literature, known widely as classical Persian literature.

Some scholars consider that it was between the 10th and 16th centuries that the transition began between the unified Persian language of Iran and Central Asia on the one hand, and modern Persian and Tajik on the other. For a while longer, Dari was considered a dialect of the Persian language and was called Farsi-Kabuli. In modern times, Tajik and Dari have become the national languages of the independent states of Tajikistan and Afghanistan. However, scholars to the present day still classify them as Persian dialects.

Leila Dodykhudova is Senior Research Fellow at Department Iranian Languages Unit, Institute of Linguistics in the Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russia. She is also Research Fellow in Pamiri Studies at the Institute of Language and Literature of the Academy of Sciences, Dushanbe, Tajikistan. She is the author of several books in Russian and Tajik, including translations of several books from English into Russian.

Maxime Delpierre

The Nizārī Reception of Avicennism: Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī between Avicennism and Ismā'īlism

The intellectual tradition of Avicennism developed in substance mainly from *al-Ishārāt wa'l-tanbīhāt*, and in form as different types of commentaries (*shurūḥ*), glosses (*ḥawāshī*) and addenda (*ta'liqāt*). In this exegetical tradition, the pre-eminent role of Naṣīr Ṭūsī does not need to be proved anymore. His masterwork, *Ḥall mushkilāt al-Ishārāt*, has a pivotal role in the Avicennan tradition, for several reasons: first, it gives a second life to Avicenna's philosophy after the Ash'arī theological synthesis of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī; second, it introduces this philosophy in the Shī'ī milieu and paves the way to its transition from the Nizārī Ismā'īlī milieu to the Twelver Shī'ī one; third and last, it challenges the Ash'arī interpretation of Avicenna's philosophy by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī.

In my paper, I shall focus on a critical point of this revival of Avicenna's philosophy in the Shī'ī milieu. As a matter of fact, there is nothing less explored than the introduction of this philosophy, as a first step, in the Nizārī milieu before the fall of Alamūt. Indeed, Avicenna's ontology is incompatible with Ismā'īlī theology: a metaphysics

deducing God's existence from *ens qua ens* can hardly be reconciled with an apophatic theology that places the Principle above being. As a direct consequence of this incompatibility, Nizārī theology, owing to Shahrastānī, had taken another direction, that of Ash'arī theology (based on the Ghazālīan critique of Avicenna's metaphysics), which looks closer in its spirit to the Nizārīs, inasmuch as it is a kind of fideism affirming that God's essence and will, and the reasons for His actions, are incomprehensible to human intellect, so that such a theology at best endorses the divine transcendence.

Yet Ṭūsī uses his commentary on the *Ishārāt* as a textbook by means of which he introduces Avicenna's philosophy to the Nizārī *cursus studiorum*. While his method is to stick to the source text, he also inserts elements of Nizārī catechism. Thus, he not only tries to bridge the gap between Avicenna's philosophy and Nizārī theology, but also seems to believe that the *Ishārāt* could be treated as an initiation to Nizārī doctrine. In this respect, Ṭūsī's later refutation of Shahrastānī's critique of Avicenna's philosophy, *Maṣāri' al-muṣāri'*, if viewed as a kind of autocritique after the fall of Alamūt, has a retrospective interest, because it highlights all the inconsistencies of Nizārī doctrine that Avicenna's philosophy would have allowed one to avoid, stopping just short of claiming that a consistent Nizārī should have been an Avicennian. Unlike Shahrastānī, Ṭūsī seems to believe that Ash'arī theology, precisely because it is a mere fideism, is incompatible with that of the Ismailis, because it prevents the knowledge of God and of future life, to an even greater extent than philosophy. Yet such knowledge, according to Ṭūsī, is the ultimate aim of true religion.

Henry Corbin defined 'Iranian Avicennism' as the development of the Avicennian heritage after its assimilation by Ismaili, Ishrāqī and Twelver Shī'ī thought. If this is proved to be true, Ṭūsī's exegetical work would represent the pivotal moment of an inchoative synthesis of Avicennian and Shī'ī thought. I will try to demonstrate how this great meeting occurs in the *Commentary* in the Nizārī period of Ṭūsī's career and what theoretical challenges such a paradoxical task involves.

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Janis Esots

Al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī's teaching on Walāya and its Reception in Later Islamic Gnosis

Al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī's (d. ca. 298/910) thought pivots around his doctrine of *walāya*. The term, conventionally rendered into English as 'sainthood', refers to the patron-client relationship between the gnostic and God (*walī* and *mawlā*). Tirmidhī (who believed himself to be one of the forty *ṣiddīqūn* that prevent the world from collapsing) developed an elaborate doctrine on the phenomenon of *walāya*, describing different groups and ranks of saints, and, in particular, distinguishing between *awliyā' Allāh* and *awliyā' ḥaqq Allāh*, and introducing an original but highly controversial theory of *khātim al-awliyā'* ('the sealer of saints'). He also provided a profound analysis of the transformations of *nafs* ('self' or 'soul') and elaborated on the spiritual levels of the human being.

In the reception of Tirmidhī's teaching, at least three stages can be distinguished: 1) that of his immediate disciples (such as Abū Muḥammad Yaḥyā al-Qāḍī, Abū 'Alī al-Ḥasan al-Juzjānī and Maṣṣūr al-Harawī) and the disciples of his disciples, collectively known as al-Ḥakīmiyya; 2) that of Muḥy al-Dīn Ibn al-'Arabī (who, *inter alia*, wrote detailed responses to about a hundred questions, posed by Tirmidhī in his *Sīrat al-awliyā'*); 3) that of the masters of Khwājagān/Naqshbandiyya, the dominant Ṣūfī order in Transoxiana since the 8th/14th century. In my paper, I give a brief account of each of them.

According to Hujwīrī's *Kashf al-maḥjūb*, the disciples and/or followers of Tirmidhī formed a Ṣūfī order known as al-Ḥakīmiyya (although it was probably merely a trend of thought, analytically extracted by the renowned doxographer). Like their teacher, they pondered on the meaning of *walāya*. However, rather than trying to realise in themselves the states and stations of sainthood, they appear to have focused on its external manifestations, such as miracles (*mu'jizāt*) and charismatic acts (*karāmāt*).

Muḥy al-Dīn Ibn al-ʿArabī in his answers to Tirmidhī's questions engaged with multiple aspects of the latter's teaching on *walāya*, focusing on the concepts of the 'seal' and 'sealer' of sainthood (*khatm al-awliyāʾ/khātim al-awliyāʾ*) and further elaborating Tirmidhī's distinction between the universal/unqualified sainthood (*walāya muṭlaqa*) and Muḥammadan sainthood (*walāya muḥammadiyya*).

The Naqshbandi authors received Tirmidhī's teaching both directly, by studying his own works, and indirectly, via Ibn al-ʿArabī. I attempt to show that the teaching of the early Naqshbandis and their predecessors, the Khwājagān, on silent remembrance (*dhikr khafī*) stems from the tradition of introspection, one of whose main elaborators was Tirmidhī.

Janis Esots received his PhD in Middle Eastern Literatures and Cultures from Tallinn University, Estonia, in 2007. His PhD dissertation is entitled 'Mulla Sadra's Teaching on Wujūd: A Synthesis of Mysticism and Philosophy'. In 2000–2013 (with minor intervals), he taught at the University of Latvia, becoming Associate Professor of Arabic and Persian in 2010. Since 2009, he has been the editor of the Islamic Philosophy Yearbook *Ishraq*, the fourth issue of which was devoted to Ismaili thought. He specialises in Islamic philosophy and intellectual history and has published about 50 articles and encyclopaedic entries on this subject. In addition, he has translated into Russian the works of Mullā Ṣadrā, Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī, Mīr Dāmād, Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī and Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī. He is profoundly interested in the Ismaili philosophical tradition, has previously done research on Ḥamīd al-Dīn Kirmānī and is currently preparing the *Dictionary of Ismaili Thought*.

Abdulmamad Iloliev

'Sacred Spaces' turned into Museums: The Transformation of Shrine Culture in Tajikistan

This paper examines a new cultural phenomenon in the post-Soviet milieu of Tajikistan in terms of restoration of Muslim sacred spaces and their transformation into cultural museums. Categorised here as *museumisation*, this process began in the late 1990s as an element of Islamic resurgence in Central Asia. While providing a historical background to selected Muslim shrines (sing. *mazār*) in Tajikistan, their religious significance and the saints (*awliyāʾ*) associated with them, this paper primarily focuses on the changing role of shrines as places of private meditation, religious congregation and social gathering. This paper also explores the new architectural composition of the museum-shrines, their styles and distinguishing characteristics. Particular attention is given to the shrines in the Khatlān and Badakhshan regions, where shrine visitors (*zāirān*) follow two different branches of Islam, namely Sunni (in the former region) and Shi'i (Ismaili, in the latter). However, both share a common idea of shrine culture in terms of shrine visitation (*ziyārat*), the veneration (*parastish*) of saints and the seeking of spiritual blessings (*barakāt*) from them. This study is based on the author's numerous field works in the region, which involved archival research, interviews and observations, and the study draws comparisons between shrine cultures in Tajikistan.

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Fârhès Gillon

Al-Sijistānī and the Western da'wa: is there a Common Qur'ānic Ta'wīl?

Very little is known about Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī's life (d.c. 358/971). Nevertheless, it is now assumed that, after first refusing to acknowledge the Fatimid caliphate, he eventually did so towards the end of his career. Yet the problem remains of his connection—and more generally, the connection of the Eastern Ismaili *da'wa*—to the Western *da'wa* which was first based in Syria, then in Ifriqiya, and finally in Egypt. Indeed, we lack evidence

to determine whether the pre-Fatimid Ismaili *da'wa* was an organisation unified under the authority of a head based in Salamiya, or if the Salamiyan *da'wa* was only one of various groups which one may subsume under the designation 'Ismaili'. Were al-Sijistānī and his predecessors from the Eastern *da'wa* indeed in contact with Salamiya or did they form an independent group? To what extent did al-Sijistānī and the Fatimids belong to the same tradition?

Indeed, a quick look at the Eastern Ismaili works, on the one hand, and the early Fatimid works, on the other, will easily prove that they are of a different nature, the former being very clearly influenced by Greek philosophy, while the latter contain no references to such literature. As a matter of fact, the Fatimids do not seem to have incorporated any doctrines of a philosophical nature into their official theology before the reign of al-Mu'izz (d. 365/975) or al-'Azīz (d. 386/996), although recent scholarship has shown that philosophy was not totally unknown to the Western *da'wa*. Therefore, in order to establish the exact relation of al-Sijistānī to his Western counterparts, one has to compare other aspects of the texts at hand.

One of these aspects is Qur'ānic exegesis (*ta'wīl*), which, as is well known, is essential to the Ismaili creed. The study of exegetical tradition is indeed a valuable tool for identifying doctrinal affiliations and lines of transmission. In this paper, I will therefore compare a selection of interpretations of Qur'ānic verses in some of al-Sijistānī's works with exegeses of the same verses by 'Western Ismailis' such as al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān or Ja'far b. Manṣūr al-Yaman, who both served the first Fatimids. This will allow me to highlight some interpretations that are, if not common to, at least similar in both traditions. However, this method will also show that, in spite of a general doctrinal background in common, there are also divergences which might be explained by considering that we are dealing with two parallel traditions with different, yet close, intellectual affiliations. I thus hope to contribute to two important issues when it comes to Ismaili studies: first, how doctrinally unified was pre-Fatimid Ismailism? Second, what was al-Sijistānī's impact, if any, on the progressive adoption of philosophy by the Fatimid court?

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Chorshanbe Goibnazarov

Mubārak-i Wakhānī, a Sufi-Ismaili Musician from Badakhshan

Much research has been conducted on the study of Islam and Muslims of Central Asia in the Soviet Union and in the post-Soviet era. Unfortunately, within the academic community the investigations and reflections on the contribution of musicians and their musical practices have not been comprehensive. This paper focuses on music as a foundational source of the understanding and experience of Islam in Central Asia.

As many scholars have shown, music and musical practices are significant sources for studying culture and society (Dawe, 2003; Rancier, 2014; Bates, 2012; Doubleday, 1999; Baily, 1976). Apart from being attractive for their unique tunes, sounds, shapes, and the atmosphere they evoke, music and musical instruments symbolise the traditions and identities of peoples, nations, sub-national regions, and ethnic groups. They have specific cultural meanings, and these meanings emerge from local histories and cultures. They are not only commodities but are meaningful by virtue of the cultural values they assume at a given moment in history.

This paper will focus on a revered musical instrument known as *balandmaqām* that was invented by the late 19th-century Sufi-Ismaili poet and musician, Mubarak-i Wakhānī (1839–1903), who used music as a medium of worship and devotion. Mubarak-i Wakhānī, a mystic poet, musician, astronomer, and Ismaili religious scholar from Badakhshan, is little known by the modern academic world as a musician. There are references to Mubarak-i Wakhānī's practice and his legacy as a musician, and the way he employed music as an alternative means

of worship and spirituality (Abibov 1972; 1974; Mirhasan 2005; Iloliev 2008; Matrobov 2010). However, his contribution to the musical heritage of the Pamiri Ismaili community and, more widely, to Central Asian Muslim culture is largely unexplored. Islamisation found expression not only in the political and administrative but also within the cultural and spiritual arenas in Central Asia, as evidenced by the role of music that is so deeply rooted in expressing religiosity and spirituality in the region.

I will explore Mubarak-i Wakhānī's contribution to Islamic traditions by focusing specifically on a comparison of his musical practice with that of other Sufi musical traditions in Central Asia. I will focus on his specific styles and the ways he used his musical instruments of his own making, and finally, and most importantly, his contribution to the Islamic musical tradition. I propose to discuss the *balandmaqām* in connection with the rituals and customs of other cultural and spiritual traditions in Central Asia to determine how the instrument produces locality and meaning through performance, representation, and action—a dimension of Islamic studies until now largely overlooked by scholars. Belonging to a broader family of short-necked Himalayan plucked lutes (Slobin, 1976), the *balandmaqām* plays multiple roles musically, socially and culturally. Its sound and materiality, along with its inscriptions, symbolic motifs, and decorations, together contribute to the social and cultural fabric that continues to be passed from one generation to the next.

Chorshanbe Goibnazarov is an Assistant Professor at the UCA's School of Arts and Sciences, and has a joint appointment in the Cultural Heritage and Humanities Unit as a Research Fellow. He teaches Cultural Landscapes at the Naryn and Khorog Campuses. His doctoral research examined *qasaid-khani*, a musical performance among the Badakhshani community in Tajikistan and the way music and musical performances express identities. Dr Goibnazarov's research interests include cultural studies and anthropological approaches to the study of Muslim cultures in contemporary society, with a particular focus on studying folk music, sung poetries, dance performances, material cultures and ritual performances.

Jo-Ann Gross

The Faqarāt of Khwājah ‘Ubayd Allāh Aḥrār and His Legacy in the Perso-Islamicate Sphere and Beyond

Khwājah ‘Ubayd Allāh Aḥrār's (d. 791/1490) leadership of the Naqshbandī *ṭarīqah* in Samarqand steered the *ṭarīqah* in a more centralized, communal direction in response to his activities in the agrarian and commercial economy of Central Asia, to the large number of loyal *murīds* who gathered around him, some of whom Aḥrār authorized as *khalīfas* to disseminate the Naqshbandiya outside his own community, and to his role as a mediator and spiritual advisor to Timurid sultans and *amīrs* (Gross, 1988, 1990, 2002; Paul, 1991; Algar, 1990; Babadjanov, 1996). During his lifetime and after his death the Naqshbandī *ṭarīqah* expanded to the farthest reaches of the Perso-Islamicate sphere, to central and western Iran, Ottoman Turkey and the Balkans to the west (LeGall, 2005), southeast to India (Dale, 1997; Foltz, 1996) and east to Kashgar in northwest China. Aḥrār's political role is well documented in the *malfūzāt* literature (Gross, 1990, 1992; Gross and Urunbaev, 2002; Nawshahi, 2001; Paul, 1991) and alluded to by his biographers, Timurid court chroniclers, and in his own correspondence (Gross and Urunbaev, 2002). His economic role is likewise documented in extant purchase deeds and *waqf* endowments (Chekhovich, 1974, Dale and Payind, 1999; Gross, 1988 and 2002). The record of the Aḥrārī era of the Central Asian Nashbandiya's development is thus well documented, and a substantial corpus of scholarship has examined the Naqshbandiya from its early development as the Khwājagān-Naqshbandiya in the oasis of Bukhara to its rapid and successful growth in Timurid Transoxiana under Khwājah Aḥrār.

Less attention has been paid to the writings (*risālas*) of Khwājah Aḥrār: *Faqarāt*, *Vāliidiya* and *Hawrā'iyya*. Focusing specifically on the *Faqarāt*, this paper will consider the doctrinal aspects of Aḥrār's *pīrship* through an examination of the Sufi Naqshbandī principles contained in it and the spiritual and intellectual aspects of his legacy and their significance. We rely on the Persian manuscript copy stored in the Institute of Oriental Studies, Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, Tashkent (No. 507), and the Persian edition of Arif Nawshahi, *Risā'il-i Khwājah Aḥrār: Faqarāt. Vāliidiya, va Hawrā'iya* (Herat, 2015).

Jo-Ann Gross is Professor of Middle Eastern and Central Eurasian History at The College of New Jersey. Her research focuses on early modern and modern Iran and Central Asia, with an emphasis on Ismailism in the Pamir and the social history of Sufism, shrines and hagiographic narrative traditions. She has published widely on aspects of Sufism in Central Asia and the role of the Naqshbandi Sufi

order, shrine culture in Tajikistan, and Ismailism in Badakhshan. Her book publications include *Sufism in Central Asia: New Perspectives on Sufi Traditions, 15th-21st Centuries*, co-edited with Devin DeWeese (Brill Publishers, *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, Uralic and Central Asian Studies, 2018); and her most recent articles include, "The Biographical Tradition of Muhammad Bashara in Penjakent: Islamic Hagiography in Tajikistan, in *Sufism in Central Asia: New Perspectives on Sufi Traditions, 15th-21st Centuries*, ed. by Jo-Ann Gross and Devin DeWeese (Brill, 2018), "Preliminary Notes on the *Nasab-nāmas* of Badakhshan," *Shii Studies Review* 2 (2018), 315-321, and "The Shrinescapes and Narrative Traditions of Khoja Ishaq Khuttalani," in *Saintly Spheres and Islamic Landscapes*, ed. by Daphna Ephrat, Ethel Sara Wolper and Paulo Pinto (Brill Publishers, 2020).

Tatiana Korneeva

Persian Language and Ismaili Philosophy

For many centuries the Persian language was the most widespread spoken language across a vast territory, from modern Turkey to India. There are many examples of high Persian literature like Shabistarī's *Gulshan-i Rāz*, 'Aṭṭār's *Manṭiq at-ṭayr*, and the poetry of Jāmī and Ḥāfiẓ. However, it should be noted that at the very beginning of the development of the New Persian language, there was a notable figure, Nāṣir-i Khusraw, whose contribution to Ismaili philosophy and the New Persian language was rather significant.

First of all, one should mention that Nāṣir-i Khusraw was born in Qubādiyānī, a region of Balkh. He was probably a Sunni until the age of 40. One thing that is known exactly is that during his *ḥajj* journey, Nāṣir-i Khusraw stayed for several years in Cairo, the capital of the Fatimid state, where he received Ismaili teaching. In 1059, after returning to Balkh, Nāṣir-i Khusraw became an Ismaili *dā'ī* (missionary) and wrote several treatises on Ismaili philosophy and a huge number of *qaṣīdas*.

Nāṣir-i Khusraw's poetry is rather unusual and interesting in terms of its language. Persian poetry was well developed by the 11th century, but nobody before Nāṣir-i Khusraw wrote philosophical *qaṣīdas*. He interpreted traditional forms and figures in the Ismaili manner. The *qaṣīda* stopped being a form of eulogy of a ruler or patron and became an effective way of spreading Ismaili thought.

One should also mention the language of Nāṣir-i Khusraw's philosophical treatises. He was not a pioneer in this field, as the first philosophical treatise in the New Persian language was written by Ibn Sīnā and named the *Dānishnāma-i 'Alā'ī*. However, it is his only work in Persian, and it aroused some controversy. All of Ibn Sīnā's other treatises were written in Arabic—the language of science and philosophy across the huge area ruled by Muslims.

Nevertheless, all Nāṣir-i Khusraw's treatises are written in the New Persian language. There are six works at our disposal: *Gushāysh wa rahāysh*, *Khān al-ikhwān*, *Zād al-musāfirīn*, *Shish faṣl*, *Jāmi' al-ḥikmatayn*, and *Wajh-i Dīn*. Nāṣir-i Khusraw tried to explain the philosophical concepts and doctrines of the Ismailis to people who did not know Arabic or did not know it at the necessary level. That is why the style and language of Nāṣir-i Khusraw's philosophical works are so interesting: he tried to find Persian equivalents for Arabic words and imbued existent Persian words with new philosophical meanings.

The Persian treatises of Nāṣir-i Khusraw were very popular in the Alamūt period of Ismaili history (1090-1256), primarily due to their clear and understandable language. Thanks to his works, Ismaili doctrines became widespread in Persia. It is hard to disagree with the statement that Nāṣir-i Khusraw made a significant contribution to the development of the New Persian language, and then, that the usage of the Persian language was the reason for the survival of his works for centuries. After the Mongol invasion in 1256, the Ismailis and their supporters preserved a part of the rich library of Alamūt.

Tatiana Korneeva is Research Fellow at the Department of Philosophy of Islamic World, Institute of Philosophy, Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS). She graduated in 2012 from the Russian State University for the Humanities, Institute for Oriental and Classical Studies with a specialist degree in the philology of India and Muslim South Asia (languages: Urdu, Persian, Arabic, English). Between 2012-15 she carried out post-graduate studies at the Institute of Philosophy (Russian Academy of Sciences). In 2016 she defended her PhD thesis on *Nāṣir Khusraw's Philosophical Views (on the material of the treatise 'Gushāysh wa rahāysh')*, with a specialty in the history of philosophy. Her main fields of research are Islamic Studies, Arab-Muslim philosophy, Ismaili studies, Nāṣir-i Khusraw's philosophy, and the Dialogue of Cultures.

Otambek Mastibekov

The Spiritual Dance of the Badakhshani Ismailis through Rūmī's Poetry

The amalgamation of the various Sufi *ṭarīqas* with the Ismaili tradition has been a known theme for centuries and scholars have treated many aspects of this, including terminologies, doctrines, leadership and authority, theology, and esoteric and exoteric traditions. This work does not investigate any of the afore-mentioned themes or indeed any that have been published or presented by various scholars in this field. A completely new theme, hitherto unexplored by academia, makes this work an original approach to the relation between Sufism and Ismailism. This is the *Spiritual Dance of the Badakhshani Ismailis through Rūmī's Poetry*.

Rūmī's poetry in the Badakhshani milieu is read and performed in five various spheres, the most popular being performed through: *qaṣīda*; the spiritual dance, which is different from the popular Sufi dance of *samā'*; the wedding ceremony and other festivals where the dance is different from the spiritual one; folk and other theatrical music; and the reading of the works of Rūmī, which is called *Rūmī-khānī* and which is performed through discussion and debate rather than through music and dance.

This paper illustrates and analyses the first four groups and omits the last one due to its non-relatedness to music and dance. We might note that Rūmī's poetry is selected for various performances for both its meaning and rhyme. Poems whose content is not suitable for the funeral ceremony are not recited as a *qaṣīda* and poems that have a religious-devotional or sad content are not performed at weddings. The same condition relates to rhyme as well.

Historically, the spiritual dance was performed occasionally at a funeral ceremony during a *qaṣīda* performance. However, this tradition gradually stopped and this presentation will discuss the reasons for this in detail. The main focus of this work, however, is an analysis of the dance and its relation to the content of Rūmī's poems. Based on this, I endeavour to differentiate the symbols of pre-Islamic Badakhshani culture and ethnography and their assimilation to Islam, and to Ismailism in particular, and I shall highlight the penetration of these cultural elements into Sufism. Equally, I will discuss how Sufism has influenced the cultural tradition of the Badakhshani Ismailis. There are many features that show their uniqueness and others that highlight the differences between Ismaili and Sufi dance.

Every move of the dance should correspond to the meaning of each verse that is being recited. Equally the task of the dance is to reveal the esoteric meaning of the poem and at the same time to convey a reflection of the spiritual world. On the other hand, the wedding dance to Rūmī's poetry reflects material joy and happiness.

As has been mentioned, no work has been done on this theme yet. Therefore this work presents material sources from the field, both video and audio, and makes an original analysis through the author's own experience and knowledge.

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Toby Mayer

The Mystic as Theurgist? A Theme in the Sufism of Najm al-Dīn Kubra (d. 618/1221)

The impact of the Kubrawiyya in the Īl-Khānīd period was great and members of the order performed a vital proselytising role at this time. Among various possible examples to mention are 'Alā' al-Dawla Simnānī's major influence on Arghūn; Ṣadr al-Dīn Ḥamūya's role in the conversion of Ghāzān (80,000 of whose soldiers allegedly converted with him); Sayf al-Dīn Bākharzī's role in the conversion of Berke Khan, chief of the Golden Horde; and Yahyā Abī 'l-Mafākhir Bākharzī's role in the conversion of Tārmāshīrīn the Chagadaid. The belief in the transcendental power of the realised Sufi is a key to understanding the influence of the Kubrawiyya. This resulted from various factors: the internal development of Sufi teachings about the person of the realised mystic; the

naturalisation in wider Muslim society of a cult of saints; and even, in the original historical and social context of Khwarazm, where the order emerged, pre-Islamic beliefs about healers, prognosticators, meteoromancers and weather-sorcerers that held sway amongst powerful Turkic groups like the Qipchaq.

The eponym of the Kubrawiyya, Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, is strongly associated with these notions of saintly power, and hagiographical materials on him (however legendary in complexion) accent his miraculous abilities and give numerous examples of them. What is of greater significance is that Kubrā himself in his *Fawā'id al-Jamāl* ('The Fragrances of Beauty'), which is put forward by him as both a spiritual diary and a guidebook for aspirants, seems to present the via mystica as a progress to attaining such empowerments. He speaks of a cognitional theology, involving the mystic's circumambulation of the divine attributes, one after the other, as 'presences' (*ḥaḍarāt*), and the activation of a share (*naṣīb*) in the mystic's heart in each presence. Then, passing away (*fanā*) in God results in becoming a participant, as it were, in God's own creativity. At this stage there is, says Kubrā, a radical assumption of responsibility (*tawallī*) by God for His righteous servants (Qur'ān 7:196). This mystery is presented in various ways, one of which is in terms of the threefold progression *talwīn* (literally 'colouration'), *tamkīn* ('consolidation') and finally *takwīn* ('existentiation'). Kubrā is quite explicit in regard to the last stage as to his meaning: that God gives the mystic the power of the creative fiat *kun* (the command 'Be!') by which realities can be summoned into external existence. Again, Kubrā explores this in terms of the hierarchy of internal subtle centres (*laṭā'if*), with which Kubrawi mystical theory would become inextricably identified. He states that in rising to the level of the centre called *al-sirr* ('the mysterium'), the zealous intent (*himma*) of the mystic inevitably unites with the power of God. Kubrā's great text may thus be read, *inter alia*, as exploring this distinct concept of Sufism, as a system that develops its practitioner in a highly Islamic version of theurgy (Gk., *theourgia*, in Gregory Shaw's definition: 'god-work'). The paper will follow multiple threads in the *Fawā'id* to bear out Kubrā's system of 'theurgic Sufism', which would pass into his successors' writings in the Kubrawiyya.

Toby Mayer is a Research Associate in the Qur'anic Studies Unit at The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London. After completing his undergraduate degree in Indian Studies at the University of Cambridge, he went on to study Medieval Arabic thought at the University of Oxford, where he wrote his doctoral thesis on the Book of Allusions (*Ishārāt*) by the major Persian philosopher Ibn Sīnā. In 2001, in conjunction with Professor Wilferd Madelung, he published a critical edition and translation of Shahrastānī's *Kitāb Muṣāra'at al-Falāsifa*, entitled *Struggling with the Philosopher: A Refutation of Avicenna's Metaphysics* (London, 2001). Until 2003, Dr Mayer was at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, where he taught courses in Islamic philosophy and mysticism. He has also worked for the Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation and on various documentary film projects in India, Indonesia and other parts of the Muslim world.

Shin Nomoto

An Early Ismaili Thinker on Language: A Preliminary Study of Thought of Language from Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī's Kitāb al-Zīna

This study aims at an investigation of the development of thought on language in the Shi'i intellectual context, seen in the chapter titled the 'superiority of the language of the "Arabs"' (*faḍl lughat al-'Arab*) from *Kitāb al-Zīna*, a voluminous lexicographical work on religious terms, by Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, an early Neoplatonist Ismaili-Shi'i thinker in the 4th /10th century in north-west Iran.

The text of *al-Zīna* has attracted the attention of even Sunni and Ithnā-'ashari scholars, as well of the Ismailis and of modern scholarship. Among modern Western scholars, G. Vajda paid attention to various aspects of thought on language on the chapter in question of *al-Zīna* such as letter symbolism, cosmogony based on letters, and the relation of the signified and signifier (which is related to the topic of the origin of language).

The discussion of these topics in the thought on language can be found in the majlis attributed to 'Alī al-Riḍā, the eighth Imam of the Ithnā-'asharīs, contained in *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* by Ibn Bābawayh (d. 381/991–992).

Therefore this paper proposes to analyse the thought of language in the *majlis* and to compare it with *al-Zīna*. In addition, other Ithnā-'asharī texts contemporaneous with al-Rāzī will be analysed. Thus we will be in a position to take a step towards elucidation of the thought on language of the Imami-Shi'i intellectual context, common to both Ismailis and Ithnā-'asharīs.

Shin Nomoto has a PhD from McGill University, Montreal, 2000. He is currently Professor at the Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, Keio University, Tokyo. He specialises in the history of Islamic thought, especially, and in Ismailism and Neoplatonist philosophy in Islam. He is presently working on an English translation of *Kitāb al-Iṣlāḥ* by *Abū Ḥatīm al-Rāzī* (d. 334-5/934), an influential work on prophetic thought which ignited a debate on Neoplatonist philosophy, theology and the history of prophets. Additionally, the multifaceted nature of Ismailism has led to his interest in various genres such as the occult sciences (alchemy, astrology, Hermeticism, etc.) and the history of natural sciences.

Nourmamadcho Nourmamadchoev

Schisms and their Effect on the Ismaili Communities of Badakhshan

Two events in the Ismaili history of the medieval period are marked as turning points. First, the fall of the Fatimid Empire and the succession dispute on the death of the Imam-caliph al-Mustanṣir (d. 487/1094), which divided the Ismaili community into the Nizārī and Musta'ī branches. Second, in the second quarter of the 14th century, namely after the fall of Alamūt, the Nizārī Ismailis faced another schism that once again divided the community, into the Muḥammad-Shāhī and Qāsim-Shāhī branches. It is evident from historical sources that the Qāsim-Shāhī Imams, based mainly in Iran, lived a clandestine life mostly in hiding while the Muḥammad-Shāhīs engaged in the religious and political life of Iran, Badakhshan, Syria and, later on, South Asia. Scholars are usually of the opinion that the population of the mountainous regions of Badakhshan followed the line of the Muḥammad-Shāhī Imams up to the 18th century, although this theory seems not to be conclusive.

In this presentation, I will talk about the continuation of the Ismaili tradition in Badakhshan in the post-Alamūt period, particularly after the split between the Muḥammad-Shāhī and the Qāsim-Shāhī branches. Based on manuscript sources from Badakhshan, I will show that the Ismailis of Badakhshan followed both branches of the Nizārī Ismaili tradition. Utilising records from the *Silk-i gawhar-rīz* and other sources, I will present the missionary activities of these groups and their hierarchy of initiation. I will argue that in the early 16th century, the Muḥammad-Shāhīs managed to take control of Badakhshan for a short period of time and later on lost their political influence over the region. From the mid-16th century onwards, their followers started joining the Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārī branch which has survived into the modern period.

Nourmamadcho Nourmamadchoev received his BA in Oriental Studies (Arabic and Persian Languages and Literature) from Khorog State University in Tajikistan in 1997. In 2001 he completed a one-year intensive Khorog English Programme and was then offered a place on the two-year Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities (GPISH) at the Institute of Ismaili Studies (IIS). Nourmamadcho then joined the Oriental Studies Department at the University of Cambridge where in 2005 he received an MPhil in Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies. In the same year he was awarded an IIS Doctoral Scholarship to pursue his PhD at the Department of History, SOAS, which he successfully completed in 2014. Nourmamadcho is currently working at the Ismaili Special Collections Unit at the IIS. He is also currently converting his PhD thesis into a monograph and writing an article entitled *Shāh Khāmūsh* and 'the Story of Arrival'.

Alexandre Papas

Sufi Orders, Shrines, and Lodges in Contemporary Khurāsān-e Raḡavī

As is well known, Khurāsān was a birthplace of Islamic mysticism and gave rise to important Sufi traditions and institutions throughout the medieval and early modern periods. Paradoxically, the late history of Sufism in the region, especially in its Western part (after the Treaty of Paris, 1857), remains understudied. Based on fieldwork conducted in October 2017 (mainly in Khāf, Sangān, Tāybād, Torbat-e Jām, and Torbat-e Heydarieh) and several written and iconographic documents collected in the city of Khāf, this paper explores the current situation of Sufism in the Iran province of Khurāsān-e Raḡavī. It appears that Sufi orders, shrines, and lodges linked to the Naqshbandiyya, the Qadiriyya, the Chishtiyya, and the Ni'matullāhiyya are very active today and have differing historical origins. Their rituals as well as their intellectual production show the existence of complex networks connecting Khurāsān to Iranian Kurdistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. In my presentation, I will try to lay out the preliminary lines for the Sufi landscape of contemporary Khurāsān-e Raḡavī.

Alexandre Papas is a historian of Islamic mysticism. He graduated in philosophy at the Sorbonne University, and holds diplomas in Persian, Turkish and Mongolian from the Institute of Oriental Languages & Civilisations, and a PhD in history from the École des Hautes

Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) in 2004. In 2006, he received the award of Best PhD Dissertation from the Institute for the Study of Islam and Societies of the Muslim World. His work deals mainly with Sufi mysticism, saint veneration and politico-religious issues in Central Asia and the neighbouring areas (China, Tibet, and Northern India) from the 16th century to the present. He was a research fellow at the CNRS since October 2007 and has been a senior research fellow since October 2017. He has been a visiting assistant professor at Kyoto University (2007), Ohio State University (2008) and the American University of Paris (2009). In 2012, he was awarded the CNRS Bronze Medal for Modern History.

Aslisho Qurboniev

The Khurāsānians: Mapping the Presence of Eastern Iranians in Medieval Islamic Society and Thought

Since the Arab-Islamic conquest of Eastern Iran, the lands beyond the Oxus became the main suppliers of both the manpower and the money of the early Islamic empire. Slaves, porcelain, silk, textile, paper all came through the Transoxianan frontier. In addition to their trading position, the Islamised local population, together with other Eastern Iranians, were also among the first Muslim scribes, translators, religious scholars, and intellectuals, but is it possible to quantify and visualise their contribution based on written historical sources in Arabic? This paper proposes a computational reading of a large corpus of classical Arabic texts, the Open ITI Corpus (currently comprising 3,450 unique titles and nearly 450 million words for the period prior to 911/1506), to answer this question. The primary aim of this study is, by using distant reading methods, to quantify and visualise the presence of the *ahl al-Khurāsān* (also called the *‘ajamīs* or *fārisīs*) in the Islamic textual heritage in the early Islamic period.

Since the publication of Richard Bulliet’s ground-breaking quantitative work on conversion to Islam (*Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period*, 1979), few people have attempted to quantify conversion and by extension the contribution of the converted people. However, the rapid development of computational technology in the past two decades has made it increasingly easy to peruse and analyse an astonishing amount of material instantly. Thus, this paper will be able to offer a “bird’s eye view” of the people of Khurāsān and Transoxiana in Arab-Islamic texts, including histories, biographical dictionaries and hadith collections, employing distant reading, (i.e. computational method to read and extract information) from thousands of written sources. Finally, the paper will focus on a couple of case studies to demonstrate the merits and shortcomings of the method in answering historical questions.

Aslisho Qurboniev is a Post-doctoral Research Fellow at AKU-ISMC (KITAB-Project) working on the Islamic West, including the medieval Maghrib, al-Andalus and Sicily. He has a PhD in Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Cambridge (2020) and an MPhil in Islamic Studies and History from the University of Oxford (2014). His doctoral thesis “Traditions of Learning in Fātimid Ifrīqiya (296-362/909-973): Networks, Practices and Institutions” is a study of the formation of scholarly communities and learning traditions in early Fatimid Ifrīqiya. Aslisho’s current research is on cultural memory and book history in the premodern Islamic world.

Yuri Stoyanov

Central Asian Turkic Carriers of Manichaean-Islamic Symbioses — Revisiting a Hypothesis of Eurasian Religious Mobility

The paper intends to reassess the theories of the formation of a Manichaean-Islamic symbioses in the early stages of the expansion of Islam in Central Asia and their transmission westwards during the migration of Central Asian Turkic groups towards the Middle East, the Levant and Asia Minor. Early and more recent theories have posited such Manichaean-Islamic symbioses, for example, in the use and notion and symbolism of light in cosmological and prophetological contexts, religious hierarchy and the practice of confession. These theories draw on the evidence of the processes of the interaction of Muslim and non-Muslim local traditions in Central Asia as well as some characteristic elements in Alevi/Bektāshī traditions and syncretism in the Ottoman empire. A reassessment of these hypotheses will have important implications for understanding the patterns of Islamicisation of Central Asia, emergence of local syncretisms and dynamic religious mobility triggered by the westward migrations of Inner Asian Turkic groups during Central Asia’s expansive period on the Eurasian political and religious arena.

Yuri Stoyanov has been Senior Fellow at the W.F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research, Jerusalem since 2006, and is a Research Associate at the Department of the Near and Middle East, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. He is the author of several books including *Defenders and Enemies of the True Cross* (Vienna, 2011); *The Other God. Dualist Religions from Antiquity to the Cathar Heresy* (London and New Haven, 2000); *The Hidden Tradition in Europe. The History of Medieval Christian Heresy* (Penguin Books, London, 1994); *Military-Religious Fraternalism in Eastern Christianity and Near Eastern Islam* (London and New Haven, forthcoming); *Medieval Heresy and Pseudepigraphy in the Near East and Levant* (Cambridge, forthcoming).

Paul Walker

Al-Ghazālī as a Key Historical Witness to the Ismaili Doctrine of Ta'lim

Even a minimal acquaintance with the writings of al-Ghazālī gives the distinct impression that he was highly concerned with the threat the Ismailis and their doctrines posed against both himself and Sunni Islam. By his own admission, he wrote six separate treatises to refute and condemn them, most importantly his 'The Infamies of the Esoterics' (*Faḍā'ih al-bāṭiniyya*), which he composed in the year 488 (1095) — not in 487 (1094) as commonly stated — in the months prior to his famous renunciation of government service and departure from Baghdad. The new young 'Abbāsīd caliph al-Mustazhir had requested the work.

While Ghazālī scholars have certainly taken careful note of various aspects of this treatise and there is one modern book devoted to it, the exact historical context that engendered it at the time, as well as various facets of Ghazālī's knowledge of Ismaili doctrine, remain imperfectly understood. His attack on the doctrine known as *ta'lim*, with its insistence on the unrivalled absolute authority of a single infallible imam, is a key piece of evidence until now not sufficiently explained. The assumption that he had in mind the Alamūt teaching by Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ of what came to be called Nizārī Ismailism is correct but dating it to as early as 488, or even earlier than that, strongly suggests that it was a doctrine already widely advocated, at least in the 'Abbāsīd-Saljūq east. Significantly, there is no sign of it in the Fatimid domains either earlier or later. But for certain in the East it emerged even prior to the Nizārī-Musta'li split, which commenced with the succession dispute that followed the death of the Fatimid caliph al-Mustanşir.

However, our knowledge of events in the career of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ comes from much later Ilkhanid sources and those accounts are fraught with problems. And they are in part legendary at best. Although the doctrine of *ta'lim*, which was certainly implicit in Ismaili works long before, such as in the *Ikhtilāf uşul al-madhāhib* of al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, or in the various writings of al-Kirmānī, in the *Infamies of the Esoterics*, Ghazālī directed his attentions squarely against a teaching he encountered personally in his own time and place. But we know the doctrine of *ta'lim* otherwise solely from accounts, often imprecise, recorded much later, in particular Shahrastānī's *Milal*. While Ghazālī's refutation deliberately renders that of his opponent's teaching weak and less than coherent—he has no incentive to fully and faithfully expound the doctrine of a heretical enemy—his is the earliest, and perhaps most complete, account of it available to us.

Paul E. Walker (PhD, University of Chicago, 1974) was director of the American Research Center in Cairo for over ten years (1976-1986). He is currently Deputy Director for Academic Programs, Center for Middle Eastern Studies, at the University of Chicago. As a specialist in the history of the Islamic thought, he has published dozens of papers and over a dozen books, among them *Early Philosophical Shiism: The Ismaili Neoplatonism of Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī* (Cambridge, 1993); *The Advent of the Fatimids: A Contemporary Shi'i Witness* (with Wilferd Madelung) (London, 2000); *Exploring an Islamic Empire: Fatimid History and Its Sources* (London, 2002); *Fatimid History and Ismaili Doctrine* (Ashgate, Variorum, 2008), *Orations of the Fatimid Caliphs: Festival Sermons of the Ismaili Imams* (London, 2009) and *Caliph of Cairo: al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah, 996-1021* (Cairo, 2009). His current research focuses on popular ritual, governing institutions and Ismaili doctrine in the Fatimid period.

Thierry Zarccone

An Aspect of the Practice of Naqshbandī Sufism at Yarkand, Xinjiang, in the 20th Century: Ishan Abdullah Khan Haji Tura and its Legacy

This presentation endeavours to show how Naqshbandī Sufism from the Ferghana Valley was introduced in the south of the Tarim Basin, in Xinjiang, in the early 20th century. The paper focuses on a particular branch of the Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya established at Yarkand around 1928 by Abdullah Khan Haji Tura (1904–1978) and directed by his son up to the present day. In addition to the transmission of Sufism, including *khafī* and *jahrī dhikr* and also dance (*samāʿ*), although the two last practices are banned in some other branches of the Naqshbandiyya, Abdullah Khan Haji Tura and his sons were known for their expertise in modern and traditional Uyghur medicine, and in Turkish poetry and literature. The sources of this study are Sufi manuscripts in Turkish, preserved in the private archives of the family, and meetings with Abdullah Khan's sons between 1998 and 2010.

Thierry Zarccone is Senior Researcher at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in Paris, based at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (Sorbonne), Paris. He has held visiting professorships at Kyoto and Fribourg (Switzerland), and gives courses currently at the Institute of Political Sciences in Aix-en-Provence. His field of expertise is the history and anthropology of Islam in the Turko-Persian region (Turkey, Central Asia and Xinjiang). The author of numerous articles on related scholarly topics, including the history of Sufism, Sufi lineages, saint veneration and Shamanism, he has also published on modern and contemporary Turkish and Central Asian history. Zarccone's most recent book is *Le Mystère Abdelkader, la franc-maçonnerie, la France et l'Islam* (Paris, 2019).



